



The Henley College Corporation

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee held on Monday 8 March 2021 at 09.00 via remote participation

<p>Members present: Charles Wiggin Satwant Deol James Lingard Trevor Watkins Vince Maltese Chris Murray</p> <p>In attendance: Eamonn Egan Ashok Patel Jacky Gearey</p>	<p>Chair Principal/Ex Officio Member Independent Member Independent Member/Chair of Corporation Independent Member Independent Member</p> <p>Vice Principal Finance Director Clerk</p>	
Agenda Item	Minutes	Action by
3.1	<p>Opening of meeting The meeting opened at 09.02 by Trevor Watkins as the Chair had advised him that he would be late attending due connectivity issues.</p>	
3.2	<p>Apologies for Absence 1. Eric Burrow – Covid testing There were no other apologies.</p>	
3.3	<p>Declaration of Interests No interests were declared</p>	
3.4	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting: (i) Minutes of the meeting of 16 November 2020. (ii) Minutes of the meeting 1 February 2021</p> <p>Resolved that the Committee agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meetings held both of 16 November 2020 and 1 February 2021 respectively and the minutes to be signed by the Chair.</p>	
3.5	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes (including review of actions) Item 2.4 - seek market assessment of VFM/cost/functionality and opportunities which exists in newer systems and to provide a recommendation at the next F&R meeting 8 March 2021 – see item 3.7 All other actions had been closed off and there were no further actions outstanding.</p>	
3.6	<p>Estates & Infrastructure Strategy The FD provided the committee with the background information concerning the extensive estates strategy undertaken in 2016-17 which involved some large-scale developmental plans including options to develop a new build and proposals of consolidation onto a single site. These plans remain as options to consider in the future, but involve significant capital investment funds, disposals of land & buildings etc, which are not likely to materialise in the short/medium term.</p> <p>Since that time the SLT had been working to develop a more deliverable shorter-term Estates & Infrastructure Strategy (2021-24) which addresses an immediate investment need on all fronts. These plans will require refreshing each year to ensure compliance</p>	



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	<p>with capital funding grants. The FD advised that the college would continue to explore opportunities to secure capital grants, similar to securing £0.5million from OxLEP previously.</p> <p>Given the recent issues associated with Covid-19 and spacing, there is a need to consider some wider aspects which involve a detailed review of how curriculum and support services are delivered with the key on-going work around 'zoning' of curriculum delivery. The main aim has been to modernise buildings that fall short of expected standards for the students. The other areas of concern have been IT/MIS where investment is urgently needed to keep pace with student/staff expectations of a modern digital environment.</p> <p>It is expected that the College would utilise some of the restricted reserve to finance the R2 (public services and sports) building refurbishment to ensure it is fit for purpose with the cost estimated to be around £450k including VAT, work to be completed in the summer. The project would finish in time for the next academic year and therefore the cost will straddle two financial years, in addition this work fits in well with the recent FEC recommendation. The committee discussed the proposed renovation and asked if there were any projections as to how many more students this would bring to the College, the FD confirmed that such refurbishments including a dedicated teaching space with a physio and that this had attracted more students with the VP providing examples of this citing the new sports course which was now looking to bring in 80 students.</p> <p>The OxLEP capital funding bids for the zoning work (D5, D1, D2 and R3) are estimated at a total capital spend amounting to £1.2m and would be for summer 2022 and 2023, these have been submitted and the FD will advise of the decision from the LEP once known.</p> <p>Charles Wiggin arrived at 09.13 and then took over as Chair.</p> <p>The IT expenditure would be financed via the College general capital budget for 2021-22. This was a longer term plan looking at hardware especially as a result of the pandemic and difficulties experienced in the support function. Approval of this expenditure would not adversely impact the overall financial health of the College which will remain as "outstanding" for 2021-22. The cost for this is £420k and again would cover two financial years.</p> <p>Principal arrived at 09.20 as she had been welcoming the students back to the college</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the Report on the Estates & Infrastructure Strategy was received by the committee (ii) the spend from restricted reserves of £450k for estates improvements for R2 was approved by the committee (iii) the spend of £420k from general capital budget for IT expenditure was approved by the committee (iv) FD will advise the committee of OxLEP matched funding for D5 once known 	<p style="text-align: center;">FD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FD</p>
3.7	<p>Digitalisation Strategy Procurement Update Proposal on Student Record System Vendor</p>	



