

## MINUTES

### *Finance & Resources No 46*

Date: *13/03/2024 (Wednesday)*

Time: *18:00–20:00*

Venue: *Via Teams*

Committee: *Finance and Resources*

Present: *David Hall, Jane Booker, Sue Collinge (Chair) and Wes Johnson (Principal)*

Attending: *Janet Whiteside (Director of Finance), Joanne Sherrington (Vice Principal) and John Wherry (Deputy Principal)*

Clerks: *Ron Matthews (Clerk)*

## ***Public Minutes***

Item number:  
(and category)

Item description:

**01.24**

***Decision***

### ***Attendance of College Management Staff***

Section 8.2 of the current Constitution and Terms of Reference for the Finance & Resources Committee states: *College management and/or consultants may attend meetings by invitation in an advisory capacity.*

**Resolved: That College Management Staff attend the meeting.**

**02.24**

***Decision***

### ***Apologies for Absence***

There were no apologies for absence all members being present.

**03.24**

***Decision***

### ***Minutes of Previous Meeting***

The public minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee meeting number 45 held on 28 November 2023, published on the extranet, were agreed and signed as a true and correct representation of the meeting.

**04.24**

***Decision***

### ***Declarations of Interest***

There were no declarations of interest made in respect of items on the public agenda.

**05.24**

***Decision***

### ***Strategic Plan Progress Report***

The Committee considered the report of the Principal on the progress of the Strategic Plan. Whilst FE and HE numbers were on or close to target, Apprenticeships remained strong against a national trend. Provision of 14-16 year olds was buoyant although current HE application for 2024/2025 were less promising. Sickness levels were below target and slightly above the AoC benchmark. Commercial activity was looking stronger following the decline experienced during the pandemic. Surplus/loss was well below target. The majority of the KPIs were referred to in the Financial Position Statement later in the agenda.

**Resolved: That the report be received.**

**06.24**

***Decision***

### ***Financial Position Statement for the Period Ending 31 January 2024***

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance on financial performance up to 31 January 2024. The current position was a loss of £349k with significant work still to be undertaken to ensure the forecast of £28k was met. This loss had been reduced by £104k during the month but the variance behind forecast remained consistent at £421k. Apprenticeship income was behind profile but the team were confident of reaching forecast. Delivery of AEB contracts and other

devolved funding was continuing to plan. Commercial income was strong although the margin had been impacted by the pay increase. The Deputy Principal, Resources, reported that the loss on the farm was due to issues with the dairy herd and were proving difficult to resolve. A recruitment freeze has been implemented for all new posts as a response to the requirement to reduce staff costs and all subsequent replacement posts would continue to be scrutinised. Work on non-pay savings continue. Negotiations continued with the College Union (UCU) regarding the pay increase which had not been awarded to the staff in the bargaining unit. However, these costs had been accrued into the pay costs as if they had been paid, as they are owing to staff. The balance sheet remained strong with a cash balance of £13.956m and cash days of 144. ESFA financial health remained 'Good'. Circulated with the report was a copy of one of the regular newsletters from the Chief Executive of the AoC, David Hughes, in which he reported on the additional funding available to colleges for English and Maths resits; these came with conditions. The newsletter also made reference to the loss of Level 3 tuition funding. Governors asked a number of questions for clarification to which management responded. The Vice Principal also reported that comparisons with local colleges indicated that Myerscough needs to become more efficient in delivering the curriculum.

**Resolved: That the reports be received.**

**07.24**

**Decision**

***Financial Regulations Annual Review***

The Committee considered the report of the Vice Principal on a review of the Financial Regulations which was required on an annual basis; the changes to the previous version of the document had been highlighted. These included amendments needed as a result of the decision of the Office for National Statistics for Colleges to revert to the public sector. Amongst the amendments proposed were: Signing requirements – commitment to expenditure (7.2):

- Director of Finance to sign up to £5k (previously Vice Principal & Deputy CEO)
- Vice Principal & Deputy CEO and Director of Finance to sign over £5k and under £25k (previously Principal and Vice Principal & Deputy CEO)
- Principal and Vice Principal & Deputy CEO to sign over £25k and under £50k (previously Chair of Finance & Resources)
- Orders over £50k – Finance & Resources Committee
- Bank signatories (9.1):
- amounts up to £50k, any signatory including Director of Finance (previously excluded)
- amounts over £50k, Principal and Vice Principal & Deputy CEO, or delegated to another member of Principalship

Changes were also proposed to the investment criteria. Due to the level of amendments to the document it was

