

Present: Matthew Adams, Paul Cumming, Phil Douce, Toby Hooper, Sam Lifford, Gill Slater, Ed Senior and Cherry Yau (*arrived at 5.45pm*).

In Attendance: Ruth Scotson (Deputy Principal), Sallyanne Griffiths (Finance Director) and Jo Payne (PA to the Principal/Clerk)

1. **Apologies:** Abigail Stephenson.

2. **Standing Items**

- (i) Toby Hooper declared his role as a Trustee on the Heart of Mercia MAT Board and confirmed that he had officially resigned from the Local Governing Body and that this would be his final meeting.
- (ii) No items were identified as confidential.
- (iii) An item of urgent business was identified which would be considered under matters arising in consideration of the minutes.

3. **Minutes**

(i) Minutes of the Finance & Resources committee: 13th November 2019

The minutes of the meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair. An update was received on the action points as follows:

- The College was accessing the Apprenticeship Levy for the new apprentice;
- An updated action plan including outcomes had been submitted to the ESFA in relation to evening class Maths and English GCSE early intervention. Whilst confirmation that the intervention had formally closed was requested, this had not yet been received.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

The Principal circulated a document to the Committee summarising the response to consultation over the withdrawal of Access, adult daytime and evening class provision. There had been nine responses to the colleagues, primarily from evening class teachers, and the Principal's responses to the questions they raised were considered. The estimated cost of redundancies for evening class teachers was outlined and the Principal concluded that adult education would cease from September 2020. As the Local Governing Body previously endorsed the proposal, the consultation summary was for information only to ensure governors remained fully informed.

In response to questions, the Principal advised that:

- The £8,000 community funding was income generated by evening classes, however, it had become harder to justify that the evening class programme was beneficial to the wider community when many of the courses were taken recreationally;
- There would be minimal implications of the decision on students currently on adult education courses as all would complete by the end of the current academic year. It was noted that there were a couple of student enrolled on Functional Skills courses who were not yet qualified for GCSE qualifications, who had anticipated progressing on to GCSE courses. Whilst other institutions offer GCSE resits, the Principal would check that these students had other arrangements in place.

The Committee thanked the Principal for feeding back on the consultation and **noted** the information provided.

4. Finance

(i) Routine Report

The Finance Director presented her report and highlighted the following points:

- The College's current surplus/deficit was £194,000 surplus against a projected deficit. The government contribution to teachers' pay had been anticipated in two instalments, but was paid in full earlier;
- Exams expenditure variance was due to entries being made earlier and similarly the insurance figure was due to a payment in advance;
- It was currently not possible to close the previous year due to an issue being worked on by Civica. The next time governors' received an update it would provide a more accurate accounting picture and governors could see the forecast moving forward. Governors requested that the forecast be shared as soon as it was available.

In response to questions the Finance Director advised that:

- Civica's customer service had been poor in response to the current issue. The risk was deemed to be low as Civica were working to address the problem by the end of the week. Whilst there was a service level agreement with Civica, as they had rolled out the system to other colleges and academies, there was no longer a dedicated team to offer customer support;
- She was content that the College had been prudent and not committed to revenue spend on premises or IT.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and thanked the Finance Director for her report.

(Sallyanne Griffiths left the meeting at 5.50pm).

5. Employment

(i) Personnel update

The Principal presented the employment report which included data on staff absence and equality monitoring and highlighted the following:

- A Cover Supervisor had been appointed to assist the Deputy Principal and Heads of Department with setting meaningful work during staff absence to ensure that lessons were not cancelled;
- An MIS Manager had been appointed and would start at the end of March;
- The data indicated an increased number of females applying for positions, although they were then less likely to be appointed. The percentage of females appointed had, however, increased compared to the previous year.

In response to questions it was reported that:

- The data excluded those on casual or variable hour contracts. It was suggested that there was a tendency for more females to be employed on fixed term contracts. The Principal agreed to confirm how many staff were on fixed term contracts;
- The equality monitoring data had to be published on the College website;
- Shortlisting of applicants was completely anonymous;
- Where staff reported that they had experienced stress related ill-health, the College would expect to respond through individual discussions with the staff member. More generally, the College subscribed to an Employee Assistance Scheme and had trained Contact Officers. The Staff Satisfaction Focus Group was also an opportunity for staff to make suggestions about things the College could do to assist with staff workload. Staff wellbeing was a standing item on the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee agendas and activities including pilates, football, fruity Friday and the College's membership package with Malvern Theatre were regularly promoted;

- Stress among teaching staff was often attributed to the increased levels of accountability for student outcomes. The College was focussed on tackling workload issues and, although only an incremental step, 7 members of staff who taught 5 ½ blocks would reduce to 5 blocks of academic teaching next year with the remaining ½ block for enrichment. This would reduce their caseload.

The Principal agreed to:

- Check with the Personnel Officer why equality monitoring of shortlisted candidates was not reported in addition to monitoring the characteristics of applicants and those appointed;
- Find out if the data could be compared against national or regional data for benchmarking purposes.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and were impressed by the number of staff who had accessed training which demonstrated the College's recognition of the importance of staff development.

