



Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 13 March 2025 at 8am via Microsoft Teams

Present: John Fogarty – Chair (*Foundation Governor*)
Brother Ben (*Foundation Governor*)
Janet Gater (*Principal*)
Andrew Rannard (*Foundation Governor*)
Naheem Shafiq (*Associate Member*)

In attendance: Michelle Williams (*Vice Principal, Finance, Resources & Systems*)
Ruth Potter (*Clerk to Governors*)

The Chair welcomed all attendees and the meeting was opened in prayer.

1. ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Declarations of interest

Members were invited to declare whether they had any direct or indirect personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interest or conflict of interest in any matter which formed part of the agenda for this meeting or was likely to be discussed at this meeting. No declarations were made in addition to those already recorded on the Register of Interests, however the Chair took the opportunity to remind members that he had a close family member who was a student at the College.

1.2 Apologies for absence

All members were present. The meeting was quorate.

1.3 Items to be included under urgent business

No items were submitted.

1.4 Minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 21 November 2024 (*previously circulated*)

The minutes were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair in accordance with Article 12 (3) of the Articles of Government. The publication of the minutes was authorised in accordance with Article 13.

1.5 Matters arising from the minutes (*previously circulated*)

Committee members considered the action log prepared by the Clerk.

Minute 2.1 – An update was requested on the latest position with regard to government funding for the increase in national insurance contributions. The Vice Principal confirmed that the exact level of funding had not yet been confirmed; further detail was expected in May.

Minute 5.1 – A point of clarification was sought with regard to the point made on whether the College had a separate scheme of delegation. Reference was made to the College's Financial Regulations and it was noted that the specific budget allocations for each department were set out separately in the annually approved

financial plan. In accordance with the usual business cycle, this plan was presented to the Committee in the Summer Term for consideration before final approval by the Governing Body.

1.6 Committee risk register *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal explained that in response to a recommendation arising out of the External Governance Review, an extract from the strategic risk register was included to provide assurance and oversight of the risks specific to Finance & Resources Committee. The updates provided against contingent risks were highlighted.

Resolved:

- **That the Committee Risk Register be received and noted.**

2. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

2.1 DfE – Governing Body Finance Dashboard *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal presented the Department for Education's (DfE) Governing Body Finance Dashboard and reported that this was openly available on the Department for Education (DfE) website. The Finance Dashboard was based on historical data submitted by the College in its latest Financial Forecasting Return and it was noted that the financial health assessment grade had been moderated as Good for 2024-25 (the current budget year). The indicative assessment grade for 2025-26 was also Good.

No specific issues were highlighted.

Resolved:

- **That the Governing Body Finance Dashboard be received and noted.**

2.2 NJC Staff Pay Awards *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal confirmed that since the original paper for this item had been circulated on 6 March, further developments had taken place which had been reported in the Addendum paper circulated to members by the Clerk the previous day.

Background context was provided on the differential teachers' pay award between academised and non-academised sixth-form colleges (SFCs) arising from the government's approach to funding. Reference was made to the National Joint Council (NJC) for Staff in Sixth Form Colleges Joint Statement on the teachers' pay award issued on 31 January 2025. This recommended the implementation of a pay award of 3.5% backdated to 1 September 2024 rising to 5.5% from 1 April 2025 for teaching staff in non-academised SFCs such as Carmel. Teaching staff in academised SFCs would receive the full 5.5% pay award back dated to 1 September.

The Vice Principal indicated that a pay award of 3.25% had been approved in the College's financial plan, however the additional cost had been met by the College in order to ensure adherence with the NJC's joint statement recommendation. It was noted that the College's Financial Regulations confirmed at clause 4.1 that the pay and conditions framework for staff, as determined by the Governing Body, were in accordance with the SFCA nationally agreed terms and conditions, set out in the NJC Conditions of Services Handbook.

A discussion ensued. The remainder of this agenda item was deemed confidential for the purposes of the minutes.

2.3 Finance Update and Management Accounts – January 2025 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal provided a summary of the College's financial performance up to the end of January 2025. The key point highlighted was in relation to the unconfirmed DfE funding for in-year growth which would now be less than the £400k initially anticipated. In addition, final notification of the additional funding expected for pay awards and the increased national insurance contributions was awaited. It was noted, however, that income from Higher Education (HE) had been higher than anticipated due to positive student recruitment.

