



Mission Statement: *Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures*

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Date: **Friday 26th June 2020 3.30-4.40 pm**
Virtual meeting

Present: Ms D Taaffe (Chair)
Ms J Gray (Principal)
Ms W Middlemas
Mr A Burr
Mr M Hellewell

Together with: Ms L Gates (Head of Finance)
Mr A Lloyd (Vice-Principal: Information Systems and Resources)
Ms A Crumblehulme (Head of HR)
Mrs S Hawitt (Governance Administrator-FCAT)

		Action
13.2020	Preliminaries The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies The meeting took place remotely using Google Hangouts Alan Lloyd left the meeting (due to migraine)	
14.2020	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest	
15.2020	Consideration of any items of urgent business. There was no urgent business to discuss	
16.2020	Confirmation of Quoracy It was noted the meeting was quorate	
17.2020	Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2020 The minutes of the meeting held on 2 nd March 2020 were approved	
18.2020	Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda a) Management Accounts- (Item 07.2020 from the previous minutes) it was agreed to discuss if the £750K investment from reserves agreed in June 2017 still meets the needs of the college. (Discussed in item 19)	
19.2020	Management Accounts Directors received and considered the Management Accounts for the period ending 30 th April 2020 (paper 7.1) presented by the Head of Finance she informed directors that the impact of Covid-19 is under continual review. Directors were invited to ask questions, there were no questions to answer on this paper	

20.2020 | Draft Budget

Directors received and considered the draft budget for 2020/21 and a two year forecast (paper 8.1) presented by the Head of Finance it was noted that this draft budget will receive a further update in the Autumn term it was also noted that this is particularly critical this year given the Covid-19 situation and the difficulty predicting 2019-20 outturn and therefore 2020-21 opening balances. Directors were informed that things have moved on very quickly and college are responding to changing government guidelines.

It was noted that as previously communicated, ESFA changes to financial returns means that this budget will be reported to the ESFA in January 2021, however the ESFA have requested an additional financial return to gather information on the impact of Covid-19 by 31st July.

Directors were informed that the college is in the very fortunate position that 96% of income is guaranteed ESFA income, however income areas where the college has been impacted include lettings and catering income.

The Head of Finance also highlighted one significant cost to the college was the cancellation of student overseas visits, it was noted that college insurance would not cover the cost and referred back to the travel companies who to date are not in a position to refund. Directors were informed that college had taken the exceptional decision to refund all students in advance of a refund being received. Worst case scenario the total cost to college will be approximately £34,000, but it is hoped at least some of the costs will be refunded in future

The Head of Finance explained that the bursary scheme had been reviewed to ensure it meets ESFA guidance and remains affordable for the college without needing to top-up with other funding. The scheme this year will be focussed on an individual assessment of student need

It was noted that the pension funding from the government was only guaranteed until March 2021 therefore no income has been included for the final four months of the year. If funding is confirmed from April 2021 then this would change the budget and move it closer to a balance position.

In summary the message to the Corporation is that this is how the draft budget looks to date, whatever happens it was agreed that the £750k investment from reserves (agreed on June 2017) would need to be increased

Questions from Directors

In response to a question about the potential reduction in the deficit of up to £100k and where this is likely to come from it was noted that, savings from not paying the college bus company other than 25% of normal costs as a retainer on duration of closure. Other savings include supply staff, marketing, electricity costs and general department budget lines as a result of the college closure.

Asked about the considerable amount in examination fees and if there was any possibility of a rebate it was noted that at present a rebate is very unlikely Directors asked about the number of student applications, it was noted that the number of applications had increased by 16 on this time last year.

Directors were informed that every applicant had been interviewed by email and there had been a good uptake to the virtual new student day.

In response to vulnerable students it was noted that the budget included funding for vulnerable students and it was expected that there would be an increase in bursary applications for support for vulnerable students

In response to a question about exceptional funds for future years it was noted that there are no guarantees for additional pots of funding other than applications as and when these funding streams are available.

In response to a question about any providers of college business not able to manage beyond Covid-19 it was noted that the bus company had asked for a retainer but college is expected to continue working with them and there were currently no other known concerns.

