



MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 12th March 2025 at 6.00pm

Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Mark Nelligan (Chair)
 Claire Douglas (Vice Chair)
 Tom Clark
 Dave Roberts
 Liz Gilroy-Scott
 Mark Aulds (Parent)
 Dan Hards, Principal

Stephanie Wiles, Director of Finance and Estates, (Advising Officer)
 Catherine Davies, (Clerk)

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mark Aulds declared his interest as Health and Safety Link Governor at Esher Church of England High School.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Tim Oliver.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting of 21st November 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

F&E1-01 Director of Finance and Estates to submit Capital Plan at next meeting. **Done**

5. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS, PLUS FORECAST OUTTURN, CASHFLOW AND COMMENTARY FOR 4 & 5 MONTHS TO 31.12.24 AND 31.01.25

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced the management accounts for months 4 & 5. The Chair asked the Director to focus on the month to 31.01.25 accounts. She highlighted the following points:

- ESFA recurrent funding is £253,449 above budget due to the funding of 7 months of the pay award. The funding for the additional 5 months is due to be received soon; an adjustment to the budget has not yet been made to reflect this expected income as the exact figure is not known.
- The budget forecast has accounted for the 5.5% salary increase and National Insurance changes but only the income received so far and not the expected income for the additional 5 months and the NI grant. Once all income is received its expected that any shortfall will be met from other income or existing reserves.
- Lettings income is above budget and above income at this point last year.
- Interest income is healthy due to the spend on the new classroom block being slower than expected and interest rates remaining high.
- Expenditure is below budget as the pay award had not been finalised. The pay award is expected to be paid from the March payroll onwards.
- The cashflow is ahead of budget due to the build starting later than expected.

- EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation) at 31 January 2025 was above budget.

The Chair thanked the Director of Finance and Estates and her team for their excellent work.

The Committee approved the Management Accounts, plus forecast outturn, cashflow and commentary for 4 & 5 months to 31.12.24 and 31.01.25.

6. CAPITAL BUDGET AND NEW CLASSROOM / CARETAKERS COTTAGE BUILD UPDATE

The Chair asked the Director of Finance and Estates to update the Committee regarding on-going maintenance work, current capital projects and new capital projects.

Caretakers Cottage

The Director gave an overview of the Caretakers Cottage; the plan approved at full board was to convert the cottage into 2 flats to be rented to an Estates Team employee and to a teacher in a subject that is difficult to recruit for (such as Economics). The initial quotes received estimated the project would cost around £150,000. Planning permission was granted, and new detailed quotes were sought. The new quotes received for the work (which includes fireproofing between the 2 flats) are considerably more than the original budget; this is partly due to building inflation too.

The Principal added that difficulties in recruiting teachers in subjects such as Economics have not materialised this term and due to the increased costs, the option to refurbish the cottage as a house for 1 member of staff from the Estates Team is the preferred option. The Director of Finance and Estates added that the Estates Department is currently fully staffed and working well as a team.

The Chair asked the Director to seek new quotes to refurbish the Cottage as 1 house and these will be reviewed. If the quotes are within the original £150,000 budget plus the £30,000 contingency the Director may go ahead with the work. If the best quote is above £150,000 then the Director will come back to the Committee to discuss. The Director and Principal agreed with this approach.

Planned Works

The Director gave an overview of planned works for the current academic year including a new front exit gate, roof on G block, fire doors in Y block (first floor), rear exit gate and drive and a lockdown & mass communication system. The additional request from the capital budget is £105,282.90

A Trustee asked for more details of the fire door replacement plan and the Director gave an overview of the risk assessment and plan put in place in 2023 to replaced fire doors across the site. The Committee also discussed other avenues for seeking capital funding such as CIF bids.

New Classroom Block

The Director confirmed that the new Classroom block is on budget and running 2 weeks behind schedule.

The Committee agreed to the request for £105,282.90 to fund additional capital works.

Looking to 2026 the Director of Finance and Estates gave an overview of possible capital fund projects including re-submitting a planning application to build an additional 4 classrooms. Other projects include continuing to replace fire doors and B block roof, the redevelopment of external social areas and the continuation of the 20-year rolling maintenance plan.

Action: The Director of Finance and Estates to seek new quotes to refurbish the Caretakers Cottage as a house to be rented to a member of the Estates Team.

7. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL:

- Reserves Policy 2025

The Director of Finance and Estates gave an overview of the Policy which includes increasing the cash reserve level from £1,000,000 (agreed in 2015) to £1,800,000.

The Chair asked that the list of reasons for having a shortfall in receipts was expanded to include an unfunded pay award (reasons already listed are lower-than-expected enrolment, an unexpected reduction in funding per student, unexpected urgent capital expenditure, or a significant delay in the receipt of funding) and the Director agreed.

The Committee approved the Reserves Policy subject to the amendment to include an unfunded pay award.

- Local Government Pension Scheme Discretionary Policy

The Director of Finance and Estates gave an overview of the policy and noted this policy is a requirement of being a member of the LGPS and there are no changes in this update.

