

Present: Matthew Adams (Chair), Sam Lifford, Ed Senior, Gill Slater, Abi Stephenson and Cherry Yau.

In Attendance: Ruth Scotson (Deputy Principal)
Luke Moseley (Vice Principal Designate)
Andrew Leyland (MAT/College Accountant)
Jo Payne (PA to the Principal/Clerk to the Local Governing Body).

1. Apologies: Paul Cumming and Phil Douce.

2. Standing Items

- (i) There were no declarations of interest relevant to the agenda.
- (ii) Those items referring to individual members of staff or students were identified as confidential.
- (iii) No urgent business was identified.

3. Minutes

(i) Minutes of the Finance & Resources committee: 10th February 2021

The minutes of the meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record. The actions points were carried forward to the next meeting.

4. Finance

(i) Trust's Finance Report

The MAT/College Accountant presented his report and made the following points:

- The year to date income and expenditure showed a positive variance of £20,000 as a result of in-year growth funding of around £59,000 due to the College recruiting 114 additional students compared to the previous year;
- 16-19 tuition funding had been received to assist with the unexpected costs of the pandemic to support catch up and funding towards pay rises and increased pension contributions had continued;
- The Cafeteria had a negative variance of £28,000 as a result of their usual delivery of services being severely restricted by COVID restrictions;
- The £280,000 depreciation charge in relation to property would be absorbed;
- Additional funding of £12,000 had been received in relation to onsite testing between February half-term and mid-March
- Premises income showed a positive variance of £45,000. It was noted that the recharging of grounds staff costs as part of the joint use agreement was now accurate;
- The College's staff costs as a percentage of income was 72% compared to 68% at Hereford SFC and 75% at King Edwards

The Principal congratulated the MAT/College Accountant on identifying the error in grounds recharges. He also commented that the College's staff costs were not equitable to those of Hereford SFC given that significantly more of their senior staff costs were attributed to the MAT.

(ii) Budget and Financial Forecast

The MAT/College Accountant presented the budget and financial forecast and advised that:

- The three year forecast was based on cautious estimates about student growth;
- £22,000 had been included for the cost of installing temporary classrooms, however, the Principal noted that these may not be needed for the coming academic year so would then be removed from next year's forecast;
- Wage inflation had been forecast at 1% in each of the three years;
- An additional £35,000 of teaching staff costs was not in this version of the forecast but had been updated to reflect this.

In response to questions, the MAT/College Accountant confirmed that:

- The ESFA had guaranteed the pension funding for next year. There was no guarantee that it would continue after this, although there was some hope that this would be factored into the main funding allocation to help colleges bridge the funding gap;
- The pensions deficit only related to the LGPS rather than the TPS. It was likely at the next triennial review of LGPS liabilities that the outcome would be that contributions would increase further to cover the deficit.

The Principal noted his concern at the assumption that pay rises would remain at 1% in each of the three years as if it was determined that a higher pay rise was awarded this undermines the planning process. It would be preferable to assume a higher pay award in the first instance.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

5. Update Reports

(i) Principal's Update

The Principal presented his report and highlighted the following:

- Return to College testing was a real success and the response of students in participating in testing was tremendous;
- There had only been a few recent passes which had not resulted in the need for others to isolate;
- Students were no longer required to wear face coverings in the classroom, but in updating the College risk assessment, it was decided that students should continue to wear face coverings in communal areas and corridors where physical distancing could not be maintained;
- Parental feedback was extremely positive and subsequently, a number of parents had agreed that the College could retain the deposit they paid at the start of their son or daughter's time at College;
- The College had received five nominations in the SFCA Awards with three of these being shortlisted. The Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing was one of three finalists in the Health and Wellbeing category and the College and the Principal were finalists in the COVID and Beyond category;
- All indicators in relation to applications for next academic year were positive and these were approximately 300 ahead of the equivalent point last year. The College was redoubling its efforts to convert applications into enrolments. Predictions on student numbers for next year were conservative although there should be an increased rollover from year 1 to year 2 given the increase in first year numbers;
- The job descriptions of the two Vice Principals who would join in September were outlined.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- The College had not featured on the 'Everyone's Invited' website, however, if Ofsted were to visit this term, the focus would be on how the College responds to sexual harassment. The Principal was confident that the College had robust safeguarding procedures in place and any report of sexual harassment would be taken extremely seriously and police involved;
- The tutorial programme had covered harassment and also dealt with relationships, respect and consent.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and commented that it was positive to see such positive feedback about the College's response to COVID.

