

Present: Matthew Adams, James Adnett, Paul Cumming (remotely), Phil Douce, Ed Senior and Sam Wilson.
(Phil Douce gave notice that he needed to leave at 6.40pm).

In Attendance: Andrew Leyland (College/MAT Accountant) and Jo Payne (PA to the Principal/Clerk)

1. Apologies: Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal).

2. Standing Items

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

3. Minutes

(i) Minutes of the Finances & Resources Committee: 15th November 2023

The minutes of the meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair. The following update was shared in relation to the action points:

- In response to governor challenge, it was identified that there was a DPIA in relation to filtering and monitoring software, however, this was out of date. The Trust DPO subsequently reviewed and updated this;
- The Trust have drafted guidance in relation to the allocation of School Condition Allowance monies which indicate top slicing of 25% in the first year and 50% in subsequent years and the rationale in terms of Trust reserves was shared. The Trust Estates Co-ordinator would be in charge of any allocation process with the support of an external consultant. Whilst there would not be a bidding process for monies. The Committee requested from the Trust a plan of how academies could maintain and improve their facilities if money allocated to them is held centrally;
- The College is still awaiting clarity of the arrangements for repaying the investment in the Science Centre. The MAT Accountant advised that payments on the existing loan have been delayed until the Trust decides how reserves will be distributed. There was concern at the possibility of interest being charged when at the November LGB, the CEO said that interest would not be charged. Governors asked, if there is a Trust Finance Policy, whether this might be shared.

4. Finance

(i) Financial Update

The College/MAT Accountant presented an update on the latest financial reporting and providing the following commentary:

- The final instalment of £458,000 from the capital grant for the science centre has been received;
- Utility costs were £80,000 more expensive than budgeted and this assumes the same percentage uplift in April 2024;
- Building improvements have been capitalised due to the Trust due to receive School Condition Allowance;
- The catering surplus of £41,000 was against the budget of £40,000;
- Whilst it was hoped to reduce security from two to one personnel, this has been decided to be insufficient, therefore, the planned saving will not materialise;

- January payroll indicates costs will be £54,000 over budget, a reduction on the £63,000 forecast;
- TPS contributions have increased, but there has been confirmation that this will be fully funded;
- The core funding rate will increase by 1.89% for next year with some changes to other elements;
- The College is attempting to recover funds in relation to high need placements from Worcestershire Children First.

In response to challenge, the MAT Accountant advised that:

- The increase in TPS contributions would be fully funded April to August this year and for next academic year, but for subsequent years, this was dependent on the next spending review;
- The policy historically has been to cap fixed assets over £2,000.

The Committee noted the update provided.

(ii) Draft MAT Central Charges Policy

The Principal advised that the Trust adopts a zero based approach to MAT services – central costs are split between the academies. New institutions who join (with the exception of sixth form colleges) will pay 25% of its share of central costs in the first year, building up to 100% after three years. The Committee noted the policy.

5. Management and Strategic

(i) Principal's Update

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

- A Police investigation is ongoing into the assault which took place on Spetchley Road resulting in one of our students being seriously injured. SLT are continuing to be a presence at key times and a second Site Security Officer will be in post once a suitable candidate is identified;
- The recent health and safety audit was conducted poorly both in terms of the planning and preparation and in the reporting. The College replaced its local health and safety policy with the Trust policy as instructed, yet the auditor advised that the College should have local policy in place and the Trust policy was overarching. To ensure compliance until the Trust position is clarified, the College has reinstated local policy;
- Whilst Worcestershire Children First has paid the College its contribution for the high needs students placed with us, they have reported to the ESFA that none have been placed with the consequence that the College has not received £30,000 in funding this academic year. The error in reporting appears to have been repeated this year which will result in a similar loss of funding next year. The Director of the Council has been contacted and they are looking into the matter;
- College land is not now required for the bridleway as the approval needed does not permit this to be completed within the expected timeframe;
- Although the current student number is the highest on record, a smaller first year intake will result in fewer progressing to year 2. Even if the College recruits a similar sized cohort next year, numbers are likely to be smaller with a subsequent impact on funding in the following academic year. Planning is ongoing to look at savings that can be made for next year to better prepare for a likely reduction in funding in the following academic year.

In response to challenge, the following was noted:

- The Police have been responsive to recent request from the College and are trying to be more of a presence at County Hall and on Spetchley Road in relation to concerns about road safety;

- As the Trust is the duty holder, the Committee were in favour of a deficit audit model in that the Trust should dictate what the College should have to meet its duty of care and to be compliance and audits should check that arrangements are robust. There was concern that the lack of clarity around policy potentially exposed the College to risk.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and their concern that the Trust was too focused on its growth at the expense of clarifying matters around compliance.

(ii) Draft Prevent Risk Assessment

The Principal advised that the College did already have a Prevent risk assessment, but has moved to adopting the DfE/ESFA model template.

The Clerk was asked for an update on the appointment of a new designated safeguarding link governor. All avenues were continuing to be followed, however, Clerks across the Trust reported similar issues in identifying suitable individuals willing to take on governance roles.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(iii) Policy on Managing Violence and Aggression at Work

The health and safety audit identified that the College should have a policy in relation to managing violence and aggression at work. In producing this policy document, the College has looked to identify instances when colleagues might encounter possible aggression or violence and outlined mitigating actions that would make the risk acceptable.

The Committee **approved** the policy and challenged the College with considering whether risk to students from violence or aggressions had been considered in a similar way.

6. **Employment**

The Committee **received** the HR update noting the statutory equality data that needs to be published on the website.

7. **Property/Resources**

Estates Vision Statement

The Principal advised that as part of what the Trust were looking to do in relation to allocating school condition monies, it was requested that an estates vision was produced. The vision aims to identify projects that are mission critical, e.g. fire resistance measures and increasing the number of toilets as opposed to the 'nice to have' projects. In terms of adding timescales for the works, the Committee noted the difficulty in doing this without knowing what funds it would be allocated and what might be possible.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

8. **Policy Reviews**

Health and Safety Policy

Whilst the College awaits clarity about the Trust Health and Safety Policy, the College has reinstated its local policy and attempted to respond to the points identified in the audit. The policy was approved with the changes as outlined.

Fire Safety Policy

The policy was approved noting the updated fire evacuation procedures.

Student Conduct Policy

The policy was approved without change following a recent review to reflect the College being a non-smoking/vaping site.

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:

- A number of policies have been introduced in response to the health and safety recommendations and, as part of this, department areas were being asked to revisit risk assessments around working practice and to share these so they were stored centrally;
- There were no identifiable trends in the accidents reported.

The contents of the report was noted.

10. Closing Standing Items

(i) Risk Management: The risk register would be reviewed and shared with the Local Governing Body.

(ii) Impact: The committee’s scrutiny of health and safety, student safety and challenging how the Trust would fairly allocate funds was noted.

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

(iv). Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 21st February 2024

The meeting finished at 6.41pm

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

Date:.....

FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 21st FEBRUARY 2024

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
FRC/21.02.24/3(i)	Request from the Trust a plan of how academies could maintain and improve their facilities if money allocated to them is held centrally.	EYS/JJP	March 2024	
FRC/21.02.24/3(i)	Request from the Trust a copy of its Finance Policy.	EYS/JJP	March 2024	
FRC/21.02.24/5(iii)	Review whether risk to students of violence or aggression at College has been risk assessed and mitigations identified.	EYS	ASAP	

ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
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 COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
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/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	✓

* Denotes changes.