

**THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON Tuesday 25 June 2024 at 16.30**

Present: Ann Donoghue, Dan Lodge (Principal), Barbara Hobday, Paul Mittendorfer, Clare Ruaux, Dominic Wakefield

In attendance: Members of SMT – Ian Dumbleton (FD), Steve Martell (DP)  
Rob Hussey (VP Curriculum), Andrea John (VP Pastoral) (to Item 6a)  
Russha Sellings (Director of Governance/GD)

In the Chair: Ann Donoghue

**1. Chair’s Introductions and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including GS&R Chair Barbara Hobday to provide an update for Item 8 and as part of succession to Chair in the next academic year. Apologies were received and accepted from Graham Lawrence. Teddy Bridges was not present at the meeting.

The Chair said the focus would be on the key matters under Items 6&7. The VPs were welcome in attendance for updates earlier on the agenda and they would depart afterwards.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

None declared with regard to the agenda items.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2024**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

**4. Matters Arising**

*(not already covered on the agenda)*

Item 5 (iii) – Scheme of Delegation review – the Chair referred to the live document a copy of which was included in the papers. The GD agreed it was an important point to review policy ownership since the appointment of a HR Director in particular where policies crossed over between Finance and HR. The document had been adjusted slightly to reflect the correct position.

Item 6a(iii) – Levelling up premium – the Principal expressed thanks for the reminder about the premium. The College had been able to appoint a DT teacher. The premium did not apply in this case, however the Principal had copies of the relevant eligibility criteria and would ensure this was included in future recruitment adverts where applicable.

**5. Student Financial Support**

*Paper: Annual report 2023-24*

The VP (Pastoral) was present to update the Committee. In total the allocation was around £100k and it was possible to roll over unspent funding to the next year. There had been a significant increase in applications by over 40% which could be in part due to growth, however there was additional focus on ensuring the funding was fully utilised by as many disadvantaged learners as possible. This included a proposal to increase the household income threshold further to £36k per annum for the bursary fund. 100% of travel expenses had been met from the College travel award on advice of the ESFA financial support review. This review also highlighted the need to facilitate a discrete payment method for FSM students and development work with MIS had achieved this. The card linked to the students’ ID and worked in a similar way to a debit card which was able to be used in multiple locations around campus.

Members fully supported the approach and suggested the good practice could be shared with other colleges. It was confirmed following a question that household income was self-assessed and included a declaration. There was a wider discussion on electronic payments more generally for meals and refreshments; currently the only payment mechanism was by card and there wasn't considered a great driver to change this.

## **6. Strategy Items**

*Papers: Business KPIs, SAR and QIP sections 3&4*

### **a) Strategic workforce planning (staff workload/wellbeing)**

The Chair emphasised that this update was for information following questions from the Committee over the last year about how the College would strategically prepare the organisation for growth.

The VP (Pastoral) spoke to some slides to provide members with an overview of the recent strategic planning to support workload and thereby improve staff wellbeing. This had been presented to staff at a recent all staff meeting.

It was explained that following the development of the workload action plan, a holistic structural review had been developed with the Education Committee. The aim was to better equip staff to address some of the current educational challenges while also building capacity for future growth. A particular focus was on reducing the administrative burden in curriculum areas, increasing student support capacity and introducing a more proactive system for student interventions. The VP (Pastoral) demonstrated how this would be possible through various organograms. The College were appointing new dedicated faculty administrators. The new model had been fully costed and in some cases it was identified that the administrators could cost-effectively support teachers' work for example admin for organising trips which teachers found particularly time consuming. The Heads of House could also focus on interventions introducing them at an earlier stage while there was dedicated capacity for attendance management. Level 2 would have a dedicated lead due to the unique challenges faced in this area and interviews for this role had taken place that day. There would be a dedicated Wellbeing Practitioner in Student Support freeing the current Head of Student Wellbeing to continue to support the whole College community including staff as Head of Wellbeing which had worked well as an initiative trialled over the last academic year.

