

Preston's College
Abridged¹ Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 28 November 2019 at 5pm
Boardroom at Preston's College

Present:

Mr J Taylor	Chair
Dr E Smith	Principal and Chief Executive
Ms J Jones	
Ms K Williams	

In attendance:

Mr D Foy	Estates, Health & Safety Manager (until minute 5)
Mr S Nixon	Executive Director Resources
Mrs C Rayner	Clerk to the Board
Ms G Thornton	Head of Human Resources

Apologies:

Mr J Boydell
Mr S Browne
Mr S Edwards

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair noted that apologies had been received from Mr Browne and Mr Edwards.

It was noted that a quorum was present.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2019

The Committee agreed the Minutes of Resources meeting on 20 June 2019 as a correct record.

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2019 were approved and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising

The Committee noted the report on progress of actions from previous meeting.

a) Minute 4 – Matters arising

Mr Nixon gave a verbal update on the suggestion that the College could further develop its 'wellbeing' training. He confirmed wellbeing training was a growth area for the College and referred to projects with Leyland Trucks and local schools.

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.

b) Budget 2019/20 and Three Year Forecast

Mr Nixon gave a verbal update on forthcoming changes to the method by which the ESFA collected data from 2020, making reference to:

- colleges to submit a consolidated return to the ESFA each January;
- whilst the changes were designed to reduce bureaucracy for colleges there were timing implications for Board and Committee review and approval. To assist, the ESFA had agreed that for 2019/20 the consolidated return could be submitted by February 2020. The Committee noted that the return required Corporation approval and an additional Board meeting would be required in February;
- as the Board and Resources Committee would not normally consider a forecast in January there were implications for accuracy of forecasting budgets at this point in the academic year;
- the Resources Committee would review the draft submission to the ESFA at its meeting on 13 February 2020; from January 2021 the Board would need to schedule a meeting in January.

c) Minute 9 Employment Policy Review

The Clerk reported that, as agreed at the meeting on 20 June 2019, revised versions of the Job Share Policy and Paternity Policy had been reviewed by the Committee in writing between meetings. She reported that no further amendments had been received from members. The Committee formally approved the Job Share Policy and Paternity Policy.

Resolved:

The Committee:

- **noted the report on progress on actions from previous meeting;**
- **noted verbal updates on wellbeing and the changes to submission of financial data to the ESFA from 2020;**
- **approved the Job Share Policy and the Paternity Policy.**

5. Health and Safety Annual Report and Policy Update

a) Health and Safety Annual Report

Mr Foy, Estates, Health and Safety Manager, presented his Health and Safety – Annual Report and Policy Update performance update report, making reference to:

- the Annual Health and Safety Report - 2018/19 academic year;
- key figures from the report; the total number of incident report forms received had increased from 309 to 387, the number of College related incidents had fallen from 64 to 49 and the College had one Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2012 (RIDDOR) reportable incident during the academic year 2018/19;
- benchmarking against National and Regional statistics taken from the Health and Safety

Executive evidenced that the College was currently operating well below the accidents/incident levels compared to other businesses both locally and nationally;

- compliance with Health and Safety Executive legislation;
- positive feedback from an internal audit of Estates Management earlier in the year;
- the College's achievement of a Gold RoSPA Award in its first year of entry;
- the College's involvement in the LOcHER project and the LOcHER project steering group and his active involvement in promoting the concept across the sector and wider industry forums;
- initiatives to share best practice with other colleges and raise the profile of the College's health and safety work.

The Committee discussed the Health and Safety Annual Report with management and, in response to queries, noted:

- an explanation of how the number of reported incidents increased but the number of incidents fell in 2018/19 which related to how incidents were categorised and reported. Mr Foy highlighted the importance of differentiating between College related issues and student related issues, such as calls outs for students feeling unwell with minor ailments or pre-existing health conditions;
- the total number of completed incident report forms would vary between 300 – 500 in each academic year;
- to assess risks at the College the statistics in the report would be analysed e.g. to see if there were any significant increases in a particular School or workshop;
- introduction of a “stay put” alarm system which could also be used for other College announcements such as the two minutes’ silence for Remembrance Day;
- successful outcome of an internal audit of Estates Management in early 2019 and implementation of changes to systems and processes as a result of three internal audit recommendations. One of the actions related to communications with senior management and the Board and would be addressed in future Health and Safety reports;
- achievement of the Gold RoSPA Award in the College’s first year of entry and the successful LOcHER project had given the College a national profile.