(ii) COVID Recovery – Resources and Security

The Clerk advised that the COVID recovery document had been updated for consideration by the Committee. She reminded governors that this had been introduced, alongside a similar document in relation to teaching, learning and assessment which was monitored by the other sub-committee, to enable governors to continue to effectively monitor and challenge senior leaders during the pandemic. The Clerk proposed that, assuming a return to normal operations next academic year, that there was no further need for this document to be updated and monitored.

In response to questions around any new developments introduced as a result of COVID that would continue, the Principal said that remote Parents' Evenings were likely to continue into future academic years given the positive response from parents. He added that the College planned to experiment with modest parts of the tutorial programme remaining online to enable tutors to conduct more one-to-one and small group sessions. It was also felt that Teams would remain an ongoing feature although would not replace any face-to-face teaching.

The Committee **noted** the update and agreed with the Clerk's recommendation.

(iii) Personnel Update

The Principal presented the personnel update and noted the following:

- More teaching staff had been recruited than was typical of previous years. Although financial forecasts were based on an assumption of modest growth in student numbers, staffing had been based on more substantial growth. This was to mitigate the risk that insufficient teachers would result in new students having a poor experience, potentially withdrawing and the College's reputation being damaged as a consequence;
- Four of the new teachers appointed were Early Career Teachers. This was a new government scheme replacing the NQT status and involved support and remission for two years rather than just one;
- The College viewed the Early Career Teacher framework positively and the Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning, along with Heads of Department, would be given time to mentor and support these teachers. Whilst some government funding would be received, it was not sufficient to cover the costs involved.

The Committee **noted** the update provided.

(iv) Property

The Principal presented the updated Property Strategy and referred to the short term priorities noting the following:

- Although planning permission had been sought, it was unlikely that the temporary classrooms would be required for next academic year. He explained that the current capacity based on the existing 6 block timetable and average class size was 1700. Given this year's increase in enrolments, it was anticipated that there would be a higher rollover into the second year and, if recruitment remained strong, the student number could begin to near this capacity;
- The College could consider reverting back to a 7 block timetable and marginally increasing the average class size which would increase capacity to 1900. This, however, would create issues in terms of the capacity of social spaces;
- It was likely that the main staircase would not be renewed as yet;
- Turnstiles would be installed at the front of the main entrance in the next stage of measures to improve site security. This would require students to use their ID cards to gain access and address the current issue with the main entrance doors.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(v) IT Update

The Principal presented the report prepared by the Senior Leader for ILT Strategy and noted the following points:

- Schools and colleges were currently a particular focus of cyber attacks with data being hacked and bribes made for its return;
- A new firewall had been installed and two factor authentication introduced with some external penetration testing planned to ensure that the College was as protected as possible from such threats;
- Governors were asked to note the planned investment of approximately £200,000 in the IT network to make it more robust and reliable and this work would take place over the summer.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- Whilst staff had not received specific cyber security training, they had been trained in the use of two factor authentication and information on scams was routinely shared. It was agreed that the College would investigate possible cyber security training for staff;
- The College was covered by MAT level insurance in relation to cyber security.

The Committee **noted** the report and information provided.

6. Governance

(i) Update

The Clerk presented her report and outlined the following points:

- A survey had been shared with governors inviting feedback on the timing of the conference which it had not been possible to hold as yet this academic year. Governors were also asked to feedback on their preference for the completion of peer appraisals and whether in person meetings should resume next academic year;
- The Committee's cycle of business and terms of reference were unchanged and the committee should review these;
- The draft schedule of meetings for next year were presented for consideration.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and agreed to **recommend** the committee terms of reference, cycle of business and draft schedule of meetings for 2020-21 of reference for approval.

7. Policy Reviews

(i) Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

The Committee **approved** the policy without change.

(ii) Fees & Charging Policy

The Committee **approved** the proposed policy without change.

8. Annual Reports

(i) Safeguarding

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(ii) Staff Development

The Principal presented the Staff Development report which had been prepared by the Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning and noted the following points:

- In addition to training of staff in house, there had been a MAT Collaboration event in January which was successful and valued by colleagues;
- The appraisal process had been reviewed with a pre-appraisal questionnaire for staff to complete prior to meeting with their line manager and also a renewed emphasis on targets which, for teachers, needed to focus on improving value added.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and the information provided. There was discussion around the frequency of appraisal meetings and, where these should be more frequent. The Principal advised that the new appraisal process included a mid-year review with a focus on discussing progress of students and strategies for effective catch-up. He added that effective management should mean that line managers were having more regular informal discussions with staff and the College had invested in middle management training. There was also discussion about the potential benefits of 360 degree appraisals for senior and middle managers and this would be fed back to the Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning.

