

## Meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee

**Venue:** STC Conference Room 1 / TEAMS

**Date:** 19 June 2025

**Time:** 4.00pm – 6.00pm

**Present:** Clive Johnson (in the Chair)  
Donya Urwin (T)  
Lindsey Whiterod

**Apologies:** Gary Hindmarch

**In Attendance:** Jane Cuthbertson (Chief Operating Officer)  
Neil Longstaff (Director of Governance)  
Lorna Lister (Senior Governor Support Officer)  
Karen Ritchie (Director of Finance)  
Allyson Edney (Director of HR)  
Craig Scott (Director of IT)  
Daniel Raw (Director of STEM & Green Initiatives)(Part)  
Graham Razey (National Leader of Education)  
Mandy Morris (Principal)  
Simon Ashton (Marine School Principal)  
George Clark (Governor)  
Malcolm Grady (Chair of Governors)

### ACTION TRACKER

Item	Summary of Action Required	By whom	Status	Comment / Update
<b>Meeting of the 20 March 2025</b>				
4.	<b>Approval of Policies:</b> That the Harassment & Bullying Policy and the Sickness Absence Policy dates were to be amended.	AE		Completed
7.	<b>Procurement Act:</b> Presentation/Paper on the Act as and when the College begin to use the new framework	CP		19.06.25 – Still outstanding – acknowledged. An update will be provided to Committee in the new academic year. 25.09.25 – Paper presented at meeting
<b>Meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>				
7.	<b>Policies: Recruitment &amp; Retention Policy</b> Q. How many people in receipt of Prima?	AE		15.09.25 - 11 staff in receipt of a retention premia. 1 Deputy Head 10 staff in difficult to fill roles.
16.	<b>Pay Award:</b> Over performance - £50 incentive voucher to be looked into.	JC		25.09.25 - This was not pursued – an increased pay award was provided to staff as approved by the Board

## MINUTES

ITEM	ISSUES	ACTION
1.	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>There were apologies for absence received and accepted from Gary Hindmarch.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Declarations</b></p> <p>i. <u>Declarations of interests</u> The Chair reminded members to declare any conflicts of interest as they arose on the agenda.</p> <p>The members of the Committee were reminded of the standing declarations in respect of the roles held in Tyne Coast Academy Trust by CJ.</p> <p>ii. <u>Business to be raised under Item 19</u> None</p>	
3.	<p><b>Minutes</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.</p> <p><b><u>3ii – Terms of Reference Tracker</u></b> The Chair noted the progression against the workplan.</p> <p><b><u>3iii - Matters arising not covered on the agenda</u></b> As reported on the Action Tracker.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Graham Razey (National Leader for Further Education (NLFE))</b></p> <p>Graham Razey provided a comprehensive overview of the college's financial position, progress made, and future outlook. He highlighted significant improvements, including a better budget outturn for 23/24 and a forecasted 7% EBITDA for the current year. GR emphasised the importance of maintaining momentum, developing a long-term financial strategy, and investing in staff and systems.</p> <p>Key risks for 25/26 were discussed, including cash flow management, the impact of the new build, and ensuring the improvements made are sustained. GR stressed the need for clear processes, management of fixed furniture and equipment, and careful governance of the new build project. He acknowledged the hard work of Jane, Karen and the team in improving financial controls and devolving budgets and highlighted that, of the 21 colleges he had supported as National Leader, this College had improved its financial position the most and over the shortest period of time than any other college he had worked with.</p> <p>The importance of investing in the future, particularly in marine growth, was highlighted. GR concluded by commending the college's progress and urging continued vigilance and strategic planning.</p> <p><b>Q. Do we have the resources available to complete the recommended tasks?</b> Resources were one thing and skills another – Did the college have the skills? No, not at present however felt that we were working toward achieving. The staff needed to feel empowered and part of the whole operation.</p>	

