



MINUTES

of the meeting of the Finance and Employment Committee held on Wednesday 23 March 2022

- Present: - Alan Layng (Chair)
Igor Andronov
James Caird
David Williams (Principal)
- In Attendance: - Edward Gwillim (Director of Finance)
Debra Baldwin (Director of Personnel)
Jo Ricketts (Deputy Principal)
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Corporation)
Tony Bramley (Governor)

The meeting was quorate as four Members were present.

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| <p>1. Apologies for Absence
No apologies.</p> | |
| <p>2. Declaration of Interests
No declarations of interest.</p> | |
| <p>3. Minutes of the last Meeting and Matters Arising
It was agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2021 as a true and accurate record. The majority of matters arising would be discussed during the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. The Director of Personnel updated Governors that the incident reported to the last meeting in the previous health and safety report, which had not involved people, related to a light bulb that had exploded.II. The Director of Finance reported that the query raised by Mazars regarding a leasehold property not having depreciation was a presentational error which had not affected the financial statements. | |
| <p>4. Annual Operational Plan (AOP)
The Principal reminded Governors that the AOP had combined several action plans which was linked to the objectives in the strategic plan. The AOP will measure progress implemented and managed by individual managers. Progress will also be regularly</p> | |

reported to the Board. There was a suggestion to assign actions relevant to each Committee which would ensure robust and regular reporting, this was agreed. Additional reports provided to the Committee will also evidence progress of the AOP; managers would incorporate progress of the AOP in reports where appropriate.

D Williams

There was discussion about the development process for a digital strategy which would predominantly enhance teaching, learning and assessment. A survey has been issued to staff to review current operational use of digital resources and preferred technology and digital resources. This will ensure that the digital strategy supports teaching, learning and assessment, meets industry standards and future course developments. The survey results will be used as the baseline to develop the digital strategy along with discussion with faculties and courses. There was an option to present feedback at a Governors' Workshop later next year. Discussion progressed to mechanisms to implement the infrastructure; CMT would address this ensuring IT systems and equipment are operationally fit for purpose and support the curriculum and future development. This would be reported further during the next academic year once a baseline has been established.

E Gwillim

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the AOP and progress updates to March 2022

5. **Employment Reports**

The Director of Personnel presented the following reports.

- I. The staff report highlighted this term's range of staff development. Personnel action plan tasks for completion by January 2022 were outlined including changes to safer recruitment processes to meet KCSIE. Alternative payroll and HR system providers are being researched with demonstrations arranged; the current contract expires in October 2022. The Gender Pay Gap deadline to upload information to the Government site is 31 March 2022 which will be reported at the next meeting. There are challenges to recruit staff to some posts. To mitigate against this a range of employee benefits are included in adverts and the website is being made more interactive. A Governor asked if DBS checks will be undertaken for Governors noting that DBS checks have commenced for new Governors and will be followed by rechecks for existing Governors.
- II. The health and safety report included accident statistics since August 2021 recording 58 incidents with a high number of trips and falls, the majority of these were children in the nurseries. There was one RIDDOR reportable accident on the farm at Walford Campus when a cow had knocked a member of staff unconscious very briefly whilst administering medication to the cow. Learning from the accident and relevant actions have been put in place including a requirement for two people to work together with animals on the farm, an app is being

D Baldwin

trialled. The Health and Safety Advisors continue to liaise with Assistant Principals to make changes in an attempt to reduce accidents. First aiders are being recruited to ensure numbers meets government requirements. Health and safety audits will be recorded on an electronic system. An overall health and safety generic action plan is being developed to incorporate all campuses. The Health and Safety Governor raised discussion about defibrillators and the requirement to replace these to ensure that they are working. A plan is in place to replace defibrillators.

The College is continuing to follow Government guidance to manage covid-19. Cases are monitored closely with some relevant local measures embedded. There had been a rise in cases during the last two weeks.

A Governor suggested including statutory inspections, legislation and contact with agencies e.g. policies in future reports which was supported and was included as applicable.

D Baldwin

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the reports

6. Health and Safety Committee Minutes: 16 March 2022

The Director of Personnel updated Governors on discussion at the Committee regarding the correct PPE for employees or self-employed working on site. The College has the same PPE requirements everyone with all staff reminded to ensure compliance to legislation. The Health and Safety Committee had agreed that requirements for contractors would be included in contracts.

