

- 6.2 The DCEO provided an overview of the report which covered the Learner Journey and student experience from the first quarter of the academic year.

Student Growth

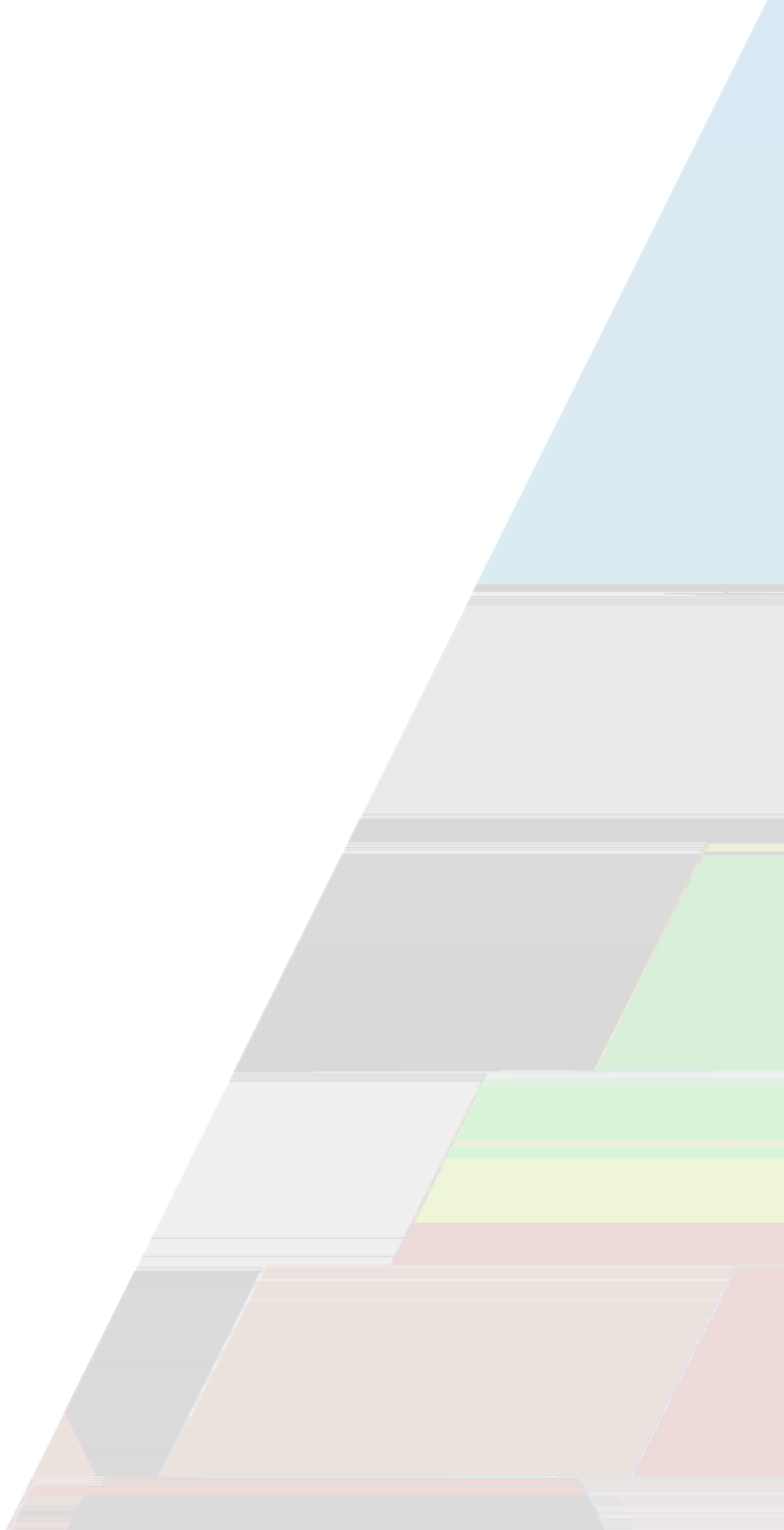
- 6.3 The DCEO informed the Board that the organisation had experienced an influx of 16-18 year old students (9370 students in total), which surpassed the original 6% growth target (8937 students). The Board noted that the demographic of 16-18 year olds would be rising by 3% every year until 2027.
- 6.4 The DCEO highlighted that due to Covid, many students have complex needs, learning gaps and skills gaps. As a result, the Government reverted to the 1819 standards.
- 6.5 The Board noted that a high number of students had not achieved their English and Maths. The college had seen a 30% increase in GCSE English and Maths enrolments.
- 6.6 The DCEO highlighted that the college had seen an increase in priority areas such as Construction and Engineering. The Board noted that the college was managing the increase by creating new groups, where possible, and by operating a continuous waiting list.
- 6.7 The DCEO emphasised a notable rise in the number of English as a Second Language (**ESOL**) learners. This increase was attributed to referrals from local charities that no longer had funding for these learners.

