

Meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee

Venue: STC Conference Room 1 / TEAMS

Date: 12 March 2026

Time: 4.10pm – 5.55pm

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

Apologies: Gary Hindmarch

In Attendance: Jane Cuthbertson (Chief Operating Officer)
Karen Ritchie (Director of Finance)
Neil Longstaff (Director of Governance)
Craig Scott (Executive Director of Digital and Projects)
Simon Ashton (Marine School Principal)
Alison Edney (Director of HR)
Sarah Bartlett (Director of Estates)
Dan Raw (Vice-Principal)

ACTION TRACKER

Item	Summary of Action Required	By whom	Status	Comment / Update
Meeting of the 25 th September 2025				
14	CFFR: Governor Dashboard to be included as an agenda item moving forward to provide a visual representation.	KR		The Governor Dashboard was presented at Finance Committee. A more in-depth presentation can be given at Governor Development Events or June Committee to support Governors knowledge. <i>An explanation against the ratios has been provided</i>

MINUTES

ITEM	ISSUES	ACTION
1.	Apologies for Absence The Committee approved apologies for absence received from those identified above having first considered the reasons for their absence.	
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 and JF. ii. <u>Business to be raised under Item 14</u> None	
3.	Minutes	

	The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair. <u>Matters arising not covered on the agenda</u> - As shown on the Action Tracker and below: - Joanne Fanning's attendance at the previous meeting was to be captured in the Governors attendance figures for 2025/26.	NL
4.	The Chair, with the approval of governors, changed the order of business as follows: Update on Partnership Activity (FE / Marine) Confidential item.	
5.	Human Resources Report incl. Staff Voice The purpose of the report was to provide an update on key Human Resources matters, including workforce data, employee relations, recruitment and retention, sickness absence, statutory reporting and Staff Voice. AE highlighted the following for governor consideration: - Staffing numbers across all staff groups and comparison with previous academic years - Staff turnover, including the impact of restructures and voluntary redundancy - Employee relations activity, including disciplinary, grievance and probationary processes - Recruitment activity and ongoing challenges in specialist curriculum areas - Use of agency staff and actions being taken to reduce associated costs - Targeted Retention Incentive Payments for FE teachers - Sickness absence trends, reasons for absence and wellbeing support in place - Occupational Health activity and management of long-term absence - Gender Pay Gap reporting for the statutory reporting period. Staffing numbers had decreased slightly due to efficiencies and turnover had reduced significantly to just under 14%, attributed to positive changes implemented in November 2024, such as pay increases and compressed working hours. However, there was an increase in staff investigations, with 18 conducted but only 7 leading to action. Recruitment efforts had seen fewer adverts but more applicants and there were ongoing efforts to reduce agency costs. The government's targeted retention incentive payment for eligible lecturers was also discussed, with 52 lecturers applying last year. Q. How many successful? It was noted that the College was not made aware of how many applications were successful. Sickness absence had decreased overall, but long-term absence remained a concern. It was noted that long term absences related particularly to operations and stress-related issues. AE emphasised the importance of robust occupational health referrals to address long-term absence. Q. There was a need for a realistic understanding of what the medical position is? Difficult to obtain from the medical professionals. Q. Why are we seeing more staff on the management spine. Is this owing to more managers in post? It was commented that the area of student services had grown significantly over the past two to three years but these were not necessarily management positions. It was reported that there were four IT staff, which were specialist posts but had to be placed on the management spine but were not classed as managers, which could misrepresent the figures.	