7. Finance Reports

The Director of Finance presented the following reports.

- I. The revised forecast in the management accounts to 28 February 2022 showed a small surplus for the year of £348K. Non-pay costs have decreased and with subcontracted provision increasing. The balance sheet remained strong with £6.2M cash. Cashflow to 2023/24 had factored in reduced income and assumed confirmation of capital projects. Cash dips in March 2023 before increasing but is never less than 55 cash days. Strong controls for costs are embedded and the restructuring of County Training will ensure that the College remains in a good financial position.
- II. Student applications 2022/23, funding and financial assumptions were provided in the report 'Consideration of Impact of learner numbers on FY23 financial planning'. The impact of lower recruitment to 16-19 programmes, HE and by fee payment adult learning has reduced funding in the current year and will result in smaller 2nd year cohorts. The ESFA's lagged funding methodology will also reduce 16-19 funding in 2022/23. There will be a reduction by £531K for main programmes and

disadvantaged learners. The teachers' pension scheme grant (TPS) has been based upon historic numbers and recalculated at £374K less next year. Overall income will reduce by £885K. Inflationary increases, National Insurance, pay award assumptions and 35% increase in utilities were incorporated with an expectation to make c£200K additional savings. It was presumed that the reduction in student numbers in 2022 is a one-off resulting from covid-19 forecasting enrolments will increase in 2022/23 with sufficient measures to address the shortfall. Based on these assumptions, the college will still have a sufficient cash buffer to manage this effectively. In the event that enrolments do not increase, additional savings will be required.

There was a suggestion to prepare an outline plan taking account of scenarios previously outlined. Following discussion it was agreed that the estimated increase for utilities was too low and needed to be increased. There was a question about staff recruitment and if pay was a factor in recruitment issues concluding that the staff pay needed to be increased in the budget.

A Governor asked if there was an analysis of demographics of 16-19 years which would impact on recruitment. Overall demographics are rising. Last year applications had increased which did not convert to enrolments. There are several variable factors including multiple applications to colleges, students not wanting to travel so far to colleges and higher grades resulting from TAGs [or Teacher Assessed Grades] changing students' chosen courses. CMT are continuing to monitor applications by courses and implement plans to mitigate.

- III. There was confirmation of the resolution approved by the Board on 18 February 2022 to increase subcontracting provision.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note management accounts to 28 February 2022
- To note applications to date for 2022/23, funding and finances and the potential impact on the financial position
- To confirm the resolution approved by the Board to increase subcontracting provision to £950K for 2021/22 which was included in the new policy

8. Accommodation Reports

The Director of Finance presented the first Annual Estates Report 2020/21. In future this would be reported to the Committee in the autumn term The College had received £917K Further Education Capital Allowance (25% matched funding from the College) with an extension authorised to carry forward spend beyond the original March 2021 deadline to September 2021 due to limitations created by the pandemic. Premises costs were broken down by campus with a suggestion to distinguish between planned repairs

E Gwillim

and maintenance compared with responsive maintenance in future. Sustainability practices were outlined noting additional work was required. There have been an increase in security issues with additional CCTV coverage and improvements to security in response to safeguarding audits ensuring improvements to compliance and health and safety.

E Gwillim

There was a question why cleaning and waste disposal costs were significantly higher in Hereford Campus compared to Oswestry Campus and Walford Campus noting that contracts are outsourced in Hereford.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note annual estates report which would be reported to the Board for information. In future the report would be reported in the autumn term.

9. Policies for approval

- I. The Tuition Fees Policy had been discussed by CMT which had no major changes but included inflationary increases.
- II. The health and safety responsibilities policy was a single policy to be implemented throughout the College. This included Governors' responsibilities which had not changed.

The Committee agreed: -

- To recommend the Board approve the tuition fees policy and health and safety responsibilities policy
- The Clerk would add the policies to the governance section on Moodle once approved

L Watkins

10. Any other business and comments

There were no items.

11. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Wednesday 6 July 2022 commencing at 12.15 pm.

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**.....