Members were hugely encouraged by the planning and observed the importance of considering a more efficient working model as well as increasing resources and wellbeing overall as the College expanded. The plans needed to be tested and monitored and the Principal thought it would be sensible to survey staff after the first year to assess the impact.

The potential of AI in workload reduction was discussed. The VP (Curriculum) agreed there were many opportunities in this emerging area, a topic at the recent summer SFCA conference. The new Digital Lead included in the workload planning would be able to explore the possibilities.

[17.05 – the VPs were thanked for their updates and left the meeting]

### **b) Business KPIs**

The Chair noted that targets across the reports sometimes varied and while this could be explained, consistency would be helpful for more effective oversight.

The DP said the numbers for enrolment were strong and the College were in a good position to welcome a record number of potential new starters at the following week's Welcome Days. The student experience at these events was especially important. Conversely, the international market remained volatile and the future of the provision uncertain if the College became a 16-19 academy.

Members asked whether the KPIs were static; the Principal responded that adjustments were usually covered in the commentary.

### **c) College QIP Parts 3&4**

Members were content with the RAG ratings as long as targets were sufficiently moderated and supported by the narrative and didn't feel it was necessary to break down the scoring further. The feedback on the QIP from a consultant indicated the template could be simplified and this would be addressed. **(Action: VP (Curriculum))**

## 7. Finance Matters

*Papers: Management accounts (end of May), ESFA correspondence, financial dashboard, draft budget and forecast, cashflow statement, balance sheet, capital budget, financial commentary*

The Chair reiterated the need for the Committee's rigour and scrutiny of the financial management reporting for endorsement to Governing Body.

### i) Management Accounts (end May)

Referring back to the update in Item 6a, members asked about the financial implications of the new staffing model. There was a related question about what the resulting increase in headcount would cost. The cost of the additional staff resourcing would be £150k per annum and this was included in the budget forecast.

### ii) Latest ESFA correspondence/dashboard

Members received the correspondence and were pleased that the College maintained its outstanding financial health rating. The comment on dating the Balance Sheet in the next Financial Statements was noted.

### iii) Budget 2024-25/Financial Forecasts

The draft budget was subject to change. The Chair had provided feedback on one of the highest line items 'All other admin costs' and requested that the figure be split out where it contained larger items or for example allocation to the correct cost centre such as legal/professional fees. It was observed that costs of 'Busy Bees vouchers' was quite specific and low comparatively to other costs and therefore could be included elsewhere unless there was a specific requirement to split it out. **(Action: FD)**

It was confirmed following the earlier discussion about staff costs that the net impact was balanced due to artificially lower staff costs this year and would remain around 72-73% of budget which the FD believed was a satisfactory position.

### iv) Cash Flow Forecast

Members asked how the College was positioned coming into the latter part of the financial year and the FD said the landing point was comfortably above target. Some of the variances were challenged, especially the interest receivable. The FD advised that the budget was revised mid-year and presented to Governors, in this instance there were factors that increased the interest including the John Snelling donation. Members considered his legacy and the Principal said his bequest had been instrumental to driving forward the first phase of the Estates Masterplan and a plaque was put up in the Café in recognition.

### v) Balance Sheet

There were no comments raised.

### vi) Capital Budget 2024-25

Members sought assurances that the RAAC costs would be reimbursed and they heard from the Principal that while the eligibility requirements had been met, the next steps to confirm the design solution and appoint the contractor would need to be arranged in the first instance. As the works would cross 2 public sector financial years, it was likely to need additional DfE approval.

### vii) Financial Commentary/Assumptions

Several of the assumptions were challenged, in particular, the in-year funding which appeared conservative. The FD said this was on advice of the College's Territorial Manager as the College

prepared for growth. However, the potential change of Government may impact funding and therefore the assumptions more generally.

There was an agreed minor amend to the Adult Ed bullet on page 8 to show the correct academic year.

**Recommendations: The Governing Body approve the latest Management Accounts, cash flow and balance sheet, the Budget 2024-25 including capital budget and forecasts subject to amends.**

## 8. Report from GS&R Committee

The DP and Staff Governor were asked to depart the room during the discussion.

