

FINANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday 6 July 2021 at 4.45pm
MINUTES

Chaired by: Steve Oldridge

Members Present: Ian Brabbs Mick Paxton Neil Hughes Phil Rumsey

Also Present: Lesley Clemmet – Director of Finance & Resources

Heather Campbell – Clerk to the Corporation

1 **Apologies for absence**

No apologies received and the meeting was quorate with 5 members present.

2 **Declaration of personal conflicts of interest**

None.

3 **Minutes of the previous meeting.**

a. **Agree Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2021 and the Confidential and Restricted Minutes of 24 March approved at the Corporation on 20 April 2021.

The Chair asked members if they had any comments/amendments to the minutes and there were none raised.

b. **Updates from Clerk or College Management** – None.

c. **Review of actions agreed**

The Chair referred to the report and the following was noted:

- 10-Mar-2020 Item 9 Clerk to refer list of relevant policies to each committee for review when master schedule finalised by HR – the Chair noted that this has been WIP for some time and asked the Principal to pursue the matter with HR to finalise the Master List and for it to be included as an Agenda item for the next meeting.
- 24-Mar-2020 Item 8 Director of Finance to update all bank mandates in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Regulations – she noted that this should be marked a work in progress, as not all the mandates had been finalised yet and should be included as an Agenda item at the next meeting.

ACTION AGREED

Principal to follow up as a matter of urgency finalising the Master Policies Schedule with the HR Manager.

d. **Matters arising not covered in agenda** – None.

4 **Updates on Potential Changes in Provision, Staffing, Performance and Pay Issues**

a. **New Financial Risks or Opportunities**

The Director of Finance & Resources advised members she was not aware of any new Financial Risks or Opportunities that she needed to raise with the committee.

b. **Pensions and Pay Awards**

The Director of Finance & Resources advised that Pensions and Pay Awards are covered in her Commentary below under item 7 Financial Updates.

The Vice Chair reminded the meeting that the Senior Post Holders pay award of 2.5% approved at the Corporation meeting 15 December 2020 was subject to review once teaching staff pay awards had been finalised. He asked if the 2.5% needs to be reviewed in the light of the teaching staff pay award since although this would be something for the Remuneration Committee to consider if a further review was required it would affect the budget figures .

The Principal advised that the difference between the agreed teaching pay award and SPH pay award was marginal and therefore he did not feel it was necessary to review the 2.5% award to SNP so that there would be no impact on the budget. The Director of Finance agreed with this assessment of the position .

The members agreed that the Principal's assessment of the position regarding the absence of any need for a further review of the SNP pay award as supported by the Director of Finance, should be brought to the attention of the Remuneration Committee at its meeting later that evening.

5 **Standing items**

a. **Principal's expenses – actual and planned (for Chairman's approval)**

The Principal observed that he did not have any actual or planned expenses.

b. **Approval of any issues relating to planned trips overseas**

- (1) Senior Staff – None planned
- (2) Family Members – None planned

c. **Reporting of issues relating to quotations/tenders**

The Director of Finance & Resources advised there were none.

d. **Health & Safety Update (significant Estate related issues only)**

The Chair enquired if there were any Health & Safety updates relating to Estates.

The Director of Finance & Resources advised that the only matter she had to raise was the previously reported need for the removal of the asbestos recently found in the main block. As reported she had put in a CIF bid of £120k to meet the cost of the removal, which had been successful and the work will be carried out in the near future.

6 **Receive Estates Update**

The Chair invited the Director of Finance & Resources to give members an update on the Estates and any projects planned.

Director of Finance & Resources advised majority of the Estates projects and planned works, were covered in her budget commentary under item 7, but she highlighted the following:

- Lighting project funded by a SALIX loan has been completed apart from the solar panels which had had to be deferred as the original site chosen on the B Block roof had been found not be strong enough. A survey had been carried out to find an alternative site and had decided on siting them on the main block which is a smaller area meaning less panels. As a result, the final cost of the project will come in under budget.
- New boilers project is coming to an end and has come in within budget.

As the SALIX loan has been delayed because of the delay in installing the solar panels the College has had to use its reserves to pay for the work but SALIX are now at the point of releasing the loan was expected to have been received before the end of July.

7 **Finance Update**

See confidential minutes.

8 **ESFA**

See confidential minutes.

9 **Review Redundancy & Discretionary Payments Guidelines**

The Chair referred to the Guidelines and invited comments from members.

The Vice Chair proposed various amendment to the wording within the document that he felt needed clarifying and it was agreed that once amended the Guidelines would come back to the committee on 22 July for approval and recommendation to the Corporation.

The Principal highlighted at section 4 second bullet point '*Redundancy plus discretionary payment to any one individual must not exceed £10,000*' the reference to the monetary limitation would need to be reviewed in the light of him having recently had to approve a redundancy payment to a member of staff without any enhancement.

ACTIONS AGREED

Clerk to email the Guidelines document to the Vice Chair to amend the wording.

Vice Chair to amend the wording and once amended it come back to the committee on 22 July to approve and recommend the Corporation approve the document.

Principal to discuss wording with the Director of Finance & Resources of second bullet point in section 4.

10 **Annual Review of Travel & Subsistence Rates for Staff June 2021**

The Chair referred to paper J on the Travel and Substance Rates for Staff and noted that the paper proposed no increase in any of the rates .

The Principal advised he had explored what other colleges pay, which varied but the majority of them were in line with the HMRC Approved Mileage Rate of 45p. Neil proposed that the mileage rate be increased to the HMRC Approved Rate. The Principal confirmed that the College staff do not do a lot of mileage and the Director of Finance & Resources confirmed that an increase from 38p to 45p per mile would not have a great impact on the budget.

The Chair asked members if they were prepared to approve the proposal that the College mileage rate be linked to the HMRC rate of 45p with no change to any of the other expense rates.

Members agreed the proposal.

11 **Review and Finalise the Banking Arrangements**

The Director of Finance & Resources advised that she had not completed the review of the Banking Arrangements due to issues with Lloyds Bank and the College finance policy linked to the Banking Arrangements, but confirmed that the mandates for the other two bank accounts now had the previously agreed signatories removed, which the Finance governor had facilitated by ratifying the relevant documentation. Therefore, she asked to defer the Finalising of the Banking Arrangements to the Extra F&E meeting on 22 July.

Members agreed to defer the item to the next meeting.

12 **Identify any discussion items as “Confidential & Restricted”**

Members considered their discussions and agreed the discussion under Items 7 and 8 be classified as confidential.

13 **Any Other Business**

No matters raised.

14 **Date of Next Meeting – Extra F&E meeting 22 July 2021**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.15pm