

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 15 MAY 2023

PRESENT:

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| Arif Patel | Chair |
| Dr Fazal Dad | Principal and Chief Executive |
| Fran Crossland | Member |
| Ridwaan Omar | Member |

IN ATTENDANCE:

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| Nicola Clayton | Director of Business Development and External Engagement |
| Jennifer Eastham | Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services |
| Rachel Tarplee | Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality |
| Sarah Horeesorun | Director of Governance |
| Melissa Drayson* | Observer |

* indicates participated via Microsoft Teams

The meeting commenced at 5pm and was quorate.

The Chair welcomed everyone and extended a special welcome to Ridwaan Omar as this was his first Committee meeting since his appointment was approved at the March Board meeting. Melissa Drayson joined the meeting via MS Teams and observed the meeting as part of the External Governance Review.

Round table introductions followed, and as it was also Arif Patel's first meeting as Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, he paid tribute to the previous Chair for his wisdom and support. Arif Patel explained that feedback from the External Governance Review, his thoughts as the new Chair and those of members of the Committee, would help shape the approach taken to the Committee in the future. One of the first changes might be to incorporate a topical presentation at the start of the meeting, similar to that of the Audit Committee, focusing discussion on a core area of the business. For example, Item 5 of this meeting was to focus on the Financial Strategy. Future presentations could focus on Estates, Recruitment, Health and Safety, Sustainability and Human Resources (HR).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received in advance from Michael Lee, Paul Morris and Steve Waggott.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair advised those in attendance that should members of the Policy and Resources Committee become aware of any potential conflicts of interest, they should be disclosed at the earliest opportunity during the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2023

The Committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 27 February 2023 as a true and accurate record, and these were duly signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the updates on the actions from the previous meetings as included in the agenda document. The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services said that the feedback on the HR Item, taken at the last Committee meeting, had been considered and that the People Strategy would be going to the July Board meeting.

5. FOCUS ON: FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services had planned to talk the Committee through potential options for managing the College Finances in the future. However, as this warranted a bigger discussion and apologies had been received from several members of the Committee, it was decided to include the options in the Budget paper for the next meeting on 19 June. The proposed handling of this Item was understood and supported by those members present, though it did crop up again later on in the meeting under Item 10, Business Planning.

6. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Management Accounts to 31 March 2023 and reforecast update.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Report and supporting information highlighting the current operating position.

The Report informed members of the current operating position and that this was currently ahead of budget. Full details of the variances were included in Appendix One.

The Vice-Principal reminded the Committee that strategies were in place to manage the risks and to ensure costs were managed to minimise the impact on the out-turn position.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services assured members that close scrutiny of expenditure continued to ensure that shortfalls in income were actively managed, and that the Balance Sheet to March 2023 remained strong.

The Committee was reassured that the shortfalls were being effectively managed, noted the content of the Report and Management Accounts at Appendix 1 and **AGREED** that the Report be recommended to the Board for approval.

7. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Director of Governance introduced this Item and explained that the Whistleblowing Policy was reviewed every three years and had come up for timely review. The Policy had been updated, with the changes highlighted in the attached Policy document itself and had already been considered and the proposed changes supported by the JCC.

The Chair commented that paragraph 2.2 of the Policy was nebulous and needed to be more prescriptive, whilst another member highlighted that the job role of Clerk needed updating to Director of Governance in paragraphs 9 and 10.2.

The Committee supported the suggested changes and that the Whistleblowing Policy be **RECOMMENDED** for approval to the Board once the changes made.

Action: Director of Governance

8. STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-25, ANNUAL OPERATING STATEMENT – PROGRESS AS AT 30 APRIL 2023

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained to Committee members that this Report provided an update on the progress towards the measures and targets within the Strategic Plan 2022-25.

Appendix A provided the detail.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services informed members that in response to comments made at the last Committee about the number of measures not yet reportable, the Team were investigating if it were possible to report mid-year. However, measures such as exam performance and retention would remain unreportable until, for example, exam results released.

The Committee noted the content of the Report and attachment.