The Committee approved the Local Government Pension Scheme Discretionary Policy.

Action: Director of Finance and Estates to add unfunded pay award to the Reserves Policy 2025.

8. DRAFT SCHOOL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL CHECKLIST

The Director gave an overview of the Questions in the SRMA including:

Question 12 - update on the wording regarding risk management.

Question 30 - update re in-year balances

Question 35 - update regarding information published on the College website

The Chair noted Question 10 outlines the role of Chair of the Audit Committee passing to Tom Clark. Tom is a chartered accountant and holds an audit license. The Clerk added that the Committee /Chair membership list will be approved at the next Board meeting and thanked Tom for taking on the Chair of Audit role.

The Chair drew attention to Question 11b and the Director of Finance and Estates noted that the answer to this question is no and the meeting of the Audit Committee twice a year is acceptable for a College of this size.

The Chair asked if the answer to Question 19 could be expanded to include capital spending on maintenance and replacement works in maintaining the site and the Director agreed.

The Chair also asked if the answer to Question 25 could be edited to reference the Disaster Management Plan that is part of the Strategy and the Director agreed.

The Committee approved the draft School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool Checklist subject to the amendments to Questions 19 and 25.

Action: Director of Finance and Estates to expand answers to questions 19 and 25 in the draft SRMA.

9. HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

The Director of Finance and Estates informed the Committee that there had been 40 accidents this academic year; none required notification to RIDDOR. This is an increase in the number of accidents

compared to this time last year (*after the meeting the Clerk noted the number was 22 in March 2024*).

The Director explained the increase was due to a new team recording accidents on the College system and small injuries such as requiring a plaster are now being reported as an accident.

The Chair asked for clarification that the increase in the recording of accidents wasn't due to a trend or state of the site and the Director replied that this was not the case, for example "sports injuries" is the main category for accidents.

The Committee discussed allergies and the steps taken by the catering team to ensure food safety training regarding allergies is in place. The Committee also discussed first aid training for the Reception team which includes the use of Epi pens and there are 3 defibrillators on site.

A Trustee asked about Health and Safety Reports regarding the building of the Classroom block and the Director replied that reports provided at regular meetings with the build team reflect a high score for health and safety.

The Director briefed the Committee regarding an internal audit on Health and Safety that is taking place on the 24th March and the report will be shared with the Committee. She added that normal maintenance and servicing activity continues. The annual external fire risk assessment carried out in February granted the level "tolerable" to the College which is the highest level that can be achieved for a site of this size.

A Trustee asked the Committee to consider how they are assuring themselves of compliance and the Director gave an overview of the checklist used to ensure the College is compliant with health and safety legislation. In addition, external reviews of health and safety take place during the year. A Trustee asked if any failures have been reported and if any near miss reporting is recorded.

The Committee asked the Director to request benchmarking data when the Internal Audit takes place in March and to see whether they raise the requirement to report on near misses.

The Committee thanked the Director for her briefing.

10. MINUTES OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GROUP MEETING OF 27 FEBRUARY 2025

The Director of Finance and Estates briefed the Committee regarding the meeting and noted 40 students are enrolled on the Carbon Literacy certificate as a 6.2 Progression Pathway. The training involves 10 contact hours and the submission of reflection activities. Green Week is taking place week commencing 24th March and events include a climate talk and clothes swap.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT OF PLANNED ACTIVITY

The Director of Finance and Estates added that the Eco Schools Green Flag Award is re-applied for annually and the ESD Co-ordinator and students are working on updating the Action Plan and Environmental Review and submitting evidence regarding how the College continues to improve its sustainability.

The Committee noted that it is not possible to install any more solar panels at the site because the national grid is unable to accept any additional capacity.

The Committee thanked the Director for her briefing.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Principal gave an update regarding the current position regarding the Duke of Edinburgh Iceland Trip in 2021.

The Clerk asked the Committee to approve gifts to Members and Trustees to reflect exceptional service to the College up to the value of £200 and the Committee agreed.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 25TH June 2025 at 6pm

*The meeting closed at 7.15pm
Attendance was 88%*

Signed and date

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

1	The Director of Finance and Estates to seek new quotes to refurbish the Caretaker's Cottage as a house to be rented to a member of the Estates Team.
2	Director of Finance and Estates to add unfunded pay award to the Reserves Policy 2025.
3	Director of Finance and Estates to expand questions 19 and 25 in the draft SRMA

SUMMARY OF TRUSTEE CHALLENGE [C] / SUPPORT [S]

C/S	Minute	Topic
S	5	The Chair thanked the Director of Finance and Estates and her team for their excellent work.
C	8	The Chair asked if the answer to Question 19 could be expanded to include capital spending on maintenance and replacement works in maintaining the site and the Director agreed. The Chair also asked if the answer to Question 25 could be edited to reference the Disaster Management Plan that is part of the Strategy and the Director agreed.
C	9	A Trustee asked the Committee to consider how they are assuring themselves of compliance (with H&S legislation).