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	<p>The committee had been asked at the previous committee meeting to consider replacement of the Student Record System (SRS) and Outcome and agree the procurement process for a quotation. The process undertaken to deliver this solution was as set out in the 1 February 2021 Special Meeting of F&R. The SLT felt that it had to balance between the qualitative factors offered by each system against a good VFM solution and that the system change will be a significant enhancement to the data management and reporting system of the College. Unfortunately the response was poor with only three replies with the existing provider not tendering. The main responses covered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Civica REMs system offered the best outcome in terms of addressing both key criteria. There was an opportunity to bring through enhancements as and when these are fully developed and tested by Civica over time, which would allow for internal staff to familiarise/influence advanced features. Additionally at a cost not currently know there would be the facility to allow for some additional investment to this REMs system for advanced features to be taken during implementation or over the contract period of 5 years. Cost would need to be approved by F&R if material i.e. if over £10k per annum. 2. Advanced Pro may offer better support but comes at an increased cost <p>The Chair asked for questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could the college use shared services with another college's system – FD said that the sector had tried this some time ago and it never worked albeit he was not aware of any colleges doing this.. the Principal endorsed this citing a nearby college and the difficulties that could arise in staff and system changes.–. 2. Cost projections – were the software licence costs included in the REM costs – FD affirmed that they were included in the maintenance costs 3. REMS on premise solution would there be significant hardware costs – no additional costs as current infrastructure will accommodate this 4. Professional services fees – the committee said that these need to be part of the support agreement and had to be distinguished. 5. References for this provider to be provided – FD said that this was being actioned this week <p>There followed a discussion on the considerable cost difference between REMS and Advanced Pro quote and the reasons for this much of which was due to REMS attempt to regain market share.</p> <p>The key recommendations put forward were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To approve the quotation received from Civica for the REMs SRS, being an initial cost of £35.8k and annual costs of £12.8k 4. To seek more detailed references from other users, visibility of a 'live' system and ensure compatibility to the college's needs, before agreeing to proceed to contract. <p>The Chair asked for a further report to confirm the pros and cons on the selection to be put forward and agreed that this could be concluded via email once provided.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Digitalisation Strategy Procurement Update was received by the committee (ii) The FD to provide more detailed report on the respective pros and cons of the different systems referencing other users together with the visibility of a 'live' system ensuring compatibility to the College's needs, 	FD
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	(iii) The report to be sent via email to the committee before agreeing to proceed to contract	FD
3.8	<p>Management Accounts January 2021</p> <p>The Committee was asked to note that the College is currently performing slightly better than expectations and a positive outturn for the 20-21 financial year. The SLT has continued to deploy resources to ensure that the College works safely during this pandemic period and during lockdown and continues to deliver on-line teaching and support services.</p> <p>The current financial position has the capacity to deal with any minor negative positions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic situation, but if something material was to originate i.e. funding adjustment, then the SLT would need to reassess this overall assessment.</p> <p>Committee asked about in year funding for the additional students with FD confirming that there was a strong possibility but that it would be for next academic year.</p> <p>Resolved that the Management Accounts 31 January 2021 were received by the committee</p>	
3.9	<p>HR Updates</p> <p>(i) Employment Law</p> <p>Due to firstly Brexit and then the COVID pandemic, there has been little movement on employment law, with some expected measures now delayed before even coming to parliament. The usual changes to statutory payments have been announced regarding the weekly rate of Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Adoption Pay, Statutory Paternity Pay and Shared Parental Pay will increase with effect April 2021.</p> <p>(ii) Staff Pay Award 20/21</p> <p>The FD advised that the pay award requested by unions of 7% was not affordable in the current climate, especially given that rate per learner funding uplift is unlikely in the short/medium term. The College financial performance in 19-20 and projected 20-21, including the overall financial health position remained strong and an appropriate increase was affordable. Also it was felt that to achieve the ambition of Ofsted "outstanding" in the next few years will be better supported with highly motivated staff both teaching and support.</p> <p>Therefore it was proposed that the College should consider making a 1.% to 2% range pay ward, which would cost approx. £55k to £110k. There was much discussion on this, and the committee agreed that a 1.5% pay award should be put forward to the board for approval. Should this be agreed, the overall pay cost ratio would remain within the range of benchmark for College's in this financial health category, for the current and next year. Whilst the committee wanted to be more ambitious in the % increase, FD said that it was the on costs e.g. pensions at 22% that had to be taken into account and that it was a case of looking at three years hence and the respective funding for this. The Principal confirmed that unions had not as yet been consulted. The committee felt that positive messaging was critical and that a comparison to the sector would be beneficial</p>	



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	Resolved that: (i) The employment law update was received by the committee (ii) The staff pay award report was received by the committee and that a pay award of 1.5% to be back dated to 1 September 2020 was recommended to the board for approval	
3.11	Any Other Business There was no other business.	
3.12	Items to be taken forward to next Corporation Meeting for approval: (i) Staff Pay Award	Clerk
	Date and Time of Next Meeting The next scheduled meeting is Monday 14 June 2021 at 09.00	
	Meeting Closure The meeting closed at 10.09	
	MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday 8 March 2021 were agreed and accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair. on	