

Present: Matthew Adams, James Adnett, Paul Cumming, Phil Douce, Sam Lifford, Gill Slater, Ed Senior and Cherry Yau (via Teams).

In Attendance: Andrew Leyland (College/MAT Accountant) and Jo Payne (Clerk to the Local Governing Body)

1. **Apologies:** None. Cherry Yau gave notice that she needed to leave at 6.15pm.

2. **Standing Items**

- (i) No declarations of interest were made.
- (ii) Examples, although anonymised, of low-level concerns were identified as confidential to the committee.
- (iii) No urgent items were declared.

3. **Minutes**

(i) Minutes of the Finances & Resources Committee: 10th November 2021

The minutes of the meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair in due course. An update was provided on the action points. The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(ii) Public minutes of the Grievance Appeal Panel: 24th November 2021

The Clerk presented the recommendations of the Grievance Appeal Panel and the College response was considered.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and **agreed** to make the following **recommendations** to the Local Governing Body based on the College response:

- The College should develop a briefing note for the appointed Investigating Officer. This should advise the Investigating Officer to meet with the individual raising the grievance and the individual about whom an allegation was made. If the Investigating Officer determined not to do so, the reason for this decision should be recorded in the investigation report.
- The College should ensure that the invitation to the Grievance Hearing clearly explains the measures the College would be prepared to take to facilitate the attendance of the individual raising the grievance and the individual about whom an allegation was made, for example, at different times.
- The College should consider wording in exemplar letter notifying employee that probationary period is being extended so that this is more positive and developmental, e.g. rather than 'I am unable to recommend that you pass your probationary period', consider 'Your probationary period has been extended to provide opportunity for you to meet all of the criteria'.
- The College should issue DSE workstation checklists to all new staff for completion in their first week.
- The College should review initial review documentation so that at the three month period, there is clear opportunity to identify if mandatory training has been completed or, if not, make clear that this is a requirement ahead of the six month review.
- The College should ensure that job descriptions are clear and accurate particularly if updated after an individual has been in post for some time and the job role has changed. Consideration should also be given to ensuring that the job title is indicative of the role, e.g. administrator/technician.

(iii) Public minutes of the Student Exclusion Appeal Panel: 17th January 2022

The Clerk presented the recommendations of the Student Exclusion Appeal Panel. The Committee **noted** the information provided and **agreed** to make the following **recommendations** to the Local Governing Body:

- The College should seek, wherever possible, to produce a timeline of relevant meetings held by College staff should be prepared and submitted for consideration by the Panel;
- When taking statements, the member of College staff conducting the interview should try to establish dates and times of any alleged incident.

4. Finance

(i) Financial Update

The MAT/College Accountant presented the income and expenditure account for periods one to five and the full year forecast. It was noted that:

- There was a £188,000 variance on bursary funding with £143,000 carried forward into the current academic year. The Vice Principal (Progression) had worked to encourage students to apply for support and this included extending the free meal allocation to cover breakfast in addition to lunch;
- The 16-19 tuition fund showed a positive £16,000 variance tutors recruited to deliver Maths and English catch up sessions;
- Exams fees showed a positive variance of £63,000 as the cost of exam entries for summer 2022 had not yet been invoiced. There were also credit notes from last summer due to exams not going ahead;
- A contingency administration budget had a positive variance of £57,000, with only £6,000 of this used for enrichment, equality and diversity, Ambition etc;
- In relation to the forecast it is too early to make accurate predictions but no significant budget exceptions were noted and the College was on track against budget;
- In terms of salaries there was a negative variance of £27,000. A 1% pay rise across that board was implemented;
- The MAT central recharging method was changed in year and back dated and this was not reflected in the budget;
- The College's insurance had a positive variance of £40,000 as this was now arranged at MAT rather than College level;
- The forecast EBITDA was £591,000 with an accounting surplus of £58,000 assuming no further fixed asset additions.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- The 1% pay increase was realistic and had already been awarded to teaching and support staff. Senior staff pay would be considered and determined by the Trust;
- Staffing costs were as expected given the increase in the number of teachers this year;
- An EBITDA of £500,000 was required to break even.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and thanked the College/MAT Accountant for his update.

(Andrew Leyland left the meeting at 5.47pm).

5. Management & Strategic

(i) Principal's Update

The Principal presented his update report and noted the following points:

- The College no longer needed to alert the Health Protection Team when a threshold was met. This appeared to be part of the government's strategy of 'living with COVID' with an announcement expected on Monday with a likely lifting of the isolation guidance. There were four

members of staff with underlying health conditions for whom this would be a concern and the College would need to consider how to respond to this. The SFCA was lobbying to retain free testing for schools and colleges;

- Confirmed cases at College appeared to be decreasing in line with a national decrease in the infection rate. 16 students and 3 members of support staff were currently isolating;
- Student numbers for this academic year were positive, an increase of 100 on last academic year. Applications for September 2022 remain ahead of the previous year although the gap was narrowing. In conclusion it was felt that the College would do well to recruit as many students next year due to a combination of factors. Alternatives such as apprenticeships were opening up again and, with the return to external exams, it was likely that fewer students would be qualified for level 3 programmes. Whilst the year 11 demographic was slightly higher than last year, the growth was in schools with sixth forms from whom our capture rate was typically lower. Hopefully a slightly increased rollover to year two would result in similar student number for next year;
- There would be a modest increase in the basic funding rate of approximately £350 per student which, due to the lagged funding and increase in student numbers this year, would mean around £500,000 in additional funding next academic year;
- There was a requirement to increase the timetabled contact time that students receive. The College timetable would need to change to respond to this and staff would shortly be consulted on this;
- Recent parental feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Where an area received a positive response of less than 90%, the College provided an initial response to parents;
- Mock exams and mop up sessions went well with high attendance rates. This was the second opportunity this academic year for students to practice sitting exams in timed conditions in exam rooms.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- It was not yet possible to advise how students performed in the mocks as teachers were marking papers with a deadline of adding these to the Portal by 4th March;
- There would be no further formal opportunity for second year students to practice before the summer exams, however, subjects would do timed assessments etc.

The Committee **noted** that information provided.

(ii) Managing Allegations

The Principal explained that previously, managing allegations was an appendix to the safeguarding policy, but KCSIE 2021 required it to be a standalone policy. The policy should sit at MAT level, but as this does not yet exist, a policy has been drafted for use by the College. More explicit reference is made to the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer, but essentially the procedure for managing an allegation is unchanged. What is new is the focus on reporting and recording of low-level concerns with an emphasis on passing on concerns about colleagues or self-referring where the staff member has concerns that an incident might be perceived in a particular way. The College's guidance on safer working practices and the staff code of conduct had also been updated.

The Principal referred to some anonymised examples of low-level concerns reported this academic year. These were all recorded in a central register with routine review by the Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that there were no safeguarding themes or defects in the College's culture and practice identifiable by the incidents reported. Low-level concerns would be kept for the length of time the staff member was employed by the College at which point this would only be retained if there was an indication that the staff member presented a risk or to protect the College from possible litigation.

It was noted that the Trust Managing Allegations policy would supersede the College's policy once approved by the Board. The Committee **approved** the Managing Allegations policy and **noted** the examples provided.

(iii) Emergency Response

The Principal explained that a previous audit highlighted the need to implement a more satisfactory Run, Hide, Tell policy. The College now had software which would alert staff to the nature of any threat by appearing on computer monitors. The College bell system was not currently sophisticated enough to sound an alternative ring so even though an alarm can be raised, the nature of the threat could not be communicated. Quotes had been obtained for thumb locks to ensure that all classrooms could be locked from the inside.

The Committee **approved** the Run, Hide, Tell policy. The Principal advised that there would be training for staff on run, hide, tell principles.

6. Employment

(i) Personnel Update

The Principal presented the update report and noted the following:

- There had been a change to the pay of support staff on the bottom points of the scale due to three of the bottom four points being removed. Tweaks were subsequently made to the pay of a number of support staff to maintain differentials;
- Data on equalities monitoring was included and would be published in accordance with the College's equality duty.

The Committee commented that:

- There appeared to be a shift in the gender balance with fewer women applying for posts, but more being appointed. The Principal thought that this was due to the profile of the positions advertised;
- 5% disclosed disability on application, yet of those appointed, 10% had a disclosed disability;
- There was a 10% decrease in staff from a Christian background which a corresponding increase in those with no religion;
- The diversity in staff was not reflective of the student body although it was noted that this was a problem across the county. It was suggested that the College consider positive action statements in its recruitment advertising or consider an open day for those from ethnic minorities.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(ii) Staff Wellbeing

The Committee **noted** the contents of the update on staff wellbeing. The Principal explained that the College was moving away from using Staff Pulse as the fact that staff were not asked the same questions made it difficult to benchmark against or to respond to concerns constructively. Internal surveys would be reintroduced as would the Staff Satisfaction Focus Group. The Senior Leader for Subject Improvement chairs the employee focus group on workload which offers constructive suggestions which were discussed with the Principal.

