

## MOULTON COLLEGE

### FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Monday, 25 March 2024 at 5.00pm in the IT Suite

<b>Present:</b>	Charles Matts	Independent Governor
	Mark Wakeford	Independent Governor
	Mohamed Saeudy	Independent Governor — via teams
	Corrie Harris	Principal
	Karen Squires	Staff Governor
<b>In attendance:</b>	Alicia Bruce	Chief Operating Officer
	David Aldridge	Executive Director Human Resource
	Matt Smith	Executive Director of Skills and Business Development
	Stuart Baker	Director of Estates & Facilities (Items 12-16)
	Andrew Bailey	Director of Student Services (Items 12- 18)
	Sarah Bunney	Finance Director
	Catherine Duro	Head of Governance

#### SECTION A – ROUTINE ITEMS AND GOVERNANCE:

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##### 24/12 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)

Absences were noted for Ashley Clarkson and Mustafa Regec-Noor.

##### 24/13 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

##### 24/14 Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)

The minutes of the meeting held on **22 January 2024** were **approved** as an accurate record for publishing.

##### 24/15 Outstanding Actions (Agenda item 4, Paper B)

There were no outstanding actions.

#### SECTION B – RESOURCES:

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There was some rescheduling of the agenda.

##### 24/16 Estates Update (Agenda Item 5, Paper D)

Thanks were given for an **informative and assuring** report. Governors were pleased to note the positive consideration of student experience across estates work.

It was reported that priorities had been regulatory and compliance activities, including lift maintenance, which had improved the service and student experience, gas safety certificates and electrical hardwiring had also been completed.

The identification process of priorities for the estate was detailed. It was **asked** where information on what helps student experience was sourced from. It was **explained** that this was from experience and student voice, for example the bus shelter was requested. Some green space being lawned to give a more collegiate atmosphere for the students.

Sustainability was thread through all activity. It was **asked** if we could calculate embodied and used carbon – it was **confirmed** this was possible and high on the agenda. Governors were assured that as the team complete items such as boilers it was ensured that if they were not currently sustainable that retro fit has been considered and where possible enabled, for example hydro boilers. Governors **understood** that the refurbishment for T levels would be a focus over the summer, with air sourced heating and solar panels. Balancing the cost today and in the future with the sustainable priority was a consideration at the start of all projects.

It was agreed that an estates update report would become a standing item.

*(Stuart left the meeting)*

#### **24/17 IT Position Report (Agenda item (Agenda item 4, Paper C)**

The IT presentation was taken as read and the detail behind the GANNT Chart explained.

Governors were **assured** by the illustration of rapid implementation, with a logical work through of essential activities clearly detailed. The pacing for impact was explained. Transparency on funding was given.

The need to build a transfer of data to ProSolution into the capital investment plan and a change management programme, was **explained**.

Cyber essentials plus was being aimed for in the next calendar year.

Disaster recovery was **challenged** and an **assuring** update was provided.

Culture and staff training was the other vein to the delivery of the IT improvement programme. It was **confirmed** that communication had improved and staff were seeing the positive impact of the work taking place.

The staff governor **reported** that staff could see and feel things happening which was reassuring. The amount of timely communication had brought patience and understanding from staff who were on the journey and feedback was positive.

Governors **agreed** that this was good news which had been a long time coming.

Thanks and congratulations were offered to Andrew for managing this project and activity.

**24/18 FE AND HE RECRUITMENT (Agenda item 8, paper G)** – was heard next in the meeting.

A positive picture was reported. The committee were **informed** the previous year's issues had been addressed and the college were now able to recruit internationally.

It was **asked** what underpinned the positive shift in conversions from offer to acceptance. It was agreed that the college reputation was a key factor. As the college processes evolved and improved the applicant experience acceptances were increasing. The team were not complacent and working to ensure these increases materialise into enrolments. The improvements were **reported** to be a response to the improvement in process, quality of communication, quality of interviews and marketing.

Governors **understood** that for the first time there was a need to talk about capping numbers which was not a decision taken lightly by SLT, but needed, to protect the quality of education for those attending. This action was **supported** by governors.

### **24/19 Sustainability Position Report (Agenda item 7a, Paper E)**

An **update** was provided to governors on the early committee meetings and questions were invited. The budget restrictions were questioned against the resource needed.

Governors were **assured** that staff were very aware of the sustainability priority and see how important it is, it is a shared priority. There had been a positive response from staff wishing to be directly involved. A communication need had been identified to inform and celebrate what was already happening across the college, which was unrecognised or misunderstood.

