Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting Held on 17th June 2025
Commenced at 5:15pm in the Elm Boardroom.

Present
Paul Goodman (PG) Chair of Committee
Gideon Schulman (GS) (Chair of Governors)
Annette Cast (AC) (Principal)

Apologies
Julian Davies (JD) (Governor)

In Attendance
Anjana Jonathan (AJ) (Director of Finance)
Ian Atkinson (IA) (Project Manager for New Build)
Kayee Chan (KC) (Director of Governance)

Minutes transcribed by Paula Dawson (Interim Director of Governance)

1. Chair's Opening Remarks and report of any Chair's Action taken since last meeting

None.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Julian Davies.

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4a. Minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2025

Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4b. Action point review

Legal Services tendering **-** AC noted the legal contract was being renewed. Companies had been contacted to quote for the contract and one had been received from Brown Jacobson and two other quotes were awaited. It was felt that although Eversheds would be the best company and had been used previously, they were too expensive for a college the size of Stanmore. It was hoped the three quotes would be available in time for the full board with a pre-meet to discuss their contents. The college was predominately looking for a contract for employment law and HR service with a retainer for other services. Long term issues were inherited and it was hoped that there would not be the same number in future. The retainer would cover unlimited employment law and an hours discussion plus fees for further advice. The college will look for a specialist building lawyer. The contract would be for a one year or possibly 2 years which may result in a discounted rate. Stoneking were inherited and were also very expensive, when challenged they claimed there were a number of previous issues that they covered but there had been no further additional issues since then.

The college is now out of the Stoneking contract and needs an employment law specialist that will support the college with cases previously taken to tribunal. The previous tender was undertaken some years ago and at the time Stoneking had been the most competitive, against Eversheds, but as times had changed a new contract was required. The Governors will wait until the Board for an update.

5. Matters Arising

None.

6. Finances

Financial Update and Draft Budget

The new charity is ongoing and it was hoped it will be implemented in 2026. The FE sector is looking at FRS102 and aligning with international IFRS to review lease accounting and income recognition. The lease accounting would be aligned with IFRS and all operating leases would be recorded on balance sheet, this did not affect Stanmore. Income recognition rules on subcontracting did not affect Stanmore as they do not subcontract. Direct Delivery Plans were included and remained similar to last year for 16-18 and adult provision.

The college was trying to bring delivery more in house and had hired a facility in the high street to deliver beauty courses for adults only. Rail Future was being co-delivered with a cohort of 24 learners and this had been budgeted for next year. Delivery for this course was on campus.

The college had factored in a 2.5% pay award and incremental drift was noted in the papers, this would cover the increase in salary between grades.

Direct Delivery Plan - Papers were shared and there were no changes noted.

6c. DfE Financial Assessment

The DfE had assessed the college as outstanding and had found no financial irregularities in the CFFR. Governors were delighted with the outcome and thanked AJ for her work on securing an outstanding grading. In 2023/34 only 29% of FE colleges were outstanding and 50% were graded good.

6d. Accounts Direction

Each year the DfE issued accounting direction and the current one was for 2024/25. This had previously been shared at Audit Committee and there had not been any changes made. The Statement of Regularity, Financial Handbook and Funding Comparison were included.

6g. Cap Ex

All staff had been asked to confirm their needs for Cap Ex and areas such as IT and Facilities plus faculties have been asked to request their Cap Ex requirements for next year. Marketing have requested £20k for signage for the new build. £200k to the DfE had not been paid but was ringfenced until their invoice had been received. £800k was the expected spend with some contingency.

Grant funding of £810k had to be spend by 2027 with £400k on hold for phase 1 requirements if needed. £220k for T level specialist equipment grant had been ringfenced. £800k from reserves and £622 from the DfE Grant showed a total capital request of £1.422 million.

T level funding was not received last year. Funding this year was due to the introduction of 3 T Levels into the curriculum, Engineering was ongoing and 2 new T levels were due to this year. AJ agreed to share the list of equipment requested by departments. The £100k will be used on the legacy building but some of the £400k may also be used and must be recorded as matched with grant funding.