The Executive Director of Resources commended the work of the Estates and Facilitates Team in recording, reporting and capturing risk related data.

b) Health and Safety Policy – General Statement of Intent

Mr Foy referred to the College’s Health and Safety Policy. He explained that there was a legal requirement for the policy to include three sections of which the first section, the strategic commitment entitled “General Statement of Intent,” must be approved by the Committee. The Committee approved the 2019/20 General Statement of Intent.

Resolved: The Committee commended the achievements of the Estates and Facilities Team outlined in the report and:

- noted and approved the content of the draft Annual Health and Safety Report.
- confirmed commitment to Health and Safety by its approval of the 2019/20 General Statement of Intent on behalf of the Board.

6. Performance Against Key Performance Indicators

Mr Nixon, Executive Director Resources, presented his report on Performance Against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – November 2019.

The Committee discussed the report on current performance against Key Performance Indicators with management and noted responses to queries raised by members.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report on current performance against Key Performance Indicators.

7. Enrolment Update

Mr Nixon, Executive Director Resources, referred to his Enrolment Update report, which had been considered at the October Board meeting. The Committee noted the Enrolment Update report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Enrolment Update report.

8. Period 3 Management Accounts

Simon Nixon presented his report on the Period 3 Management Accounts and commentary, making reference to:

- pension adjustments required;
- accounts were prepared in conjunction with budget review meetings involving budget holders across a whole range of College activity. Business Planning meetings would take place with Heads of Schools/Departments from 25th November onwards;
- the Committee's detailed discussion of KPIs: the most significant issues were currently shortfalls in forecast income against Higher Education and Advanced Learner Loans targets; Apprenticeship income was also a risk area. However, mitigation plans were in place;
- the employer contribution rate for the Local Governance Pension Scheme (LGPS) would increase by 3 percentage points from April 2020. However, deficit payments would reduce, the College would benefit from savings of £140,000 annually from 2020/21, with a part year impact of £50,000 in 2019/20.

The Committee discussed and noted the Period 3 Management Accounts and commentary report.

Following queries, the Committee noted:

- background on the LGPS, which was a well run scheme;
- all governors were invited to an additional finance session, requested by the Audit Committee, which would be held on the afternoon of 11 March 2020. The session would include sessions to find out more about the work of the finance team.

Mr Nixon undertook to provide further detail on:

- rationale for the significant difference for year to date actual compared to current year budget which was likely to be due to budget profile;
- reason for large payroll provision which was likely to relate to HMRC.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Period 3 Management Accounts, commentary and financial position.

Action: Mr Nixon to provide clarification on accounts queries.

9. Annual Report and Financial Statements

Mr Nixon referred to the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements. He highlighted:

- the external financial audit by KPMG was largely complete with no significant issues raised. The external auditors had issued a management letter indicating that an unqualified opinion would be given when the financial statements were signed;
- the anticipated final outcome of the funding assurance audit undertaken on behalf of the ESFA, which would not be officially confirmed until the final reconciliation statement was received in late November/early December. However, no further adjustments were expected;
- some minor changes required to text in the report;
- the College had achieved income targets with the exception of HE income;
- impact of FRS102 pension adjustments.

The Committee discussed the Annual Report and Financial Statements with management and, in response to queries, noted:

- the College's new mission and strategy would be included in the 2019/20 Report and Financial Statements;
- the College had been selected randomly by ESFA for the funding assurance audit and it would not be conducted annually;
- reflections from management on the funding assurance audit process and acknowledgement of management diversion from day to day activities to respond to audit requests.

The Committee approved the financial statements for 2018/19 and recommended formal adoption by the Board at its meeting on 12 December 2019, subject to any changes required as a result of the various audit processes.

Resolved: The Committee approved the financial statements for 2018/19 and recommended formal adoption by the Board at its meeting on 12 December 2019, subject to any changes required as a result of the various audit processes.

10. Review of Public Benefit Statement

The Clerk presented her report on the revised Public Benefit Statement. The Committee noted that the Association of Colleges (AoC) Code of Good Governance for English Colleges included reference to college's publishing a Public Benefit Statement as best practice and this had also been highlighted by RSM, the College's Internal Auditor. The Clerk outlined the rationale for the proposed changes.

The Committee approved the changes and noted that the final version would be designed by Marketing and published on the College's website.

Resolved: The Committee approved the revised Public Benefit Statement for publication on the College's website.

11. Staff Satisfaction Survey

Ms Thornton presented her report on the Staff Satisfaction Survey 2018/19, making reference to:

- York College had conducted the survey for the first time as a trial;
- York College were able to provide direct benchmarking with other further education providers;
- the questions were standardised and included questions from the new Education Inspection Framework;
- a summary of the results of the Staff Survey 2018/19 and management's approach to addressing the feedback with employees;
- the survey included six main sections: Management style, Communication, Customers, College, Me and General;
- the College's top 5 highest and lowest scoring questions;
- recognition of the necessity for greater investment in the workforce to move from an Ofsted Grade 2 to a Grade 1; the People Deliverables to supporting the 5 year plan focused heavily on professional development and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all staff within the wider context of organisational development.

