



**Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
held on 26 April 2023 at 5.30 pm via Microsoft Teams**

Present:	Donald Inglis (Chair) Rob Hickey Heidi Fraser-Krauss Matthew Rice Lee Probert (Chief Executive and Principal)	
In Attendance:	David Hawkins – Vice Principal for Finance and Professional Services Chris Leng – Director of Human Resources Carolyn Barker, Director of Governance Sarah Chamberlain, Director of Marketing & External Affairs Paul Cutten, IT Systems & Services Manager	
1.	Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest	Action
1.1	There were no apologies received. The Chair extended a special welcome to Paul Cutten joining the meeting to provide an update on Cyber Security. There were no declarations of interest. The Chair of the meeting was Donald Inglis. Notice of the meeting was given at least 7 days in advance. The meeting was quorate.	
2.	Minutes and Matters Arising	
2.1	Minutes The minutes from the previous meeting held on 22 February 2023 were approved as an accurate record.	
3.	Matters Arising	
3.1	Action Summary All actions from the 22 February 2023 meeting were recorded as being completed.	
3.2	Any Other Matters None reported. Agenda item 4.4 was taken at this point in the meeting.	
4.	Strategic Plan Implementation	
4.1	Finance & General Purposes KPI Scorecard The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services advised the Committee that the scorecard had been updated to reflect the current position against the agreed targets. <i>The Committee resolved to note the update to the scorecard.</i>	
4.2	Implementation Plan – Priorities 4, 5 & 6 The scorecard linked to the update provided to the Committee summarises the progress reports against strategic priorities 4, 5, and 6.	

	<p>A summary of the progress against these strategic priorities was provided by the Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services and the Director of Marketing & External Affairs.</p> <p>The Committee was advised that the college had received 3 grants being very positive in terms of investing in the college's estate and on various other projects. There was some unfortunate news shared with the Committee that the plans to install solar panels would not go ahead as the roof would not support the weight. Solar panels are to be installed on the new two-storey extension and further thought is being given to other energy reductions.</p> <p>The Director of Marketing and External Affairs reported that she will be completing a refresh of the progress of partnership priorities.</p> <p><i>The committee noted the report on progress against the strategic priorities.</i></p>	
4.3	<p>Strategic Risk Monitoring</p> <p>The Committee received the risk report detailing the College's key risks monitored and based on the information available as of 17 April 2023.</p> <p>The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services advised that the financial performance is an increased risk and advised that a further update will be given as the Committee is briefed on the draft budget within item 6.1.</p> <p>The Committee asked about the potential to invest in strengthening the roof of the building to support solar panels and asked if there were any grants available. The advice from a site survey of the roof confirmed that major strengthening of the roof would be required with significant investment needed. The executive advised that investment in replacing all the lights in the building between April and September would support the college's sustainability and overall energy reduction.</p> <p><i>The committee resolved to note the strategic risk monitoring report.</i></p>	
4.4	<p>Cyber Security Update</p> <p>The Committee Chair introduced the IT Systems and Services Manager who attended the meeting to provide an update on where the college is in terms of its cyber security plans and progress.</p> <p>The IT Systems and Services Manager provided a bit of background concerning education institutions being on high alert regarding cyber security attacks. He also provided an update regarding the cyber security action plan, confirming that all actions from 2022 had been completed. Other key points of action during the year included –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the implementation of multifactor authentication for students following the introduction last year to staff. • penetration testing was completed last year. JISC invited to test the college's systems where they highlighted several vulnerabilities that the IT team has now spent the year addressing. • Email filtering and internal phishing exercises to around 800 staff, with over 200 staff having clicked on the fake email and 66 entering their credentials. Those staff were then required to complete training. A further exercise showed some improvement. 	

	<p>Focusing on the current year the IT Systems and Services Manager explained that the following work is in progress -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking actions such as replacing the mobile phone fleet to support the application and final submission to gain Cyber Essentials Plus certification. • Patching work on security vulnerabilities (approximately 250 unique applications) with some more bespoke applications that require a manual process. Several versions of applications have also been identified and targeting these to bring back to one version. • External access for MyView HR system and multiple layers of defence implemented with siloing of data in different systems. • Procedures developed for multi-scenario planning for business continuity plan purposes and how the IT teamwork and communication with stakeholders. • Scenario planning has been undertaken including the compromise of the server room and there are plans to test again based on a malware outbreak in May. • Formalised schedule of backups is in place and there are plans for a new server room in the new construction centre extension to house business continuity. <p>The Committee thanked the IT Services and Systems Manager for the comprehensive update. A member asked about the business continuity plan from a technical perspective and what options are available to the college if the IT team cannot fix the problem and there is a loss of infrastructure resulting in there being no IT access for a week. The IT Systems and Services Manager advised he believed divisional plans include scenario plans regarding having no access to IT. The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services explained that the SLT is to consider the contingencies to be put in place in the event of a loss of IT and particularly who would be the key point of contact if the IT Systems and Services Manager is not available. The Committee asked for assurances on how the college would function if there were to be a loss of IT for a week.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the Cyber Essentials accreditation and noted that it is considered to be a base level and that other frameworks such as ISO are becoming more widely used. There is a drive from the Government to improve in this area. Heidi Fraser-Krauss offered support from technical experts at JISC. The Committee recommended that the team consider the level of cyber security maturity it wishes to get to and map the journey to determine what is achievable. A governor explained there have been mappings completed against the ISO management framework that may be useful to share with the college. The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services thanked the governor for the offer.</p> <p>Rob Hickey joined the meeting at 17.47.</p> <p>The IT Systems and Services Manager left the meeting at 17.55.</p>	<p>DH</p> <p>DH</p>
5.	Financial Sustainability	
5.1	<p>2022-2023 Financial Performance</p> <p>Management Accounts for the 7 months to 28 February 2023</p> <p>including year-end forecast</p> <p>[confidential – redacted minute]</p>	