Educational Leadership Team

- 6.8 The DCEO provided an update on the ELT and the Board noted that the team had been working collaboratively to tackle the issues associated with the increased number of students and the behavioural challenges.
- 6.9 The DCEO highlighted the Day 42 Campaign. The initiative aims to retain

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induction meetings, basic tools, and coaching and mentoring skills. The Board acknowledged that Ofsted were scheduled to inspect the level 5 Learning and Skills Teacher Apprenticeship programme and noted that the inspection was not mandatory and aimed to enhance the quality.

- 6.21 The Board received an update on the apprenticeship achievement rate (54.1%). The Board noted that the figure was expected to remain static, and the overall improvement was 7% compared to the previous academic year. Following the implementation of sustainable changes within the apprenticeship area, the organisation feels confident that the achievement rate will improve in future years.

Kathy Slack left the meeting.

7. Staff Journey Update

7.1 The Board received the Staff Journey Update which was taken as read.

7.2 The Chief People Officer (**CPO**) provided an overview of the paper which included recruitment, on-boarding, and details of how the organisation was driving the culture across the workforce.

7.3 The Board discussed the section of the report relating to employee and line manager relationships. The CPO advised that the organisation had introduced a people management training programme and a system called Clear Review to support managers with planning, conducting and documenting one-to-ones and challenging conversations, with the objective of improving the relationships. The Board noted that the new ELT supported the development of quality leadership as it was providing clarity and support directly to the front line.

7.4 The Board noted that staff turnover had not increased but the impact of staff leaving had a greater effect on the organisation due to the growth in student numbers.

7.5 The CEO advised the Board that the organisation was exploring policy options which would help improve the culture such as employees working from home during non-term without asking permission.

7.6 The DCEO reminded the Board that the Faculty Manager role was currently under review and would focus on addressing the high number of direct reports.

The Student Governors left the meeting for the following item.

8 Finance, Information, Estate and Equipment, with particular emphasis on the revised budget for

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- 8.3 The COO informed the Board that the predicted ESFA financial health remained and reminded the Board of the key financial metrics. The Board noted that the organisations cash balance and debt were as expected, whereas the EBITDA had been an area of risk. The EBITDA outturn was in excess of 1% to income as projected which
- 8.4 The Board was notified that the 2022/23 academic year closed with an available cash balance of £18.7m. The COO reminded the Board that there were some long-term commitments against the cash.
- 8.5 The Board noted the updated summary of the Income and Expenditure account and that the actual pay outturn had remained broadly the same as presented in July, with the EBITDA £100k lower as expected.
- 8.6 The COO provided an overview of the funding and reiterated that the key driver for the organisations financial performance last year was on Tm0o£oi

6.5% from September. The proposal would cost £1.4 million of the additional funding.

- 8.12 The Board noted that Activate Learning was currently not at risk of industrial action. The University College Union balloted their 221 members in October for strike action, but given a response rate of 44% no action can be taken.

Teacher salary scales.

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- 8.13 The COO outlined the proposal to change the salary scales for teaching staff. The COO highlighted that teachers were currently on a 20-point salary scale and as they were often unqualified when they joined, it took 20 years for them to reach the top of the scale on the increment system which was the norm within the sector. The Board noted that the introduction of a 15-point salary scale, as commonly seen in other colleges, would be a valuable recommendation to improve the attraction and retention of teachers. The in-year impact of implementing the new scales would be £250,000 due to adjusting the current teachers to align with the new scale points.

Additional expenditure and risk mitigation.

