

MOULTON COLLEGE

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Monday, 21 October 2024 at 5.00pm in M6.

Present:	Ashley Clarkson	Independent Governor
	Charles Matts	Independent Governor
	Mark Wakeford	Independent Governor
	Mohamed Saeudy	Independent Governor
	Karen Squires	Independent Governor
	Oliver Symons	Principal
In attendance:	Suzzanne Ijewski	Independent Governor
	Alicia Bruce	Chief Operating Officer
	Faye Williams	Vice - Principal
	David Aldridge	Executive Director Human Resource
	Sarah Bunney	Finance Director
	Andrew Bailey	Assistant Principal
	Jack Marlow	Farm Manager
	Catherine Duro	Head of Governance

SECTION A – ROUTINE ITEMS AND GOVERNANCE:

Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)

1. Absences were accepted from Stuart Baker.

Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)

2. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2024 were **approved** as an accurate record for publishing.

Outstanding Actions (Agenda item 4, List)

4. An update was provided on the two outstanding actions which were being addressed.

SECTION B – RESOURCES

Farm Annual Report 2023/24 (Agenda item 5, Paper B)

5. The annual report was **received** and governors' attention drawn to the key points. Congratulations were given on the yield achieved during DEFRA's reported second worst year on record.
6. An update was provided on the carbon soil testing and promotion of regenerative farming. The pending requirement to publish a report on carbon was discussed.
7. All were **proud** that the students engaged in all elements of the farm.
8. Governors **asked** for a proposal specifying the resources needed to develop the farm and deliver an outstanding experience, from a commercially viable farm. **(Action JM)**
9. **Thanks** were given for an informative report, which equipped governors to make decisions regarding the development of the farm.

JM left the meeting.

Estates Annual Report 2023/24 (Agenda Item 6, Paper C)

10. The Estates annual report was received. Governors were informed of the progress during the year and updates against current and future projects.

IT Annual Report 2023/24 (Agenda item 7, Paper D)

11. The annual report was received and **summarised** that it had been a positive 9 months, with all milestones achieved to stabilise the IT infrastructure, for staff and students,
12. It was **confirmed** that thinclient had been challenging, but now all staff at 0.6FTE an above had a laptop. The college was preparing to enable students to BYOD (Bring your Own Device) from September 2025, with support for those without.
13. It was **asked** what percentage of classrooms had been updated (**Action ABa**)
14. It was **confirmed** that an AI strategy was being developed.
15. Governors were **assured** of the positive result from a cyber security penetration test that had been completed against the Montpellier questionnaire.

FE and HE Recruitment (Agenda item 10, Paper G)

This item was heard early due to presenter availability.

16. Governors were **informed** that FE recruitment had gone to plan and been successful. At the time of writing, it was hoped that numbers would finalise at a level high enough to submit a growth case for in year funding. Caution was advised as this growth reflected a national trend and funding was not guaranteed.
17. Governors were advised that HE recruitment had been more challenging and that the reasons for this had been discussed in depth at HEBoS. It was **asked** if further support was needed. The issues were school specific and understood. An HE development plan would be presented to the next meeting of HEBoS, in November. Conversion from FE was **encouraged**.
18. It was **asked** how well recruitment had started for 2025/26. It was **confirmed** that it had been a positive start with a record attendance at the first open day, interviewing of those applicants would be completed in student week.
19. It was **asked** if the breakeven point was known by course. It was **confirmed** that this was available from 4Cast and use of this was improving.

Tuition Fees, Accommodation and Transport 2025-26 (Agenda item 13, Paper I)

20. The tuition fees paper was received. Governors were advised that these had been updated, and a revised version would be circulated showing a year-on-year comparator and a discount on HNC/HND. This proposed discount was **explained**.
21. It was asked if a competitor analysis had taken place and if the courses were viable with reduced fees. There was a **robust debate** on the appropriate fee level.
22. It was **confirmed** that contributions were reviewed at course level and growth was needed from a small base. Governors were assured that lose leaders would not run. A small cohort of three learners had been supported in relocating elsewhere to protect their student experience.
23. **Resolved** that the revised proposal be **recommended** to the Corporation for **approval**.

