



MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 22 JUNE 2020

PRESENT:

Paul Levet	Chair
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Professor Waqar Ahmed	Member
Paul Morris	Member
Arif Patel	Member
Roger Spensley	Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Nicola Clayton	Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement
Jennifer Eastham	Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
Sharon Germaine-Cox	Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Jean Tracy	Clerk to the Corporation

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Michael Lee, Kathryn Lord 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 18 MAY 2020

the Committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 18 May 2020 as a true and accurate record, and these would be signed by the Chair when able to do so (Covid-19 lockdown).

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the updates against actions from previous meetings.

5. COVID-19 – COLLEGE UPDATE

As agreed by the Board at its meeting on 3 June 2020, the Report provided the Committee with an update on the impact of Covid-19 on Quality of Education, Finance and the progress on re-opening the College.

The Report covered the way in which teaching had been delivered online and the agreed method for tutor centre assesses grading in FE. It was noted that these grades would be subject to awarding body quality assurance checks, statistical modelling and analysis against centre performance from previous years. In HE, adaptations to student assessments had resulted in a

variety of open book style assessments being adopted. The number of HE students sitting the exams was positive and the College was supporting those students who had not yet attempted their examination.

The Committee noted the increase in the planned budget deficit as a result of the pandemic and that the College would not run out of cash; cash balances remained healthy.

The Saturn Centre and the MOT Centre had opened. Both openings had been overseen by the College's Health and Safety Manager, staff and Trade Union Health and Safety Representative to ensure full risk assessments were undertaken and social distancing and the necessary PPE were in place. Student assessments taking place in College were by invitation only and were progressing well. Although the Unions had voiced concerns, staff were keen to return to work.

The Health and Safety Governor Champion commented on the discussions which had taken place with Union representatives at the Health and Safety Committee; the Unions were critical of the process and not the content. It was noted that the overall College Risk Assessment had been shared with Board Members and was sufficient.

The Report also covered the external and internal consultations which were taking place such as the meetings held with the Council and College working groups.

6. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – PERIOD ENDING 31 MAY 2020

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Management Accounts up to the period ending 31 May 2020.

The Committee noted the information provided in the Report on the key issues in relation to income, pay and non-pay costs and balance sheet and cash. The expected out-turn deficit was noted and that this was higher than planned, in part due to the impact of Covid-19 in commercial income, as had been noted at the previous meeting. The Committee noted the cost savings and measures which were continuing.

A member of the Committee asked if the College had planned ahead to recover the apprenticeship losses. The Director of Business Development and External Engagement stated that apprenticeships would be signed up as soon as the students could get into work. The College was also to deliver a 'flying start' programme; students would enrol to the programme before transferring to an apprenticeship when this became available. Interviews with students were taking place online and work was being done on CVs, for example.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the Report to the Corporation Board.

7. COVID-19 SPECIFIC FINANCIAL RETURN (AS PER ESFA UPDATE 20 MAY 2020)

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained the background to the return and the documents which would be completed and returned to the ESFA. It was noted that there would be some minor adjustments to the figures as the details for the new return were released after the budget papers for this meeting had been written.

Policy and Resources Committee **APPROVED** the Principal to sign off the return.

8. COLLEGE BUDGET 2019-20 AND FINANCIAL PLANNING 2019-20 to 2021-22

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services informed the Committee that the Financial Planning dates were incorrect, the correct dates being Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-23. All other information was correct.

The Committee was informed that the College had taken account of the FE Commissioner's comments that it had been over optimistic in the student number targets and was thus not

predicting large growth. The impact of Covid-19 on September recruitments could not be assessed at this time and the College had included a £1m contingency to cover the possibility of there being no growth in student numbers. It was noted that the document achieved 'Good' financial health, as required by the FE Commissioner.

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services went through each of the papers contained in the appendices which included the ESFA Financial Planning Checklist.

A member of the Committee asked about possible ramifications if the College were to breach its loan covenants. Information on the discussions with Barclays was provided, it being noted that the banks were looking to support colleges who could evidence that covenants had not been met due to Coronavirus.

The College was challenged on its student number targets. The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained the process in detail: the College considered last year's recruitment figures and previous year's trends; the Business Planning process and the detailed review by the Executive.

Information was provided on the plans for September in terms of opening the College. It was noted that teaching would be delivered 50:50 on direct and online teaching and that all necessary actions regarding social distancing would be in place.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the paper to the Board for approval.

9. ESFA FINANCIAL HEALTH LETTER

The Committee noted that the ESFA had confirmed the College's financial health grade, based on the published accounts, as 'Good' and that this was in line with management's assessment. The ESFA had also confirmed that they had 'reviewed the College's audited financial statements, financial statements management letter and annual report of the audit committee and had not identified any significant financial control concerns'. The Committee was reminded that the ESFA financial health letter had been delayed because of the pandemic.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Principal and Chief Executive informed the Committee of planned protests by the TUC in response to the current restructure process. No action was required.

There were no other items of Any Other Business.

11. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair thank Members present for their attendance and contribution at the meeting, commenting that it was important that the Board supported the College in its education delivery.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday 28 September 2020 at 5.00pm.

Signed:

Date: