

**Present:** Matthew Adams, James Adnett, Paul Cumming (remotely), Phil Douce, Tom Gregory and Ed Senior.  
(Paul Cumming gave notice that he needed to leave at 6.30pm).

**In Attendance:** 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:** Sam Wilson and Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal).

**3. Standing Items**

- (i) Paul Cumming declared his role as governor at the Chantry School given the school's membership of the Trust.
- (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: 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023

The minutes of the meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair. In relation to the action points, the Principal advised that he has attempted to seek clarity in relation to repayment of the Science project investment. Whilst arrangements have not yet been confirmed, discussions with the Trust CFO were encouraging in terms and suggest it would be unusual for interest to be charged. The Committee **noted** the information provided.

**5. Finance**

(i) Financial Update

The College/MAT Accountant presented the September 2023 update providing the following commentary:

- The 6.5% pay award has been authorised and would be backdated to September;
- Accrual and prepayments were still to be released so the update is misleading at this stage;
- The EBITDA is lower than the College has been accustomed to in recent years;
- Non-teaching staff costs are being reviewed in light of an indicative £85,000 overspend;
- Last academic year, the College received in-year bursary funding. It is not yet known if this would be received again this year, but if it is not, consideration will need to be given to reducing the amount allocated to students or reducing the number of students the College is able to support. Figures were shared with governors indicating that the College had been able to support more students this year compared to last year;
- The Cafeteria was forecasting a similar or possibly even better surplus this year compared to the £62,000 surplus achieved last year. It was noted that Cafeteria staffing costs had, however, increased;
- With more institutions joining the Trust, it is intended to consult governors on the format of the financial information they receive and what level of detail they would find useful.

In response to scrutiny, it was noted that although the EBITDA currently looks higher, this would reduce once prepayments were released.

The Committee **noted** the information provided. Whilst some feedback about the format and detail of financial information governors received was given, it was agreed that the Clerk would collate written feedback from governors and share this with the MAT/College Accountant.

(ii) Student Union Accounts

The Committee **reviewed** the accounts and recommended the Student Union accounts for approval.

(iii) Trust Cost/Benefit Analysis

The Principal explained that he recently presented to staff about the cost/benefit analysis of being in the Trust given the increase in MAT charges. A reminder about the rationale for academising and joining the Trust was shared and it had improved financial resilience. It was noted that the College's growth increased the amount of the MAT charge. As the Trust grows there are also increasing burdens on central staff and resources. The schools joining might also not immediately be in the position to contribute the full 5%. In terms of cost benefits, the College has saved around £150,000 on roles that previously existed which had not needed to be replaced e.g. a Finance Officer. College staff with a Trust role as part of their job also have part of their salary paid by the Trust. Not paying VAT also saved a not insignificant amount. The expertise of central staff and the opportunities created for sharing good practice and collaboration were also really beneficial. The informal benefits of getting to work with institutions like the Chantry School was also highlighted.

The Committee were keen to know if the Trust implemented targets and improvement plans that institutions joining would need to meet. They also commented on the potential risk of College staff with Trust roles having an increased workload as the Trust grows and perhaps needing to relinquish their role at College.

## 6. **Management and Strategic**

(i) Principal's Update

The Principal presented the key points of the update and highlighted the following points:

- The teaching and support staff pay award has been agreed nationally and will be implemented in November pay backdated to September. The award has only been partially funded leaving a shortfall and, whilst this was affordable for the College this year and staff deserve the increase, similar partially unfunded awards going forward was not sustainable;
- The City Council are still negotiating in respect of the donation of College land as part of the active travel corridor proposal;
- The College has its highest ever number of students currently, however, the target of 1800 students was not met which was disappointing given the record number of applications for places and the final number was likely to be 1720. The under-recruitment was the result of grading being returned to 2019 levels with many applicants not qualified to access College courses. Whilst the addition of another level 2 group mitigated this to a degree, the College failed to recruit as many year 1 students as anticipated. Given the positive student number this year, funding for next year will increase, however, the challenge is in the following year when it is likely that the student number will decline even if we recruit similar numbers as this year;
- Both of the autumn term Open Events were well attended and feedback was positive;
- The DfE commissioned a RAAC survey which was completed today. From speaking to the surveyors, a significant amount of concrete has been plastered over, so while they have not found any RAAC, it is likely that the College will be asked to expose areas of concrete in certain areas around College for further scrutiny;
- A document on AI has been produced to consider how this might be harnessed in teaching and learning and to identify actions for the College;

- It was positive that the transport providers had worked with the College so positively to respond to capacity concerns. There were still some issues in relation to reliability, but the bus company continues to work with the College to find solutions.

In response to challenge, the Principal said he would respond to the City Council to note governors concern over land ownership and liabilities. Governors also felt that the College should incur no associated costs in donating the land. James Adnett advised that he recently attended one of the College Open Events and was positive in his feedback, in particular, the knowledge of students in subject areas.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(ii) HR Update

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

- Planning in relation to teaching staff was accurate and the FTE has increased by 5 teachers. Given the under-recruitment, however, there was some overstaffing. The increase in the FTE was larger than anticipated and this was being reviewed;
- Staff absence has decreased in relation to both teaching and support staff;
- Governors requested to see some of the comments included in leaving questionnaires following slightly higher than usual staff turnover. The comments were largely positive and there were no identifiable trends in relation to the reason for leaving.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(iii) Cyber Security Report

The committee received the report on cyber security highlighting that the College had achieved both Cyber Essentials and Essentials Plus. If the College had failed to achieve these, it would have had a detrimental impact on funding. Recent penetration testing and a phishing simulation were successful. Data has been requested in relation to the phishing simulation and how this compared with one of the other colleges in the Trust.