ABa left the meeting.

Sustainability Annual Report 2023/24 (Agenda item 8, Paper E)

24. The sustainability annual report was received and the revised approach and priorities discussed. The clear report was **commended**. Governors understood a

- development plan was underway to measure sustainability across the estate and the curriculum; to enable progress, reporting and promotion of activity.
25. The three strategic pillars were detailed and the approach to lead and deliver them throughout the college explained.
 26. It was **asked** when the carbon baseline would be available. The challenges in the data sifting were explained. A commitment was made to providing this to the next meeting, **(Action FW)**
 27. Governors **acknowledged** that the college was behind others. They encouraged high **aspirations** and strategic targets, with a willingness to learn from others. A governor **challenged** that it was not acceptable to say there was insufficient funding as considerable progress could be made without financial investment.
 28. Governors were **informed** that the Moulton College SWAP programme had been **promoted at the UN**, alongside only other one globally for developing solar skills. This was to be celebrated. Colleagues were **signposted** to the UN Youth programme.

Staff Voice Review 2023/24 (Agenda Item 9, Paper F)

29. The annual staff survey results were received, the timing of the survey, and the pros and cons of this were **discussed**.
30. It was **agreed** that whilst the improving position was positive there remained room for improvement. The reduction in staff turnover was noted as a positive improvement. Governors were **assured** that generally the college does not lose staff to other colleges but back to industry or to retirement. Governors were advised that plans were in place to retain staff from the sessional bank and phase retirement to retain knowledge and expertise.
31. Governors **discussed** how the results and actions were shared with staff. They were assured of the forums in place to enable this.
32. The people strategy would be presented to the December meeting of this Committee. **(Action DA)**

SECTION C – BUDGETING & FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Management Accounts (Agenda item 11, Paper H)

33. The Period 12 management accounts were received. There were no surprises. It was **confirmed** that over the year income had increased but so had costs, primarily due to staffing and agency costs, which had impacted on profitability.
34. Governors were **reminded** of the measure of the financial health score, and the careful financial management needed to achieve the required level.
35. Governors were **assured** that during the year everything owed could be covered. The Period 3 management accounts coming to the next meeting would illustrate the cashflow forecast.
36. The headroom was understood to be minimal and the very **careful management** of expenditure and in particular agency staff was **encouraged**.

Financial Position Update (Agenda item 12, Paper I)

37. A verbal update was provided on the starting point of the year. Governors were **advised** that not all income targets had been hit, in particular around HE and apprenticeships, but as had been **discussed** earlier in the meeting, there was cautious optimism of a growth case for in year 16-18 funding. This **may impact** on the capital projects; staff pay award and agency staffing levels. Governors were **assured** ELT were carefully monitoring progress against the budget and financial health score.

38. A **full review** would be provided for discussion to the next meeting with the period 3 accounts.

Section D – RISK

Risk Management Report (Agenda item 14, Paper J)

39. The risk management report was **received** providing a starting point for the year. The risk register was **agreed** to be comprehensive and an accurate reflection.

40. **Resolved** that the Risk Management Report be **recommended** to the Corporation.

Section E –CLOSING ITEMS:

Any other business (Agenda item 15)

Impact of Governance (Agenda item 16)

- Clarity of the interrelation of all aspects the college – particularly recruitment/staffing/student experience
- An informative insight into the Farm as a commercial venture and learning facility.
- Investment proposal requested for the farm.
- A reassuring IT report demonstrated impact of governance challenge to resolve issues last year.
- Challenged to drive sustainability without financial investment.

Date of next meeting (Agenda item 17)

Monday 2 Dec 2024 (Joint with Audit to signoff Statutory Accounts)

MOULTON COLLEGE

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Monday, 21 October 2024 at 5.00pm in M6.

