

Meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee

Venue: STC Conference Room 1 / TEAMS

Date: 20 March 2025

Time: 10.00am – 10.45am

Present: Clive Johnson (in the Chair)
Gary Hindmarch
Donya Urwin (T)

Apologies: Lindsey Whiterod

In Attendance: Jane Cuthbertson (Chief Operating Officer)
Lorna Lister (Senior Governor Support Officer)
Karen Ritchie (Director of Finance)
Allyson Edney (Director of HR)
Craig Scott (Director of IT)
Sarah Bartlett (Director of Estates)
Claire Pinkney (Contracts & Procurement Manager)
Daniel Raw (Director of STEM & Green Initiatives)

ACTION TRACKER

Item	Summary of Action Required	By whom	Status	Comment / Update
Meeting of the 20 March 2025				
4.	Approval of Policies: That the Harassment & Bullying Policy and the Sickness Absence Policy dates were to be amended.	AE		
7.	Procurement Act: Presentation on the Act as and when the College begin to use the new framework	CP		

MINUTES

ITEM	ISSUES	ACTION
1.	Apologies for Absence There were apologies for absence received and accepted from Lindsey Whiterod.	
2.	Declarations i. <u>Declarations of interests</u> The Chair reminded members to declare any conflicts of interest as they arose on the agenda. The members of the Committee were reminded of the standing declarations in respect of the roles held in Tyne Coast Academy Trust by CJ. ii. <u>Business to be raised under Item 17</u> None	
3.	Minutes	

	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair.</p> <p><u>3ii – Terms of Reference Tracker</u> The Chair noted the progression against the workplan.</p> <p><u>3iii - Matters arising not covered on the agenda</u> As reported on the Action Tracker.</p>	
4.	<p>Approval of Policies</p> <p>The following policies were reviewed and approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Annual Leave Policy • Family Friendly Policy • Harassment & Bullying Policy (Dates to be amended) • Leave of Absence Policy • Management of Alcohol or Substance Related Incidents Policy • Sickness Absence Policy (Dates to be amended) • Redundancy Policy <p>The following policies were reviewed and recommended to the Board for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees Policy • Security Policy • Sub-Contracting Fees & Charging Policy • Business Continuity Policy • Senior Post Holders Disciplinary Policy & Procedure <p>Resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The committee accept the reports acknowledging the information as presented. That the Harassment & Bullying Policy and the Sickness Absence Policy dates were to be amended. That the committee recommend the Fees Policy, Security Policy, Sub-Contracting Fees and Charging Policy, Business Continuity Policy and the Senior Post Holders Disciplinary Policy & Procedure to Board for approval. 	AE
5.	<p>Update on Partnership Activity</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to provide the committee with an update on Partner activities.</p> <p>The college were involved in a number of partnerships across TCC whilst also looking to expand the offering with expressions of interest in potential partnerships across STC and TM. Some partnerships were on teach out, but this was being managed effectively to ensure all students involved had the opportunity to successfully complete their qualification.</p> <p>The college were invited to the grand opening of Northumberland FA by Norma Redfearn (Mayor of North Tyneside) on the 18th March 2025. The colleges' key partners were invited along to the Advisory Boards which allowed a strong representation from across the area.</p> <p>DR noted that the partnerships were going strong and felt positive about the future.</p> <p>Q. What was the relationship like with TNT? Good, they were not looking to go anywhere else for support, the relationship was growing due to the strong engineering management.</p> <p>Resolved: That the report information is received and acknowledged.</p>	

