

Meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee

Venue: via TEAMS
Date: 1 December 2020
Time: 4.00pm – 6.00pm

Present: Colin Seccombe (in the Chair)
 Malcolm Grady
 Martin Hottass
 Donya Urwin
 Andy Walton
 Lindsey Whiterod

In Attendance: Neil Longstaff (Director of Governance)
 George Clark (Governor)
 Jane Cuthbertson (Chief Finance Officer)
 Catherine Donnelly (Exec. Director of HR)
 Steve Chittenden (Finance Manager)

ITEM	ISSUES	ACTION
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence received.</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</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2020 were approved and to be signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Matters Arising not covered on the agenda</p> <p><u>3.1 HR Resources Plan 2020-21</u> CD reported that the College’s new IT/Digital Strategy would cover 3 areas: Operational, Hardware and Structure, and Digital Delivery. The Delivery element would follow the Grimsby model and focus on workforce planning, training and the staffing resources/skills required to support delivery within the curriculum. The HR action plan would be modified to reflect the input required from HR to support this.</p> <p>Q. When will modifications be made? The CEO anticipated actioning this in January 2021.</p> <p>Resolved: That CD is asked to provide an update to the Committee on the modifications to the HR plan in response to the IT/Digital Strategy.</p> <p><u>3.2 Financial Regulations</u> It was confirmed that the Financial Regulations were presented to the Board and approved.</p>	CD

	<p><u>3.3 Human Resources Report – HIVE</u> Confidential item</p> <p><u>3.4 Bad Debt Provision and Annual Write Off of Bad Debts</u> Confidential item</p> <p><u>3.5 Sub-contracting review - Groundwork (Groundwork South and North Tyneside)</u> Confidential item (restricted)</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Policies:</p> <p><u>4.1 Relocation Expenses Policy</u> CD explained that this policy had been updated to reflect change of dates and a request by unions over the relocation expenses. It was being recommended that Section 5 (Allowances) be amended to follow HMRC guidance that up to £8k could be awarded but this would be at the discretion of the CEO.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Relocation Expenses Policy, as presented, is approved.</p> <p><u>4.2 Volunteer Policy</u> The purpose of this report was to provide the Committee with a new Volunteer Policy for approval.</p> <p>The Policy was first initiated at the beginning of 2020 and was approved by SEG and unions by March, however, lockdown prevented the policy from being taken further at that point.</p> <p>This policy was seen as a mechanism of providing a good work/life balance to staff which helped ensure a high level of staff wellbeing. It was explained that volunteering was beneficial to developing leadership, communication and problem-solving skills, team player skills, as well as engaging College staff in projects that benefit the local community, which in turn, supported the College’s strategic goal to respond to the needs of the region.</p> <p>It was noted that the College would encourage all eligible members of staff to take up to two paid volunteer days per annum to participate in activities that benefitted their local community. This was particularly relevant in the current climate as demand for services that support the local community was high and the need for volunteers had increased in some sectors.</p> <p>A governor supported this but asked whether staff would be encouraged to become involved. CD confirmed that this would be the case via the CEO’s briefing but no discussion had yet taken place on any particular organisations to support. CD indicated that this could be sought from staff and reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p>Another governor felt this would be excellent personal development re. non-curricular and as staff lived across the North East, it could enhance the reputation of the College and at the same time addresses the College’s strategic aims in reflecting community needs.</p> <p>Q. Costs? Minimal, as staff would be asked to plan in advance and seek cover within.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Committee approve the Volunteer Policy.</p> <p><i>CD left the meeting</i></p> <p><u>4.3 E-Safety Policy</u> This updated policy kept the College compliant. Governors asked that the reference to South Tyneside College be amended and other typos be addressed.</p>	

	<p>Q. Policy re. memory sticks? This had been covered under a requirement to meet the Cyber Essentials award to achieve ESFA funding. It was expected that the College would be moving onto the next level, Cyber Essentials Plus, which would remove all use of any memory sticks.</p> <p>Resolved: That the E-Safety Policy is approved subject to the amendments identified by governors.</p>	LWh
5.	<p>Management Accounts to 31 October 2020</p> <p>Confidential item.</p>	
6.	<p>Student Withdrawals</p> <p>Confidential item.</p>	
7.	<p>Student Union Accounts 2019-20</p> <p>Confidential item.</p>	
8.	<p>Annual Report on Governor Expenses</p> <p>Confidential item.</p>	
9.	<p>Approval of Contracts and Planned Expenditure in Excess of £125K</p> <p>Confidential item.</p>	
10.	<p>Annual Pay Award 2020/21</p> <p>Governors were reminded that due to the impact of COVID-19, the 1% pay award for 2019/20 built into the budget had not been released to staff. As part of the 2020/21 budget setting process a 2% pay award was built into the budget.</p> <p>As detailed within the Management Accounts, there was a shortfall of income against the curriculum plan, primarily within Engineering in the Tyne Metropolitan campus and in the Marine School with a further potential risk if enrolments in January were not as expected due to the risks associated with a further lockdown as a result of COVID-19.</p> <p>Governors' views were sought. It was explained that any award agreed later in the year could be backdated.</p> <p>Resolved: That Board is recommended to agree that the salary increase is retained within the forecast and not released leaving a decision pending to later in the year.</p>	JC
11.	<p>Annual review of the Public Benefit Statement</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to ask the Committee to undertake a review of the College's Public Benefit Statement (PBS).</p> <p>NL reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Code of Good Governance for English Colleges recommended the adoption of such a statement and in doing so the College would be complying with the Code. • The annual review of the document was delegated to the Finance and Resources Committee. • The PBS described how the College sought to add value to the social, economic 	

	<p>and physical well-being of the community it served.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Senior Executive Group had considered the statement and recommend several changes, which were highlighted for consideration. <p>It was reported that this document was to be posted to the College website.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Committee approve the Public Benefit Statement subject to an update on the student numbers.</p>	NL
12.	<p>Any other business</p> <p><u>12.1 Bad Debt Provision</u></p> <p>Resolved: That the CFO is asked to present a paper at the next meeting.</p> <p><u>12.2 Website</u></p> <p>A governor asked that his governor profile be updated. It was noted that all profiles were to be updated and a new website was to be rolled out in the near future.</p>	JC NL
13.	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 17 March 2021 at 4.00pm via TEAMS</p>	
14.	<p>Investigation re. contract</p> <p>At this stage in the proceedings, staff except for the CEO left the meeting.</p> <p>Confidential restricted item.</p>	
15.	<p>To undertake the annual salary review for the Senior Postholders</p> <p>At this stage in the proceedings, the CEO and Director of Governance left the meeting.</p> <p>Confidential restricted item.</p>	
16.	<p>Identification of Confidential Items</p> <p>Resolved: That the following items are to remain confidential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 3 - Matters arising (3.3, 3.4 & 3.5 (restricted)) Item 5 – Management Accounts Item 6 - Student Withdrawals Item 7 - Student Union Accounts 2019-20 Item 8 - Annual Report on Governor Expenses Item 9 - Approval of contracts in excess of £125k Item 14 - Investigation re. contract review (restricted) Item 15 - To undertake the annual salary review for the Senior Postholders (restricted) 	

Signed: **Date:**