WORCESTER SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee
Meeting held on Wednesday, 12th May 2025 at *5.37 pm*

Present: Matthew Adams, James Adnett, Tom Gregory, Chantal Pottage and Ed Senior.
In Attendance: Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal) and Jo Payne (Clerk to the Local Governing Body)

1. Apologies: Sam Wilson and Andrew Leyland (MAT/College Accountant)

2. Standing Items

(i) There were no declarations of interest relevant to the agenda.
(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: 12th February 2025
The minutes of the meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Finance

(i) Financial update including three-year financial forecast
The Principal presented the March 2025 update produced by the Trust in the absence of the MAT/College Accountant, and provided the following commentary:

- The current position is an EBITDA of £840,000 which is almost £400,000 greater than when the budget was set. This is positive given concerns about the financial landscape being more challenging next year albeit this the College is in a strong position with a forecast EBITDA of £254,000;
- The forecast is based on a 3% pay award, however, the School Teacher's Review Body has recommended 4%. If implemented, the expectation is that the cost of any pay award above the 2.8% increase to core funding would need to be achieved through efficiency savings;
- Next year, the budget is based on an increase of £400,000 for additional staffing. This is the result of the timetable being managed very efficiently this year, and increase in the average class size and the possibility that the College will both recruit and retain more students;
- Academic departments capitation will increase by 1%;
- IT spend has been helped as £165,000 has been brought forward into the current academic year;
- The budget includes a 3.5% increase in estates costs and a 7% increase in cleaning and security;
- Whilst the bursary allocations have not yet been published, the College has taken a small number of measures to ensure that financial support can still be offered to as many students as possible. It is also likely that Worcestershire County Council will increase the cost of the bus pass.

In response to challenge, the following points were noted:

- With the College's success in retaining more students in-year, there was a risk that they might achieve outcomes which impact value added, however, the importance of young people achieving a qualification was really important compared to the alternative;
- Predictions around student numbers for the next academic year were used when planning staff recruitment. Some overstaffing in departments for next year will hopefully mean that the College could manage any additional growth in the following year without the same level of additional staffing resource;

- Whilst there is flexibility in terms of part-time staff being on a range, as the College has been in a stronger position financially, there has been more willingness to agree to staff being full-time. It is also hoped to continue to extend the enrichment offering for as long as it remains affordable;
- Next year's budget is based on the College having approximately 45 additional students, however, estimated student numbers for the subsequent two years becomes harder;
- There is no external penalty for having a large surplus.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and **recommended** the budget for approval.

5. Management and Strategic

(i) Principal's Update Report

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

- The College's condition rating has improved, the consequence of which is that it will be allocated less School Condition Allowance than last year. The Trust had approved the College's plans to spend its SCA this summer based on the amount received last year which would involve spending more of the College's allocation than the 50% post-MAT charge;
- The College has committed to completion of the fire safety works and the renovation of four toilets from SCA monies. Decisions also need to be made in relation to the replacement of the photovoltaic panels on the roof which are no longer working at a cost of approximately £80,000 and work to make the cafeteria kitchen and servery a more pleasant working environment through the installation of suitable extraction and ventilation.

In response to challenge, the following points were noted;

- The funding allocation for 2025-26 is lagged meaning that this year's student number determines next year's funding;
- The Advanced Maths premium provides funding for students on Maths and Further Maths above a baseline determined by enrolments between 2019 and 2021. Core Maths and high value courses also attract additional funding as do English and Maths GCSE resits;
- The Trust has two years to spend the SCA allocations awarded to its academies so as long as it is spent across the Trust, there will be no clawback;
- Consideration will be given as to whether the four new toilets will all be designated for female use given that there are queues to use female toilets throughout the day. In relation to the Supreme Court ruling, whilst it is clear that gender specific toilets are required for staff purposes, the guidance for students it less clear. It was suggested that the EHRC will issue clearer guidance;
- The College energy supplier is West Midlands Energy and the College had not experience the significant increase in costs that had been expected at one time;
- No decision has yet been communicated following the College's submission of a proposal to create a new Art block to increase classroom capacity and create more toilet facilities back in February. The Committee requested clarification from the Trust around its decision making criteria and process and the indicative timescales so that the College could prepare accordingly;
- The Committee felt that sister Colleges subsidising train travel from Worcester to Hereford or KEDST was non-collegiate and it seemed a poor use of Trust funds to spend money transporting students by train when there is a Trust College in Worcester. The Committee asked that this be raised.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(ii) HR Update

