

**FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2024**

**Present:**

Tony Sadla  
David Wheeler – External Governor (Chair)  
Jat Sharma - Principal

**In Attendance:**

Matthew Brown (Director of Finance and MIS) (DoF)  
Jacky Leek (Head of Finance) (HoF)  
Lesley Venables (Head of Governance) (HoG)

Natalie Priest (Head of Human Resources) – minutes 214 to 236  
Deb Rajania (Director of Operations & Resources) – minutes 288 to 297  
James Norris (Assistant Principal Commercial Development) – minutes 237 to 265  
Graham Ward, Chair of Audit Committee – minutes 251 to 265

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|            | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                      |
| <b>214</b> | Apologies for absence were received from Nelson Tanyanyiwa and Stuart Pedley-Smith.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                      |
|            | <b>Declarations of Interest</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                      |
| <b>215</b> | There were no declarations of interest in any agenda item.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                      |
|            | <b>Minutes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                      |
| <b>216</b> | <b>Resolved</b> – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                      |
|            | <b>Matters Arising</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                      |
| <b>217</b> | Governors received a progress report on actions identified at the previous meeting and noted that the majority of these had either been completed or were featured on the agenda. The Head of Governance and the Director of Finance & MIS were asked to review the action list and combine items that appeared in several places                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>LV/<br/>MB</b>                    |
| <b>218</b> | The following updates were noted:<br><br>Minute 17 – the AP Commercial Development had met recently with Mary Mahoney to discuss the HE Review, with a further session to be arranged.<br><br>Minute 34 – the Financial Strategy would form part of and align to the new Corporate Strategy, which would be submitted for approval by the Corporation in October 2024.<br><br>Minute 42 – to be moved to the action list of the Learning & Quality Committee. The College was considering transferring some full cost recovery provision to apprenticeships and how the flexibilities of Adult Education Budget funding could be maximised.<br><br>Minute 82 – this had informed the budget for 2024/2025 but had not yet been included. The timeframe was now December 2024. Governors were advised that £1.5m had been allocated for capital expenditure in each year, but the College had not necessarily spent the full amount. | <b>JN<br/><br/>JL/JS<br/><br/>LV</b> |

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|     | <p>Minute 87 – under the reclassification of FE colleges to the public sector, there was now a requirement to have a Reserves Policy. This would be actioned at the October 2024 Committee meeting.</p> <p>Minute 152 – modelling of the financial implications of the new HE Strategy would be undertaken once it had been reviewed in detail and recommended to the Corporation by the Learning &amp; Quality Committee.</p> <p>Minutes 199-200 – the Director of Finance &amp; MIS reported that management was confident that the acquisition of the Adult Learning Centre building from Walsall Council would not be classified as a “novel or contentious transaction” under the DfE’s regulations and did not require any legal opinion.</p> <p>All risks of this proposal rested with Walsall Council and meant effectively surrendering the Hawbush campus for another fixed asset. The Chair commented that the Corporation needed to be assured that this provided good value for money and that any potential risks were minimal. The sequencing of the various moves between College campuses was high risk but would be carefully managed.</p> <p>The Corporation would be asked to approve the Adult Learning Centre and associated projects at the October 2024 meeting.</p> <p>Minute 206 – costs had now been obtained from all bidders on leasing gym equipment and the original recommendation had been confirmed as providing the best value for money.</p> | <p>JL</p> <p>JL/JN</p> <p>DR</p> |
|     | <b>Chair’s Action</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                  |
| 219 | There were no items to be noted under Chair’s action.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                  |
|     | <b>Human Resources Update</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                  |
| 220 | Governors received a report on HR issues including performance against key indicators. The College’s total staffing complement had increased from 884 to 903 since the previous report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                  |
| 221 | Sickness absence was 4.17% compared to 4.26% at the same point last year, 45% of which was due to long-term absence and was mainly due to minor illnesses and mental health issues. Approximately 35% of absence for the latter reason was work-related and governors were advised that this included individuals subject to the College’s performance management processes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                  |
| 222 | Further strengthening of mental health initiatives had continued to take place, including refresher training for existing Mental Health First Aiders and the recruitment of a further cohort amongst staff, which had widened the profile of representation, including male MHFAs across different sites. Targeted activities would now integrate mental health initiatives into general wellbeing programmes,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                  |
| 223 | The College was working towards the Combined Authority’s Thrive Accreditation on health and wellbeing, and was currently on track to meet the foundation level requirements, progressing to the bronze level in 2024/2025.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                  |

