

**Present:** Matthew Adams, James Adnett, Paul Cumming (remote), Ed Senior and Cherry Yau (remote).

**In Attendance:** Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal Curriculum), Luke Moseley (Vice Principal Progression), Andrew Leyland (College/MAT Accountant) and Jo Payne (PA to the Principal/Clerk)

**1. Appointment of Chair:** Matthew Adams was unanimously appointed as Chair of the Committee for the academic year.

**2. Apologies:** Gill Slater, Phil Douce and Sam Lifford.

**3. Standing Items**

- (i) No declarations of interested were raised.
- (ii) No items were identified as confidential to the Committee.
- (iii) No urgent items were declared.

**4. Minutes**

(i) Minutes of the Finances & Resources Committee: 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021

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

- The possibility of cyber security training for staff has been raised with the Senior Leader for ILT Strategy and is being explored;
- Governors' discussion on the possible benefits of 360 degree appraisals was fed back to the Senior Leader responsible for staff development. It would be considered whether this might take place for different staff in different years rather than all at one time;
- The Clerk would carry forward the items in relation to the annual disciplinary report with a view to these being incorporated in the summer term review.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

**5. Finance**

(i) Financial Update

The College/MAT Accountant presented the end of year audited position and the October 2021 update providing the following commentary:

- The College returned a £455,000 surplus for the year and this was the figure in the audited financial statements which would not be subject to material adjustments;
- Accruals and pre-payments had not yet been released and the November report would provide a more accurate reflection;
- Some additional funding not budgeted for had benefited the College including £67,000 in COVID funding, in-year growth funding for growth of more than 110 students;
- The cafeteria generated £66,000 less income than in the budget as a result of COVID restrictions;

- In the current academic year there were bursary funds of £143,000 unspent which would be clawed back within two years if this was not used. Consideration was being given to increasing the eligibility criteria for the funds and using this to support IT provision for students eligible for support;
- £90,000 would be invested in write-on laptops for teaching staff with a further £50,000 planned next year to roll this out to front line support staff;
- The increase in students numbers of approximately 90 would result in improved funding next year;
- Staffing costs were £587,000 higher than budget;
- £200,000 would be invested in the IT network with depreciation on a monthly basis over a four year period;
- Whilst there was some uncertainty about the continuation of pay increase and pensions funding in the 2023-24 academic year, indications were that this would continue until the next Spending Review;
- £122,000 funding had been made available to curriculum areas representing a significant increase on the previous year.

In response to questions, the College/MAT Accountant noted that the Trust only had one bank account and balance sheet which is why details for the other Colleges and central MAT figures were included in the report. The reserves retained was reflected in the statement of funds.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(ii) Student Union Accounts

The Vice Principal (Progression) reported that the Student Union had a difficult year, but with its affiliation with the NUS, they had made a positive start to the new academic year with plans to spend monies on social functions etc. The elections for key roles were taking place in the coming weeks.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and recommended the Student Union accounts for approval.

(iii) Audit Reports

The Principal reported that the management comments in the reports were those of the Trust.

In relation to the recommendations in the HR audit about policies, the Committee questioned why there were not MAT policies in place. The Clerk reported that a group had been formed with representation across the colleges with a view to drafting and implementing MAT policies. A Trust Safeguarding policy was identified as the priority. The Committee requested that their concern regarding the lack of MAT policies be reported back to the Trust.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the risk management and HR audit reports.

(iv) Catering Manager Report

The Principal presented the Catering report and noted the fantastic work that the Catering team do and the positive atmosphere they create both for students and visitors. The team had responded to the new legislation around Natasha's Law and the need for a list of full ingredients to be listed on pre-packaged foods. This had involved a lot of staff time and liaison with suppliers to ensure compliance.

In response to questions it was noted that students do not have to declare allergies specifically but can note these as a medical condition. Consideration will be given as to whether this might be added to the student application process.

