

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2023

PRESENT:

Arif Patel	Chair
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Michael Lee	Member
Paul Morris*	Member
Ridwaan Omar	Member
Steve Waggott*	Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Nathan Rogan	Associate member
Jennifer Eastham	Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
Rachel Tarplee	Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Nicola Clayton	Director of Business Development and External Engagement
Joanne Calcutt	Head of Human Resources
Sarah Horeesorun	Director of Governance

* indicates participated via Microsoft Teams

The meeting commenced at 5pm and was quorate.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that there would be a change to the Agenda order with Item 13, the Human Resources Report, to be taken after Item 4, thereafter, the Agenda order would resume. This change was agreed by the Committee.

For presentation reasons, these minutes are set out to follow the Agenda order.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received in advance from Fran Crossland and Steve Nunwick.

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 25 SEPTEMBER 2023

The Chair mentioned finding a minor typo and would inform the Director of Governance. The Committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 25 September 2023 as a true and accurate record, and these would be signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the updates on the actions from the previous meetings and the Chair highlighted that the action regarding the development of a Campus Master Plan had been

carried forward since February 2022 and wondered whether this action should be archived, or RAG rated blue as having been considered and underway. The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services informed members that an update on the Campus Master Plan would be given at the February meeting of the Committee.

5. FINANCIAL POSITION 2022/23

To set the context for the Items that followed, the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services provided an overview setting out the process for the Annual Report and Financial Statements and explaining that each component is presented here as a separate Report, rather than one large unwieldy Report. This approach, or bite size bits of the process, makes it easier for the Committee members to consider each individual element.

(i) Management Accounts to 31 July 2023 (FINAL)

This Report had been seen by the Committee as a Pre-Final version. The Vice-Principal explained that it had been a challenging year and reported a breakeven position.

The Committee agreed the Report be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporation Board for approval.

(ii) Annual Report and Financial Statement

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that all colleges complete the same pro-forma and exercise as this every year. The figures therein, were the same as those within the management accounts and the documents had also been scrutinised by the Audit Committee at its meeting 14 November 2023, where it was requested that the Pension Creditor figure be split. This has been done.

The Committee agreed to **RECOMMEND** the Annual Report 2022/23 and Financial Statement to the Corporation Board for approval at its December meeting.

The Principal and Chief Executive added his thanks to the Vice-Principal, her Team and everyone who had contributed to the Annual Reporting process.

(iii) Related Party Transactions and Register of Interests

This Report is produced to ensure transparency in and probity in conducting the College's business with any organisation or business with which any of the Governing Body members may have a relationship. The ESFA do review this information and members were asked to review the content.

Committee members noted the disclosure information and that this would be approved as part of the Financial Statements.

(iv) Review of Financial Objectives

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services reminded members that a strategic decision had been made at the July Corporation Board meeting to change the Financial Strategy for Objective 1.

The Committee agreed the performance against the Financial Objectives 2022/23 and the Financial Objectives for 2023/24 and that these be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporation Board for approval.

(v) Annual Review of Accounting Policies

Having reviewed the minimal changes to the Accounting Policies for the Financial Statements 2022/23, highlighted in the Appendix, the Committee **AGREED** to recommend these to the Corporation Board for approval.

(vi) ESFA Finance Record

As part of the ESFA Accounts Direction the College is required to submit a Finance Record return to the ESFA by 31 December 2023. This is basically the Financial Statements information entered into a standard template and uploaded to the ESFA for them to analyse and provide sector benchmarking information.

Subject to Board approval of the Financial Statements on 8 December 2023, the Committee approved the submission of the Finance Record to the ESFA

6. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31 OCTOBER 2023 & BUDGET MONITORING UPDATE

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services talked the Committee through the current financial position.

The position was better than forecast, though there were a few areas, such as Higher Education and Apprenticeships, that were being more closely managed. Cash balances remained strong.

In the discussions that followed there was acknowledgement that costs had increased and were still increasing and that was having an impact sector-wide. Teachers Pensions were also set to increase.

The Committee thanked the Vice-Principal and the Finance Team for managing the finances well and were reassured that variances in predicated income were being effectively managed.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Management Accounts to the Corporation Board for approval.

7. ANTI-BRIBERY ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

The Committee considered the College's current Anti-Bribery Policy and noted that there were only minor amends proposed to the version approved last year.

The Committee agreed that the Policy remained current, pertinent, and represented the expectations of behaviour for those connected with the College.

The Chair mentioned Intellectual Property and asked if this was included in the suite policies falling under the overarching 'Counter Fraud' action plan discussed at the Audit Committee. It was agreed that the Chair would share an example, the Anti-bribery and Corruption (Oxford) with the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services.