An update was provided regarding sustainability in the curriculum, it was reported that in some curriculum areas it was very well covered and embedded. In other areas there was consistency through personal development and tutorials for all. A sustainability competition was open to all students regardless of course to put ideas forward for delivering which would show where student interest lay. Two students had attended both meetings and been given actions they were delivering on.

Governors **understood** that the action plan would be reviewed at the next meeting of the sustainability working party.

### **24/20 Sustainability Working Party Minutes (Agenda Item 7b, Paper F)**

The Sustainability Working Party minutes were received. The committee remit was clarified; it was there to challenge and support and build sustainability governance through all committees and the corporation. It would be meeting twice more this year to understand the action plan and seek to allocate governance responsibilities across the committees.

## **SECTION C – Budgeting and Financial Performance:**

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### **24/21 Apprenticeships and Commercial Activity report (Agenda item 9, Paper H)**

The report was taken as read. The headlines were discussed and actions to cover the variances shown assured. Questions were invited. The impact of, and action for vandalism was discussed.

### **24/22 Business Support KPI's (Agenda item 10, Paper I)**

The KPI's were discussed and those beneath target explained.

It was **asked** how many key posts were vacant at the time of reporting. All the gaps were critical and agency staff were having to cover front line delivery which was most critical for student experience. Governors **understood** it was very typical across the sector, and the college were considering new approaches to address the issue.

EBITDA was showing the opposite pattern from the previous year and the reasons were explored. This year the college was performing better on income but the pressure on staff costs was requiring action to stay above the target.

The staff governor **confirmed** that staff moral had been boosted by good news on IT, the estate and finance.

### **24/23 Management accounts and Cash flow (Agenda item 11, Paper J)**

The Finance Director explained the key changes.

The **impact** on the college's financial position and the flexibilities offered by the DFE Loan transfer were **explained**. Governors were **assured** it gave the college more freedom to strengthen its financial position and invest to be more sustainable, with better quality facilities through a managed capital programme rather than servicing a debt, until we are strong enough to repay it.

Growth in capital projects, through grant funding, including a T level equipment grant which had been awarded for animal, agriculture and construction and an HTQ grant, was **detailed**. The caveats of the grants were **discussed**.

Governors understood that although income increased, growth had led to increased costs.

There was a **debate** regarding the devolved budgets. The committee was **assured** this gave managers much more control and offered greater clarity on where savings could be made, than there had been when managed centrally. A significant contingency pot was being put in place to draw from rather than needing to cut other budgets in the case of an emergency.

#### **24/24 Treasury Management Report (Agenda item 12, Paper K)**

The treasury management paper was received. The report confirmed the transfer of the loan.

### **SECTION D – HUMAN RESOURCES**

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#### **24/25 HR Quarterly Report (Agenda item 13, Paper L)**

A number of long-term sickness absences had been resolved this quarter.

There was a **lengthy discussion** around the current levels of agency spend and the impact. Governors were assured the strategy was being revisited alongside retention strategies for current employees. Governors were assured there was a structured induction and support, from the Assistant Principal for TLA, for agency staff.

The living wage 9.7% increase in April was discussed and the impact on the salary bands.

The Committee was **informed** that a joint union submission was expected after Easter, to the AoC for the annual pay award, which will be considered, but any increase would have to be moderate without additional funding. No sign of any additional funding coming for a pay award, so our ability for a pay award next year will be limited. Modelling will come forward to a future meeting. The importance of giving a pay award in a challenging market was not disputed.

### **Section E – POLICIES:**

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#### **24/26 HR Policies**

- **Paternity Leave Policy (Agenda Item 14, Paper M)**
- **Adoption Leave Policy (Agenda Item 15, Paper N)**
- **Shared Parental Leave Policy (Agenda Item 16, Paper O)**
- **Staff Right to Work Policy (Agenda Item 17, Paper P)**

The four revised policies, the changes made and the reasons for them, were detailed.

**Resolved**, that the four revised policies be **approved**.

## **Section F –RISK MANAGEMENT:**

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### **24/27 Risk Management Report (Agenda item 18, Paper Q)**

The risk management report was received and the reduction of two risks following the transfer of the debt understood.

It was **agreed** that a review of the strategic risks was needed. This was scheduled for the upcoming governor development day.

## **Section G –CLOSING ITEMS:**

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### **24/28 Any other business (Agenda item 13)**

There was no other business.

### **24/29 Impact of Governance (Agenda item 14)**

- Impact realised – significant risks and issues highlighted earlier in the year had been progressed satisfactorily.
- Staff voice welcomed throughout the meeting providing valuable triangulation.
- Further engagement from students regarding sustainability was requested.

### **24/30 Date of next meeting**

Monday 3 June 2024 5pm