

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>th</sup>  
MARCH 2025 AT 4.30PM AT THE KINGSWAY CAMPUS**

<b>Present:</b>	Neil McGrath Mary Murphy Chris Sikorski Susan Smith	External Governor Principal Staff Governor External Governor
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Dan Adams Julie Holland Julia Withersby Catherine Shaw	Assistant Principal, Curriculum (Cronton) Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources) Assistant Principal, (HR & Central Services) Head of Governance

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted for Stephen Young (External Governor) and Gordon Holmes, (Assistant Principal Finance & Estates).

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None

**3. MINUTES**

**3.1 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024  
(previously circulated)**

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting.

**Resolved** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 be **approved** as a correct record.

**3.2 To review the action log and to consider any matters arising from the minutes  
(previously circulated)**

The report was reviewed.

**Resolved** - The Committee **noted** that action points were either completed or featured on the agenda.

**4. FINANCE AND RESOURCES UPDATE**

**4.1 Human Resources (previously circulated)**

The Assistant Principal (HR & Central Services) presented this report and highlighted the following aspects:

- Staff Absence – from the start of the academic year to date this stood at 3.12%, compared to 3.76% in the previous year

- Staff Turnover – this had reduced significantly compared to the previous year
- HR policies and procedures – the low number of staff members who were subject to processes relating to (i) disciplinary, (ii) capability, (iii) extended probationary periods and (iv) grievance
- Gender Pay Gap March 2024 – the mean gender pay gap was 11.7% and represented a slight increase compared to the previous year. The median pay gap had increased from 21% to 28.2%
- Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy – this continued to be a key priority with the annual Wellbeing Day having taken place in November 2024 followed by a Wellbeing week in January 2025; feedback had been very positive.

A discussion took place regarding the increase in the median gender pay gap. The analysis confirmed that due to the growth in the college, the number of female support staff had risen, particularly in areas such as invigilation and learning support roles.

**Resolved:** The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

#### 4.2 **Health and Safety Update** *(previously circulated)*

The Deputy Principal (F&R) presented this report and highlighted the following aspects:

- Accidents, Incidents and Near Miss Statistics – overall the numbers had decreased significantly in comparison to the previous year. There had been no RIDDOR reportable incidents. No patterns or trends had been identified relating to recorded ‘near misses.’
- Health and Safety (H&S) Activities – forthcoming training included critical incident and disaster recovery scenario training

During discussions it was confirmed that evacuation procedures had recently been tested for Foundation Studies learners in CRMZ and this exercise was completed successfully.

**Resolved:** The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

#### 4.3 **Financial Forecast Update 2024/2027 to include Budget Monitoring 2024/2025** *(previously circulated)*

The committee was advised that since circulating the report the Government had made funding announcements which would affect this financial forecast and in-year monitoring report. There remained some uncertainty in respect of the headline funding announcement and until clarification was received, this report could not be updated with a request for subsequent Board approval. A discussion took place and it was anticipated that an updated report would be presented for scrutiny at the next Finance & Resources Committee meeting. As FE was an unprotected budget in Government funding terms, Governors acknowledged that the recent funding announcements created some uncertainty.

The recent Government announcement concerning a reduction in adult funding rates was discussed and the potential impact for the College and its learners. Governors were assured that despite these external factors, the College remained in a strong financial position.

**Resolved:** The Committee **noted** the report.

#### 4.4 **Property Strategy Update** *(previously circulated)*

The Deputy Principal (F&R) presented this update and highlighted the following key aspects from the report:

- New Builds – As previously reported (i) Cronton Music Hub and Teaching Block and (ii) Green Technology Build at Kingsway had both been delayed due to changes in the design team. Since the last meeting it had been established that project costs were forecast to increase by approximately £1.5m. Additionally, it was estimated that a further £1.5m would be required in respect of upgrades to accommodation and curriculum resources that would be required for delivery.
- The College continued to progress preventative maintenance plans. This included remaining upgrades following fire risk assessments, concrete repairs awaiting the new cladding scheme, on-going heating, cooling and lighting.
- Visioning Project – the College had appointed consultants (Drees and Sommer) to undertake an in-depth review of accommodation on each site. This included an anticipated student number analysis, current space/room utilisation, any curriculum changes and a full condition survey.

During the subsequent discussion and in response to a question raised, it was confirmed that upon completion of the Visioning Project, the consultants would be invited to present their findings to Governors.

