

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
held remotely on Monday 28 June 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

Mervyn Jones declared an interest regarding appointment of Chair.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Governors agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes of the last meeting, including the confidential minute, held on 22 March 2021 as a true record.

Matters arising from the Minutes

- I. The limit for levels of delegated authority outlined in the financial regulations would be based on the gross value of costs in future.
- II. Progress towards including details of informal and formal levels within the Disciplinary Procedure and Grievance Procedure Policies would be checked. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Finance Report

- I. Management Accounts to 31 May 2021 showed a small improvement in the College's position. ESFA financial indicators calculated the College's financial health as outstanding.; however, there is a deficit of £473k with some additional variances anticipated in June management accounts. The reason for additional HE tuition fees income was requested which had been calculated based on student withdrawal dates and extensions this year. There is a contingency until confirmation is provided following the Examination Boards. Retention is good noting staff support, extended term times and workshops remaining open during Easter had maintained retention; this would be publicised. OfS have a new quality measure which will incorporate retention.

A Governor requested a breakdown of capital costs in future to enable Governors to understand if these were a legacy of works, budgeted or unbudgeted maintenance or capital projects. The Finance Director stated that the recent ESFA capital grant was

the first it had received for a number of years. There is a small automatic OfS capital grant received each year, but that is potentially going to be phased out. ESFA had started making capital grants available to the sector, but were either very specific, for example to support T-levels or were grants for very large projects.

- II. Applications 2021 showed FE recruitment is strong and ahead of budget. HE recruitment is below budget with a conservative view taken in the budget this year.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the management accounts to 31 May 2021 requesting the accounts refers to ESFA Financial Health criteria **ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR**
- To note the applications

5. Marketing Report [A confidential minute was recorded]

6. Budget 2021/22 and Financial Forecast

The Finance Director explained that the budget will be submitted to ESFA in the detailed College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) spread sheets. [Details were provided in the confidential minute]

7. Stronger Towns Partnership Bid

The Principal reported that the Government Town Investment Plan had been accepted; however, the full grant had not been approved. The next step would require completion of the business case and integrity of the skills foundry bid; this would need to be completed within two months. The College is working with collaborative partners on bids.

Scott Rolfe declared an interest that he is involved in another bid submitted to the Government Town Investment Plan.

8. Premises and Accommodation

Station Approach handover has been confirmed at the end of August 2021 for occupancy in September. There are good levels of interest for accommodation which is also being offered to Foundation students. An onsite meeting has been arranged with the Chief Executive at Herefordshire Council, NMITE, Engie and HCA. There was a question about the communal area fitout and if this had been resolved with confirmation that this is being addressed with CityHeart.

The Principal is discussing preparing a 5-year estates strategy with consultants and would discuss progress separately with Clive Hodgeman. Discussions are ongoing with Herefordshire Council regarding CRC to extend the lease to include the Hive (currently housing Artist Blacksmiths) and the chapel wing. This will provide music and theatre facilities in addition to relocating Foundation Diploma enabling collaboration between Foundation and HE whilst freeing up space for increased FE students. There will be some additional maintenance costs. There has been discussion regarding Herefordshire Council's plans for CRC and extending the lease beyond 2023. Stronger Towns bids may require additional space at CRC which will be discussed by the Committee in September **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the premises and accommodation reports

9. Health and Safety

- I. The Health and Safety Policy Statement had been revised with changes highlighted. The health and safety report highlighted that covid-19 has been a major focus to ensure the continuing health and safety of all staff and students on and off site. Security at Folly Lane is being reviewed with plans for a staff member at the front when the foyer is open for exhibitions. There have not been any RIDDOR accidents with accidents noted. Several annual targets have not been achieved due to prioritisation to ensure measures were in place to manage covid-19. Targets will be addressed during the summer before the new term begins. The Health and Safety Designated Governor will be invited to the Health and Safety Committee. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**
- II. Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference were presented for approval.

The Committee agreed: -

- To recommend the Board approve the Health and Safety Policy Statement with a grammatical error amended in point 9
- To note the Health and Safety Report
- To approve the Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference

10. Cyber Security

The Chair updated Governors that cyber security had been discussed by college chairs in the West Midlands which had affected several colleges. The Finance Director and Network Manager have discussed additional measures to protect against cyber-attacks including updating staff training, introducing multi-factor access control and arranging specific insurance. Cyber security has been added to the risk register.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note actions to protect the College from cyber-attacks

11. Policies

The sick pay policy, including sickness and lateness, had been separated from the capability policy and was a distinct policy.

The redundancy policy had been simplified which follows the ACAS procedures. A minor change was agreed to the first bullet point in the introduction. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL.**

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the sickness policy
- To approve the Redundancy Policy

12. Annual item for Committee

The Committee agreed: -

- To appoint Mervyn Jones as Chair for 2021/22
- The Committee self assessed its performance concluding that it was effective and adequately met the requirements of its terms of reference. The Clerk reminded Governors that the Search and

Governance Committee is seeking to appoint a Governor who is an accountant who would also become a member of the F&GP Committee. A Governor had some contacts who could be approached **ACTION: CLERK**

- No changes were required to the terms of reference

13. Any other business

The Principal had submitted a bid to a community renewal fund for £183k which did not require matched funding. This was to fund a sustainability festival and touring exhibition 'H.Innovate. HCA staff time had been costed in the bid. Appreciation was recorded to Peta Darnley for her contribution to prepare the bid. It has been selected to progress to the next stage. A Governor proposed ensuring appropriate governance processes are established for events involving significant funding from third parties, such as health and safety implications.

14. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Monday 22 November 2021 commencing at 5.00 pm. An additional meeting would be arranged in September **ACTION: CLERK**