(iii) Learning Support

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and the information provided.

(iii) Disciplinary Report

The Deputy Principal presented the report and noted that although the number of exclusions and sanctions issued had decreased, this was not a fair comparison with the previous year due to the lockdown at the start of 2021

In response to questions it was noted that:

- Consideration would be given to providing a break down between level 2 and 3 students and indicating whether students were included more than once in the figures i.e. a student issued with a written warning was subsequently excluded following a further breach of the code of conduct;

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and suggested it would be useful to look at comparative data from other colleges in the MAT.

9. **Health & Safety**

(i) Health & Safety Update and Accident Report

The Clerk presented the report and noted the following points:

- To meet the statutory requirement to hold a termly fire drill, this took place at the end of April;
- The timing of the drill was chosen to minimise disruption to teaching, however, meant that parents and students were attempting to access the site ahead of the next lesson at the same time as the entrance barrier was being closed as part of the drill. This resulted in congestion on Spetchley Road and on the College drive and in the event of a real fire, the emergency services would not have been able to get onsite;
- Whilst the building was evacuated promptly, staff and students congregated too close to the College building and, when the drill was complete and the all clear given, some student attempted to drive through the car park at the same time as others were filtering back into the building.
- The Premises Manager already had plans to better utilise the full complement of Fire Marshalls to assist in directing staff on students away from the building and preventing students from getting into their cars until the car park was clear;
- Communication had been shared with parents advising that, in future, they would need to park on Spetchley Road until the drill was complete to ensure that the barrier could be closed. Any traffic on the driveway would be filtered into the visitors car park;
- The accident report data was included and, not surprisingly given the period of lockdown, reported incidents were lower than in previous years.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- There had been no near misses or accidents reported by staff in relation to working from home. All staff had to complete a home working risk assessment early in the first lockdown;
- Staff and students were regularly reminded of how they could report an accident or near miss;
- The College were not permitted to ask whether staff had received COVID vaccinations nor could it ask to see the results of any confirmatory or home tests;
- In relation to the wellbeing of staff and students, the Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing had done a significant amount to raise awareness and to promote positive mental health. Students were engaged with mental health initiatives and a number acted as Mental Health Ambassadors and participated in the Back to School project for which the College's involvement was commended;
- It was difficult to quantify the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of staff and students, however, in students there had been a significant increase in anxiety and other mental health issues. For staff, the pressures of the additional workload of Teacher Assessed Grades was significant. The Staff Satisfaction Focus Group provided opportunity to feedback on wellbeing activities;
- The College's Employee Assistance Programme was not well used by staff, although it was regularly promoted and brought to the attention of individuals as required. The College's Contact Officers were better utilised and provided a more immediate response in terms of advising on a suggested course of action or signposting to other support available.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and

10. Closing Standing Items

(i) Risk Management

The Principal advised that the Risk Analysis document had been updated with many of the post-mitigation scores lowered to amber or green. It was noted that the higher risks were predominately in relation to the IT network and these risks would be mitigated by the planned investment in the IT network.

The Committee **noted** the updated Risk Analysis.

(ii) Impact: The Committee agreed that its scrutiny of the financial forecast and assumptions, the wellbeing of staff and students and COVID recovery were demonstrated its impact.

(iii) Any Urgent Business: None.

(iv). Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 12th November 2020 (if the schedule of meetings is approved by the Local Governing Body).

The meeting finished at 7.03 p.m.

Signed:.....

Matthew Adams (Chair)

Date:.....

FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 26TH MAY 2021

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
FRC/26.05.21/5(v)	Investigate possible cyber security training for staff.	EYS	November 2021	
FRC/26.05.21/8(ii)	Feedback to the Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning in relation to possible 360 degree appraisal of senior and middle managers.	EYS	July 2021	
FRC/26.05.21/8(iii)	Consider breaking down disciplinary figures by level and to indicate where numerous sanctions were issued to the same student.	RJS	July 2021	
FRC/26.05.21/8(iii)	Request comparative data on disciplinary sanctions from other Trust colleges.	RJS	July 2021	

ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
FRC/10.02.21/10(i)	Feedback Committee comments in relation to risk register and user friendliness of this documentation.	GS	March 2021	
FRC/20.05.20/3	Discuss the arrangements for equality monitoring of shortlisted applicants with the Personnel Officer.	GS	12.11.20	

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check

* Denotes changes.