6.	<p>Business Continuity – update for Governors</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to provide the committee with an update on the business continuity position.</p> <p>Since the last report in March 2024, there have been no business continuity incidents. According to our Business Continuity Policy, a desktop simulation exercise should be conducted if no incidents occur within 12 months.</p> <p>In October 2024, significant refurbishment works began for blocks D, F, E, and Ignite at Tynemet. These works required the full vacation of blocks D, F, and Ignite, and the partial vacation of block E. Approximately one-third of the campus needed to be relocated within a tight two-week period due to immovable project deadlines. The requirements and urgency of this exercise mirrored those of a business continuity event.</p> <p>The relocation project was managed by the Director of Estates, Sarah Bartlett, involving timetabling classes into free slots and reusing mothballed floors. Daily Teams meetings were held to coordinate efforts between various departments. Challenges included staff availability, the volume of materials to be relocated, and insufficient rooms with power and data cabling. Solutions involved prioritising project work, hiring temporary staff, and making substantial timetable changes.</p> <p>Key to the success was the daily catch-up meetings via Microsoft Teams, which allowed rapid issue resolution and adherence to timescales. The response to this incident was used in place of a desktop simulation exercise.</p> <p>Resolved: That the committee agree to receive the report and acknowledge the information as provided and that this be presented to the Board.</p>	
7.	<p>The Procurement Act</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to provide governors with an overview of the Procurement Act 2023 and its significance to procurement of the College.</p> <p>The Procurement Act 2023 came into force on 24 February 2025. The Act replaced the four sets of regulations previously governing procurement in the public sector. The Act proposes reform of public procurement and gave improved clarity and consistency for contracting authorities (CA), no matter which sector they operated in. The College was considered a CA and was therefore subject to the Act, the College was exempt from certain parts of the Act, but these exemptions were minimal.</p> <p>CP highlighted the main changes, improvements and drawbacks for the governors and explained that two acts could be running at the same time which could cause some confusion.</p> <p>Q. Does the Procurement Act come into force if the college were offering contracts? No, the easiest way to understand it was if we were spending money or supplying something the college were covered by the act.</p> <p>Q. What about the Falcons partnership? They were supplying to the college so they would be covered by the Procurement Act not the college.</p> <p>Q. Do you expect to use the new framework soon? Strategy was to use the existing framework and covered by the old act.</p> <p>A governor stated it would be useful to know when the college were using the new framework and asked for a paper to be presented to the committee when this took place.</p> <p>Q. How did you manage to inform the organisation of the new regime and that it was adhered to? It was already highlighted in the College Financial Handbook; this was a bible for any Manager/Budget Holder in the business and should be checked regularly for clarity. There had</p>	CP

	<p>to be a cultural shift for budget holders to check with procurement first. It was about building those relationships with the people in the college that may spend more money than others, so they had full understanding of what was required.</p> <p>JC stated that a crib sheet had been created and distributed to staff, it was also part of the induction process for new starts. It was also noted that when budget setting was taking place the budget holder signed to say that they would comply with procedures and process appertaining to their budget</p> <p>Resolved: That the report information is received and acknowledged.</p>	
8.	<p>Human Resources Report</p> <p>Confidential item</p>	
9.	<p>Update on Budget Pressures</p> <p>Confidential item</p>	
10.	<p>Management Accounts</p> <p>Confidential item</p>	
11.	<p>Bad Debt Insurance</p> <p>Governors enquired whether it was possible for the College to take out insurance against Bad Debt specifically as there was a government scheme.</p> <p>Insurance could be sourced however only covered for non-payment through insolvency and was for both UK and Overseas customers.</p> <p>Trade Credit Insurance could protect against customer insolvency, but also for nonpayment or late payment for solvent companies, again this was for UK and Overseas customers.</p> <p>The cost of Trade Credit Insurance was based on a % turnover, combined with the level of risk of bad debt.</p> <p>UK Export Finance was a scheme backed by the UK Government to protect businesses against risk on nonpayment when exporting Goods/Services overseas determined case by case. The College would need too meet eligibility requirements as detailed in the paper.</p> <p>There was a list of countries that were not covered, and had a lot of restrictions: for example, Nigeria was only covered by a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Current Insurers were contacted, and the College were awaiting quotes.</p> <p>Resolved: That the report information is received and acknowledged.</p>	
12.	<p>Funding Allocations 2025-26</p> <p>Confidential item</p>	
13.	<p>Estates Strategy including New Build update</p> <p>Confidential item</p>	
14.	<p>Approval of Contracts and Planned Expenditure in Excess of £125k</p> <p>Confidential item</p>	

15.	College Financial Plan from ESFA Confidential item	
16.	College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) Confidential item	
17.	Any other business None.	
18.	Date and time of next meeting Thursday 19 th June 2025	
19.	Identification Confidential Items Resolved: That the following items are to remain confidential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 08 – Human Resources Report • Item 09 – Update on Budget Pressures • Item 10 – Management Accounts and Commentary • Item 12 – Funding Allocations 2025-26 • Item 13 – Estates Strategy and New Build Update • Item 14 – Approval of Contracts and Planned Expenditure in Excess of £125k • Item 15 – College Financial Plan from ESFA • Item 16 – College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) 	

Signed: **Date:**