## 6. Management and Strategic

### (i) Principal's Update

The Principal presented his report highlighting the following:

- Infection rates in Worcester had caught up with the rest of the county and the increase was reflected in the number of cases amongst students. There were currently 21 students isolating which meant that 77 students had reported positive cases since the start of the academic year;
- Where the College had met a threshold in that 10% of a class were affected (i.e. two students in a class of 20), the local Health Protection Team reviewed the College's risk assessment and remained satisfied with safety measures, in particular, enhanced cleaning regimes. They were satisfied that transmission was not internal. If there were to be an outbreak, the College might be instructed to reintroduce measures such as the wearing of face coverings. Should infection rates continue to increase or numbers of cases increase at College, it might be decided to reintroduce these measures regardless of HPT instruction and this had been communicated with parents and students;
- Open Events were run with some COVID safety measures in place including staggered arrival times and restricted numbers. The events were ticketed and the format adapted so that on arrival visitors heard from the Principal before visiting subject areas. This allowed the College to control the flow of traffic. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive particularly in relation to the input of students who were described as inspirational;
- Restrictions on attendees did result in the need for an additional Open Event. Feedback about this event was particularly positive with attendees grateful for the additional opportunity to visit;
- In total approximately 660 families visited over the three events compared to 750 over two typical events without restriction;
- Whilst not all students were yet at the 6 week point, it seemed probable that there would be an increase in the student number of 90 compared with the funded number of 1488. This also indicated a further increase in the percentage share of the year 11 county cohort and of the share of post-16 in the county.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- The College was not currently requiring the wearing of a face covering unless a student was identified as a close contact of a positive case e.g. had cases in the household. In such cases, the advice was to conduct daily lateral flow testing and to wear face coverings whilst at College

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

### (ii) Strategic Development Plan

The Principal presented the Strategic Development Plan and advised that it was relatively unchanged from the conference although suggestions made were still being reflected on.

The assumption within the plan of non-pay inflation of 2.5% was challenged as to whether it was realistic and could be offset by the increase in students numbers. The Principal advised that some of the assumptions were centrally determined. The College had updated some of the narrative to reflect its growth in student numbers and potential for further growth which would offset costs.

The Committee noted the need to monitor staffing costs given the increase in teaching staff. The MAT Accountant noted that the forecast for 2022-23 planned for 3 additional full time teachers and was more prudent in its assumption.

The Committee **agreed to recommend** the Strategic Development Plan for approval.

(iii) Personnel Update

The Principal presented the personnel update and the following points were highlighted:

- The College appointed new teachers equivalent to 10 FTE this academic. This had supported the College's investment in 10% timetabled time for teachers to provide enrichment and support which not only responded to workload but improved provision for students;
- A successful programme of support was in place for Early Career Teachers and those teachers new to College;
- There was not the same increase in support staff although there were some current vacancies that were to be filled. An additional tutor was appointed and also an additional cover supervisor. A Site Security Officer took up post this term and had proved a fantastic addition;
- There were some difficulties in filling positions for roles such as Learning Support Assistants and Cleaners;
- Significant time had been invested into preparing for the introduction of a new HR system which should provide increased functionality;
- Absence rates for teaching and support staff were interesting and indicated the impact of COVID with the ability to work from home reducing the number of short term absences;
- The College's staffing costs were 71% of income compared to 72% average across the sector. This compared with 84% in 2018 and indicated significant progress which meant that the College could afford the investments it had made and would make in future.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(iv) Cyber Security Report

The Cyber Security report was noted. In response to questions, the Committee was advised that where students did not have a smart phone that would enable multi-factor authentication, it would be possible to provide them with a USB key. A survey of students indicated that only 0.5% were without smart phones, but these students were a critical group.

It was noted that the Trust had appointed a Cyber Security Officer to work across the colleges to provide a MAT wide response.