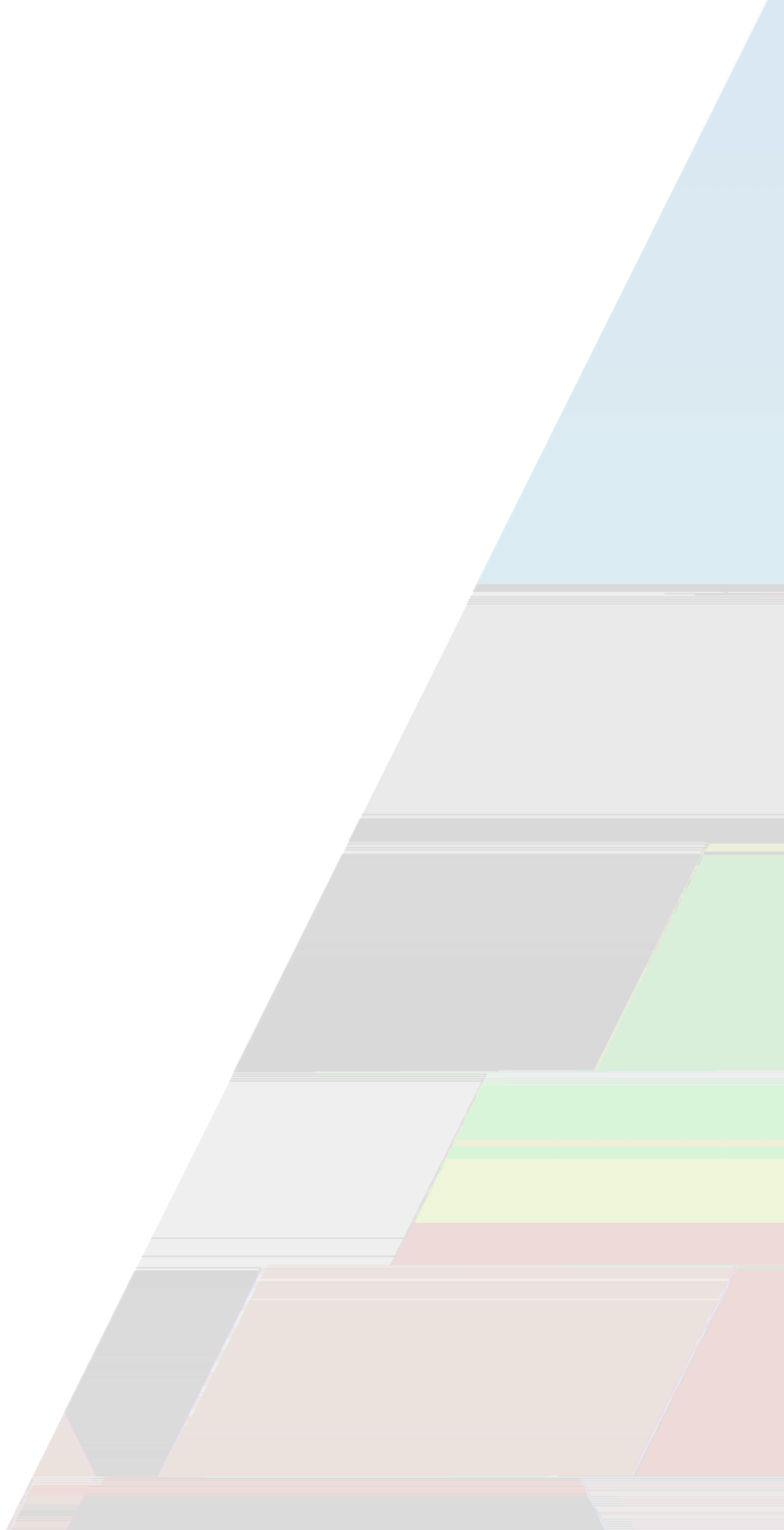
- 8.14 The Board noted that the organisation wished to utilise the remainder of the additional funding to support additional expenditure such as broader well-being opportunities for staff and to mitigate the risks within the original budget, rather than to increase EBITDA or reduce the accounting deficit.

Revised Budget

- 8.15 The COO provided an overview of the revised budget. The Board noted that the principles behind the budget which was agreed in July, would remain. The additional funding provided the opportunity to reward staff at a higher level than anticipated whilst e

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The Board discussed and agreed the recommendation to appoint Smitha Nair as a governor.

The Board approved the recommendation to appoint Smitha Nair.

The Board noted that Andy Stone would be fulfilling the role of Link Governor for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. An introductory meeting had taken place with the CPO.

The Link Governor for Compliance provided an update on his recent meeting with the Compliance Team at Merrist Wood and commented on the fantastic facilities. The Board noted an issue with the fire doors within the accommodation and the link governors concerns regarding the Health & Safety (H&S) escalation process. The COO confirmed that he would follow up with the team.

The Corporation Seal has not been used.

There were no policies for approval.

of meeting

The Board noted that the Governance and Strategy Day would be taking place on Tuesday 21st November 2023 and the next Board meeting would be on Tuesday 12th December 2023, both at Reading College.

at 19:42.

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