9. FINANCIAL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) 2022/23 - AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services introduced the Report and highlighted progress made on the 23 KPIs monitored by this Committee.

Appendix A provided the detail of the progress made on the KPIs.

There followed some discussion of potential alternative ways to present this information and the Principal and Chief Executive suggested that it might be useful to see how this is presented in NHS reporting.

Action: Principal and Chief Executive

The Committee noted the content of the Report and attachment.

10. BUSINESS PLANNING UPDATE – BUDGET 2023/24 HEADLINES

The Report provided the Committee with an update on the process of Business Planning, the end result of which will be the Colleges budget for 2023/24 and a set of student number targets.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services outlined the process and explained that the Executive were working through the budgets line-by-line until they reach an acceptable plan.

The Committee noted the update on Business Planning and in reference to point 5 of the Report, Members present supported the proposal that the Financial Strategy be brought to the June Policy and Resources meeting for fuller consideration before recommendation to the Board.

11. SUBCONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS 2022/23 – MID-YEAR REVIEW

The Director of Business and External Engagement presented this Report and explained that the College is working with the subcontractors to ensure that the students are receiving good quality learning and the best student experience.

The quality of the provision is subject to the same high level of quality monitoring and robust support as other College courses and the provider has responded positively to the close scrutiny and any changes needed.

The ESFA have released a subcontracting standard and Ofsted have a dedicated HMI to examine quality.

The Chair asked if the ESFA subcontracting standard was graded and the Director of Business and External Engagement explained that the College would commission an external audit of the provision and that this is reported to the ESFA.

The Committee noted the content of the Report, thanked the Director of Business and External Engagement and asked that thanks be shared with the Team.

12. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY 2022/23 TERMLY UPDATE

The Director of Business and External Engagement talked the Committee through this Report.

The Committee acknowledged the many and varied bids that the College was involved in and as detailed in the External Funding summary sheet attached to the Report.

13. HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) - UPDATE

The Report provided a summary of core HR data for the period 1 February 2023 to 30 April 2023. Appendix 1 contained a detailed summary of the key data sets.

A member enquired as to the age of the benchmarking information and the Vice-Principal explained that the last information made available to providers was in 2020 – pre Covid.

Members noted the content of the Report.

14. HEALTH AND SAFETY(H&S) - UPDATE

This Report and the attachment updated the Committee on the key H&S activities during the academic year to date. The Committee talked through the particular incidents highlighted and the Principal and Chief Executive confirmed that a Martyn's Law training workshop had been booked for staff.

The Committee noted the content of the Report and infographic.

15. NET ZERO CARBON - UPDATE

The Report highlighted progress towards the Government's Net Carbon Zero targets. For the benefit of new members, the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained why the College was reporting on this and the current position.

The Sustainability Officer continued to promote sustainability and cross-campus awareness raising activities.

An update regarding the priorities and progress was included in Appendix 1 and the Chair added that H&S would be a topic for a focused presentation and discussion at the Committee in the future.

Members liked the dashboard at Appendix 1 and noted the content of the Report.

16. ESFA FINANCIAL STATEMENT LETTER

This Report and copy of the ESFA College Financial Health letter was provided to the Committee for information.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that in parallel to the letter, the ESFA financial Dashboard was available online showing key funding information and benchmarked against the sector. This had been shared with Governors separately.

Members noted the letter and Report.

17. YEAR-END ACCOUNTS 2021/22 – LANCASHIRE COLLEGES CONSORTIUM

The Committee is briefed on the ventures in which the College has an interest. The College is a member of the Lancashire Colleges Consortium Ltd (TLC).

The Report and TLC year-end Accounts were supplied for information.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items additional items under any other business.

19. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair thanked Committee members for their contribution and discussions.

The Chair reminded the Executive and Director of Governance that Items 5 and 23 would be taken at the next meeting as agreed in this minute and asked for any ideas for future focused presentations be sent to the Director of Governance.

The Chair offered particular thanks to the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services.

20. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT POLICY AND RESOURCES MEETING

Monday 19 June 2023 at 5pm in the Exchange Boardroom and via MS Teams.

The Committee then considered the Part II agenda items – minutes recorded below.