In response to governor scrutiny, the Principal advised that the phishing simulation would be repeated at least annually. It was also noted that the College's data was backed up at Hereford Sixth Form College and via versa to mitigate against the risk of data being lost. The contents of the report were **noted**.

(iv) Filtering and Monitoring

The Principal advised that there is a more significant emphasis on filtering and monitoring in KCSIE 2023. Consequently, the College has reviewed its filtering and monitoring systems and procedures. The safeguarding governor was also involved in the review process.

There was some challenge in relation to the link to the DPIA which was incorrect and linked to an email communication suggesting that the Trust does not have one. It was stated that if using filtering and monitoring software then a DPIA was needed. The Principal agreed to follow up on this.

## 7. **Annual Reports**

(i) Equality Annual Report 2022-23 and Equality Policy

The Principal presented the Equality annual report and advised that a new Raising Standards Lead for Equality and Diversity had been appointed and has real enthusiasm and energy with awareness already raised around remembrance, Black History Month and Diwali

The Committee **noted** the contents of the annual report and **approved** the Equality Policy with the minor changes outlined in relation to personnel changes.

(ii) Exams Report

The Principal presented the Exams Report and commented on the fantastic work of the Exams Manager and her assistant. The smooth and efficient running of the external exams and internal mocks was impressive and meant that the College spent very little on late fees etc. The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(iii) Digital Strategy Policy

The Clerk presented the report produced by the Senior Leader for ILT Strategy which has updated the strategy for the current and next two year including expenditure. The Committee **approved** the updated Digital Strategy policy.

## 8. Property

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

- The Science extension is now complete with some work on reinstating the car park where the building compound has been still to be done. There are some snagging issues still in relation to the ventilation and heating which the contractors are continuing to address;
- Responding to fire safety remedial actions has become the strategic priority in addition to the need to respond to the shortage of study and social space and student toilets. The premises development plan completed, indicates that 50 additional toilets are needed for the number of students the College has, however, the best way of responding this would be to complete phase 3 of the Science extension, to relocate Graphics and reinstate toilets;
- Whilst Performing Art and Sport facilities are good, access to them via the changing rooms needs to be addressed.
- The ESFA has earmarked almost £1 million to the College in relation to building condition, however, this money would be devolved to the Trust. The Trust would then decide on the level of top slicing and how much would be allocated to the College.

The Committee **noted** the information provided. The Committee raised some concerns about the need for the principles of fairness in relation to devolved funds and a need for the Trust to determine and publish detail on how it would prioritise the allocation of funds. Governors said they would like guidance on what they should be holding College management to account for and how, and they would like to see MAT rules formulated and guidelines set in relation to compliance.

## 9. 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:

- There were two fire evacuations in the first half of the autumn term. This raised concerns in relation to the process for responding to students with mobility issues. A member of staff now has specific responsibility for agreeing Personalised Emergency Evacuations Procedures. The evacuation also identified the need for more staff to be trained in the use of the evac-chair and this would be arranged;
- The accident report for last year in its entirety and this year to date do not indicate any identifiable trends;
- The College has signed the DfE's Staff Wellbeing Charter and will share this with staff including guidance on out of hours electronic communication.

The contents of the report was noted.

- (ii) Educational Visits Co-ordinator Report  
The EVC report was **noted**.

**10. Closing Standing Items**

- (i) Risk Management: The Clerk explained that the risk register in its entirety had been split between the two committees based on the sections most relevant. The Principal provided an update on the risks that had been increased in terms of the post-mitigation score which were largely in relation to the need to respond to the lack of social and study space and the fire safety actions identified by the fire risk assessment. In relation to the risk of hacking of College IT systems, the Principal agreed to request feedback on whether the College has considered simulating how it would respond in the event of a cyber security breach.
- (ii) Impact: The committee's scrutiny of the estates issues around fire safety and donation of College land was noted.
- (iii) Any Urgent Business: No urgent business was identified.
- (iv) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024

The meeting finished at 7.05pm

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

Date:.....

**FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 15<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>
FRC/15.11.23/5(i)	Provide feedback on the format and level of detail that would be useful in the financial reporting that governors receive.	Governors	December 2023	
FRC/15.11.23/6(iv)	Check whether the College and Trust has a DPIA in relation to filtering and monitoring software.	EYS	ASAP	
FRC/15.11.23/8	Seek clarity from the Trust on how the allocation of devolved funding would be prioritised to meet estates and health and safety needs.	EYS	February 2024	
FRC/15.11.23/10(i)	Request feedback on whether the College has considered simulating how it would respond in the event of a cyber security breach.	EYS	February 2024	

**ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>
FRC/24.05.23/4(i)	Seek clarity about the arrangements for repaying the internal loan for the science centre and note governors concern should the proposal be for interest to be charged.	EYS	ASAP	

**ACTION POINTS COMPLETED**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>
FRC/24.05.23/5(ii)	Consider whether there are any identifiable themes in exit interviews as to why staff decide to leave.	EYS	November 2023	✓

\* Denotes changes.