	The CEO stated that this raised an issue and the actual numbers should be identified to determine the breakdown of actually how many managers were within the management spine and how many were holding technical positions. The Chair also asked for the number of agency staff to be reported. Q. Nature of staff investigations, was it staff behaviour or staff more confident to address issues? AE indicated that there was some concern that escalated action was not necessary as the matter could be handled better or differently. Also, there were allegations from students that needed to be fully investigated but it was often found that there was no case to answer. Q. How many staff on long term sickness ? Approximately seven, some with serious reasons. AE drew governors attention to developments in staff voice, including the introduction of pulse surveys (4 per year) and the annual staff survey using York College for an analysis. NL reported that this tied in with the new Framework for Student, Staff and Stakeholder Voice, which was to be presented to the Board for approval. Q. Questions set by York College? TCC could set additional questions but an analysis would only cover the preset questions. Q. Have staff unions been consulted? They were to be notified and encouraged to ask their members to complete the surveys. Q. How do you encourage feedback given the poor feedback on exit interviews? AE outlined the structure of the questionnaires, which were designed to be quick responses with only a few opportunities for statements, thereby easier to complete. Resolved: That the report is received and information acknowledged. That the Gender Pay Report is approved and is to be published on the College and Government websites by 31st March 2026. That greater detail is to be provided in the Executive Summary around the key HR risks in future reports to the Committee. AE left the meeting.	AE AE AE
6.	Risk Management (Monitoring of Key Financial Risks) Confidential item.	
7.	Disaster Management/Business Continuity Plan Update The purpose of the report was to provide the Committee with an annual update on the College's business continuity arrangements, including assurance on testing, exercising and preparedness activities undertaken during the reporting period, and planned activity for the remainder of the academic year. CS highlighted the following: - Over the last 12 months, the College had not experienced any live business continuity incidents requiring plan invocation. - Focus had been on assurance and exercising activity, with particular emphasis on cyber resilience and senior leadership readiness. - A multi-agency cyber incident exercise for senior managers (including a member of the College Board) was delivered by the Police in November, testing leadership, decision making and coordination. - In January, governors undertook a cyber-attack scenario to test Board level oversight, assurance and governance responsibilities during disruption. It was noted that both exercises outlined above, provided positive assurance and generated learning that was informing ongoing resilience and cyber security improvements.	

	A lockdown procedure test was scheduled for later in the year, involving staff and students simulating a lockdown scenario. CS emphasised the importance of these exercises in raising awareness and improving preparedness. Q. Lessons learned from these exercises, how were they fed back to staff to implement? They were cascaded down to individual departments to update their specific plans. The committee discussed the importance of continuous improvement and vigilance to avoid complacency. CS provided assurance that the College's extensive cyber security measures were regularly reviewed and updated. Resolved: That the committee agree to receive the report and acknowledge the information as provided and that this be presented to the Board.	CS
8.	Six monthly Estates condition update This report was to update the Committee on any condition changes to the current sites as the College progressed through the academic year. SB highlighted changes and risks at various sites. The Halls were experiencing communal shower failures and South Tyneside College had issues with subterranean boilers and underground pipework. At the Marine Offshore Safety Training (MOST) centre two areas were being refurbished to host ENEM labs creating more space in the new build, and roof leaks were being addressed. The jetty had been refurbished and the fire training centre might require significant investment in the future. TyneMet had mothballed floors and repaired roof leaks, with a focus on LED lighting upgrades. Q. Anyone hurt by the sign blown down? No and arrangements were being made for repair and the College insurance company was being consulted. Q. TyneMet – although not spending large amounts, will the LEDs be reusable? SB confirmed that LEDs could be moved into the new build where needed. The committee discussed the importance of managing these issues and the potential for moving to a new site with support from the local authority. Resolved: That the committee agree to receive the report and acknowledge the information as provided	
9.	New Build - Overview of financial implications on budget Confidential item.	
10.	Management Accounts and Commentary Confidential Item	
11.	Approval of Contracts and planned Expenditure over £125k Confidential item.	
12.	Funding Allocation 2026-27 JC reported that the College's funding allocation for 2026-27 had not yet been received. Initial indications suggested minimal increases, with more funding directed towards schools.	

	Resolved: That the committee note the current position.	
13.	Fees Policy 2026/27 This policy outlined how the College would apply the funding regulations and set fees according to market forces. CS stated that this was an annual review and the changes this year were of a minor nature, involving name changes and updates to job titles and tables. Resolved: That the Finance and Resources Committee accept the policy and recommend it to the Board for approval.	CS
14.	Any other business None	
15.	Date and time of next meeting Resolved: That the next meeting of the Committee is to be held on 18 June 2026 at 4pm	
16.	Identification Confidential Items Resolved: That the following items are to remain confidential: • Item 4.1 & 4.2 - Update on Partnership Activity (FE / Marine) • Item 6 – Risk Management (Monitoring of Key Financial Risks) • Item 9 – New Build - Overview of financial implications on budget • Item 10 – Management Accounts and Commentary • Item 11 - Approval of Contracts and planned Expenditure over £125k	

Signed: **Date:**