(ii) Redundancy Procedure

The Principal outlined the proposed change to the College's Redundancy Procedure to suggest that where the initial decision in relation to selection and possible redeployment had been made by the Principal, an appeal would be heard by a Committee of the Multi-Academy Trust Board – most likely the Local Governing Body.

The Committee **approved** the Redundancy Procedure with the changes as proposed.

(iii) Minutes of the Staff Satisfaction Focus Group

The Deputy Principal presented the minutes of the most recent Staff Satisfaction Focus Group. She advised that the main focus had been responses to the staff workload survey. Attendees raised the timing of mock exams and the subsequent impact on the College calendar e.g. timing of Parents' Evenings. SLT were currently considering the timing of the mock exams for next academic year with a view to publishing the year calendar as soon as possible.

The Deputy Principal advised that the Senior Leader for Subject Improvement had a role in responding to staff workload and he had raised Staff Pulse – a fortnightly survey of staff. It was reported that a definite decision had not been taken and it was felt that this could be done in-house.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

6. Property

(i) Principal's update report and Property Strategy

The Principal reported that:

- The Property Strategy had been updated to confirm that a capital bid was submitted for the flat roof repairs, but that the College was advised against submitting a bid in relation to the circuit board and refurbishment of one of the old science laboratories;
- Corridors would continue to be refurbished;
- A glass partition would be installed in the LRC to create a silent study space and a glass screen would be installed in the reception area to replace the temporary partition currently being used;
- The College was receiving revenue from hire of the refurbished tennis courts. The College needed to determine what to do with the area alongside this.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(ii) IT update report

The Principal presented the IT update report and highlighted the following points:

- A JISC audit of IT systems and processes had been completed and identified that the College should be able to identify individual devices accessing the College Wi-Fi to then be able to deal with any misuse. Currently, an area of College where a device was being used could be identified, but not the specific user;
- The audit also suggested that the College had the right number of IT Support staff, but not at the right level. Issues in relation to data backup were also highlighted;
- MIS was an area of understaffing due to the need for manual inputting in the new system. It was hoped that the appointment of the new MIS Manager would assist with this and reduce the burden on the IT Support Manager on his return. The Principal confirmed that the IT Support Manager had been kept informed about the recent appointment.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

7. Policy Reviews

(i) Fire Safety Policy

The Principal outlined proposed changes to the policy such as reference to the Premises and Estates Manager as the Health and Safety Manager. The policy also reflects ESFA guidance that fire drills should be conducted at least termly. The evacuation procedures were updated and reference made to the College's Fire Marshalls.

In response to questions the Principal advised that:

- The College conducts fire drills termly, but the policy had not been amended to reflect this. ESFA guidance was issued in the aftermath of the Grenfell fire;
- The College's cladding was compliant and this had been scrutinised by the Committee after the Grenfell disaster. The minute of the relevant discussions would be circulated to governors for information;
- Whilst individual staff were named in the evacuation procedures, this was for internal use only and did not form part of the Policy when shared externally.

The Committee **approved** the Fire Safety Policy with minor changes as outlined and **noted** their appreciation of the role of the Fire Marshalls and the additional responsibility taken on by the Premises and Estates Manager.

(ii) Student Conduct Policy

The Principal referred to the proposed change to the policy to reflect the expectation that contextual safeguarding be considered where significant decisions were being made as to whether a student remained at College. He explained that there had been two recent incidents involving misuse of drugs, one resulted in exclusion and one in a formal written warning. In the instance where the student was excluded it was not felt that the College could do anything further to support the student that had not already been attempted whereas in the other instance it was felt that more support could be provided. The Principal said that in the past, governors had been clear that the College should have a zero tolerance approach to the misuse of drugs and, therefore, governors should consider whether they approved of this subtle change in policy. There was a general consensus that consideration of the wider context was a suitable approach for the College to adopt.

The Committee, therefore, **approved** the proposed changes to the Student Conduct Policy.

(iii) Harassment & Bullying Policy

The Principal referred to a proposed minor change whereby any complaints about the Principal should be raised with the Trust's Executive Principal or Clerk to the Trust Board.

The Committee **approved** the proposed changes to the Staff Protection from Bullying and Harassment Policy.

(iv) Sustainability Policy

The Committee **approved** the minor change to the Sustainability Policy as outlined. There was some discussion about the College's approach to single use plastic. The Principal advised that there were water fountains available for student use and reported that the Cafeteria used bio-degradable food receptacles, however, acknowledged that there was more that could be done. The Principal agreed to investigate the availability of reusable water bottles and Costa Coffee cups.

8. **Health & Safety**

(i) Health & Safety Update and Accident Report

The Principal presented his report and referred to the updated accident report. There were no identifiable trends or patterns.