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| 224 | Some agency staffing had been used to cover sickness absence, but it was noted that there was a high premium for such individuals in disciplines such as Construction and Engineering.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |    |
| 225 | Governors referred to the discussions under a separate agenda item on levels of performance amongst staff in the apprenticeships directorate. The Head of HR reported that it was common for assessors to deliver a high quality experience to students but find it difficult to complete the necessary paperwork accurately or in a timely manner. Managers were often reluctant to have 'difficult conversations' with staff about these issues due to the risk of them calling in sick or choosing to leave the organisation. There was some duplication of resourcing within apprenticeships, but terms and conditions were superior to those offered by employment agencies. |    |
| 226 | The Principal commented that governors needed to be aware of a number of factors, including pressures on FE pay levels and productivity (staff to income ratio), the national scheme for new teachers to receive a £6k 'golden hello' in certain sectors and the requirement for the College to balance performance management with delivery of high quality teaching, learning and assessment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |    |
| 227 | The College had reviewed alternative teaching models, case-loading and streamlining the paperwork required by apprenticeship regulators. These had been introduced where appropriate and possible.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |    |
| 228 | A total of 6 disciplinary and grievance cases had been undertaken in 2023/2024, one of which was for gross misconduct for safeguarding reasons and was being kept under review with the Local Authority Designated Officer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |    |
| 229 | From the 50 current vacancies, 18 were at the pre-employment stage. A total of 21 were for business support posts, with a further 14 for teaching staff. Recruitment for some jobs was difficult, particularly in teaching and there was no mechanism within the current pay structure to reward staff with particular skills. This situation was likely to exacerbate due to a national shortage of teaching staff in STEM subjects.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |    |
| 230 | A significant number of the vacancies being advertised were in Community Learning and the STEAM faculty. This was due to an increased number of students with SEND, high natural rates of turnover and progression of learning mentors into teaching roles.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |    |
| 231 | Staff turnover had reduced from 17% in 2021/2022 to 13.4% in 2022/2023 against a published sector average of 17.8%. The current rate of turnover from August 2023 to June 2024 was 9% and the highest proportion was at lower level posts. Information on turnover at other colleges in the region and details of internal progression would be provided at the next meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | NP |
| 232 | The staff survey for 2023/2024 had been launched and included questions on student behaviour and safety. The outcomes would be compared to those from 2022/2023 to assess the impact on HR and well-being initiatives, and would be presented to a future Committee meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | NP |

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| 233                                                                           | There had been a positive campaign to remind existing staff of the benefits of working at the College, together with promoting these to job applicants. Issues from the staff survey would be identified and addressed by the relevant manager early in the new academic year.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |       |
| 234                                                                           | A common theme of feedback from staff focus groups had been the lack of visibility of the Executive Team. Communication from SLT to Curriculum Development Managers and teams was vital and opportunities to achieve this needed to be built into timetables. Staff had welcomed their involvement in the consultation process on the development of the new Corporate Plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |       |
| 235                                                                           | Celebrating staff success was also important and had been enhanced by the introduction of the 'Viv-up' initiative, which allowed staff to recognise achievements amongst their peers. Governors were also encouraged to use this system, possibly as part of their link governor visit feedback.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | ALL   |
| 236                                                                           | Further work was required on the Investors in Diversity accreditation, which was likely to result in a number of recommendations to be actioned.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | NP/JS |
|                                                                               | <b>Natalie Priest left the meeting at this point.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |       |
| <b>Finance Report to May 2024 (including AEB &amp; Commercial Activities)</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |       |
|                                                                               | <b>James Norris joined the meeting.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |
| 237                                                                           | The Director of Finance & MIS (DoF) presented the management accounts to 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2024, which had already been received by the Corporation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |
| 238                                                                           | The Committee was advised of an issue relating to grants to Levy employers that the CITB (with which the College worked on delivery at CCM) was requesting deliverers to sign. The Director of Finance & MIS reported that, as the exclusivity terms of the contract meant that it was uncompetitive and against the ethos of a public sector organisation, it was highly likely that the College would break it. However, as CITB was a national employer no allowance had been made for negotiation, so the College was in a position whereby it had to sign the contract, otherwise it would not be able to offer CITB programmes to Levy employers which would impact on CCM's profitability. |       |
| 239                                                                           | The College had questioned the legality of the CITB's approach and would be discussing the matter informally with the ESFA/DfE at the next scheduled meeting. It was agreed that the Director of Strategic Partnerships would provide an update to the October 2024 Committee meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | JA    |
| 240                                                                           | <b>Resolved – 1</b> That the College's current approach to this issue be confirmed and that the contract with the CITB be signed<br><br>2 That a report on the latest position be made to the Committee's October 2024 meeting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |       |
| 241                                                                           | The AP CD presented a report on sub-contracting performance and proposals for 2024/2025.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |       |