	<p>GR noted that there had been discussions around corporate services and that the spend now was about right, moving forward the aim was to understand where the spend was within each department and how it was divided. There was a need to work cohesively not alone or in silos.</p> <p>The financial position was commendable, GR explained that staff needed to develop systems and processes and that they felt supported and appreciated in doing so.</p> <p>GR explained that the curriculum was relatively simple to plan and not many metrics could break it, if the CP was devised, followed and resourced properly it would work.</p> <p>It was noted that planning and decision making had to be quicker.</p> <p>JC informed the committee that whilst GR was soon to be stepping down in his role as National Leader, he was going to be working with the college for a further 2 years on a contractual basis and an area he has been commissioned to review is the new build project team regarding resources and governance.</p> <p><b>Resolved: The Governors thanked Graham Razey for his support and recommendations.</b></p>	
5.	<p><b>Annual Review of Subcontracted Provision</b></p> <p>Confidential item</p>	
6.	<p><b>Human Resources Plan 2024-25 progress review</b></p> <p>The purpose of the report was to update the committee on the HR Plan progress.</p> <p>The HR Plan progress review provided an update on key actions and projects. The induction process was discussed, highlighting its improvement. Positive feedback was received for pension training.</p> <p>The implementation of a new HR system was highlighted, which aimed to improve staff details and integration. There were issues with analytics, but overall, the system was expected to provide better information and integration.</p> <p>Learning and development initiatives were discussed, including CPD implementation and management training. The new system would help capture CPD records more accurately.</p> <p>NL highlighted the need for more targeted governance training, focusing on strategic roles rather than operational details. It was suggested that a development programme for governors be created for the new academic year, with progress already made in scheduling training sessions, NMCC (Learning and Development Manager) was to be included in the planning of the session.</p> <p>The HR Plan also included discussions on staff enablement and improvement, with a focus on developing a positive culture and system within the college. There were comments on the importance of developing leaders and ensuring staff were supported effectively.</p> <p>Overall, the HR Plan progress review indicated positive steps towards improving HR processes, staff development, and governance training, with ongoing efforts to address challenges and enhance the college's HR capabilities.</p> <p><b>Q. Was the new build part of the plan?</b> Not now however with the support from GR senior leaders could be utilised, trained and money could be saved.</p>	

	<b>Resolved: That the committee agree to receive the report and acknowledge the information as provided.</b>	
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Policies/Procedures</b></p> <p>The following policies were reviewed and approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paternity and Parental Leave Policy</li> <li>• Recruitment &amp; Retention Premia Policy</li> <li>• Treasury Management Policy</li> <li>• Leave of Absence Policy</li> </ul> <p>The Bursary Policy was deferred and was to be presented directly to Board on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025.</p> <p><b>Q. How many people were in receipt of Premia?</b> Possibly 7/8 however would identify the exact figure.</p> <p><b>Q. Was there a desire to remove Premia entirely?</b> No, however would like to make it consistent across the college.</p> <p><b>Q. How often was the policy revised?</b> Continually reviewed for new posts and annually for existing staff.</p> <p><b>Q. Were there any other key areas emerging?</b> Maths.</p> <p><b>Q. Was there any flexibility to explore alternative options?</b> Yes, as and when the situation arises.</p> <p>The committee approved all presented policies, noting the importance of consistency and clarity in policy updates. The discussion highlighted the need for ongoing review and adaptation of policies to meet the college's evolving needs.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The committee accept the reports acknowledging the information as presented.</b></li> <li><b>The committee approve the Paternity and Parental Leave, Recruitment &amp; Retention Premia Policy, Treasury Management Policy and the Leave of Absence Policy.</b></li> </ol>	<b>AE</b>
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>HE Fees</b></p> <p>Deferred to the Quality of Education Committee scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025.</p>	
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Budget 2025-26 and 2 year financial forecasts – including capital expenditure &amp; KPI's (internal and external)</b></p> <p>Confidential item</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Student Association Budget 2025-26</b></p> <p>The purpose of the report was to request approval of the Student Association Budget for 2025/26.</p> <p>The student association budget was discussed as part of the overall budget. The budget had increased to £33k to account for more time for the Student Union President.</p> <p>There was positive feedback on the work done by the student association, noting their representation on the board and their contributions to the college community.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p>	