Governors asked if sponsors had been sourced for any of the courses, AC agreed the college could try but as the DfE are funding the build it was felt this may not be appropriate at that time and may be better once the build was complete. Previously Governors had been involved in securing sponsors with input from SLT, Marketing and Finance and employer groups. A charity company could also be set up to support sourcing of sponsors. Governors could be asked to support with this and AJ had made contact with Barclays to review their support of this.

The budget would be shared with the Board next month.

The CFFR contained some of the budget and also the financial statement and was shared with the DfE. The DfE used this as the basis their assessment. The 25/26 budget was included on the CFFR and they asked for the 26/27 budget. AJ was only projecting a 2% increase in income due to the new build being completed. The GLS, ASF and 19 plus income were included as there was stress on the GLA to release more funding. 16-18 increased slightly by 2% and pay and non-pay increased also. Every sheet stated the college is outstanding.

Efficiency plans for non-pay and pay and with the restructure there are likely to be cuts on staffing. Each course had been reviewed for staffing and Heads had been asked to look at efficiencies to reduce the %. Forecasting for new learners in comparison to last year (1418) showed the trajectory of funding for learners this year (1446). This years curriculum plans suggested it would meet 1543 but being prudent this had been cut to 1490 learners. In year growth would also be added to this. The focus was to become a community college and have the new build in place, rather than concentrate on growth.

6h. Draft Budget and Indicative Budget

All contracts had been received. The budget had been a hybrid model and departments were asked for non-pay spend and capital spend for the year. They had looked at how many hours were required for the curriculum plan and requirements were reviewed. Vacancies and current establishments were also being reviewed and added into the budget.

The 2.5% pay increase had been budgeted for and was dependent on AoC recommendations. Staffing costs remained too high. Recent benchmarking data from AoC stated 25 days had increased to 40 days but had also kept the staff ratio at 65%. Stanmore currently stands at 67.9%. There would be some efficiencies with the current restructure being considered. Once this structure was in place and student numbers were confirmed there would be a re-forecast. A Management Accountant has been appointed and starts on 1st August and she will support AJ. The college were allocated less funds due to student numbers and lagged funding but if successful in gaining more learners funding was likely to increase. The staff ratio was linked to improving utilisation percentage (97%) and this year has been lower (85%) despite over delivering this year. AC noted that most areas had been over delivering and staff utilisation has never been at 97% as this equates to outstanding. AC confirmed staff utilisation was for the whole of 2024 and the current figure was only up to May. The only way to reach 99% would be to get a higher number of hourly paid. The college believes it has been fully utilised in the past but it has not as key metrics have not been met. There is a balance between good teachers but not having so many full time staff that they cannot be fully utilised. 70/30 hourly is ideal but really 80/20 is more realistic. The Management Accountant starting will help and the budget would be adjusted once student numbers settled in the new year. The annual review with the ESFA/DfE FE Commissioner took place last week and they were not sure how realistic 65% was within the sector and with the increase of the NA they were pleased that the college were focusing on teaching and learning.

Governors felt it was a good report and were pleased with the appointment of a Management Accountant. The new Payroll and HR software system update was being implemented with Payroll being the last section to move over. There would be two or three parallel payroll runs and then the change would take place in August or September. The HR system implementation would be completed by the provider and was int eh process of being fine-tuned. Training for staff would start the following week.

7a. Risk Register to May 2025

The risk register had been shared earlier in the day with committee members and noted.

7b. Capital Build Risk Register

IA shared the risk update report with the committee.

The summary of risks identified were maintaining business as usual during Exams and ensuring noise level was managed. Lessons had been learned and would be managed through the next phase. Demolition would continue and construction would be completed and the contractors would work around exams. Exams had been timetabled and moved off site of necessary.

Infrastructure services for utilities were being energised and cables run over to the current building. There would need to be a power shut down to connect services. Current services were not in a great state and as all services came from the boiler room or Elm, these would need to be abolished, so there would need to be some work undertaken to reroute.

New staff, new courses and changes to strategic direction had resulted in changes to room layouts and usage and had increased costs and time. There was some demolition to be completed. Planning for construction was now complete and the fixing on the façade and tree concerns had been overcome but there are some preopening conditions to be discharged. There were programme delays around asbestos found in some areas in the early phases. This was hoped to be mitigated through resequencing but there was the possibility of further asbestos being discovered. The decant of Elm and Willow would be a complicated process involving staff and all contractors and was not without risk. Weather could not be controlled and there were a number of mitigations in place with plans being made to ensure a smooth transition.