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| 242            | The current position on each of the College's 3 sub-contractors was outlined. Embark had been below the projected profile but had given an assurance during its own Performance Management Review (PMR) meeting with Combined Authority that any shortfall would be achieved by 31 July 2024.                                                                                                                                                                                                   | JN/DW |      |         |        |          |                |
| 243            | Learning Curve was predicting a carryover into 2024/2025 of £0.75m which had been approved by the Combined Authority. It was proposed to issue contracts to Embark and 3EEs for a third of the amount of this year's contract and to monitor these closely throughout term 1 for any potential increases in contract values against the AEB contract.                                                                                                                                           |       |      |         |        |          |                |
| 244            | Governors were advised that the College had no concerns regarding the quality of provision provided by sub-contractors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |       |      |         |        |          |                |
| 245            | Apprenticeship performance against the Accountability Framework indicated that all provision was "On Track". In-year retention and achievement levels had increased, although there would be an overall shortfall in financial performance of approximately £0.5m (£3.8m against the target of £4.3m), which had been reported to the Committee at previous meetings. There would be some apprentices carried over into 2024/2025 due to the lack of end point assessment opportunities.        |       |      |         |        |          |                |
| 246            | Governors were advised that there may be an additional allocation for Learning Curve to address any shortfall in 2023/2024 and to secure out of area AEB for the ESFA. It was agreed that Chair's action would be utilised if this occurred.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |       |      |         |        |          |                |
| 247            | The Directorate had undertaken a detailed review of the range, future demand and viability of all 39 apprenticeship standards and had decided to reduce this to 21 over time. Staff currently engaged on the withdrawn programmes would be transferred to the delivery of AEB provision or other apprenticeship standards.                                                                                                                                                                      |       |      |         |        |          |                |
| 248            | A governor questioned the target for the number of Out of Funding apprentices and was advised that the College's target was 15% and actual performance was 10% against this for 2023/2024.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |       |      |         |        |          |                |
| 249            | The Committee received a revised Supply Chain Fees & Charges Policy for 2024/2025, which was a requirement of the ESFA.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |       |      |         |        |          |                |
| 250            | <p><b>Resolved – 1</b> That the following sub-contract allocations be approved for 2024/2025:</p> <table><tr><td>3EEs</td><td>£48,000</td></tr><tr><td>Embark</td><td>£287,307</td></tr><tr><td>Learning Curve</td><td>£522,885</td></tr></table> <p><b>2</b> That the Corporation be recommended to approve the revised Supply Chain Fees &amp; Charges Policy for 2024/2025</p> <p><b>3</b> That Chair's action be used to approve any further allocation to Learning Curve for 2023/2024</p> |       | 3EEs | £48,000 | Embark | £287,307 | Learning Curve |
| 3EEs           | £48,000                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |       |      |         |        |          |                |
| Embark         | £287,307                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |       |      |         |        |          |                |
| Learning Curve | £522,885                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |       |      |         |        |          |                |