**Resolved: That the Corporation be recommended to adopt the revised Financial Regulations with effect from 1 April 2024.**

**08.24**

***HE Policy and Procedure, Bursary Policy and Tuition Fees 2024/2025***

***Decision***

The Committee gave consideration to the proposed Higher Education Policy and Procedure, Bursary Policy and Tuition Fees for 2024/2025. To ensure compliance Myerscough was required to work with UCLan to agree the fee structure for new entrants in 2024/2025 as part of the Access Agreement and also in line with the requirements of the Office for Students. The review of the Bursary Policy and student support package remained similar to last year. The College current recommendations were based on the existing fee cap of £9,250 for full time students. The report included a summary of the fees including part time and international students.

**Resolved: That the HE Policy and Procedure, Bursary Policy and Tuition Fees 2024/2025 be agreed.**

**09.24**

***Decision***

***Strategic Risk Register***

The Committee considered the Strategic Risk Report for 2023/2024 as presented by the Vice Principal. Members noted that the risks identified were initially classed as 'Inherent Risks'. Actions taken to mitigate these risks resulted in 'Residual Risks'. The report also included a review of the College Risk Appetite and a definition of scoring matrix. Reputational damage, partnership arrangements, inability to secure financial stability, cyber security and failure to deliver quality improvements and achieve successful outcomes at Ofsted remained high risks.

**Resolved: That the report be received.**

**10.24**

***Decision***

***Human Resources Report for the Period Ending 31 January 2024***

The Committee considered the above report which contained an analysis of staff turnover, a breakdown analysis of leavers, staff stability index and staff sickness statistics for the year up to 31 January 2024. The Committee noted that staff turnover, the percentage of workers who leave, currently stood at 18.97%, including 21.43% for management staff, 22.58% for teaching staff and 16.32% for support staff. During the same 12 month period, 2022/2023, data showed the turnover was 18.55%, including 17.5% for management staff, 18.46% for teaching staff and 20% for support staff. Overall, staff sickness stood at 2.74% and was being closely monitored. This was below a target of less than 3%. Long term sickness of 10 employees, compared to 8 for the similar period last year, was above the target of 6. The average number of working days lost due to sickness per employee was 7.13 days. The team had supported 168 vacancies this quarter with 101 current vacancies. The service was currently supporting 50 new employee relations cases. Discussions continued with the College Union for teaching staff (UCU) regarding the pay offer and their subsequent strike action. Both parties had agreed to refer the matter to ACAS and this process was currently underway. The report also included details of staff restructure, training, service availability, staff wellness provisions and changes to the Occupational Health provider. Mentioned in the report was the Gender Pay Gap report - March 2022. The College was required to publish a report for the period

1.4.2022 – 31.03.2023 by the end of March 2024. The College median pay gap (middle) had decreased by 7.02% (19.45% median pay gap). The mean pay gap (average) had decreased by 2.68% (10.98% mean pay gap). The decrease was due, in the main, to an increase in female employees in the upper quartiles of the workforce. The report highlighted areas of focus for the year ahead which, it was hoped, over the long term, would serve to reduce the pay gap. The new ITRENT computer system for Payroll and People sections would be going live in the near future which would improve services. The new Director of People, Alice Roberts, took up her post at the beginning of February 2024.

**Resolved: That the report be received.**

## **11.24**

### ***Decision***

#### ***Health and Safety Report for the Period Ending 31 January 2024***

Members considered the Health and Safety Report for the period ended 31 October 2023 which provided an analysis of accident statistics over the period together with other Health and Safety activities, including policy updates and staff training. Overall, the number of accidents, 106, mirrored the same period last year and was close to pre-pandemic levels. There were 29 near misses and 1 RIDDOR reportable accident during this period which was well below the target of less than 3%. However, the number of reported near misses had increased. Accidents were as follows: Staff 14 (13%) an increase of 7 from last year Students 90 (85%) a decrease of 7 from last year Visitors 2 (2%) Analysis showed: 19 (18 %) were taken to hospital – 6 Students, 1 Apprentice, 1 Visitor and 1 Contractor 59 (56%) received first aid treatment 28 (26%) needed no treatment There were no identifiable trends and no areas for concern. However concern was expressed that low incidents were not being reported with the out centre showing low numbers. The report also made reference to the Internal Audit Assurance Review of Estates which also included a review of the Health and Safety provision at the College. There were a number of recommendations made concerning Health and Safety compliance and the Deputy Principal, Resources, outlined the findings. The full report would be going to the Audit and Governance Committee in April.

**Resolved: That the report be received.**