The Principal presented the HR update report and invited questions. In response to challenge, the following was noted:

- 42% of the College's staff are aged over 50 and it was asked whether this was a concern. Whilst it was a concern that a number of staff in this age category had significant roles at College, there were a number of strong colleagues who it could be envisioned stepping into more senior roles;
- The Principal will discuss with the HR Manager some of the suggestions about benchmarking and classifications in the equality monitoring data which it was felt would make it easier to interpret and analyse.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(iii) Staff Satisfaction

The Vice Principal presented the overall findings of the spring term staff satisfaction survey and raised the following points:

- The response rate was higher than the autumn term survey and responses were more positive almost across the board, however, it was noted that support staff were more positive than academic staff;
- 96% of respondents said the College is a good place to work, with the same area of focus around workload and communication coming through as receiving less positive responses than other questions;
- Time was devoted at the more recent staff meeting to talk through the responses.

In response to challenge the following was noted:

- The approach of convening working parties to consult on the College calendar, for example, proved popular and is something that senior leaders will look to use again when considering workload etc;
- The response rate was 61% of the total staff number and responses were anonymous with the exception of asking whether an individual was a member of academic or support staff;
- The same questions are used across the Trust so there will be opportunity for benchmarking and this will be shared with governors in due course;
- The Committee asked whether there could be more subjective questions to allow respondents to expand where they have been positive rather than only when they did not agree with a statement.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and commented that the results were excellent.

6. Policy Reviews

(i) Fees and Charging

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

7. Annual Reports

(i) Staff Development

The Vice Principal provided an overview of the staff development report as prepared by the ECT & Staff Development Lead and noted the following:

- Staff training had been directly linked to the College's teaching and learning strategy and the areas of focus identified at departmental level;
- The teaching and learning are overseen by the Teaching and Learning Lead who is supported by six Raising Standards Leads;

- In the summer, there will be distinct training for those who teach A Levels and those who teach Applied subjects to acknowledge the differences between them. A Raising Standards Lead to specifically support applied colleagues with teaching and learning and, in particular, strategies to make clear behavioural expectations has been appointed;
- Three colleagues have taken on associate senior leader roles this year which has been a success and the approach, now that it is financially possible to do so, it to create progression opportunities for colleagues.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

(ii) Disciplinary
The Principal presented the disciplinary report which records the number and nature of offences that have resulted in a sanction from an oral warning confirmed in writing through to exclusion. The increase in the number of oral warnings was noted and this was attributed to the College's approach of trying harder to tackle low level behaviour such as policing the bus stop, car park and toilets. Despite the increase in these recorded incidents, the general feeling was that the behaviour of students was better this year.

The Principal advised of the intention to include strategies outside of formal sanctions that might be used to address non-attendance or non-completion of work etc such as contracts and attendance reports.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

(iii) GDPR
The contents of the report were **noted**.

8. Health and Safety

The latest health and safety update was provided and the following was noted:

- An unplanned evacuation was triggered by a contractor working on the Sports Centre alarm system unaware that the College's Dance Studio alarm was linked to the College. The evacuation did raise a number of issues which the College is looking to address, e.g. members of the senior leadership team being trained in interpreting the fire panel and resetting the alarm if it was a false alarm;
- As the College fire alarm system is still relatively new, we have requested that contractors return to address concerns in any areas where the alarm was difficult to hear;
- The College has introduced a policy on administering medication to include over the counter medication. Parental consent will be sought prior to any medication being administered;
- The latest accident figures were shared with no identifiable trends.

The Committee wished the clarify both that the storage of medication would be secure and that students with medical needs or mobility issues do have a personal emergency evacuation plan. The Principal confirmed both to be the case and procedures around PEEPs were more robust than they had been previously. The Committee **noted** the information provided.

9. Closing Standing Items

(i) Risk Management: Consideration will be given in relation to any associated risk with the storage of medication.
(ii) Impact: The Committee noted its scrutiny of MAT decisions in relation to SCA and travel which were to ensure that monies are spent in the best interests of students.

(iii) Any Urgent Business: No urgent business was identified.
(iv). Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 12th November 2025.

The meeting finished at 7.14pm

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

FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 12TH MAY 2025

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
F&R/12.05.25/5(i)	Request clarification from the Trust around its decision making criteria, process and the indicative timescales re the allocation of central SCA funds.	EYS/JJP	ASAP	
F&R/12.05.25/5(i)	Raise governors' concerns about the use of Trust funds to subsidise travel from Worcester to HSFC/KEDST.	JJP	ASAP	

ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
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