5.2	<p>The Chair of the Committee thanked the Vice Principal for Finance and Professional Services for the update on the management accounts.</p> <p>ESFA Financial Health confirmation</p> <p>The Committee received a copy of the ESFA letter and a copy of the Governing Body finance dashboard. The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services advised that the letter confirmed the financial health rating of the college for the year 2021-22 and noted it was an outstanding health grade. The Committee was pleased to note the result and that the health grade currently this year is likely to be a good rating. The dashboard provided to governors included supporting evidence from the sector about the assessment of colleges in terms of forecasting and income streams. It was noted that overall, there appears to be a decline in colleges being rated outstanding but not as many were noted as inadequate.</p> <p>The Committee noted the dashboard commenting that it was a really useful document and were pleased regarding the rating of the college in light of the financial pressures.</p> <p><i>The committee noted the ESFA's confirmation of Financial Health Assessment.</i></p>	
6.	Budget	
	<p>6.1 Budget 2023-24 progress</p> <p>The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services provided a verbal update to the Committee on the progress of the draft budget for 2023/24. A draft budget is to be presented at the June committee meeting to consider and as appropriate recommend for Board approval at their July meeting.</p> <p>[confidential – redacted minute]</p> <p><i>The Committee resolved to note the update on the draft budget for 2023/24.</i></p>	
7.	College Staff & Teams	
7.1	<p>HR Report</p> <p>The Committee received the HR report noting the sickness absence statistics, tutor utilisation, and a staff pay update.</p> <p>Members were asked if there were any comments, questions, or queries regarding the report.</p> <p>The Director of Human Resources gave an update on the sickness statistics noting that as a percentage of working days lost in the year to 31st March 2023 it was 3.0%. This was 0.6 percentage points higher compared to the year ending 31st March 2022. Minor illnesses were the highest contributor to absences with 19.2% of all days lost.</p> <p>Training is being planned for managers around mental health and adjustments that can be made for staff with ACAS support being provided as well.</p> <p>[confidential - redacted minute]</p>	

	<i>The Committee resolved to note the HR report.</i>	
8.	Estates and College Environment	
8.1	<p>Health, Safety and Welfare Update</p> <p>The Committee received the Health, Safety, and Welfare report noting that update on Covid19 cases and control measures on site and accidents statistics year to date. There were no major incidents reported this year. Overall reporting was good with mainly low-level accidents having occurred.</p> <p>The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services advised the Committee that health and safety audits have been taking place across departments. Recently audits had been conducted within sports and public services where an unsatisfactory rating was given. This led to a notice to improve the risk assessments covering the gym, to ensure daily checks of equipment are undertaken. A decision was taken to temporarily close the gym until improvements were made. The actions were completed rapidly and the notice to improve lifted.</p> <p><i>The Committee resolved to note the health and safety report.</i></p>	
8.2	<p>Construction centre extension update</p> <p>A report summarising the progress and plans to build a two-storey extension to the existing construction centre building was submitted to the Committee. The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services advised governors of a delay due to issues with the foul drainage due to the original drawings being incorrect. The contractors have advised they hope to recoup the delay throughout the project.</p> <p>The piling works are to be completed outside of exam dates to ensure there is as little disruption as possible. There will of course be some noise from works with the erection of steelwork and connections to the existing building however this is thought to not cause too much disruption.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the £18,000 cost related to the extension of time and impact on the programme appears reasonable for 4 weeks over what is a relatively tight timescale within the programme of works. The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services commented that the contractors are looking to make up for the lost time within the programme.</p> <p><i>The Committee noted the construction centre extension update report.</i></p>	
9	Marketing, Communications & Partnerships	
9.1	<p>Partnerships Strategy</p> <p>The Director of Marketing and External Affairs advised the Committee that she was in the process of reviewing the nurturing partnerships strategy. The Committee noted there were 6 themes in the strategy and all key actions in the strategy had now been completed. The director advised that it is a good point at which to refresh the strategy and align it with the overall college strategy. A couple of key areas of focus will be the implementation of a key account management strategy, areas for growth, and activities that come from the LSIP. There will also be a move to look at further revenue-generating opportunities. The director advised that invitations to the Reach Awards on 25 June would be sent out to governors shortly.</p>	

	<p>The director advised that reporting from the next meeting would see a focus on a few key partnerships that are in discussion to gain input and guidance from governors.</p> <p><i>The Committee noted the update on the partnership strategy.</i></p>	
10	Policy and other matters	
10.1	There were no policies submitted for approval.	
11	Key Meeting Outcomes and/or Actions	
11.1	<p>Matters for report to the Governing Body (if any)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management accounts - Confirmation of ESFA's financial health rating for 21/22 being rated as outstanding. - Position regarding discussions with UCU. - Cyber security. <p>Matters for report to the Audit Committee (if any)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cyber security 	
12	Summary Matters	
12.1	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There were no other matters noted.</p>	
12.2	Date of next meeting – 7 June 2023	