

Preston College

Redacted and Abridged¹ Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 5 October 2023 at 5.30pm Zoom

Present:

Ms Joanne Jones	Chair
Mr John Boydell	
Mr Steve Browne	
Ms Lisa Keegan	
Mr Simon Nixon	Principal and Chief Executive
Mr Jose Sedano-Martinez	
Mr Richard Sellars	

In attendance:

Mr Mark Airey	Head of Finance (until Minute 16)
Mrs Clare Rayner	Clerk to the Board
Mr Iain Stott	Interim Executive Head of Resources (until Minute 16)
Ms Gill Thornton	Head of Human Resources (until Minute 16)

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair thanked all present for joining the meeting remotely, she explained that as a number of members needed to join remotely, she had agreed it was preferable to hold the meeting remotely.

The Chair welcomed Richard Sellars to his first meeting.

As there were no apologies, it was noted that a quorum was present.

2. Declarations of interest

The Committee noted the inherent interests of all staff Item 18: Pay Strategy.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 May 2023 and 8 June 2023

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2023 (part 2) as a correct record. The Committee agreed the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2023 as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the agency budget figure reference in Minute 8.

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2023 and 8 June 2023 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the amendment agreed.

4. Matters arising

The Committee reviewed the report on the progress of actions from previous meetings.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report on progress of actions from previous meetings.

¹ Please note that any matters which the Corporation is satisfied should be dealt with on a confidential basis have been removed from these minutes.

5. **Pay Strategy**

The Chair explained that she would like to bring Item 18 Pay Strategy to the start of the meeting to ensure there was adequate discussion time.

Ms Thornton, Head of Human Resources, presented her report on proposals for affordable and appropriate staff pay award for 2023/24.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed the proposed pay award for recommendation to the Board.

Resolved: Committee agreed to recommend the proposed pay award for recommendation to the Board

-

6. **Draft Outturn Position 2022/23**

Mr Mark Airey, Head of Finance, referred members to the Period 12 Management Accounts and the Draft Outturn Position 2022/23 report.

Mr Airey reported:

- that subject to final checking, and external audit, the draft surplus (before pensions adjustments) current expectation was that the draft accounts to be audited, In addition, the College had been selected for a funding audit which had started on 11 September 2023, and there was risk that there could be an income clawback as the audit was still ongoing;
- on the significant agency costs incurred during 2022/23. However, following recruitment and retention strategies the College had been less reliant on agencies to date in 2023/24.

In response to queries from members, the Committee noted:

- that some capital grants had been received but not paid out yet including T Level capital equipment and demolition of the nursery;
- the biggest risk at present was the possibility that the funding audit might result in some funding clawback.

The Chair commented positively that the introduction of proactive actions, such as additional SCPs, had clearly been successful and that it was encouraging that a surplus was forecast, despite increased agency costs.

The Committee noted the Period 12 Management Accounts and the forecast outturn position report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Period 12 Management Accounts and the forecast outturn position report.

7. **Performance against Key Performances Indicators**

Mr Stott, Interim Executive Head of Resources, presented his report on progress on the College's performance against KPIs and funding dashboards. The Committee noted the Performance against Key Performances Indicators. Mr Stott reported:

- 16-18 numbers continued to improve which indicated that the College was increasing its market share;
- following the uncertainties of the pandemic, apprenticeship numbers were improving;
- progress of achievement of Adult Education Budget.

Following concerns regarding underspend on maintenance, Mr Airey explained that some maintenance during 2022/23 had been paid for with grants which had not been fully spent and vacancy drift had offset some of the agency costs, rather than maintenance underspend. He explained that the College had a significantly higher number of 2022/23 staff vacancies than in previous years, some of which were in harder to recruit roles, and, whilst the College had increased the agency cost budget for 2022/23, it had not been sufficient.

Following discussion, members agreed it would be helpful to review a report on the 16-18 demographic and market share numbers.

Mr Stott presented the Enrolment Update at Appendix C. He reported:

- that whilst overall enrolment was positive to date, there was less interest in T Levels, which reflected the national picture and was likely to be due to media coverage which had reduced confidence in the qualification with school teachers and parents;
- on the government's announcement of its ambition in the longer term to introduce a new qualification to replace A Levels;
- that the number of High Needs enrolments continued to grow, with 115 High Needs learners enrolled to date and a further 13 learners predicted, based on discussion with Lancashire County Council;
- apprenticeship enrolment was positive to date, with the College surpassing the August and September recruitment profile;
- on the College's role as a College of Sanctuary which was perceived positively by stakeholders;
- an update on HE performance to date;
- an update on the Adult enrolment which would remain challenging.

Mr Sellars left the meeting.

In response to queries from members on the impact on staff following the significant increase in learners studying GCSE maths and English at the College, the Committee noted that:

- the increase had caused some initial logistical difficulties due to classroom sizes. It was noted that a number of learners would re-sit these GCSEs in November 2023 and it was hoped that this would reduce overall numbers;
- results were down nationally and many of the learners who had taken exams in the summer would not have had as much exam experience due to the impact of the Covid pandemic;
- there was an expectation that the government would provide additional investment to support English and maths GCSE teaching;
- achievement of maths or English GCSE on resit, alongside the requirements of their new course, remained challenging for many learners.