## 7. Governance

(i) Clerk's Update Report

The Clerk presented her report and noted that:

- The SFCA issued an occasional paper on racial equality for consideration by governors and leaders. It was advised that a webinar on Equality and Diversity and the role of governors in this was scheduled for February. The Clerk had contacted a consultant to consider what support might be available to the College in addressing its lack of diversity in its staffing and, in particular, how to encourage applicants from an increasingly diverse background;
- Governor feedback about the conference was positive in terms of the location, timing and presentations.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

## 8. Annual Reports

(i) Equality Annual Report 2020-21 and Equality Policy

The Vice Principal (Progression) presented the Equality annual report. He noted that it was an area for significant focus and the offering for students in terms of celebrations of diversity in College were not on par with other local schools and colleges. It was acknowledged that this needed to improve

given the interest of our students in equality and diversity matters and it was an area of frustration. It was suggested that it would be beneficial for a governor link visit to focus on the College's equality and diversity offering.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the annual report and **approved** the Equality Policy with the minor changes proposed.

(ii) Exams Report

The Vice Principal (Progression) presented the Exams Report. He noted that the Exams Manager was relatively new in post but had significant experience as the Exams Assistant previously. She was supported by an Exams Assistant who joined College this term.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

**9. Property**

The Principal presented the updated Property Strategy and noted the following:

- The bid to the post-16 capacity fund was unsuccessful. Whilst the project met the criteria when the application was submitted, the criteria used for judging required full project costs and tendering as a result of the number of applications that were received;
- Meetings had been held with two companies with a view to undertaking a site development plan and having a more coherent approach to capital bids. This might mean the College was not in a position to apply for capital funding this academic year or even next, but planning would aim to have a fully worked out project for submission;
- It was intended to add the Site Security action plan as an annex to the Strategy and similarly, the next version would address the recommendation of the Premises audit to provide more detail on current priorities.

The Committee **noted** the updated Property Strategy and the information provided.

**10. Health & Safety**

(i) Health & Safety Update and Accident Report

The Clerk presented the health and safety update and accident report and the following points were noted:

- The autumn term fire drill was held at the end of September with some of the issues raised in the summer term evacuation successfully addressed;
- The Fire Risk Assessment was undertaken with the recommendations and actions taken included for governors' consideration;
- The number of reported accidents last year remained small in number perhaps as a result of sporting activity being unable to go ahead due to restrictions/

The contents of the report was noted. In response to questions the fire risk assessment identified one fire door that was warped and did not close properly and its replacement would be a priority. Some seals on others required replacement, but this provided opportunity to consider replacement of the doors as a means of improving the aesthetic. The Principal noted reference to a roll call which was not accurate as registers were not taken on evacuation.

There was some discussion about recent incidents affecting students which were communicated with students and parents and what the College's obligation was when incidents took place offsite. The Principal advised that this was considered within the Safeguarding Policy and the College clearly had a duty of care to its students even when they were not at College. It was important that the College continued to raise awareness of risks and to

keep a log of incidents, the response and outcome. The Principal reported that he had contacted the Police raising concern at 4 incidents affecting students in a three month period. The county's Safeguarding Lead was also willing to raise concerns with the Police where appropriate.

(ii) Educational Visits Co-ordinator Report

The EVC report was noted. Trips and visits had resumed again this year with the lifting of COVID restrictions this academic year. This would remain under review should restrictions be reintroduced.

**11. Closing Standing Items**

(i) Risk Management:

The Committee **noted** the information provided. In terms of additional risk management issues to be considered, the Committee noted the need to accurately estimate future costs e.g. non-pay expenditure. The Committee also noted its concern at the lack of Trust policies, in particular, in respect of employment aspects.

(ii) Impact:

(iii) Any Urgent Business: No additional urgent business was identified.

(iv). Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022

The meeting finished at 6.55pm

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

Date:.....

**FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 10<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>
FRC/10.11.21/5(iii)	Feedback to the Trust the Committee's concern at lack of Trust policies in respect of personnel matters.	JJP	November 2021	
FRC/10.11.21/5(iv)	Consider whether the online application can specifically ask about dietary allergies.	LIM	February 2022	
FRC/10.11.21/8(i)	Identify opportunity for link visit to focus on the College's equality and diversity provision.	JJP	February 2022	

**ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>
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**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>
FRC/10.02.21/10(i)	Feedback Committee comments in relation to risk register and user friendliness of this documentation.	GS	March 2021	✓
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	✓

\* Denotes changes.