

Preston's College

Redacted¹ Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 13 February 2020 at 5.30pm Boardroom at Preston's College

Present:

Mr J Taylor	Chair
Dr E Smith	Principal and Chief Executive
Mr S Browne	
Ms J Jones	

In attendance:

Mr S Nixon	Executive Director Resources
Mrs C Rayner	Clerk to the Board
Mr I Stott	Head of MIS, ICT & Data Services (until Minute 6)
Ms G Thornton	Head of Human Resources

Apologies:

Mr J Boydell
Mr S Edwards
Ms K Williams

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair noted that apologies had been received from Mr Boydell, Mr Edwards and Ms Williams.

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 28 November 2019

The Committee agreed the Minutes of Resources meeting on 28 November as a correct record.

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November were approved and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising

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

a) Minute 5 – Health and Safety Annual Report and Policy Update

Mr Nixon, Executive Director of Resources, reported that Mr Foy had left the College. He explained that Mr Foy's role had included management responsibility for both Estates and

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.

Health and Safety and following a review, management responsibility for Estates and Health and Safety would be separated. He reported that a new role of Health and Safety Officer had been advertised and responsibility for Estates management would be covered by a separate manager within the College.

Mr Nixon outlined the interim arrangements put in place pending the appointment of a new Health and Safety Officer.

Following concerns raised by governors regarding the significant risks to the College if Health and Safety matters were not robustly managed, Mr Nixon provided assurance that:

- all health and safety checks were up to date including legionella checks;
- clear reporting lines and responsibilities would be designated for the separate management roles within Estates and Health and Safety to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and completion of all required tasks;
- his view that splitting management of Estates and Health and Safety would improve management oversight.

b) Minute 2 (Part 2) Committee Effectiveness Reviews

The Clerk reported that committee effectiveness reviews were ongoing and she would update the Board on the Resources Committee's feedback once all reviews had been completed.

Resolved:

The Committee:

- **noted the report on progress on actions from previous meeting;**
- **noted a verbal update on the recruitment of a new Health and Safety Officer and interim cover arrangements.**

5. IT Infrastructure Update

Mr Stott, Head of MIS, ICT and Data Services, presented his IT Infrastructure update report, making reference to:

- an overview of the progress to date on the IT Infrastructure refresh project which had been approved by the Board in July 2019 as part of the IT Strategy;
- how the infrastructure changes would provide the College with a more resilient digital environment with increased performance and connectivity, mitigating the risks presented by an ageing IT infrastructure;
- works were currently on target to be completed within agreed timescales;
- the College's Apple computers, which had originally purchased to support the music curriculum which was no longer required, would be repurposed as thin clients;
- the forthcoming introduction of a new College app;

- forthcoming “DigiFest” which would provide opportunity for staff to develop their digital skills and knowledge.

Governors referred to requests from learners at the Governors’ Question Time to improve the Wi-Fi signal in the canteen and iStem. Governors stressed the importance of Wi-Fi to the existing and potential students and suggested that management should seek feedback from learners to ensure there were no data black spots. During discussion with management governors noted:

- the new infrastructure would increase signal strength by 1/3 across the campus;
- the significantly increased usage of smart phones since the Wi-Fi access points had been installed. In response to learner feedback some access points had been moved to improve connectivity. Following testing additional access points would be added if required;
- signal testing would take place across College and learners could feedback via Learner Voice.

In response to discussion with management, governors noted:

- migration plans were in place to ensure a smooth transition to the new infrastructure;
- the new system would improve the College’s IT security.

Governors suggested arranging external publicity once the new system was implemented.

The Committee commended management for progress to date. The Chair asked Mr Stott to attend the next meeting of the Resources Committee to provide a further update.

Resolved: The Committee noted the update on the implementation of the new IT Infrastructure.

Actions:

- **The Clerk to add IT infrastructure to the agenda of the next meeting.**
To arrange external publicity once the new system was implemented.

6. Fees Policy

Mr Nixon presented a report on the Fees Policy 2020/21. He explained that, whilst no significant changes were proposed to the policy, clarifications had been made in some sections including:

- devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) function to specific combined authorities were now included and confirmation that the College was unable to accept AEB funded learners from devolved areas;
- clarification that, as all HE learners were now the College’s directly funded learners, HE fees were now determined by the College, within the Office for Students fee framework, and not by specific universities;
- the section on Apprenticeship fees had been expanded to include the roll out of the Digital Apprenticeship Service pilot for non-levy paying employers.

The Committee noted the update on proposed changes and approved the Fees Policy 2020/21.

Resolved: The Committee approved the Fees Policy 2020/21.

7. Management Accounts

Mr Nixon, Executive Director Resources, presented his report on the Period 5 Management Accounts and commentary.

The Committee discussed the Period 5 Management Accounts with management.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Period 5 Management Accounts, commentary and financial position.

8. Performance Against Key Performance Indicators

Mr Nixon presented his report on Performance Against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – Period 5.

The Committee discussed the report on Current performance against Key Performance Indicators with management.

The Committee noted the budget included a 1% staff pay award. The Committee reiterated its view that consideration should be given to increasing the pay award, even by a half or quarter of a percentage or unconsolidated as it would send a positive signal to staff. Management provided assurance that they remained mindful of the Committee and Board's view on increasing the staff pay award. However, given uncertainties, particularly surrounding pension provision, they had taken a prudent approach when preparing budgets. Management also referred to the similar prudent approach taken by other FE colleges and communications from the Association of Colleges. Notwithstanding, the staff pay award would be continued to be reviewed.