In response to a query from a member on meeting the needs of high needs learners due to increased numbers and the impact of this, it was noted that this was currently being reviewed and that it was always challenging to meet the needs of high needs learners as the needs varied for each learner. However, the College staff had considerable experience and the increase in numbers was not significantly higher than the previous year.

Resolved: The Committee noted the current performance against KPIs and the revised format of funding and income dashboards.

Action: Management to provide a report on demographic/market share.

8. **Review of Catering Subsidy**

Mr Stott presented his Review of Catering Subsidy report and outlined the changes which had taken place to remove the subsidy from the 2023/24 budget, following the request at the previous meetings of the Committee and the Board. He reported on actions which had been taken to ensure learners on Free School Meal scheme were not adversely impacted and that the price of healthier product choices had not been increased. Mr Stott also provided details of sales to date compared to the previous year.

Members agreed that this was an excellent piece of work. The Committee recorded thanks to Mr Stott and his team for this work.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Review of Catering Subsidy report.

9. **Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy 2023/24**

Mr Stott presented his report on the changes to the Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy 2023/24.

The Committee agree to recommend to the Board the approval of the Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy for 2023/24.

Resolved: The Committee agree to recommend to the Board the approval of the Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy for 2023/24.

10. **Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression**

The Clerk presented the report on the introduction of a new Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression and Procedure for Holding Activities in College. She referred members to the changes outlined in the report that had been made to the draft

Code of Practice and Procedure for Holding Activities in College following the consultation with unions and Eversheds Sutherland The Clerk confirmed that the draft was subject to trade unions negotiations.

The Clerk explained that further changes would need to be made to the policy in 2024 as the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill had become law on 11 May 2023. However, it would take some time for the requirements of the act to be implemented.

In response to a query of whether there were currently any active risks or issues which had informed the development of the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression and Procedure for Holding Activities in College, the Principal confirmed that there were no current live issues. However, it was important that the College had a Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression and Procedure for Holding Activities in College in place.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend the draft Code of Practice of Freedom of Speech and Expression and the Procedure for Holding Activities in College to the Board for approval.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to recommend the draft Code of Practice of Freedom of Speech and Expression and the Procedure for Holding Activities in College to the Board for approval.

11. **Estates and Capital Works**

Mr Stott presented the Estates and Capital Works report. Mr Stott reported that much of the work had been completed over the summer when it was less disruptive for staff and learners. Members commented that it was evident from the feedback in the report that the changes had been welcomed by learners. The Committee noted the Estates and Capital Works report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Estates and Capital Works report.

12. **T Level Bid Works and Appointment of Contractor**

Mr Stott presented the T Level Bid Works and Appointment of Contractor report.

Mr Sellars re-joined the meeting.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that in the interests of transparency, the report to the Board should include reference to: further information on the governance arrangements, the rationale for the approach and the College's Financial Regulations.

The Committee noted the outcome of the Wave 5 Building & Facilities Improvement Grant (T Level) bid and grant received and agreed to recommend the proposed capital works and expenditure of the Building and Facilities Improvement Grant funds to the Board. Following discussion, the Committee recommended to the Board the appointment of Frank Whittle Partnership (FWP) to deliver the project under the multi-disciplinary RISE Framework, subject to management providing further assurance on the governance arrangements in the report to the Board.

Resolved: The Committee:

- noted the outcome of the Wave 5 Building & Facilities Improvement Grant (T Level) bid and grant received;
- recommended the proposed capital works and expenditure of the Building and Facilities Improvement Grant funds to the Board,
- recommend to the Board the appointment of the supplier and framework subject to further assurance provided on the governance arrangements in the report to the Board.

Action: The report to the Board to include further information on governance arrangements.

13. **Staff Voice**

Ms Thornton provided governors with information following the June round of Staff Voice meetings. Ms Thornton reported that the themes considered by staff in June had been: an update on You Said / We Did since March 2023, Health and Wellbeing for Staff, toilets in the Skills Development Building update, classroom management and mobile phone use Policy, vaping, digital Clocks for Exams, arrangements for GCSE Mocks and clarification on arrangements for Time of in Lieu (TOIL).

Ms Thornton also referred members to the “You Said It, We did It” report at Appendix A.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

14. **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement**

The Principal and Chief Executive presented his report on the proposed changes to the College’s Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Statement. The Committee noted that the College would develop an EDI strategy during 2023/24.

The Committee approved the draft College Equality Statement, at Appendix A, for recommendation to the Board.

Resolved: The Committee

- approved the draft College Equality Statement, at Appendix A, for recommendation to the Board
- noted the update on the development of a College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy.

15. **Resources Forward Work Programme 2023/24**

The Clerk to the Board presented the updated Resources Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24. The Clerk reported that the dates for meeting in 2023/24 had been approved by the Board on 29 June 2023 and had been added to the FWP.

The Committee approved the updated Resources Committee Forward Work Programme 2023/24.

Resolved: The Committee approved the updated Resources Committee Forward Work Programme 2023/24.

16. **Date of Next Meeting:**

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be confirmed at the next Board meeting.

Mr Airey, Mr Stott and Ms Thornton left the meeting.