|     | FUNDING ASSURANCE AUDIT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
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|     | <b>Graham Ward (Chair of Audit Committee) joined the meeting for this item.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |
| 251 | The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that, at its recent meeting, the Committee had discussed the 3 funding assurance audits that had taken place in the 18 months. Although it was recognised that the Audit Committee should act independently, there were implications from the funding assurance audits that impacted on the Finance & Resources Committee's remit, which was why he had been asked to attend by the Chair of the Corporation.                                                                                                                                                    |  |
| 252 | The College had been notified of the first FA audit to be undertaken by PWC in December 2022, with completion in July 2023. Measures were put in place to address the action points raised which related to the recording of Off the Job training for apprenticeships. The ESFA had identified a clawback of £0.5m in respect of this audit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
| 253 | KPMG were appointed by the College to carry out funding assurance audit work, which commenced in November 2023.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |
| 254 | However, in the intervening period Mazars were appointed by the ESFA to undertake a further funding assurance audit and the KPMG visit was put on hold and had only just been completed. The outcome of the Mazars audit had been reported to the March 2024 Audit Committee. The work had related to 2022/2023 but had looked at similar data to the PWC audit, but the resulting recommendations were different, as was the approach of the audit firm.                                                                                                                                                  |  |
| 255 | Consequently, the new AP MIS had prepared a report on all 3 funding assurance audits which had been presented to the Audit Committee at its June 2024 meeting. The Committee had assured itself over the materiality of any findings and had concluded that there would be no risk to the financial statements outcome. The auditors had advised that numerous colleges in the FE sector were facing similar issues as those raised in the reports. The resulting recommendations related to the efficiency and visibility of apprenticeships and the complexity of the government regulations on funding. |  |
| 256 | The Director of Finance & MIS commented that, if retention and achievement levels on apprenticeships were nearer 70%, any financial issues would have less significance and there would be fewer non-compliances. However, the current regulatory framework made it unlikely that the College would perform at that level, which was partly why the number of standards had to be reduced.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| 257 | Governors recognised that a huge amount of work had been undertaken by the Apprenticeships team. However, the College was not in an ideal position and the conclusion of the funding assurance audits only provided partial assurance over the current internal control framework. An action plan to address these areas for improvement had been implemented but had not yet had time to fully embed.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |
| 258 | The APCD reported that there were 3 areas within the action plan – a) strategic review of current and future standards; b) operational processes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |



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|                                                | <p>depended on manual input and were extremely complex; and c) ensuring that all staff complied with the regulatory framework/paperwork.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |    |
| 259                                            | <p>The Audit Committee had asked for an update on progress to be provided to each meeting in 2024/2025. It was acknowledged that apprenticeships was a complex and risky area, dependent on a range of different staff, but ensuring value for public money and a high-quality student experience was paramount.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                         |    |
| 260                                            | <p>Governors were advised of the recent strengthening of the College's MIS function, with the appointment of a permanent AP following several interim posts. It was felt that there was a link between sector reductions in student retention and the increase in compliance issues. Apprenticeship regulations were not sufficiently flexible which made strict adherence difficult. However, the Audit Committee had noted an improvement in the data in 2023/2024 which would continue to be tracked at each meeting.</p> |    |
| 261                                            | <p>The Chair asked whether there was any risk to the Ofsted grade 2 rating for apprenticeships as a result of these issues. The APCD responded that Ofsted would not review compliance with apprenticeship regulations but would focus on classroom observations. Under the ESFA's Accountability Framework the College's provision was on track to achieve every performance indicator.</p>                                                                                                                                 |    |
| 262                                            | <p>Questions were raised as to whether employers could take greater ownership of ensuring that Off the Job Training was completed. The APCD advised that most employers with which the College worked were SMEs and did not have the necessary resources. A tri-partite contract was signed between the ESFA/DfE, the College and the employer, but all the risk for compliance rested with the College which had very few 'levers' to use.</p>                                                                              |    |
| 263                                            | <p>Data analysis meetings within the directorate and new management reports on the level of compliance should improve monitoring in future. The work undertaken to date by the AP MIS now meant that the systems in place for apprenticeships were aligned more closely to those for other types of provision.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |    |
| 264                                            | <p>The Head of HR was asked to include information on staff performance issues in the apprenticeships directorate and how these were being resolved in the regular report to this Committee.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | NP |
| 265                                            | <p>Governors concluded that this was a complex area, but that greater scrutiny was now in place and should improve the quality of data and compliance levels. Each of the relevant committees on which these issues impinged would continue to monitor performance and highlight any further difficulties.</p> <p><b>Graham Ward and James Norris left the meeting.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                  |    |
| <b>THREE YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST 2024-2027</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |    |
| 266                                            | <p>The Director of Finance &amp; MIS presented the Three Year Financial Forecast, the first year of which formed the budget for 2024/2025. These excluded the changes that needed to be made to the apprenticeship offer (outlined above).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |    |