**Resolved:** The Committee **noted** the report and **recommended Board approval** in respect of:

- the summer works programme
- additional expenditure of £3m in total, consisting of
  - £1.5m in respect of the request lists associated with the new builds and increased costs, namely Cronton Music Hub and Teaching Block at Cronton, the Green Technology Build at Kingsway and the cladding project
  - £1.5m in respect of upgrades to accommodation and curriculum resources required to enable the College to continue in its delivery of outstanding teaching and learning

#### 4.5 **Partnership Update** *(previously circulated)*

The Deputy Principal (F&R) presented this report on behalf of Jayne Smith, Head of Skills and Enterprise. The following aspects were highlighted:

- Quality Assurance re: Power in Partnership (PiP) – most recent visit took place in February 2025 by Ben Barton, Vice Principal. Clear progress was evident across all actions contained within the quality improvement plan (QIP). PiP was on track to meet its contract funding targets for both 16 – 18 and 19+. EHCP reviews had all been completed before the end of March deadline. The improved risk rating was noted.
- Quality Assurance re: Crosby Training – a visit was completed by Ben Barton, Vice Principal and for oversight purposes was accompanied by Susan Smith (Chair of F&R) in December 2024. The findings confirmed the positive impact that Crosby had on engaging the most disengaged learners and supporting progression onto positive destinations. All programmes were on profile and there was a strong demand for its pre-employment programmes linked to recruitment within the Civil

Service, Teaching Assistants and Security, especially in non-devolved areas. Risk rating: RAG-rated green.

- All subcontractor declarations have been completed in line with funding requirements.

The Chair confirmed that her visit to Crosby Training with the Vice Principal in December was very productive and enabled her to acquire a greater understanding of the challenges encountered in delivering this niche provision.

The Committee received assurance that SMT continued to review partnership provision on a half-termly basis and adjustments made to the quality assurance process according to risk.

The Principal referred to the increasing NEET (not in education, employment or training) position in the borough and the identified need to provide Post-16 Alternative Provision had become a crucial issue. The College Management Team (CMT) continued in its discussions with stakeholders in addressing this issue.

**Resolved:** The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and performance of partners to date in 2024/2025.

## **5. POLICIES**

### **5.1 Environmental Sustainability** *(previously circulated)*

### **5.2 Fees 2025/2026** *(previously circulated)*

### **5.3 Apprenticeship Fees and Charges** *(previously circulated)*

### **5.4 Higher Education Fees and Compensation** *(previously circulated)*

Where appropriate the committee was advised of the proposed amendments and rationale in respect of each individual policy.

**Resolved:** The Committee **recommended approval** of all policies to the Board

- (i) Environmental Sustainability Policy
- (ii) Fees 2025/2026 Policy
- (iii) Apprenticeship Fees and Charges
- (iv) Higher Education Fees and Compensation Policy

## **6. COLLEGE SEAL**

### **Use of the Seal** *(previously circulated)*

In compliance with both the Instrument of Government and the College's Financial Regulations the committee was advised of the use of the seal on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025. This related to the contract documentation for the Kingsway new engineering block project drawn up by Drees & Sommer which required execution by seal.

**Resolved:** The Committee **noted** the report.

## **7. FE SECTOR UPDATES**

For information:

### **7.1 Update to the Funding Higher Risk Organisations and Subcontractors Policy by the Department for Education (DfE)** *(previously circulated)*

The Committee received an overview of the revisions made to the Funding Higher Risk

Organisations and Subcontractors Policy by the DfE. In respect of subcontractors, the Head of Governance advised that statutory assurance reviews were undertaken every three years; known as the 'subcontracting standard.' Beever & Struthers (External Auditors) undertook this audit in June 2023 and confirmed that the College had met the required standard with the subsequent report considered by the Audit Committee at that time.

**Resolved:** The Committee **noted** the report and its relevance to agenda item 4.5 relating to performance monitoring.

- 7.2 **Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act** *(previously circulated)*  
The Committee was advised that this legislation was introduced in October 2024 and incorporated into the Equality Act 2010. Governors were informed that as the employer, it was the Board's responsibility to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. The Assistant Principal (HR) confirmed that staff had received appropriate training on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025 in connection with this and an overview of it was provided.

**Resolved:** The Committee **noted** the report.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no additional matters of urgent business to be addressed.

9. **ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE BOARD**

A discussion took place.

**Resolved** – together with an overarching report the following items were to be presented to the Board at its next meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025:

- An update relating to the Financial Forecast and in-year budget monitoring
- HR updates to include the Gender Pay Gap report and the Board's responsibilities in connection with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act
- Property Strategy
- Policies – agenda items 5.1 to 5.4 (inc)

10. **MEETING EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW**

In accordance with the approved action plan resulting from the external board review in 2023/2024 Committee Members were asked to review the effectiveness of the meeting with any comments to be forwarded directly to the Clerk by 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

**Resolved:** The Committee **noted** the request.

11. **DATES OF FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**Resolved** - The Committee **noted** the next meeting date as follows:

- Finance & Resources Committee – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025

The Chair thanked all attendees for their attendance and contribution at the meeting.

**Signed:** Office copy signed by Susan Smith

**Chair of Finance and Resources Committee**

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025