Resolved:

- **That the management accounts for January 2025 be approved and noted.**

2.4 16-19 Allocation Statement 2025-26 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal reported that the ESFA's 16-19 allocation statement for 2025-26 had not yet been issued. As a result, current financial planning was based on estimated information. It was anticipated that the allocation would be confirmed by the end of April. The data would then be fed into the financial plan presented to governors for approval in the Summer Term.

2.5 Student Applications 2025-26 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal presented this report and highlighted the current level of applications for enrolment in September 2025. The application deadline had passed and all guidance interviews had been completed. Upon review of the associated data, it was the view of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) that the College would achieve the planned student numbers next year. Liaison and marketing activity undertaken by the Marketing Team was reported.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her report and noted the positive position.

Resolved:

- **That the student applications report be noted.**

2.6 Mid-Year Bursary Fund Update *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal presented this mid-year update report and confirmed that this academic year had seen the highest number of bursary applications ever. The College continued to pay the targeted bursary at a higher rate than the government funding. This provided additional financial support to the most vulnerable students. It was confirmed that all incomplete applications were followed up with the students in question in order to ensure that there were no barriers to application.

Governors' comments and questions were invited:

Q – Was the increase in applications down to cost of living issues or promotion of the scheme?

A – Both. Higher percentage of disadvantaged students across college was noted.

Resolved:

- **That the mid-year bursary fund report be received and noted.**

2.7 Annual Treasury Report *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal presented this report which had been prepared by the College's Finance Manager. Total investment earnings were highlighted.

Resolved:

- **That the Annual Treasury Report be approved and noted.**

3. ANNUAL REVIEWS

3.1 Student Transport Annual Review *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal presented this report and confirmed that approval was sought for the planned continuation of the current transport offer for 2025-26. Alongside the current free bus services, the College would continue to explore opportunities for a free bus service from Knowsley.

Governors' comments and questions were invited:

Q – Had the College participated in the Merseytravel consultation on bus service routes?

A – Yes. Student focus group also fed student view into this consultation process.

It was noted that Knowsley would be the focus of a future consultation which might provide a formal opportunity to feed in College views.

Resolved:

- **That the Student Transport Annual Review be approved and noted.**

3.2 Contracts Register Annual Review *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal referred members to the annual review of contracts held by the College, as summarised from the central contracts register. Discussion ensued on the importance of social value and local economic impact when awarding contracts alongside the best value requirements.

Resolved:

- **That the Contracts Register Annual Review be received and noted.**

4. POLICIES

4.1 Financial Regulations 2025 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal presented the Financial Regulations 2025 which had been subject to annual review, highlighting the minor amendments proposed to reflect the impending closure of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) from 1 April 2025.

Resolved:

- **That the Financial Regulations 2025 be recommended for approval to the full Governing Body.**

ACTION – FGB agenda item – Financial Regulations

4.2 Reserves Policy *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal presented this policy which had been subject to review in line with the policy review cycle. It was noted that the policy had been expanded. The Vice Principal explained that a target reserves figure was not included in the policy as actual reserves were reviewed every year as part of the annual financial planning process.

Resolved:

- **That the Reserves Policy be recommended for approval to the full Governing Body.**

ACTION – FGB agenda item – Reserves Policy

4.3 Sustainability Policy *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal presented this policy which had been subject to review in line with the policy review cycle. It was explained that the policy had been extended to include reference to more specific roles and responsibilities across the College, particularly with a view to engaging students on sustainability issues.

Resolved:

- **That the Sustainability Policy be recommended for approval to the full Governing Body.**

ACTION – FGB agenda item – Sustainability Policy

5. OTHER MATTERS

5.1 Governor Training

Members were invited to update the Clerk on any training activities they had completed since the last meeting. One governor reported training on responding to school complaints undertaken on 14 February 2025.

5.2 Any Other Business

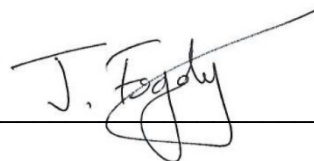
None

5.3 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 12 June 2025 at 8am.

The Chair thanked all Members for their attendance and contribution at the meeting. There being no further business to discuss the meeting was brought to a close at 9.15am.

Signed by the Chair: _____



On this day: _____ 12 June 2025 _____