

Meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee

Venue: Conference Room 1, South Tyneside College site

Date: 2 October 2019

Time: 4.00pm – 6.16pm

Present: Colin Seccombe (in the Chair)
Malcolm Grady
Andy Walton

Apologies: Martin Hottass

In Attendance: Neil Longstaff (Director of Governance)
Jane Cuthbertson (Chief Finance Officer)
Catherine Donnelly (Exec. Director of HR)
John Roach (Principal SSMS)
Alison Maynard (Dep.CEO)
Craig Scott (Business Operations Manager)
Steve Chittenden (Finance Manager)

ITEM	ISSUES	ACTION
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>The Committee approved apologies for absence received from those identified above after having first considered the reasons for their absence.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>The Chair reminded members to declare any conflicts of interest as they arose on the agenda.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2019 were approved and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>3.1 Policies</u> The Business Operations Manager had not yet had an opportunity to attend the next meeting of the Dr Winterbottom Trust to discuss possible links between the Bursary Policy and Dr Winterbottom Trust.</p> <p><u>3.2 Annual Health and Safety Report 2017-18 and 2018-19</u> It was noted that this report had been presented to the Board for information.</p> <p><u>3.3 Human Resources Plan – Progress Report</u> Confidential item</p> <p><u>3.4 Student Union Budget 2019-20</u> The Chair confirmed that the Board had agreed the recommended budget of £15,000 for the 2019-20 academic year.</p>	CSc/ NL

<p>4.</p>	<p>Committee Workplan 2019-20</p> <p>Governors were presented with a copy of the Committee Workplan 2019-20 for consideration and noting.</p> <p>It was felt that the annual safeguarding report should be presented to the F&R Committee if the policy was also to be presented to this Committee.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Committee Workplan 2018-19 is received and accepted.</p>	<p>NL</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Review of Committee Performance against Terms of Reference</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to provide governors with details of the performance of the Finance and Resources Committee during 2018-19.</p> <p>Members of the Committee (2018-19) had been asked to complete an online survey to review the Finance and Resources Committee’s performance during the previous financial year. Overall, there were no areas identified as being either ineffective or less than satisfactory (scores less than 3).</p> <p>It was noted that there had been a 67% return rate for the survey.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the report is received and acknowledged. ii. That members of committee yet to respond, be asked to complete the survey as soon as possible. 	<p>NL</p>
<p><i>With the approval of governors the Chair changed the order of business as follows:</i></p>		
<p>6.</p>	<p>Human Resources Report</p> <p>HR Report - Confidential item</p> <p><u>Policies</u></p> <p>Parental Leave policy: CD presented the Parental Leave policy for governors consideration and outlined the changes being proposed</p> <p>Q. Appeal? Any dispute would be resolved under the grievance procedure.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Parental Leave policy is approved.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>HR Resources Plan 2019-20</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to provide the committee with the five strategic objectives for Human Resources (HR) for 2019-20 and a draft action plan.</p> <p>The Chair made the observation that the plan focused on ‘business as usual’ and asked if there were any special projects or exercises to be conducted in the near future. CD responded stating that there was nothing specific but in terms of being proactive there was to be a focus on a review of the workforce to determine what was needed to take the College forward.</p> <p>Q. Staff survey? A communication strategy was being produced in light of the responses from the survey. It was stressed that this was not purely an HR document as it applied to all aspects of the College. CD reported that she was exploring a new staff survey platform</p>	

	<p>as the current format was not fit for purpose. Staff engagement was to be an ongoing process of development.</p> <p>A governor stressed the need to engage with staff on a more regular basis and not over one particular point in time. It was felt that different types of interaction would provide better feedback from staff and make governors better informed.</p> <p>JC reported that she had introduced weekly manager meetings and was providing feedback to staff. JC was also spending 2 days per week at TyneMet campus.</p> <p>Governors asked CD to consider adding timelines and budget implications for the action plan. CD informed governors that approximately £12k would be required to implement proposals. Governors encouraged the proposed approach to engage with staff.</p> <p>A governor stressed the importance on workforce planning and development to ensure the College had the right staff with the right skills in the right areas.</p> <p>Resolved: That the HR Resources Plan 2019-20 is accepted subject to the amendments recommended by governors mentioned above.</p>	<p>CD</p> <p>CD</p>
8.	<p>Safeguarding Policy and Procedure</p> <p>AM joined the meeting.</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to provide an updated Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding procedure for consideration.</p> <p>AM explained that there were very few changes and were mainly updates to posts and staff being assigned to new roles.</p> <p>Governors were made aware that AM now meets with safeguarding leads each half term to discuss issues and share good practice.</p> <p>It was noted that following a query by a member of staff, SEG was seeking advice in relation to staff being called to court to provide evidence or act as a witness.</p> <p>Q. Knife crime? This was covered as part of the Security Policy but it was acknowledged that it could depend on how a knife was being used against someone.</p> <p>It was noted that a new Wellbeing room was to be available soon and governors were to be invited to the official opening.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Committee agree to recommend the Policy and Procedure to the Board for approval subject to seeking input from the Lead Governor for Safeguarding.</p> <p>CD left the meeting</p>	<p>AM</p> <p>AM</p>
9.	<p>Update on Sub-Contracting</p> <p>Confidential Item.</p>	
10.	<p>Annual Report on Estates</p> <p>Confidential item</p>	

