

GOVERNORS/MEMBERS PRESENT: Iain Turri [Chair], Svetlana Bajic-Raymond, Gareth Beynon, Doug Jennings [Chair of Governors], Kevin Hunt [6]

APOLOGY: James Creamer, Marian Curran [Principal [2]

ATTENDING: Shane Blackshaw [Executive Finance Director], Leanne Sowersby [Governance Professional]

Absent Without Apology: None [0]

CIRCULATION: All Governors, College website

QUORUM REQUIRED: 3/6 (Voting Committee members)

Circulation: All Governors, Clerk to Governors, Principalship, & [College Website after signature].

Committee Briefing – none this meeting

ITEM	ISSUES RAISED IN DISCUSSION	ACTION
1. Welcome	1.1 Welcome: IT welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer. Apologies were accepted.	
2. Declarations of Interest	2.1 Declarations of Interest: Governors confirmed there had been no change.	
3. Previous Minutes	3.1 Minutes – 11 November 2025: The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record	
4. Actions Review	4.1 Actions Review: See Actions Report for updates. All actions complete. 4.2 Matters Arising: None	
5. College Financial Matters	5.1 Management Accounts (January 2026): SBk talked through the key points. The income/expenditure surplus for the year is forecast at £513k, the EBITDA is forecast for the year is £975k which is £16k worse than budget.	

	<p>By year-end we expect the cash balance to increase to £1327k, which is £109k over budget. SBk talked through the variances.</p> <p>Q – How is the usage of the bus routes? We do have passenger numbers, and at the end of January, these were up by around 1.5% on the previous year. This may be due to general demographic growth, rather than an increase in students, but it is hard to tell. We can really only monitor overall numbers and subsidy.</p> <p>Noted that we are locked in by the First Bus pricing model and public ticket prices, which means there is no scope to reduce the subsidy other than by increasing the number of passengers on the route.</p> <p>When First Bus transition to electric vehicles, the capacity of the vehicles will be smaller. We have asked First Bus to keep us informed around this, so that we can monitor the situation and potentially influence which routes are changed over first.</p> <p>Financial health is currently predicted to be outstanding, and we are aiming for good by year end.</p> <p>There are no issues with meeting the loan covenant.</p> <p>Noted that security gates will be installed over the Easter holidays, and new procedures will be put into place for people arriving on site.</p> <p>5.2 Budget Strategy/Planning: SBk talked through the key points. Noted that government funding rates have now been received. The funding rate has increased by 0.5%. The only mitigations are that they will continue with the NI grant to offset employers NI contributions. Student numbers for September 2025 went up by 49, which is worth over £250k in funding. Some of this will be needed to fund staffing.</p> <p>There should be some fairly firm high-level numbers to share by the April meeting.</p> <p>SBk talked through the proposed plan; to set the KPIs for EBITDA, ratio, cash days etc. and then work the remainder of the budget around those constraints. SBK also talked through the reasoning for the proposed KPIs.</p> <p>A key priority is to now start tackling the backlog of the CapEx investment. SBk talked through the proposals for allocating the operating surplus and asked for approval for the proposed mechanism.</p> <p>Q – What practical impact would overpaying the loan have, in terms of the time taken to repay and overall cost? For the loan, this runs until 2033 – any early payment would incur an additional cost. The proposed amount allocated to debt financing would more than cover the existing loan repayments and existing leases, and allows us to take out more leases for things like IT equipment.</p> <p><i>SBR joined the meeting</i></p> <p>Governors were comfortable with the proposed plan.</p> <p>Discussion around the proposed percentages. SBk noted that we could go for a higher EBITDA percentage by making some savings in the revenue budgets and releasing more cash overall.</p> <p>SBk will look at how much of the backlog a proposed percentage will be able to address, and report further.</p> <p>Noted that the general view on the pay award is that people are budgeting for 3%.</p> <p>Governors would like to see some modelling for the event of interest rates on the loan increasing</p> <p>5.3 Financial Regulations Update: SBk talked through the key points and the changes that are highlighted in the document.</p>	<p>SBk</p>
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	<p>Noted that we have very few debts owed to us that we need to chase, these are generally only for lettings.</p> <p>Q – Do budget holders have access to the information that allows them to fulfil their responsibilities? In part, there is a set of actions that come from this. Some they are already doing, some they have access to do, and some there may need to be some training and information sharing. In practice this will come into effect for the new academic year.</p> <p>Q – Could the students ever be in debt to us? Potentially with payments for trips – there is a risk around this. We are good at making sure all payments are made in advance, and that all the charges are enough to cover fixed costs.</p> <p>Governors approved the Financial Regulations.</p> <p>5.4 Treasury Management: SBk talked through the key points. This has come out of the Treasury Management policy. Bringing the report at this time of year gives an opportunity for it to influence the budget setting strategy.</p> <p>SBk noted that there is a discussion around the possibility of using some cash to invest. At this point, SBk is not confident to lock away cash to invest but would like to revisit this in June. Governors agreed with this approach.</p> <p>Discussion around the report format. Governors found the level of detail and some of the additional information useful, ;provided it is not too onerous to produce. It was fairly onerous to set up but will not be to maintain annually.</p> <p>5.5 Finance Updates: SBk noted that colleges will now be required to produce a March-end fiscal return to enable government to produce a set of year-end government accounts. It is not likely to be especially difficult to produce a position at the end of March, but it is hard to tell without knowing the full details of what has to be provided. SBk will update further in April.</p> <p>Financial Dashboard/Benchmarking: SBk talked through the report. Discussion around comparison to some of the other colleges.</p> <p>Counter Fraud: SBk talked through the report. The cyber security strategy will need to be amended to include some of the information in this DfE strategy.</p> <p>VAT: SBk talked through the report. It is unclear how this might affect St Brendan’s, as we do not know the scope of the ruling or how far back it could be applied.</p>	
<p>6. Risk Management</p>	<p>6.1 Review of Board of Governors’ Risk Register Items – Risk Dashboard: IT talked through the risks that relate to the committee.</p> <p>Q – Are we planning to do a pay rise above what the government are paying? Noted that government funding rates are only increasing by 0.5%. The sector is looking for a 4% rise, most are budgeting for 3%. It is likely that government funding will be insufficient. Because we are part of the collective pay bargaining process, we are obliged to pay what is agreed by this. We may have to disinvest elsewhere, or reduce CapEx spend etc. This may be impacted by public statements around the level of award that colleges are budgeting for, but we cannot set a level of increase independently.</p> <p>Discussion around the residual risk on liquidity – this could potentially be reduced. SBk will consider this.</p> <p>Discussion around academisation. DJ noted that he and SrMH will be meeting with the Bishop tomorrow.</p> <p>Discussion around the risk of financial fraud and whether the residual risk is appropriate. SBk will review this in light of the cyber security strategy.</p>	

	6.2 Safeguarding/PREVENT – Committee Duty Review: Noted the ongoing work on the security gates. Also noted the visit from the counter-terrorism police, who were very positive about our approach to safeguarding and security.	
7. Report Items to Board of Governors	9.1 Report items to Board of Governors: Initial discussions on budget strategy, treasury management report and Financial Regulations. 9.2 Committee Briefing Next Meeting: None. SBk will raise with IT/LS if anything comes up that would be appropriate for a briefing.	
8. Other Business	8.1 Other Business: None	
9. Next Meeting	Wednesday 22 April 2026 at 16:00	
Minutes Agreed	Minutes of Meeting agreed as true and accurate record Wednesday, 22 April 2026 Signed: _____ Committee Chair	