The GS&R Chair reported back from the meeting that had taken place on Friday. The Committee (which now included all Committee Chairs) considered at length remuneration of key roles and the performance measures over the academic year. The inflationary pay increase for all staff of 6.5%, aside from the Principal, had been implemented in this time period, prior to the annual review. Members sought assurances on the total costs including on costs being in budget. The FD confirmed the total as manageable, especially in light of future growth and members were content to endorse to Governing Body.

[17.42 the DP and Staff Governor returned]

**Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the pay awards as budgeted at their next meeting.**

## 9. Community Update

*Paper: Annual complaints report*

### i) Report on Complaints & Appeals

The report contained similar themes to previous years. There was a slight increase, however this could be attributed to increasing student numbers.

## 10. Policies

*Papers: Financial Regs, Reserves Policy, Privacy Notice, Fundraising Policy*

### i) Financial Regulations

[\(ref the new College Financial Handbook\)](#)

Members considered the proposed changes in the annual review which included those required to comply with the new College Financial Handbook (CFH) (effective 01-08-24) which formed part of the Accountability Agreement. There were additional changes proposed to Annex I presented at the meeting on asset allocation (movable fixed assets only) in response to a recent request from the College's IT Manager to dispose of old equipment in return for cash back for new technology. This had been benchmarked to ensure value for money as specified in the CFH. The proposed changes were circulated and discussed. The FD had sought feedback from his counterparts at S7 colleges and not all had a limit. The proposal was to increase the limit to £100k in line with the Principal's procurement limit. Members considered the changes very sensible and commended the IT Manager for initiating the cost saving.

Governance oversight in respect of novel, contentious and repercussive transactions and severance payments prior to DfE approval was challenged. To address the first point, it was agreed to include a process in document 10, section b) to declare to the F&GP Committee where such transactions had been made and required DfE approval (noting those of significant value would need Governing Body approval in the first instance). For section c)-e), the College would specifically seek approval from the respective Committee where a severance or compensation payment over £50k was to be made either to a member of staff (F&GP) or a member of SMT/SPH or the GD which should be

referred in all instances to the GS&R Committee. It was noted that ex gratia payments of any amount must be approved by the DfE and would follow the same process.

**Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the updated Financial Regulations subject to suggested amends.**

ii) Reserves Policy (new)

The College had prepared the policy in advance of the new requirement that was documented in the new College Financial Handbook and the FD had made reference to guidance on what should be included when drafting.

In light of possible academisation, it was agreed an annual review was sensible, although the GD advised that an academy trust must have a central Reserves Policy covering all schools in a MAT whether reserves were pooled or not.

The date would be amended on the front page.

**Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the new Reserves Policy with a title of June 2024.**

iii) Data Protection (Privacy Notice)

The main change related to the capturing of data of the for alumni and donors and the DP explained the database work that was underway.

It was noted that the document could be subject to legislative changes at any point.

**Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the Privacy Notice.**

iv) \*Fundraising Policy update (Trustees)

The Policy was presented for information. As the Collyer Endowment were currently holding the donations, this policy was circulated to Trustees in the first instance. The GD explained the reason for the changes outside of the normal review cycle related to new Charity Commission guidance on donations, specifically refusal of donations where not appropriate.

**11. Annual Meeting Assessment inc ToR**

The papers were well prepared and considered informative.

The GD highlighted the proposed changes to the ToR which ensured compliance with the ToR and made reference to the GS&R Committee’s responsibilities with regard to exceptions with pay of senior posts or the GD.

**Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the updated ToR at their next meeting.**

The Chair of GS&R wished to take the opportunity to express to Ann the gratitude of the Governing Body for her excellent chairing over the last few years. The Committee agreed she had made a significant contribution and would be missed when she transferred over to the Q&C Committee.

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee would meet on **Tuesday 19 November 2024, 16.30**

The meeting closed at 18.15

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

RRS 28-06-24