

MOULTON COLLEGE

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Monday, 3 June 2024 at 5.00pm in the IT Suite

Present:	Ashley Clarkson	Independent Governor
	Charles Matts	Independent Governor
	Mark Wakeford	Independent Governor
	Mohamed Saeudy	Independent Governor
In attendance:	Oliver Symons	Incoming Principal
	Alicia Bruce	Chief Operating Officer
	David Aldridge	Executive Director Human Resource
	Matt Smith	Executive Director of Skills and Business Development – <i>via teams</i> (Items 31- 40)
	Stuart Baker	Director of Estates & Facilities (Items 31-35)
	Andrew Bailey	Director of Student Services (Items 31-38)
	Jack Marlow	Assistant Farm Manager (Items 31- 36)
	Sarah Bunney	Finance Director
	Catherine Duro	Head of Governance

SECTION A – ROUTINE ITEMS AND GOVERNANCE:

24/31 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)

Absences were noted for Karen Squires and Mustafa Regec-Noor.

24/32 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

24/33 Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)

The minutes of the meeting held on **25 March 2024** were **approved** as an accurate record for publishing.

24/34 Outstanding Actions (Agenda item 4, Paper B)

There were no outstanding actions.

SECTION B – RESOURCES:

24/35 Estates Position Report (Agenda Item 5, Paper C)

The circulated report was confirmed as read. The key points were summarised. Governors were assured that the team structure and procurement activities were initiating the desired impact, with the subcontractors embedding into the new improved culture for the estate management.

An update was given on the T-Level building refurbishments, which had been scaled back to match the funding but still provided a space that was fit for purpose with the opportunity to retro fit further improvements later, as funding became available.

It was confirmed that against this year's student numbers there was sufficient classroom space. This had been done at minimal cost through repurposing and reallocating space, following a space utilisation audit.

Stuart was thanked again for his positive, proactive approach, from which governors were seeing an impact across the estate.

(Stuart left the meeting)

24/36 Farm Position Report (Agenda item 6, Paper D)

The key points raised in the report were highlighted. Governors gave congratulations on the cattle selling at the top of the market.

The risks facing the farm for the coming year and possible mitigations were discussed; including the capital plan and the financial constraints, governors encouraged the farm to seek partnership opportunities and raised awareness of some grants that might be open to college applications.

The developing knowledge of the soil carbon and the usefulness of the second round of data collections planned for September were discussed. It was agreed this would benefit the farm, but also be of direct use and benefit to the students to learn from.

The finance team were asked to share farm accounts from September 2024. **(Action SB)**

(Jack left the meeting)

24/37 IT Position Report (Agenda item 7, Paper E)

A further update was given on activity completed since the report was submitted.

Governors were assured that work was underway at pace to improve the academic IT environment. Assurance was also taken that security and the student experience had moved significantly in the past 6 months.

There was a discussion around the importance of developing people's skills alongside the hardware. It was confirmed that this was also scheduled into the plan once the hardware was all in place.

It was confirmed that the IT Development budget was on track with plans to utilise all available funds

24/38 FE AND HE RECRUITMENT (Agenda item 9, paper F) – was heard next in the meeting.

The paper was taken as read.

There was a robust discussion regarding the HE recruitment situation and the impact it may have on the budget. It was confirmed to governors that finance were monitoring this closely, spend was being carefully scheduled to ensure it remained within budget and the cost budget would be reviewed as necessary once the final recruitment figures were known.

(Andrew left the meeting)

24/39 Sustainability Baseline Presentation (Agenda item 8, Presentation)

The draft baseline emissions data report was presented to the meeting. The assumptions

made and the challenges in compiling the data were explained.

The challenge in compiling scope 3 emissions data was discussed.

The completeness and accuracy of the data was challenged.

The ED S&BD was asked to revisit the report and bring it to the next meeting of the sustainability working party, ensuring the queries regarding accuracy and completeness were addressed. (**Action** ED S&BD)

Governors challenged the sustainability education asking what activity was underway across the curriculum. It was asked that the working party also explore this more deeply and follow it up with TLA.

SECTION C – Budgeting and Financial Performance:

24/40 Apprenticeships and Commercial Activity report (Agenda item 10, Paper G)

The paper was taken as read and the headlines reiterated.

Governors were assured that apprenticeships were starting to show economies of scale as more were enrolled onto existing programmes.

It was confirmed that residential bookings were down for the coming year and the impact of this was being closely monitored by the finance team.

(Matt left the meeting)

24/41 ESFA Financial Health Report (Agenda item 11, Paper H)

The letter and financial health report from the ESFA were received. Governors were assured that the one remaining action was being addressed.

24/42 Pay Award Proposal (Agenda item 12, Paper I)

The pay award proposal paper was received. The unions approach and the style of language used was discussed. It was confirmed that the AoC recommendation was not yet known but that the union demands were unaffordable. Governors were advised that another increase in the living wage was anticipated next April which would further erode the college pay scales.

There was a lengthy and robust debate of the proposed pay award, the percentage, the timing, the affordability and the working week. It was asked what the impact of various scenarios would be on staff recruitment and retention. It was recognised that this would remain challenging but had to be balanced with the college's financial stability

Governors asked that the executive challenge all vacant posts to ensure the need. It was recognised that the high levels of agency spend had been discussed earlier in the year and remained an issue, but that student experience must remain a priority.

It was asked what we would need to reduce to afford a larger pay increase. This was debated.

Governors gave a steer to the executive team to increase the proposed pay award if it could be made affordable detailing the impact to the next meeting when the budget was presented.
(ACTION – DA/SB/AB)

24/43 Management accounts and Cash flow (Agenda item 13, Paper J)

The management accounts and cashflow were received. Governors were informed the college was on track to end the year slightly above forecasted income but costs had increased by a greater amount. Managing agency spend levels had remained the biggest challenge.

It was asked if all grant income had been spent. It was confirmed that it had or there were definite allocation plans for the grant income.

An acceleration in apprentice recruitment was encouraged.

24/44 Business Support KPI's (Agenda item 14, Paper K)

The Business support KPI position was discussed. It was asked how confident managers were in the staff utilisation figures. The very manual process of compiling these was explained. It was recognised that the measuring of this was an area for improvement.

Section D – POLICIES: None Due

Section E –RISK MANAGEMENT:

24/45 Risk Management Report (Agenda item 15, Paper L)

The updated risk management report was shared. Governors understood this had been revised and was an interim step, following robust debate at the previous board meeting. Some historic risks had been closed, having been addressed by the refinancing and subsequent financial position.

HE recruitment was discussed as an immediate issue. The current actions to address this and the strategic improvements were shared, giving governors assurance for the future of the HE provisions despite the immediate issues.

Section F –CLOSING ITEMS:

24/46 Any other business (Agenda item 16)

There was no other business.

24/47 Impact of Governance (Agenda item 17)

- Illustrated by the earlier challenges addressed in the IT and estates reports.
- Greater transparency and improved information sharing enabled knowing governance and informed decision making.
- Robust debate to cause reflection and further work around HE, Pay-awards, sustainability and KPI's.

24/48 Date of next meeting - 1st July 2024