Photos taken by drones were shared to show the close proximity of the boiler room to the stairwell of the new building. The build was taking shape and showed the full design with the courtyard in the centre for student use.

The risk register was reviewed monthly with all parties involved and was a live document. There would be a further review at the Board meeting next month. AC received regular updates and the main focus is the completion of the first phase for next year, April 2026 and the final completion in August 2027. Focus on the impact of the final completion had been discussed including the early decamp of Elm, is case asbestos was found and created a similar delay. Business commenced as usual and whilst money was tight an early decant could be considered if student study was not impacted.

JD was concerned that additional finances may be required and AC confirmed that this would be covered by the college to ensure that the premises were suitable for future curriculum. Lessons learned had been that adding in additional buildings later can be costly and some of the additional funds may be available from Capital Expenditure. The main focus was having a connected campus and board sign off would be required to make the changes so the building will flow and offer the ability to be flexible curriculum as needs arise.

Governors were pleased with the advice and experience of AC to ensure the college would thrive in the coming years. GS felt that IA had done an excellent job and been on top of the build. Governors and the college have done everything they could do to ensure the build will be fit for purpose. Some compromises had been made to ensure funding was received and some extra costs may be incurred to ensure that future IT infrastructure is in place. The DfE system may add time and costs to the process if required. AJ had worked with the Capital Team, Estates and IT to ensure the capital budget has been increased to cover additional elements. A four/five year legacy plan was in place to ensure the future of the college. Governors thanked IA for his work so far.

Ac confirmed that IA would not be available for the next meeting on 8 July but his assistant, Vikash Pindoria, would be supported by AC at that meeting.

7c. and 7d. KPIs

KPIs showed an increase in enrolment numbers to 1418, 170 more than predicted. The attendance rate was 75.4% and punctuality stood at 84.9% against a target of 95%. 16-18 and 19+ allocations had been met and the college was over delivering on both areas by 170 and also co-funding ESOL. Allocations for this year were being tracked including EHCP learners, with applications from this area up from the previous month. The college historically expected a high number of late applications and a high number of walk-in learners. It was hoped that the outreach by Marketing with the new website would increase applicants and online presence. The hits on line were higher and behavior was changing but this was not equating to applicants. Schools continued to try to retain their students and whilst some learners had visited the college, students were hoping to do A Levels and the message was not getting through.

Attendance remained a concern and had been for a number of years. This year (25/26) references will be taken from school to understand the individual attendance of students. The expectation will be 100% attendance and shared with parents and students. Different strategies will be used to improve attendance. Attendance may have been 75%/80% but interaction with the college stood between 91% and 93% which meant students were accessing resources but not physically engaging. It was agreed that the new build may change perception. Parents attitude to attendance was also a concern. The DfE had started to look at different modes of delivery to allow virtual access to classes.

8. Policies

a) Fees Policy – the policy was shared at the March board but the government had not issued the contribution table and this was now added.

b) Reserves Policy – approved

c) Student Financial Support Policy – the bursary household income threshold was raised from £30k to £35k to bring in more students to the framework and to support as many learners as possible. Guidelines were very strict and the change allowed the college to use the full allocation of bursary payment received.

d) Risk Management – this had not been reviewed for a long time. The main changes made were with staffing, the Deputy Principal and the risk scoring matrix. The matrix was brought in line with the risk register matrix.

e) Heath & Safety – minor changes were made, there were changes to personnel and titles and ensure clarity of responsibility.

Policies will be reviewed by KC with the Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment and a spreadsheet will be drafted to ensure policies are maintained and up to date. The old tracker was very out of date and was not a complete list, KC will be working on this. Some policies can be incorporated under an umbrella suite of policies which will be reviewed three months before their due date. Policies will be noted for committee or board review also.

9. AOB
GS thanked Paul for his hard work on chairing this committee despite the turnover of governors.

10. Date of next meeting
Draft meeting schedule will be shared with governors next week.