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| 267 | The College's cash position would return to positive after the planned routine capital investment of over £1m over the next three years. The pay to income ratio remained at above 70% but was projected to be stable over the next three years. This would allow the new organisational structure to be implemented and for further efficiencies in the operating model to be identified, which would either allow additional investment or reduce the staff to income ratio.                                                                    |           |
| 268 | The level of EBITDA was above 4% and meant that the College would remain comfortably within the 'Good' financial health range and above the target 210 points based on the ESFA's methodology.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |           |
| 269 | In the second and third years of the Forecast no assumptions had been made about increased income or inflation levels. Any benefits of the transformation process had not been included but management was confident that expenditure savings could be made in the medium term.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |           |
| 270 | The Budget for 2024/2025 was closer to College norms than the budgets for the last 2 years had been. It had been based on a detailed curriculum plan and apprenticeships strategy (work on the latter was ongoing). Some impact on capacity levels had been made, for example, higher recruitment of Maths and English teachers for 16-18 provision. The College's AEB plan was projected to exceed the current contract level and there was sufficient flexibility to meet the needs of any additional adult learners enrolled through the year. |           |
| 271 | Governors were reminded that 2023/2024 had been identified as a critical year for the organisation, with little room for manoeuvre in terms of its financial strategy. The focus had been on the growth of the 16-18 cohort which would then generate lagged funding for 2024/2025.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |           |
| 272 | The level of EBITDA was linked to the need for colleges to have a Reserves Policy. The regulator was unlikely to agree that an EBITDA of 10% was appropriate. A 5% level was more realistic, particularly given the proposed Property Strategy to be implemented over the life of the Forecast. Generating surplus cash was vital to the College's long-term planning and sustainability.                                                                                                                                                         |           |
| 273 | It was agreed that an additional column would be added to the budget on the 2023/2024 estimated outturn. Apprenticeships would be shown as a single line across all years of the forecast to enable governors to monitor performance. Investment income would be included in the Forecast at £25k in each year.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | MB/<br>JL |
| 274 | CCM had been initially seen as a way of generating cash for the College, however, its performance had been lower than anticipated. Management needed to bring clear proposals about its future objectives to the Committee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | JA/<br>JS |
| 275 | <b>Resolved</b> – That, subject to the amendments outlined above, the Corporation be recommended to approve the Budget for 2024/2025 and 3 Year Financial Forecast for 2024-2027                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |           |



| BAD DEBTS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
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| 276                                                              | The Head of Finance presented for information the annual report on Bad Debts for 2023/2024.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
| 277                                                              | The Committee noted that the amount within this classification was reducing year on year. A set of 3 criteria were used to assess how bad debts would be dealt with, ranging from internal write-offs (between £5K and £45K), seeking DfE approval for any single debt over £45K or collective debts over £250K. The latter 2 measures had been introduced following the reclassification of FE colleges in November 2022.                                               |  |
| 278                                                              | Governors were advised that the majority of student debts related to unpaid tuition fees and that a substantial amount had been written off by the College in 2022/2023. The current level of this debt (April 2024) was £149K and it was unlikely that this could be recovered. Approximately £30K worth of debt had been referred to the College's collection agency and had resulted in £8.2K being paid back.                                                        |  |
| 279                                                              | There had been a number of cases whereby students embarked on their courses and incurred tuition fees only to find that their applications to the Student Loans Company were rejected. Management felt that the level of debt reflected the profile of the College's learners, with many looking to upskill themselves and improve their earning potential. Payment of student loans tended to be carried out over a considerable time in line with current regulations. |  |
| DATA PROTECTION & FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| 280                                                              | Governors received for information the annual report on Data Protection and FOI requests for 2023/2024.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
| 281                                                              | A total of 2,507 requests had been received, 49% of which were directly from students and 51% from a third-party organisation such as the DWP and were largely for benefit claims, employment or progression purposes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| 282                                                              | Ten Subject Access Requests had been received in year, which was an increase of 11% compared to 2022/2023 and mostly related to feedback from unsuccessful interview processes. There had been 2 requests 'to be forgotten' ie deleted from the College's systems, one of which was successful with the remaining request rejected due to them being a current student and the College being required to keep certain information on its learners.                       |  |
| 283                                                              | There had been a 28% increase in staff seeking advice on data protection and GDPR issues. The department had noted a 100% increase in the number of internal CCTV requests compared to the previous year.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
| 284                                                              | A total of 23 data breaches had been reported, including those caused by third parties, which was a 77% increase from 2022/2023. It was felt that this was due to greater awareness of data protection issues and how to report them.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
| 285                                                              | Managers were required to complete an advanced internal training course (through IHasco), with a 97% compliance rate. All other staff are expected to complete an overview of GDPR training course, with a 94% compliance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |

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|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
|                            | rate. Any staff that have not undertaken training are followed up by the GDPR team. This was supplemented by training on specific items such as phishing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |       |
| 286                        | The College had received 14 FOI requests for 2023/2024, compared to 10 in 2022/2023, with all of these dealt with well within the requisite timescale of 20 working days.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |       |
| 287                        | Data-sharing contracts were in place with all partners participating in The Link initiative.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |       |
| <b>Resources - Estates</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |       |
|                            | <b>Deb Rajania joined the meeting.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |       |
| 288                        | The Director of Operations presented an update on the financial aspects of capital projects issues.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |       |
| 289                        | Planning and design work for the Adult Learning Campus (ALC) project was continuing in conjunction with Walsall Council. This was being funded through the Government's Levelling Up fund, but there could be challenges to the scale and content of the project if the allocated cost of £12.19m was exceeded. It was possible that the Council would insist on an inflationary increase to the service charge payable by the College, but this was still being negotiated.                    |       |
| 290                        | The project would release valuable accommodation at the Wisemore Campus, which may be used to house the proposed A Level Centre. Board approval would be required for the ALC once the Council's cabinet members had approved the lease arrangements and this was scheduled for October 2024.                                                                                                                                                                                                   | DR/LV |
| 291                        | It was proposed that the College's Supported Learning provision from the Hawbush Campus to the Leather Museum building. The lease arrangements for this were likely to be similar to the current lease for Hawbush, i.e., 125 years at a peppercorn rent.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |       |
| 292                        | Work on the Electric Vehicle & Sustainability Centre was currently on hold, due to lack of funding. Discussions with the local authority continued and it was noted that the Council was meeting with the relevant Government department shortly regarding this project, which would cost a total of £3.8m. There had been an extension to the completion timescale due to the General Election, however, the proposed scheme had a shortfall of £450K, for which the College had not budgeted. | DR    |
| 293                        | A number of contracts for essential services were due to expire shortly and tenders had been issued for each of these and were presented for approval by the Committee. Tenders were due back on 5 <sup>th</sup> July for the contract for CCTV provision. The Committee was asked to approve the contract for washroom services for Trust Hygiene at a cost of £93K. A further contract for deep cleaning the College's kitchens would require Chair's action if bids exceeded £100K.          | DR/DW |

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| 294                                        | In response to a question about the insurance claim for the collapse of the retaining wall at CCM the Director of Operations reported that the College had not yet submitted the claim but any issues of subsidence were normally covered under its insurance policies.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |            |
| 295                                        | <b>Resolved –</b> 1 That the approach being developed for the lease arrangements for the ALC and Leather Museum building be supported.<br>2 That the timeline for the ALC project approval from the Corporation (subject to obtaining agreement with Walsall Council) be noted.<br>3 That the contract for washroom services be approved for Trust Hygiene Ltd.<br>4 That Chair's Action be approved for awarding the Kitchen Deep Clean contract, if bids exceeded £100k. |            |
| <b>COMMITTEE SELF-ASSESSMENT 2023/2024</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |            |
| 296                                        | Governors received a draft of the completed Committee Self-Assessment for 2023/2024. It was agreed that members of the Committee would consider the proposed content and provide any comments or additions to the Head of Governance within a 2-week timeframe.                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>ALL</b> |
| <b>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b>            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |            |
|                                            | 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2024                      To be held at CCM<br>26 <sup>th</sup> November 2024                To be held at Green Lane<br>11 <sup>th</sup> February 2025<br>13 <sup>th</sup> May 2025<br>24 <sup>th</sup> June 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |            |
| <b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |            |
| 297                                        | As this was his last Committee meeting before leaving the College, the Chair thanked the Director of Finance & MIS for his contribution, support and guidance over the past few years.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |            |