Directors asked if the 2.5 % estimated pay award increase for teaching staff can be reviewed against the current situation. It was noted that final negotiations are still to take place for teaching staff however since the pay award for support staff had been agreed with a 2 year deal at 2.5% from January 2021, the teacher's pay award had been estimated in line with this deal and been included in the budget.

Directors were informed that college are keen to always offer at least the national average pay award to continue to stay attracted to the recruitment market

In response to a question about different ways of working in the future and if this would have a potential impact on staff pay, it was noted that even if students are working from home, staff are still preparing the work and for many departments the period of setting this up created more work.

The Principal assured directors that the take up on remote learning had been fantastic, students and staff are staying well connected and staff are good at chasing students who are not engaging. A student survey is due to go out next week to ask how students feel about learning during the lockdown this will help to identify some knowledge gaps, students have already been set some work for over the Summer period.

It was also noted that the college had already moved into a more digital way of working and for some departments remote working may continue.

The Student Director gave his views and said that, some subjects work better than others, it's not the same as being in the classroom but said that the teachers had been great and made the very best of the situation

In response to a question about the risk of funding for the Teaching School it was noted that the funding was initially for 3 years but kept extending for further years it is unclear if the funding will continue, however the School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) is an income generator so should continue well into the future.

20.2020 D1 resolved: recommend to the Corporation for approval the draft budget 2020-21

21.2020 Staffing Update

Directors received the staffing update June 2020 (paper 9.1) presented by the Head of HR she highlighted the following from the report, careful business planning had ensured that the vast majority of posts will be covered by the start of the academic year. Directors were informed that due to uncertain times the use of fixed term contracts had been used, as appropriate. It was noted that it was pleasing to see a reduction in turnover of staff this year continuing the downward trend of the last few years. Directors were informed that the absence data during lockdown does not provide a full picture and may not be as accurate at the end of year analysis.

It was noted that the staff survey had been really well received and results were very positive and encouraging, staff have noted that the support given had been exceptional in terms of well-being especially the introduction of a platform for social activity to maintain a sense of community amongst staff.

Questions from directors

Directors wanted to say a big well done to the staff and congratulations on the positive staff survey. Organisations are really tested when things go wrong and SLT have been excellent

Asked about advertising fixed term contracts and if it detracts interest of applications it was noted that although the posts are offered on a fixed term contract there is a possibility to become permanent in the future.

In response to a question about all staff returning to work in September, it was noted that 84% of staff confirmed their return to work, some issues of staff not being able to return to work were more about childcare rather than underlying health conditions. College are trying to be as flexible as possible to meet the needs of the staff.

The Principal remarked what a fantastic job the Head of HR and the Head of Finance had done during this period and wanted to thank them for their exceptional work.

22.2020 Health and Safety Report No 3 of 4

Directors received the Health and Safety Report No 3 of 4 2019-20 (paper 10.1) presented by the Principal.

She stated that the report covers most of the lockdown period therefore college has been closed to students. The majority of the work carried out had been safety testing and maintaining the campus. Measures have been put in place to make the college Covid secure including 2m signage.

This term staff are being invited into college by department to become familiar with the new systems and processes, all staff will receive H&S induction /training on the new systems and procedures. The Head of Estates and his team have done a remarkable job preparing the college for a return.

Questions from Directors

In response to a question about students' safety and welfare whilst at home, it was noted that every student on the safeguarding list is contacted each week and a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) had been on duty at all times during the lockdown. 60 students are expected to come into college next week as they cannot access lessons at home, it was noted that students have not/will not be disciplined for not engaging in lessons during the lockdown period.

23.2020 A.O.B

The Chair informed the committee that there is a bank of accountants willing to volunteer their time to come onto governing bodies, it was agreed the Clerk would follow this up with the Search and Governance once information is received

It was noted that a committee had been formed to discuss the Gordon Halliwell funds.

**DT SH
DC**

24.2020 Identification of any new or amended risks

No new risks were identified

Date and Time of next meeting

Tuesday 24th November 2020 at 4pm

Signed _____

Date _____