Action: Director of Governance

There had been no reported instances of bribery in 2022/23, and under its Scheme of Delegation, the Committee **APPROVED** the College's Anti-Bribery Policy.

8. ANNUAL REPORT ON GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 2022/23 AND REVIEW OF POLICY

The College's Gifts and Hospitality Policy is presented each year for its annual review by the Committee and is accompanied by the register of gifts and hospitality received during the year.

The Committee noted that the entries declared in 2022/23.

There were no changes proposed to the policy agreed last year.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Gifts and Hospitality Policy for 2023/24.

9. CODE OF PRACTICE ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH

To ensure continued compliance with the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, the Committee conducted its annual review. There were no changes since this was last approved on 9 December 2022. However, the Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality informed members that there was going to be a Freedom of Speech Bill and that this may impact on the Student Union in particular, with personal liability being a potentially controversial aspect of the Bill. Members were reassured that the Student Union President was aware of likely changes and that the College's Pastoral Team provided support and guidance to the Student Union.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech to the Board for approval and the continued adoption by the College.

10. STUDENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE 2023/24 – UPDATE

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services informed the Committee that the enrolments for students 19+ continued throughout the year and was within tolerance of meeting the target.

The starts for Apprenticeships were on target and HE group sizes were being monitored closely and some courses were not running.

The Committee thanked the Vice-Principal for the update and there were no further questions.

11. STRATEGIC PLAN – ANNUAL OPERATING STATEMENT

a) 2022/23 Final Actuals

This Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services reminded the Committee that they had reviewed the pre-final version of this Report in their last meeting 25 September 2023, and that bar for a few tweaks, the Report remained the same.

Progress for the year had been positive on a number of measures, for example investment in facilities and Gatsby Benchmarks, and areas of concern were growth in commercial income and Apprenticeships.

Members noted the final outcomes for 2022/23.

b) 2023/24 progress as at 31 October 2023

Members noted the progress made so far in year and the planned activities. No further comments were made.

12. COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

(i) KPIs 2022/23 Final

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services introduced this Report. The Committee noted that the final position against the KPIs for 2022/23.

(ii) KPIs 2023/24 update as at 31 October 2023

The Committee reviewed the progress made so far on the KPIs for 2023/24.

The Committee noted the progress made so far on the KPIs for 2023/24.

13. HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) UPDATE AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023

The Head of HR talked the Committee through the Report and supporting Appendix providing the core HR data for the period 1 August 2023 - 31 October 2023.

The Head of HR reported that the pilot with the local recruitment consultant to fill six of the Colleges hard to fill vacancies had come to an end, with five of the six posts filled. Proposed next steps were under review.

There followed some discussion of the potential implications of the increase to the National Living Wage and the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services informed members that an exercise was underway to review pay differentials between pay bands of staff and managers.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services informed members that an update on the People Strategy would feature at the February 2024 meeting of this Committee.

The Committee thanked the Head of HR for the update.

Joanne Calcutt left the meeting.

14. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY 2023/24 TERMLY UPDATE

The Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement elaborated on the detail within the Report and reminded members that the successful bids and grants had contributed to the significant investment in the estate, for example, the Industry Collaboration Zone (ICZ) launched in October 2023 and bookings and were increasing.

The Report detailed the variety of different funding bids and future investments in the HEAT facilities, Engineering and Hospitality. The College was working with the Lancashire Fire Service on managing scenarios around electric vehicles and accidents.

The Chair commented that it was good to see the success of the ICZ facilities and that local employers and business were engaging with the College and providing opportunities for students and staff to benefit from shared learning.

The Committee noted the content of the Report and thanked the Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement and her Team for their hard work.

15. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE 2023/24

In the absence of the Director of Facilities and Estates, the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services provided an update to the detail within the Report.

The Victoria Building refurbishment project was underway and staff beginning to vacate. The substantial foundations for the temporary classrooms, Portakabin's, was in place and staff and

students would be using these from the New Year. The Victoria Building would be officially handed over to the DfE and their contractors, BAM, in a ceremony on 24 January 2024.

There was a programme of works and remodelling in other areas of the campus, for example, an architect was currently working on designs for the HE library, and the Elizabeth Building, STEM and Construction all had changes and enhancements planned or underway.

The Committee acknowledged the progress made and the Vice-Principal committed to provide an update on all campus projects to the March Board meeting.

Action: Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

16. ESFA COLLEGE FINANCIAL HEALTH LETTER

This letter was shared for information and provided the Committee with assurance regarding the College's Financial Health. Based on the forecasts, the College Financial Forecasting Return generated an auto-score of 'Outstanding' financial health and this was concurred by the ESFA.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items additional items under any other business.

18. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair thanked Committee members for their contributions to the discussions.

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

Monday 26 February 2024 at 5pm in the Exchange Boardroom and via MS Teams.