	<p>i. That the committee accept the report acknowledging the information as presented.</p> <p>ii. That the committee recommend the Student Association Budget for 2025/26 to Board for approval.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Management Accounts and commentary</b></p> <p>Confidential item</p>	
12.	<p><b>New Build – Update and Budget Implications</b></p> <p><b>The purpose of the report was to provide governors with an update on strategic estate projects.</b></p> <p>JC provided an update on the new build and its budget implications. The revised CFFLR was submitted to the DfE, and confirmation of the loan was received. The Section 106 agreement was expected to be finalised soon, with a judicial review period and a cool-off period impacting the timeline.</p> <p>The development agreement and lease arrangements were discussed, with challenges in terms and conditions from other funding providers. The QA site sale was expected in August 2025, with ongoing management of security and related issues.</p> <p>The committee commented on the progress and the importance of managing the technical issues to ensure the project moves forward smoothly.</p> <p>Overall, the new build update indicated positive progress, with ongoing efforts to address challenges and ensure the project's successful completion.</p> <p>It was noted that there had been a ceremony on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to mark the first spade in the ground at the new build site.</p> <p><b>Q. GR asked what early agreements were in place which could be a risk to the college?</b> JC stated that any early agreement s were the Council's responsibility to fund with no clawback written into the contract.</p> <p><b>Resolved: That the committee accept the report acknowledging the information as presented.</b></p>	
13.	<p><b>Approval of contracts and planned expenditure over 125k</b></p> <p>Confidential item</p>	
14.	<p><b>Financial Regulations Review</b></p> <p>The purpose of the report was to review and agree the Financial Regulations prior to seeking approval to adopt by the Board.</p> <p>The financial regulations review was completed to incorporate the requirements of the national procurement policy statement and minor changes to the format. The majority of changes were in Section 8, including active objectives and procurement policy additions.</p> <p><b>Resolved: The committee reviewed and commented on the report, recommending it for adoption by the board.</b></p>	

15.	<b>DfE Confirmation of College Financial Health</b>  The DfE confirmed the college's financial health status as Requires Improvement for 2023-24 and forecasted 'Good' for 2024-25. The committee reviewed and commented on the confirmation, recognising the positive effort and achievements of the team.  <b>Resolved:</b> The committee reviewed and commented on the report, recommending it for adoption by the board.	
16.	<b>Pay Award 2025/26</b>  Confidential item	
17.	<b>Link Governor Award – HSE</b>  The report provided an overview of the recent visit and concluded that the processes and controls in place for health & safety were effective for an educational environment. The report would be presented to the board on the 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2025 as part of the governance paper.	
18.	<b>FE Commissioner Financial Benchmarks</b>  The discussion focused on the benchmarks established by the FE Commissioner. There are six benchmarks in total, with three reviewed in the latest update: cash in hand, staff pay percentage, and operating surplus percentage. The aspirational target for cash in hand has been increased from 25 days to 40 days, which the college is currently meeting. The staff pay percentage has been maintained at 65%, and the operating surplus percentage is recommended at 6%, which the college is also achieving.  The committee deliberated on the significance of meeting these benchmarks and the potential for intervention if they are not met. The conversation acknowledged the college's capability to meet these targets and emphasized the necessity to remain vigilant in maintaining financial health.  <b>Resolved: That the committee accept the report acknowledging the information as presented.</b>	
19.	<b>Any other business</b>  <u>Finance &amp; Resources Chair's Action Report</u> NL reported that the following contracts had been approved via Chairs action since the last Board meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firewall and Wireless tender</li> <li>• Microsoft EES Licence</li> <li>• Print tender</li> <li>• Contingency Release</li> <li>• IT Hardware Order</li> </ul> <b>Resolved: That the committee accept the report and endorse the use of Chairs Action.</b>	
20.	<b>Date and time of next meeting</b>  TBC	
21.	<b>Identification Confidential Items</b>	

	<b>Resolved: That the following items are to remain confidential:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Item 05 – Annual Review of Subcontracted Provision</b></li><li>• <b>Item 09 – Budget 2025-26 and 2 year financial forecasts – including capital expenditure &amp; KPI's (internal and external)</b></li><li>• <b>Item 11 – Management Accounts &amp; Commentary</b></li><li>• <b>Item 13 – Approval of contracts and planned expenditure over 125k</b></li><li>• <b>Item 16 – Pay Award 2025/6</b></li></ul>	
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**Signed:** ..... **Date:** .....