The Committee discussed the Staff Satisfaction Survey with management and, in response to queries, noted management's views on:

- apparent contradictions in staff responses in some areas. e.g. "*Staff are not afraid to say what they really think*" had scored 59 and "*Staff views are sought and considered*" had scored 94.4. It was noted that a score of 59 was only slightly lower than the benchmark average;
- the reasons for a response rate of only 50% and plans to encourage greater participation in future staff satisfaction surveys. The Committee noted that the decreased response rate, compared to the previous year, could relate to the timing of the survey just after a College restructure and management's anticipation that the 2019/20 response would return to pre 2018/2019 levels or higher;
- a new initiative for all staff to have the opportunity to complete 30 CPD hours per year;

- it was noted that some colleagues were at the top of their 'Job Family' and work was in train to review career paths for colleagues.

The Committee noted the Staff Satisfaction Survey report and the Staff Satisfaction Survey.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Staff Satisfaction Survey.

12. Employment Policy Review

Ms Thornton presented her report on the Employment Policy reviews. It was noted that the Human Resources Department operated a rolling plan for the review of all employment policies. Ms Thornton referred to the revisions to the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure and Pay Principles Policy for consideration by the Committee.

Ms Thornton reported that the College's recognised Trade Unions had been consulted during the reviews of all the policies and associated procedures.

a) Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

Ms Thornton outlined proposed changes to the Disciplinary Policy and the Disciplinary Procedure, making reference to:

- a number of cosmetic changes to make the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure documents more user friendly;
- in negotiation with the Trade Unions, the College had used the ACAS Code of Practice for Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures as the benchmark;
- two appendices of the Disciplinary Procedure: the process for Senior Post-Holders and Appeals Committee Information, could not be revised pending the Board's review of the Instruments and Articles and Standing Orders in the spring term. She explained that until this review the current appendices had not been revised.

The Committee approved the revised Disciplinary Policy and the revised Disciplinary Procedure.

b) Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Ms Thornton outlined the proposed changes to the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure, making reference to:

- a review of key roles in the event of a whistleblowing claim, including the Clerk, the Chair of the board and the Chair of the Audit Committee;
- changes to ensure the procedure for all stakeholders to raise a qualifying disclosure was clear;
- changing the name of the policy and Procedure to *Whistleblowing: Policy and Procedure for Speaking Out* to reflect best practice;
- cosmetic changes to make the Policy and Procedure more user friendly.

The Committee discussed the importance of the Whistleblowing Policy/ Procedure, particularly given the publication of the Investigation into Bournville College and other similar cases. The Committee noted plans to communicate to employees and governors that a new policy had been approved.

A staff governor referred to a requirement to include the European Social Fund (ESF) logo and associated wording on the Whistleblowing Policy/ Procedure.

The Committee approved the revised Whistleblowing Policy/ Procedure.

c) The Pay Principles Policy

Ms Thornton outlined the proposed changes to the Pay Principles Policy, making reference to:

- changes to incorporate the new Pay Framework for Business Support and Management; which was approved by Resources Committee on 20 June 2019 and subsequently at Board on 11 July 2019;
- incorporation of processes which would be undertaken as part of the Pay Framework for Business Support and Managers, which would launch in January 2020;
- other parts of the Policy had also been refreshed.

The Committee approved the revised Pay Principles Policy.

The Committee discussed how to raise awareness with staff as policies and procedures were revised.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report and approved the revised Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, Whistleblowing Policy/ Procedure and Pay Principles Policy.

Action: Ms Thornton to include the ESF logo, and associated wording required by the ESF, on the Whistleblowing Policy/ Procedure, prior to publication.

13. Forward Work Programme

The Clerk outlined the draft Resources Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2019/20 which detailed the anticipated business of the Resources Committee in 2019/20. The Clerk highlighted:

- the FWP was not a static document and could be subject to change as new issues arose during the year;
- the FWP would be kept under review by the Chair of the Resources Committee, the Chief Executive and Principal, Executive Director of Resources and the Clerk and the Committee would be informed of any substantive changes.

The Chief Executive and Principal highlighted the benefits of well managed FWPs to the Corporation and in particular the key role of the Clerk in monitoring FWPs.

The Committee approved the Resources Committee Forward Work Programme.

Resolved: The Committee reviewed and approved the Resources Committee Forward Work Programme 2019/20.

14. Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that next meeting of the Resources Committee would be held on 13 February 2020.