7. Property

(i) Property Strategy

The Principal presented the property strategy and noted the following:

- Informal feedback from the RSC was that the College had a strong application to the Post-16 Capacity Fund in terms of its growth, but the project was not shovel ready. The College was preparing another bid for the second phase of the Science Centre which would include proper tenders. If successful, this would enable the old science laboratories to be decommissioned and refurbished into general purpose classrooms;
- A premises development plan had been commissioned which would assist the College in making bids to other capital funds.

The Committee **noted** the update.

(ii) IT Update

The Committee **noted** the update report and the positive developments that had taken place.

(iii) EVC Update

The Principal presented the report noting that he and the Senior Leader for ILT who was the College's EVC, conducted a sampling exercise of trip risk assessments and found that these were robust and detailed. It was noted that residential trips had taken place, not to the same degree as previous years

8. Governance

The Clerk presented her report and noted the following:

- The DfE would publish guidance on External Reviews of Governance in April 2022. An ERG would examine the effectiveness of the board including structures, skills and levels of accountability;
- Whilst it is for the Trust to determine the nature and scope of an external review of governance, it is important that local governors are aware of the areas this would cover and considerations to ensure best practice on an ongoing basis;
- A significant feature of the ERG is requirement for Local Governing Bodies and its Committees to have an independent 'governance professional'. It was advised that governors reflect on whether the level of support provided by the Clerk was appropriate, delivered a good understanding of legal duties and responsibilities and that there was a reasonable degree of independence, particularly, given that the Clerk was employed by the College as the PA to the Principal and Marketing Co-ordinator. Governors should reflect on how assurances are given that the Clerk is acting independently in relation to governance matters.

The Committee **noted** the information provided. The Committee suggested it would be useful to survey governors anonymously on the areas that would be covering as part of an External Governance Review in relation to governance support and the role of the Clerk.

9. Policy Reviews

(i) Fire Safety Policy

It was noted that only minor change was proposed to include the updated fire evacuation procedures. The Committee **approved** the policy as outlined.

(ii) Staff Protection from Harassment and Bullying Policy

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

(iii) Sustainability Policy

The Principal explained that the College's previous policy was not fit for purpose so a revised policy had been produced with more realistic aims that would enable an action plan to be devised. Whilst measures had been taken to make the building more energy efficient, such as the solar panels and power perfecter, there had been little by way of student or staff engagement. Attempts were ongoing to get student and staff involvement with a view to having tangible actions.

The Committee **approved** the policy with the minor changes as outlined.

(iv) Student Conduct Policy

The Principal explained that a number of years ago, governors requested a change to the Student Conduct Policy whereby, if a Police investigation had not been completed within a two-month period and students were not permitted at College until the outcome was known, disciplinary procedures should be followed. A current ongoing serious incident where the alleged victim and perpetrator were both students made this more complicated given the nature of the allegation. It was unlikely that the Police investigation would be concluded within the stipulated timeframe, but it did not seem appropriate to follow disciplinary procedures which might undermine the Police investigation and cause the alleged victim unnecessary distress. It was proposed that, in such cases, a risk assessment be undertaken to consider possible mitigation and exclusion for the remainder of the academic year to be the outcome if the risk to the individual, staff or students was not acceptable.

There was some discussion around the College's duty of care towards the alleged victim and perpetrator. The Committee **agreed** that the proposed changes were sensible for such circumstances and **approved** the revisions to the policy as proposed.

10. Health & Safety

(i) Health & Safety Update and Accident Report

The Clerk presented the health and safety update and accident report. The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

11. Closing Standing Items

(i) Risk Management:

The Principal explained that the risks that remained red or amber post-mitigation were shared for consideration by governors. The College had invested significantly in its site security including the introduction of the Site Security Officer who did a fantastic job. Concerns in relation to the security of the Sports Centre were outlined. The Principal advised that he had met with Freedom Leisure and lobbied the City Council and local councillors and action had been taken. A fence would be installed by Easter to demark a fire exit route from the Sports Centre without any trespass onto the College site.

(ii) Impact: The committee noted that their consideration of appeal panel recommendations ensured that College processes and procedures were as robust as possible. The discussion and challenge in relation to the disciplinary procedures and how these should be applied was to ensure that the process was fair to all involved.

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

(iv). Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 25th May 2022

The meeting finished at 7.00pm

Signed:.....

Matthew Adams (Chair)

Date:.....

FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 16th FEBRUARY 2022

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
FRC/16.02.22/6(i)	Consider positive action statements in recruitment advertising or an open day for those from ethnic minorities to promote a more diverse workforce.	EYS/DJB	May 2022	
FRC/16.02.22/8	Issue survey requesting feedback on the governance support provided by the Clerk.	JJP	February 2022	

ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
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 COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
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	✓

* Denotes changes.