

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee  
held remotely on Monday 22 March 2021**

**Present: -** Mervyn Jones (Chair)  
Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
Peta Darnley  
Clive Hodgeman  
Scott Rolfe

**In attendance: -** Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)  
Tim Williams (Finance Director)

The meeting was held remotely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was quorate as there were five Members present.

- 1. Apologies for Absence**  
Apologies were received from Professor Robin Baker.
- 2. Declaration of Interests**  
There were no declarations of interests.
- 3. Minutes of the Last Meeting**  
Governors agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes of the last meeting, including the confidential minutes, held on 18 January 2021 as a true record.

**Matters arising from the Minutes**

- I. The COVID-19 pandemic had been added to the risk register.
- II. It was agreed that investments, accommodation and Artist Blacksmithing were being addressed as part of the College's strategy and this action did not need to be carried forward.
- III. The revised financial regulations will incorporate levels of delegated authority and if this was the net or gross level of costs. **ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR**

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

- 4. Marketing and Recruitment Update [A confidential minute was recorded]**
- 5. Finance Report**
  - I. Management Accounts to 31 January 2021 showed that the College's financial health had improved from 'requires improvement' to 'good'. This has been generated by an improvement in the income and expenditure recognising £156K of in-year ESFA funding for increased growth in the 16-18 age category. Headline data compared to budget and forecast showed some fluctuation in costs.
  - II. ESFA's budget timetable requires colleges to return a College Financial Forecast Return (CFFR) by the end of July signed by the Principal as the accounting officer. This replaces the usual financial plan and Integrated Financial Model for Colleges (IFMC). The return will require colleges to provide the 2021/22 budget and monthly

cashflow forecasts. The Finance Director highlighted risks which could be included in the budget. There are reduced HE applications and the nomination agreement costs for Station Approach accommodation in the event that 89 rooms are not allocated to students.

- III. The FE Commissioner's letter dated February 2021 and revised benchmarks were noted. The FE Commissioner reports on different benchmarks to the ESFA noting that the Commissioner's role is to work with colleges who have inadequate finance or quality.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the management accounts to 31 January 2021
- To note the budget timetable and ESFA requirements for 2021/22
- To note the FE Commissioner letter and revised benchmarks

## 6. Staff Pay Award [A confidential minute was recorded]

## 7. Premises and Accommodation

- I. The Station Approach written update was noted.
- II. The ESFA funded capital project to replace the boiler at Folly Lane had been completed to timescale.
- III. The Principal updated Governors that initial contact had been made with companies to prepare a 5-year estates strategy. The brief is challenging to ensure that the estates strategy is useful whilst it meets ESFA requirements.

The Principal will liaise with Herefordshire Council regarding CRC footprint and the lease including potential interim use of some additional space. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

- IV. The College is committed to improving environmental sustainability by setting a carbon neutral strategy and target. Sustainability and the environment are distinct features for the College. An action plan showed progress to date against actions outlined in the Climate Commission Roadmap for FE colleges. There was a question if there are any benchmarks; ESFA are collating voluntary data which will provide comparable data. The College has a Sustainability Group (comprising of staff and students). A proposal will be presented to the Board in July requesting the Board's commitment.
- V. The Health and Safety Report was noted with no major concerns raised.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the premises and accommodation reports
- The Principal, Finance Director, Chair and Clive Hodgeman would discuss proposals to prepare an Estates Strategy once further details are received from consultants. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**
- To note the Health and Safety Report

## 8. Policies

Policies were presented for comments requesting recommendations to the Board to approve with the exception of the Dignity at Work Policy which was presented for approval.

There was a request to define when an informal stage would progress to a formal stage and to what extent evidence from the informal stage could be used in the formal process within the Disciplinary Procedure for Staff and the Grievance Procedure for Staff. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

There was a request to include definitions of 'what bullying is not' and 'what gross misconduct is not' in the Dignity and Work Policy. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

The Committee agreed: -

- To recommend the Board approve the Disciplinary Procedure for Staff and the Grievance Procedure for Staff subject to points raised which would be sent to the Chair to approve changes by Chair's action
- To approve the Dignity at Work Policy

**9. Any other business**  
There were no items.

**10. Date and time of next meeting**  
The next meeting was arranged for Monday 28 June 2021 commencing at 5.00 pm.

**Signed as a true record**

Chair ..... Date .....