



## MINUTES

### of the meeting of the Finance and Employment Committee held remotely on Wednesday 24 March 2021

Present: - James Caird (Chair)  
Igor Andronov  
Alan Layng  
David Williams (Principal)

In Attendance: - Edward Gwillim (Director of Finance)  
Debra Baldwin (Director of Personnel)  
Jo Ricketts (Deputy Principal)  
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Corporation)  
Julia Cotton (Governor)

The meeting was quorate as four Members were present. The Chair welcomed Julia Cotton as an observer.

- |   | <b>Action</b> |
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| <p>1. <b>Apologies for Absence</b><br/>No apologies.</p>  |               |
| <p>2. <b>Declaration of Interests</b><br/>No declarations of interest.</p>  |               |
| <p>3. <b>Minutes of the last Meeting</b><br/>It was agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020 as a true and accurate record. A Governor asked for clarification of the RIDDOR accidents; these had been outlined in the Annual Health and Safety Report 2019/20 which had been presented at the last meeting and the December Board meeting.</p> <p>There were no matters arising with the exception to identify training for staff working from home. A Smartlog pilot is being trialled before this is made available to staff.</p> |               |
| <p>4. <b>Employment Reports</b><br/>The Director of Personnel presented the following reports.</p> <p>I. Staff Report: Staff development had been held successfully online which would continue to be available online in future in addition to some face to face training. First aid training and a Principal's briefing will be held at each campus. There was a question about progress of the personnel action plan; this was presented annually and discussed at the last meeting. During the lockdown</p>   |               |

period there has been a combination of staff working in College and from home. Staff have been paid in line with their contracts of employment and arrangements. Staff are regularly updated on Government guidelines. Risk assessments have been embedded for clinically extremely vulnerable staff returning to College in April; there are approximately ten CEV staff throughout the College. There was a question about staff conducting LFTs at home and if staff are encouraged to complete these. Staff are being reminded to complete LFTs and to record these on the NHS website and Smartlog; completion of LFTs are not compulsory.

- II. Health and Safety Report: There were 35 incidents but no RIDDOR accidents during the period August to November 2020; a decrease compared to the same period in the previous year. Reports were provided separately for Herefordshire and Ludlow and North Shropshire. The category 'non-accident' covers some accidents which occurred off-site with individuals requesting help at College. More accidents had occurred in animal care and sports at NSC, the nursery, computing and ICT at HLC. There was a question about the nature of accidents in computing and ICT. The Health and Safety Advisor had reviewed these which included a trip over a wire and some keyboards falling off a desk. Near misses are low which suggested that these are not all being reported which would provide a trend analysis to mitigate accidents; the Health and Safety Advisors are reviewing this. A fire drill at Hereford Campus was rearranged to take place in April when more staff and students will be on campus; however, there had been an unplanned evacuation late one afternoon when there were very few students in College. Details of statutory testing was noted. CMT will instigate COVID-19 walks at each campus to check compliance. Annual health and safety walks were cancelled but subsequently rearranged; Julia Cotton asked if it would be possible to accompany CMT on one of the walks which was agreed. The Health and Safety Advisors will conduct ad hoc safety audits in addition.
- III. RSM Internal Auditor's Health and Safety Audit: The auditors gave an overall opinion that the Board can take reasonable assurance in systems. The audit had been completed remotely with seven recommendations which will be addressed. A central record of risk assessments will be created, these are currently held by departments. Additional training will be delivered to managers to ensure processes are embedded. The Health and Safety Policy Statement would be presented to the Board for adoption and approval.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the reports

**5. Health and Safety Committee minutes**

The minutes were noted with confirmation that there were several outstanding actions from previous meetings which are being addressed.

**6. Finance Reports**

The Director of Finance presented the following reports.

- I. Management accounts to 28 February 2021: The I&E showed the operating surplus was £1.2M better than budget; however, £916K maintenance funds have been received YTD but the matched expenditure will be incurred later in the year. ESFA lagged funding methodology for 16-19 funding means that FY21 funding is secure and it has been confirmed by the ESFA that this funding stream will increase next year. Apprenticeship income has been reported cautiously. The Adult Education Budget (AEB) is under performing assuming c£300K clawback. HE contracts with Worcester University and HCA are below budget. Fewer adult learners has reduced tuition fees income. Other grants showed favourable variances in several areas. Income from the farms is relatively “spikey” based on farm activity; it is anticipated to be to budget. There are shortfalls in income in several cost centres which have been impacted by COVID-19. These included the nurseries (which have remained open during lockdown) and catering. The favourable variance in payroll is resultant from restructuring and overall pay costs are anticipated to be substantially below budget for the year. Non-pay expenses are below budget YTD but are expected to be over budget (as a result of the increased maintenance costs discussed above) for the year. Overall it is anticipated that the College will achieve a breakeven year-end position. The balance sheet is strong excluding the pension deficit.

A Governor asked if the maintenance grant of £945K would be spent within the stipulated project time limit of the end of March; the College applied for an extension to the end of September which ESFA endorsed.

A question followed about the level of confidence in the forecast following seven months of the year. A prudent approach had been taken this year assuming a wider variance than normal. This was relatively secure.

The impact of apprenticeship and AEB income on funding for 2021/22 was raised. These are calculated in-year noting that apprenticeship income had declined following implementation of apprenticeship frameworks. A digital apprenticeship service is being rolled out with increased MIS staff to facilitate this. It is more challenging to predict student numbers following the pandemic and economic downturn. Centre assessed grades also create some uncertainties on enrolments. The cashflow to January 2022 included clawback of AEB which was likely to reduce

by c£200K. Cashflows for next year reflect the current year with positive cash days in hand; however, this must be balanced against the College being unable to generate substantial additional cash.

- II. Significant capital projects were reported at the Special Board Meeting in March 2021 when the Board approved bids for submission to ESFA.

A summary of capital projects at the College included upgrading the toilets and showers near the café at Holme Lacy. Throughout the College works include replacing CCTV, boilers and the phone system. At Hereford a new transformer had been installed and the membrane behind the rust panels has perished and will be replaced. Windows at Ludlow College will be painted.

A Governor enquired if there was a long-term maintenance plan noting that there are priority maintenance projects but not a long-term comprehensive plan. It was agreed 'shovel ready' capital projects should be prepared, including different amounts of spend, which could be used to apply for future capital grants applications.

E Gwillim

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the summary of income and expenditure to 28 February 2021
- To note the capital projects update

**7. Policies for approval**

The Tuition Fee and Remission Policy 2021/22 was outlined with amendments to reflect changes to the apprenticeship funding scheme and include reference to ESFA guidance.

The Committee agreed: -

- To recommend the Board approve the above policy

**8. Any other business and comments**

There were no items.

**9. Date and time of next meeting**

The next meeting was arranged for Wednesday 30 June 2021 commencing at 12.15 pm.