



MINUTES
of the meeting of the Finance and Employment Committee
held remotely on Wednesday 24 June 2020

Present: - Mr James Caird (Chair)
Mr Igor Andronov
Mr Ian Peake (Principal)

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

The meeting was quorate as three Members were present. Everyone joined the meeting remotely due to the lockdown imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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| <p>1. Apologies for Absence
Apologies were received from Ms Rebecca Payne.</p> | |
| <p>2. Declaration of Interests
James Caird declared an interest regarding his appointment as Chair of the Committee.</p> | |
| <p>3. Minutes of the last Meeting and Matters Arising
It was agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes of the last meeting as a true record.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. The Director of Personnel reported that 45 members of staff were not registered for MyConcern. She was working with Assistant Principals to ensure staff register.II. The Disciplinary and Grievance Policy had been amended to state 'must' as opposed to 'should' throughout the policy at the request of the Committee. | |
| <p>4. Employment Reports
The Director of Personnel presented the following reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. The staff report provided details of staff development offered online in April and training to be provided in July. Additional modules for expenses and timesheets will be implemented to the payroll system in addition to payroll, learning, and performance modules. As a result of COVID-19 some hourly paid staff are continuing to be paid excluding overtime and sickness cover. 29 nursery | |

staff have been furloughed with claims of £11K and £15K submitted to date. The College has begun to re-open its campuses to some staff and students with a risk assessment and staff policy implemented. The staffing budget has been finalised for next year.

- II. There is a risk assessment in place for use with staff as necessary and it will be when required for some staff returning to work. The document has been used to encourage anxious staff to return to work putting additional arrangements in place to ensure their safety as much as possible. Governors agreed that this was a thorough risk assessment. There was discussion about the air conditioning system noting that this had been switched off to avoid any potential risk.
- III. The COVID-19 staff policy met Government guidelines for senior and middle managers to follow to manage staff return to work following the lockdown.
- IV. The gender pay gap report was provided separately for Herefordshire and Ludlow College and North Shropshire College as the College's had separate payroll systems at 31 March 2019. The Director of Personnel reported that she planned to conduct further analysis of the data.
- V. The health and safety report was noted with key points outlined. Smartlog is being used throughout the College to report incidents. There were 72 incidents from December 2019 to March 2020 with one RIDDOR incident, this involved a student with details provided. The College is following Government guidelines regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Arrangements are being put in place for the gradual re-opening of the College. Risk assessments have been circulated with documentation shared with union representatives for comments.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the reports

5. Finance Reports

- I. Management accounts to 31 May 2020 were outlined showing variances against budget. The Director of Finance reported that overall COVID-19 has had a negative impact on several income streams. Specific changes to income were outlined. The cashflow forecasted a dip to 35 cash days in March 2021 which would be monitored closely with costs minimised to mitigate this. Governors agreed that it is crucial to manage costs carefully in the current climate. The balance sheet remains strong. Overall the College is predicting a year-end operating deficit of £731K compared to a budgeted surplus of £75K.
- II. Capital projects were outlined. The sale of Pound Farm is on hold and the LEP funded project to redevelop Holme Lacy Campus and build an enterprise centre had

been cancelled. In consultation with the Chair of the Corporation it had been agreed to stop the project due to probable funding changes and likely cost increases. This would have also created a significant cash risk of C£800K and there was minimal contingency. The Chair of the Corporation had supported this action to withdraw based on financial reasons which were also supported by the Committee. A mezzanine floor had been installed in the plumbing workshop at Hereford Campus using LEP matched funding. A slurry store had been procured at Walford Campus in the sum of c£40K which was a recommendation from the Environment Agency.

- III. Irrecoverable debts as at June 2020 totalling £5,765 were outlined which including some businesses which had gone into liquidation and two debts inherited from NSC.
- IV. Budget 2020/21 and update on forecast is being prepared liaising with Assistant Principals using the curriculum resource model system which had been linked directly into the MIS system this year. COVID-19 has created some uncertainty to income. To date applications are strong noting that 16-19 income would be based on 2019/20 enrolments with c£800K additional funding. There is uncertainty on 19+ funding. Significant changes to income include the removal of TU funding in the region of £1.2M and £300K reductions to costs to deliver apprenticeships. A breakeven budget is anticipated next year. The College is required to submit a 24-month cashflow to ESFA, which is similar to the cashflow submitted in February 2020, and an assessment of its financial health.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the management accounts to 31 May 2020
- To note the capital projects update and Chair of the Corporation's action
- To endorse writing off irrecoverable debts to June 2020 totalling £5,765
- To note the budget 2020/21 update

6. Annual items for Committee

The Committee agreed: -

- To appoint James Caird as Chair of the Committee for 2020/21
- The Committee self assessed its performance concluding that it was effective and adequately met the requirements of its terms of reference
- No changes were required to the terms of reference

7. Any other business and comments

- I. The Chair commented that reports are very measured and controlled whilst recognising the significant amount of work required in response to COVID-19. Appreciation was recorded to CMT, staff, students and parents for the remarkable achievements during the lockdown to ensure success for our students.

II. This was the Principal's last F&E Committee and Governors thanked him for his leadership and contribution to the Committee.

8. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Wednesday 25 November 2020 commencing at 12.15 pm.

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**.....