The Principal referred to the Site Security audit and the recommendations that had arisen. He commented that the College had come a long way in a short period of time, but numerous additional recommendations had been made. A summary of the recommendations and the initial College response was circulated and the following points were noted:

- An inner perimeter was suggested with full height turnstiles. The Principal explained that the entrance wasn't ideal in that the visitors' entrance was immediately next to the student entrance and the card reader arrangements were not full proof, however, the area was largely overseen by reception areas. King Edwards' Stourbridge have a waist high turnstile solution which will be considered. Similarly, consideration would be given to replacing the sliding doors so that the entrance could be connected to the fire alarm system;
- Whether students wear lanyards had long been discussed, but HSFC had previously abandoned this due to the conflict it caused with students.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and felt that the Senior Leadership Team should continue to risk assess and take action appropriate to the level of risk. In response to a question, the Principal reported that there had been few incidents over the last five years when intruders had been in the College building. On such occasions this was friends of students or former students invited in, but that had been one or two where intruders had been unpleasant to staff.

The Principal presented the findings of the health and safety audit which determined limited assurance. He advised that:

- The Premises and Estates Manager had responded positively and many of the recommendations had already been actioned;
- In relation to servicing of the boiler, the contractor had been scheduled and then did not attend. The Premises and Estates Manager has contacted the company asking that they guarantee that servicing would take place as scheduled. This required a higher level service agreement but had been agreed. The Principal would routinely meet with the Premises and Estates Manager to monitor servicing deadlines;
- The audit would be repeated annual and offers a level of assurance to the governors and the Senior Leadership Team;
- It appears that the water was not tested in the right place, although the purpose of mixer taps was to ensure that water was not too hot or too cold. The contractor who undertakes legionella tests had been asked to confirm that the College's arrangements were appropriate;

- The auditor was informed that the College does have a lockdown policy based on 'ride, hide, tell', however, the Principal was not satisfied that methods of communicating in the event of lockdown were satisfactory;
- Random testing of laboratory and prep room doors were being undertaken as a result of the finding of the audit;
- Policies and guidance for contractors on safeguarding and safer working practices had been drafted and would be introduced imminently.

In response to questions the Principal agreed to check on the reference to a member of staff being identified for overall responsibility of health, safety and wellbeing. Governors' noted that the College did a lot to promote wellbeing so it would be useful to check on the definition in this context.

9. Closing Standing Items

(i) Risk Management

The Principal circulated an additional risk relating to ineffective management and governance with the loss of experienced governors and a new Senior Leadership Team. This was produced at the request of the Curriculum and Quality Committee. The Committee **agreed** that this was a sensible addition to the risk register and noted the internal, external and management assurances detailed. There was some discussion about the governance structure adopted by the College given that this was different to that adopted by Hereford Sixth Form College. There was some consensus that the committees were useful allowing greater focus. The Clerk advised that she would be asking governors to review the current structure in the summer term to reflect a year after the introduction of the current model.

The Principal outlined the most recent updates to the Risk Register and noted the College's gratitude to Hereford Sixth Form College and the support offered in the absence of the IT Support Manager.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

- (ii) Impact: The Committee noted its monitoring of staff equal opportunities monitoring and consideration of staff wellbeing. It was also considered that scrutiny of the health and safety and site security audit findings were to ensure the wellbeing of staff and students.
- (iii) Any Urgent Business: The additional business was considered under minutes and matters arising.
- (iv). Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 20th May 2020

The meeting finished at 6.58pm.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Toby Hooper for his dedication and contribution to the Committee and Local Governing Body over the past three and a half years. The Principal also thanked Toby for his involvement in wider College activities which it was hoped he would continue to support.

Signed:.....
Matthew Adams (Chair)

Date:.....

FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2020

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
FRC/12.02.20/3(i)	Check that adult students enrolled on Functional Skills have alternative arrangements in place to enrol on GCSE courses.	EYS	20.05.20	
FRC/12.02.20/4(i)	Share latest financial forecast as soon as it is available.	SAGR	ASAP	
FRC/12.02.20/5(i)	Confirm the number of staff on fixed term contracts.	EYS	20.05.20	
FRC/12.02.20/5(i)	Find out why equality monitoring of shortlisted candidates is not reported in the same way as applicants and those appointed.	EYS	20.05.20	
FRC/12.02.20/5(i)	Find out whether it is possible to compare equality monitoring data with national or regional comparators.	EYS	20.05.20	
FRC/12.02.20/7(i)	Circulate relevant minutes where cladding had been discussed.	JJP	ASAP	
FRC/12.02.20/7(iv)	Ask the Cafeteria Manager to investigate the possibility of introducing reusable water bottles and Costa cups.	EYS	20.05.20	
FRC/12.02.20/8(i)	Confirm the definition of 'wellbeing' in relation to the recommendation for a named individual to have responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing.	EYS	ASAP	
FRC/12.02.20/8(i)	Add update column to health and safety audit to enable governors to monitor updates ahead of the next inspection.	JJP	04.03.20	

ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
RC/20.03.19/4(i)	Confirm with the ESFA if Early Intervention in relation to 19+ GCSE Maths and English had been concluded.*	JJP*	27.11.19*	

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
FRC/13.11.19/5(i)	Check whether the Apprenticeship Levy was being accessed for the new apprentice.	EYS	12.02.20	✓
FRC/13.11.19/6(ii)	Liaise with RSM to ensure errors in final accounts are corrected ahead of LGB consideration and approval.	JJP	27.11.19	✓

* Denotes changes.