The Committee noted the report on current performance against Key Performance Indicators and commended management on progress to date.

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

9. Corporate Equality Objectives

Ms Thornton, Head of Human Resources, presented an update report on the implementation of the Corporate Equality Objectives for 2017 to 2021 which were to:

- develop and deliver action plans focusing on narrowing gaps in student performance (Objective 1); and
- actively target groups of potential students and staff to deal with under-representation of particular groups within the student and staff population (Objective 2).

Ms Thornton took members through the key outcomes of the Progress against the Corporate Equality Objectives 2018 to 2021 report making reference to:

- progress to date in narrowing gaps in student performance – 16 to 18, Adult and Apprenticeships and a breakdown of achievement rates by gender, ethnic group, ethnicity, disability, learning difficulties and difficulty or disability (DOD);

- the objectives would continue to inform Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans for all Departments and Schools across the College;
- supplementary information provided in the appendices included the relevant equality Overall Education and Training 2018/19 QAR Data for: 16 to 18, Adult and Apprenticeships.

The Committee discussed Objective 1 with management and, in response to queries, noted:

- excellent support at the College for Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) learners, with high achievement rates for SEND learners;
- management would further explore achievement rates by ethnicity in forthcoming meetings with Heads of School. Members suggested that presenting the data graphically might provide indications of whether specific cohorts were impacted;
- rationale for the demographic of apprenticeships, including the variety of ways apprenticeships commenced;
- the protected characteristic sensitive data was collected from learners on enrolment and some learners chose not to provide this data.

The Committee discussed Objective 2 with management and, in response to queries, noted:

- the varying needs of looked after children studying at the College and the additional support the College provided;
- the different types of support offered to looked after children including: bursaries, mentoring, supply of free hygiene products and meal vouchers;
- confirmation that the College linked with Virtual School Heads who worked to improve educational outcomes for looked after children;
- management plans to consider further initiatives which could be introduced to attract potential candidates from a wider demographic, and in particular to increase applications from Asian or Asian British – Pakistan candidates, as it was important that the demographic profile of staff at the College reflected the communities it served. Governors suggested it might be helpful to review the jobs advertised in the last three years to see if any trends could be ascertained.

The Committee agreed that the report indicated good progress to date in the implementation of the Corporate Equality objectives and agreed it would be useful to consider how further progress could be made. The Committee agreed it would be helpful to have further information on the support provided to looked after children at the College to provide members with increased understanding of the challenges faced by teaching staff and to review whether the College had sufficient resources to support these learners and further improve their achievement rates. It was suggested that student destination data could be useful if available. Governors noted that there were limitations in the qualitative information which could be shared to protect the privacy of learners.

The Committee noted the report on progress against the Corporate Equality Objectives for 2017 to 2021.

Resolved: The Committee noted the update on progress against the Corporate Equality Objectives for 2017 to 2021.

Actions: Further information to be provided on the support provided to looked after children at the College.

10. Gender Pay Gap Reporting 2020

Ms Thornton presented the draft report on the College's Gender Pay Gap (GPG) as March 2019. The Committee considered the Gender Pay Gap Report and noted:

- that as a public sector body, the College was required to publish its Gender Pay Gap data on the Government and College website by 30 March 2020 using a snapshot of data based on the staffing establishment on the 31 March 2019;
- the analysis showed that the GPG had closed significantly which was a positive result for the College, particularly as the 2019 restructure would have affected the results;
- the mean College GPG for 2019 was 2.09%, down from 4.4% in 2018 i.e. the last GPG report and the median GPG is 6.01%, which was down slightly from 6.08% in 2018;
- Management would work to sustain the reduction achieved in the GPG by the 2020 report through the continued implementation of the People Strategy, the College's Pay Principles Policy and other actions which were considered reasonable and achievable with the resources available to the College.

During discussion with management governors recognised that the income of some female staff could be proportionately less than male staff because women were more likely to work part time. Governors noted:

- the development of part time staff remained under review to ensure part time working was not a barrier to career progression at the College;
- the new Pay Framework Policy for business support staff allowed the pay for staff members undertaking additional project work, or interim promotions, to be temporarily increased.

The Committee approved the Gender Pay Gap Report for publication.

Resolved: The Committee:

- **approved Gender Pay Gap Report for publication within the legislative timeframe; and**
- **noted the proposed actions arising from the Gender Pay Gap data contained within the Continuous Improvement Action Plan.**

11. Review of Resources Committee Terms of Reference

The Clerk outlined proposed changes to the Resources Committee Terms of Reference which the Search and Governance Committee would propose to the Board, making reference to changes:

- to the process for approving decisions in writing between meetings;

- to policy approval and review processes;
- required to adopt the SPH Remuneration Code;
- to strengthen Board and Committee oversight of HE.

The Committee discussed the proposed changes to Resources Committee Terms of Reference with the Clerk and, in response to queries, noted:

- it was best practice to review the Standing Orders and Terms of Reference periodically and the review was included in the Search and Governance Committee's remit;
- some changes were required in order to comply with the AoC SPH Remuneration Code;
- changes had been identified to ensure consistency with the Instrument and Articles and College policies.

The Committee noted the proposed changes to the Resources Committee Terms of Reference.

Resolved: The Committee noted the proposed changes to the Resources Committee Terms of Reference.

12. Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that next meeting of the Resources Committee would be held on 17 May 2020.