

QUEEN ELIZABETH SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee held on Tuesday 31st May 2022

Present	Mr C Wiper, Chair Mr T Fisher, Principal Mr D Warman Mr A Wilson
In attendance	Mr S Hargrove, Chief Financial Officer Mrs N Wade, Acting Clerk
Apologies	Mr J Deane Prof L Oglesby OBE

Ref:		Actions
14/22	<p><u>Expansion Project</u></p> <p>Mr Fisher informed the Committee that the College is still awaiting a decision on planning permission for the expansion project but that Darlington Borough Council are due to schedule an ad hoc Planning Committee meeting for the week beginning 20th June to review the application. He described the time pressures at the beginning and end of the project with the need to both start major works during the quiet summer holiday period and to complete the project by the March 2023 Capacity Fund grant spending deadline. Mr Fisher explained that in order to secure the contractors and enable them to start on time, the College is required to sign a Letter of Intent (shared with the Committee prior to the meeting).</p> <p>Mr Hargrove explained that the contractors are ready to begin preliminary works but need to engage consultants and purchase some materials, totalling around £64k (plus VAT). Approximately £22k is allocated for architectural and engineering services, which the College will be able to use even if planning permission is denied, however the £42k (£50.4k including VAT) for materials could be lost. The Committee has previously given authority to spend up to £140k, of which around £135k has been spent. Mr Hargrove explained that it is necessary to seek approval from the Committee for the College to sign the LOI, given the attached financial risk, which would allow the project to begin on time.</p> <p>Mr Warman noted that a £50k loss would only be around 1% of College reserves and Mr Wiper asked what the worst case scenario could be. Mr Fisher replied that the worst case would be if planning permission was denied, an extension to the grant spending window was denied and if the DfE wanted to reclaim any grant funding already spent. If</p>	

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	<p>the worst did happen, the College would still retain the £22k for architectural and engineering services.</p> <p>Mr Warman asked if Mr Fisher has spoken with local councillors. Mr Fisher confirmed he has been in contact with the Chief Executive of DBC and with Peter Gibson, MP, regarding the matter. He has also spoken with the previous Leader of the Council and will speak with the new Leader if necessary.</p> <p>Mr Wiper asked if a 'decision in principle' has been made on the planning application and Mr Fisher explained that a recommendation should be made prior to the planning meeting taking place.</p> <p>Mr Warman asked if it was made clear why the application had been rejected previously and Mr Fisher replied that it had been related to travel planning, but that it has been approved this time around.</p> <p>Mr Warman asked if the objections raised are similar to those raised last time and Mr Fisher explained that they are, but that the objections weren't the reason permission was not granted.</p> <p>Mr Wilson asked if someone from the College would be present at the June planning meeting and Mr Fisher explained that he would attend if it was requested.</p> <p>Mr Hargrove added that the terms of the grant spending agreement do not clearly state whether or not the money already spent will be reclaimed if the project is abandoned, but it should be assumed that this is a risk.</p> <p>Mr Wiper acknowledged that the precedent of approving spending prior to receiving planning permission has already been set and all members of the Committee agreed that Mr Fisher should sign of the Letter of Intent on behalf of the College.</p>	

Summary of Actions:

Ref:	Action summary	By whom