Present:	Ashley Clarkson	Independent Governor
	Charles Matts	Independent Governor
	Mark Wakeford	Independent Governor
	Mohamed Saeudy	Independent Governor
	Karen Squires	Independent Governor
	Oliver Symons	Principal
In attendance:	Suzzanne Ijewski	Independent Governor
	Alicia Bruce	Chief Operating Officer
	Faye Williams	Vice - Principal
	David Aldridge	Executive Director Human Resource
	Sarah Bunney	Finance Director
	Andrew Bailey	Assistant Principal
	Jack Marlow	Farm Manager
	Catherine Duro	Head of Governance

SECTION A – ROUTINE ITEMS AND GOVERNANCE:

Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)

41. Absences were accepted from Stuart Baker.

Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)

42. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)

43. The minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2024 were **approved** as an accurate record for publishing.

Outstanding Actions (Agenda item 4, List)

44. An update was provided on the two outstanding actions which were being addressed.

SECTION B – RESOURCES

Farm Annual Report 2023/24 (Agenda item 5, Paper B)

45. The annual report was **received** and governors' attention drawn to the key points. Congratulations were given on the yield achieved during DEFRA's reported second worst year on record.

46. An update was provided on the carbon soil testing and promotion of regenerative farming. The pending requirement to publish a report on carbon was discussed.

47. All were **proud** that the students engaged in all elements of the farm.

48. Governors **asked** for a proposal specifying the resources needed to develop the farm and deliver an outstanding experience, from a commercially viable farm. **(Action JM)**

49. **Thanks** were given for an informative report, which equipped governors to make decisions regarding the development of the farm.

JM left the meeting.

Estates Annual Report 2023/24 (Agenda Item 6, Paper C)

50. The Estates annual report was received. Governors were informed of the progress during the year and updates against current and future projects.

IT Annual Report 2023/24 (Agenda item 7, Paper D)

51. The annual report was received and **summarised** that it had been a positive 9 months, with all milestones achieved to stabilise the IT infrastructure, for staff and students,
52. It was **confirmed** that thinclient had been challenging, but now all staff at 0.6FTE an above had a laptop. The college was preparing to enable students to BYOD (Bring your Own Device) from September 2025, with support for those without.
53. It was **asked** what percentage of classrooms had been updated (**Action ABa**)
54. It was **confirmed** that an AI strategy was being developed.
55. Governors were **assured** of the positive result from a cyber security penetration test that had been completed against the Montpellier questionnaire.

FE and HE Recruitment (Agenda item 10, Paper G)

This item was heard early due to presenter availability.

56. Governors were **informed** that FE recruitment had gone to plan and been successful. At the time of writing, it was hoped that numbers would finalise at a level high enough to submit a growth case for in year funding. Caution was advised as this growth reflected a national trend and funding was not guaranteed.
57. Governors were advised that HE recruitment had been more challenging and that the reasons for this had been discussed in depth at HEBoS. It was **asked** if further support was needed. The issues were school specific and understood. An HE development plan would be presented to the next meeting of HEBoS, in November. Conversion from FE was **encouraged**.
58. It was **asked** how well recruitment had started for 2025/26. It was **confirmed** that it had been a positive start with a record attendance at the first open day, interviewing of those applicants would be completed in student week.
59. It was **asked** if the breakeven point was known by course. It was **confirmed** that this was available from 4Cast and use of this was improving.

Tuition Fees, Accommodation and Transport 2025-26 (Agenda item 13, Paper I)

60. The tuition fees paper was received. Governors were advised that these had been updated, and a revised version would be circulated showing a year-on-year comparator and a discount on HNC/HND. This proposed discount was **explained**.
61. It was asked if a competitor analysis had taken place and if the courses were viable with reduced fees. There was a **robust debate** on the appropriate fee level.
62. It was **confirmed** that contributions were reviewed at course level and growth was needed from a small base. Governors were assured that lose leaders would not run. A small cohort of three learners had been supported in relocating elsewhere to protect their student experience.
63. **Resolved** that the revised proposal be **recommended** to the Corporation for **approval**.