<p>11. Letter from ESFA re. Bournville College</p>	<p>Governors received a copy of a letter from the Chief Executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency, which highlighted issues arising from an investigation report in relation to the oversight of the proper use of public funds by college governing bodies. The investigation undertaken was at Bournville College in 2015 to 2016.</p> <p>The Chair outlined key aspects of the findings.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the CFO is to conduct a self-assessment exercise against the recommended actions within the ESFA’s report and present her findings to the next meeting of the Committee with a view to presenting this at the Board meeting in December. ii. That the letter and report from the ESFA be presented to Audit Committee for its consideration. 	<p>JC NL</p>
<p>12. Financial Regulations</p>	<p>Governors were presented with revised Financial Regulations for their consideration with a view to making a recommendation of approval to the Board.</p> <p>Changes made were outlined for information, which included income for contracts. It was noted that there would be an element of training for staff on the new regulations.</p> <p>Q. Most concern to JC? Funding environment and managing this going forward. Q. External influences? Devolution and ESFA funding. The College was to receive an element of funding recently announced by the government. Q. Pension costs? Funding would be received from central government to cover any increases in pension contributions, which would see a break even position in this area of spend.</p> <p>It was commented that the aim was to achieve outstanding status as a College from ‘Good’ but there were challenging circumstances facing the College. Governors asked that a piece of work be undertaken to identify the steps needed to become financially outstanding, identifying any barriers preventing the College from reaching this, which would then become the area(s) of focus.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That Finance and Staffing Committee agree to receive the revised Financial Regulations and recommend that it be adopted by the College Board subject to clarification being provided around Senior Post Holders. ii. That the CFO is asked to produce a paper detailing a step by step journey to becoming financially outstanding. 	<p>JC JC</p>
<p>13. Management Accounts to 31 July 2019</p>	<p>Confidential item.</p>	
<p>14. Learner Recruitment and Funding Update 2019-20</p>	<p>This paper showed the targets for the Learner Recruitment and Funding update 2019-20.</p> <p>Number of enrolments appeared to be healthy.</p> <p>Q. SEG comfortable with figures? SEG had been positive about the information to date.</p>	

	Resolved: That the Committee agree to receive the report.	
15.	Bad Debt Provision and Annual Write Off of Bad Debts Confidential item.	
16.	Approval of Contracts and Planned Expenditure in Excess of £125K Confidential item.	
17.	Chair's Urgent action not covered elsewhere on agenda This report aimed to notify governors of the occasions where the Chair of the Committee (or in his absence the Vice-Chair) had exercised urgent action since the previous meeting. Governors were informed that the Chair had exercised this power in relation to Forecast Partnership Activity 2018/19. Resolved: That the report is received and the Chair's urgent action is endorsed.	
18.	NIMASA Sea Service Update Confidential item.	
19.	Any other business None.	
20.	Date of next meeting Tuesday 26 November 2019 at 4.00pm at STC site.	
21.	Identification of Confidential Items Resolved: That the following items are to remain confidential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 3.3 – Matters arising re. Human Resources Plan – Progress Report • Item 6 - Human Resources Annual Report • Item 9 – Update on Sub-Contracting • Item 10 - Annual Report on Estates • Item 13 – Management Accounts • Item 15 - Bad Debt Provision and Annual Write Off of Bad Debts • Item 16 - Approval of contracts in excess of £125k • Item 18 – NIMASA Sea Service Update 	

Signed: **Date:**