

Minutes of the Finance & Resources committee meeting FRC23.3 held by videoconference on Thursday 24 April 2024, at Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge

Present: Sophie Harrison (committee Chair), Gerry Bolton, Yolanda Botham (Principal), Alex Curnow, and Abby Futter

In attendance: Charlotte Hemmins (Finance Director), Charlotte Muir (HR Manager – part meeting)

Clerk: Anne-Marie Diaper

Ref	Actions:
<p>FRC23.3.1 Apologies for absence None.</p>	
<p>FRC23.3.2 Declarations of Interest None.</p>	
<p>FRC23.3.3 Request for any other business None.</p>	
<p>FRC23.3.4 Minutes of FRC23.2 held on Thursday 1 February 2024 The committee agreed the minutes of the last meeting as a true and accurate record.</p>	
<p>FRC23.3.5 Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda None.</p>	
<p>FRC23.3.6 HR termly report, inc update on performance against KPIs The HR Manager presented her report which covered the dates September 2023 to March 2024. She referred to staff turnover, with some insight into recruitment and some detail about where within College there was new/additional resource. She shared sickness figures, and one Governor asked a question about a member of staff on long term sick leave who had left the College's employment. The meeting heard about HR focus group sessions that had been set up following the staff survey that allowed a further opportunity for staff to engage with HR and Unions. Governors agreed that seemed another good opportunity for staff engagement.</p>	

With an update on training including GDPR and information about a 'homeworking' review, the HR Manager alerted the committee to the most recent positive gender pay gap report on the College website.

The committee thanked the HR Manager for a well-structured report.

Ref

Actions:

FRC23.3.7

Committee review of key policies

Disciplinary policy. This was presented for the committee to consider for Board approval. This policy had been considerably rewritten in 2021 so now was an opportunity to review it with no changes recommended by the College.

A Governor commented that the policy and framework was comprehensive. He had several queries; one about serious/gross misconduct and how this is handled where it is unlikely to lead to dismissal. Managers drew the committee's attention to the flowchart commenting that the matter may go to final written warning, following investigation and hearing. The same Governor had another query about reviewing a disciplinary matter where a warning had already been given, asking about how the policy is applied in practice in such cases. There was a short explanation and discussion. Discussion moved to section 6.6 relating to general underperformance. Misconduct requires College to consider matters on a case-by-case basis.

Another Governor asked if any equality impact assessments had been carried out on policies. This was confirmed, and that all relevant policies are discussed with JUMCC. The committee suggested something be added to the policy on this. The HR Manager suggested that impact assessment sheets would be added to all new or reviewed policies, going forward.

The committee agreed to recommend the Disciplinary policy for Board approval. Board

Staff Code of Conduct. This was presented for the committee to consider for Board approval. This applied to all College staff, who were required to confirm that they have read it. Amendments/updates to the code were clearly marked for Governors to see. There had been new duty on sexual harassment in workplace, and this code had been discussed with JUMCC.

One Governor commented that the social networking sites referenced on page 5 may not be the ones most used/accessed by staff today and asked that the list is updated before taking to Board for approval.

Subject to the above, the committee agreed to recommend the Staff Code of Conduct for Board approval. Board

Maternity and Adoption leave policy. This was for committee approval. No changes were recommended to this policy which was actively in use at College.

With no comments the committee was content to approve the Maternity and Adoption leave policy.

Sickness Absence policy. This was for committee approval. This policy was reviewed significantly at the last opportunity. The HR Manager commented that the policy was comprehensive.

The committee agreed to approve the Sickness Absence policy as presented.

The committee thanked the HR Manager, and she left the meeting at 10.31am.

FRC23.3.8 Estates & Property, including on health and safety

The FD presented her paper which included an update on work taken place to date: some refurbishments to the sports centre reception, LRC, G and D block, staff and student toilets, further outdoor seating/canopy for students, new secure staff cycle parking, and additional outside seating area for the staff room, much of which would be completed in the summer.

She provided an update on CIF bids the results of which were not expected until May, however, the College was very pleased to report two successful bids. A much needed water project would require match funding (she explained how much) but the work would make significant improvements to the College infrastructure. The second bid would support College security and safeguarding for students, especially in view of the progress with the Cambridge South Station project. This project for a single point of entry/reception was still in design stage, likely to be a more disruptive 12-month project, involving reviewing car parking, cycle parking, and office space, and so was a focus for the leadership team.

A Governor asked a question about access to the site via the Food Centre currently, and the FD said this would be factored into design. With a brief update on health and safety also included in the paper, the committee thanked the FD for the report.

FRC23.3.9 Management accounts March 2024

The FD The management accounts presented no significant changes since the last report. College was continuing to run ahead of budget. College was considering using contingency to fund projects in train. Whilst College was continuing to obtain quotes, the Estates team had

Ref

Actions:

requested an additional sum for works, so it was possible that some capital work would be brought forward to this year.

Governors agreed that the College's current financial position was strong, and endorsed the strategy of using up contingency on important works.

FRC23.3.10 Update on factors affecting the financial forecast

The FD presented her regular update which included increases in funding allocation (increase to student funding, national base rate increase, student disadvantage, maths premium, and TPS). She gave a verbal update on pay negotiations. There was no update for the current year for Colleges on NJC terms, and also no indications of schoolteachers' negotiations either, so College was awaiting further information. Pay costs set out were based on full establishment recognising student numbers, with an assumed pay award for next year. It was possible that there could be some industrial action around pay awards so a bigger pay bill could result for the College than currently expected.

On draft budget, high level draft budget for 2024/25 was provided, with no major changes to the last report. On staffing, posts needed were already being advertised, and a new applications system (courses) was being implemented.

On income, there was a larger high needs allocation (now part of core ESFA contract), top up high needs funding from LA additionally. Going forward she explained a 'banded' system rather than individual costed plan and College would keep an eye on that going into next year.

The FD explained non-pay budget lines, these included inflation (some inflationary drag so assumed 4% and 6% for exam fees).

With utility costs now revised slight increase going forward, Estates and CIF bids had already been discussed earlier in the meeting.

FRC23.3.11 First draft of budget for 2024/25

This paper included two versions of budget for the College as a standalone College, and the College as part of MAT. The FD explained that the financial outlook for the College alone was tight financially, but not unmanageable. For the College in academy position there were no rates or VAT payable, so slightly more favourable financially. No allowance had been made for payment of MAT central costs. There could be additional savings achievable, but these were not specifically mentioned at this point.

Ref**Actions:**

The FRC Chair asked for an overview of what the process looked like for prioritising any new budget requests from leadership team members. The Principal commented that requests are linked to strategy and the College operating plan as the baseline. All budget requests were discussed at leadership team and were minuted.

FRC23.3.12 Review risks

The committee received the paper drafted by the Clerk. A new GDPR risk was noted and the committee asked how this was arrived at. This related to a couple of data breaches, pertaining to emails, but which were not reportable to the ICO. Those members of staff responsible for the breaches had been asked to do GDPR refresher training early, and College was trialling new software (Zivver), which scans emails before sending and offers options for senders. The Audit committee had been informed.

FRC23.3.13 Any other business

None.

FRC23.3.12 Date of next meeting

FRC23.4 Wednesday 19 June 2024.