ABa left the meeting.

Sustainability Annual Report 2023/24 (Agenda item 8, Paper E)

64. The sustainability annual report was received and the revised approach and priorities discussed. The clear report was **commended**. Governors understood a

- development plan was underway to measure sustainability across the estate and the curriculum; to enable progress, reporting and promotion of activity.
65. The three strategic pillars were detailed and the approach to lead and deliver them throughout the college explained.
 66. It was **asked** when the carbon baseline would be available. The challenges in the data sifting were explained. A commitment was made to providing this to the next meeting, **(Action FW)**
 67. Governors **acknowledged** that the college was behind others. They encouraged high **aspirations** and strategic targets, with a willingness to learn from others. A governor **challenged** that it was not acceptable to say there was insufficient funding as considerable progress could be made without financial investment.
 68. Governors were **informed** that the Moulton College SWAP programme had been **promoted at the UN**, alongside only other one globally for developing solar skills. This was to be celebrated. Colleagues were **signposted** to the UN Youth programme.

Staff Voice Review 2023/24 (Agenda Item 9, Paper F)

69. The annual staff survey results were received, the timing of the survey, and the pros and cons of this were **discussed**.
70. It was **agreed** that whilst the improving position was positive there remained room for improvement. The reduction in staff turnover was noted as a positive improvement. Governors were **assured** that generally the college does not lose staff to other colleges but back to industry or to retirement. Governors were advised that plans were in place to retain staff from the sessional bank and phase retirement to retain knowledge and expertise.
71. Governors **discussed** how the results and actions were shared with staff. They were assured of the forums in place to enable this.
72. The people strategy would be presented to the December meeting of this Committee. **(Action DA)**

SECTION C – BUDGETING & FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Management Accounts (Agenda item 11, Paper H)

73. The Period 12 management accounts were received. There were no surprises. It was **confirmed** that over the year income had increased but so had costs, primarily due to staffing and agency costs, which had impacted on profitability.
74. Governors were **reminded** of the measure of the financial health score, and the careful financial management needed to achieve the required level.
75. Governors were **assured** that during the year everything owed could be covered. The Period 3 management accounts coming to the next meeting would illustrate the cashflow forecast.
76. The headroom was understood to be minimal and the very **careful management** of expenditure and in particular agency staff was **encouraged**.

Financial Position Update (Agenda item 12, Paper I)

77. A verbal update was provided on the starting point of the year. Governors were **advised** that not all income targets had been hit, in particular around HE and apprenticeships, but as had been **discussed** earlier in the meeting, there was cautious optimism of a growth case for in year 16-18 funding. This **may impact** on the capital projects; staff pay award and agency staffing levels. Governors were **assured** ELT were carefully monitoring progress against the budget and financial health score.

78. A **full review** would be provided for discussion to the next meeting with the period 3 accounts.

Section D – RISK

Risk Management Report (Agenda item 14, Paper J)

79. The risk management report was **received** providing a starting point for the year. The risk register was **agreed** to be comprehensive and an accurate reflection.

80. **Resolved** that the Risk Management Report be **recommended** to the Corporation.

Section E –CLOSING ITEMS:

Any other business (Agenda item 15)

Impact of Governance (Agenda item 16)

- Clarity of the interrelation of all aspects the college – particularly recruitment/staffing/student experience
- An informative insight into the Farm as a commercial venture and learning facility.
- Investment proposal requested for the farm.
- A reassuring IT report demonstrated impact of governance challenge to resolve issues last year.
- Challenged to drive sustainability without financial investment.

Date of next meeting (Agenda item 17)

Monday 2 Dec 2024 (Joint with Audit to signoff Statutory Accounts)