

Preston's College

Redacted and Abridged¹ Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 8th October 2020 at 5.30pm Via Zoom

Present:

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

In attendance:

Mr S Nixon	Executive Director Resources
Mrs C Rayner	Clerk to the Board
Ms G Thornton	Head of Human Resources

Apologies:

Ms K Williams

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Committee noted that apologies had been received from Ms Williams.

It was noted that a quorum was present.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

a) Minutes of Previous Meeting – 24 June 2020

The Committee agreed the Minutes of the Resources meeting on 24 June 2020 as a correct record.

b) Minute of Previous Meeting – 13 February 2020 – Part 2

The Committee agreed the Minutes of Resources meeting on 13 February 2020 Part 2 as a correct record.

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2020 and 13 February 2020 were approved.

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.

4. Matters arising

The Committee noted the report on progress of actions from the previous meeting. The Clerk reported that progress on some of the actions had been delayed due to Covid and would be reviewed in the next few months.

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

5. Period 11 Management Accounts/Financial Outturn Forecast

Mr Nixon, Executive Director Resources, presented his report on the Period 11 Management Accounts /Financial Outturn Forecast. Mr Nixon reported:

- apprenticeship income was stronger than anticipated at the outset of lockdown, which had significant contributed to the improved position;
- income variances would have been much worse without funding body protection of main grant funding sources for both 16 to 18 year olds and adult learners and without this protection which highlighted that education institutions had been better protected than some other parts of the economy;
- College expenditure forecast for 2019/20. Savings had primarily been achieved by not filling vacant posts and non pay savings as a result of not occupying College premises and a significant year end factor had been additional savings in exam costs as a result of alternative assessment arrangements;
- the overall impact of the issues identified and forecast surplus , compared with an originally budgeted surplus which should maintain 'good' financial health;
- the hard work of staff throughout the College to minimise income losses and make cost savings had been notable throughout the unprecedented second half of the year;
- the year end cash balance. There were not expected to be any short term cash issues;
- update on bank covenants;
- anticipated pension scheme adjustments and outlined of how these were calculated;
- the accounts were to be reviewed by external audit as part of the financial statements audit.

The Committee commended management and staff for the forecast outturn position for 2019/20, which members considered was particularly impressive given the challenging circumstances. Members agreed that the forecast outturn position indicated there was a understanding across the College of the importance of finance. The Committee discussed the report with management and, in response to questions from members, noted:

- College budget holders had worked really hard to identify cost savings and work co-operatively to save money were possible;

- the result would provide a sense of stability for staff at difficult time;
- the importance of sufficient FE funding to drive re-skilling following the pandemic.

Given the improvements in culture at the College in recent years, management were encouraged to consider how this could be further improved.

Following discussion, the Committee noted the forecast outturn position.

Resolved: The Committee noted the forecast outturn position report.

6. Bank Loan Arrangements

Mr Nixon presented his report on Bank Loan Arrangements and outlined options for consideration and implications

Resolved: The Committee agreed its recommendation to the Board.

7. Capital Budget Outturn 2019/20

Mr Nixon presented his report on Capital Budget Outturn 2019/20 making reference to:

- actual spend on the refreshed IT infrastructure;
- the timely improvement of IT infrastructure when the College switched to remote teaching and working for lockdown in March;
- the remaining balance had been mainly used for additional laptop purchases and joinery equipment for Construction and other notable investments included new barbering chairs, security cameras, and improvements to the 3G pitch.

The Committee noted the Capital Budget Outturn 2019/20 report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Capital Budget Outturn 2019/20 report.

8. Estate Condition Funding

Mr Nixon presented his report on Estate Condition Funding. He referred to:

- a grant letter from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) at Appendix A which outlined details of an allocation to support improvements in the condition of the College estate;
- works undertaken between 29th June 2020 and 31st March 2021 could be funded through this allocation;
- the funding must be matched by the College at a rate of 25% i.e. the College would need to demonstrate a specified spend over the same timescale. It was envisaged that this should be possible without committing any additional funds beyond what would normally be spent on ongoing improvements, but this would be kept under review;

- the funding must be used to improve the condition of buildings rated B (Satisfactory), C (Poor) or D (Bad). The funding could not be used in buildings rated A (Good), i.e. iSTEM and the Learning Zone areas. However, within all other areas, there was flexibility to undertake works as necessary to make condition improvements;
- an initial return must be submitted to the Department for Education by 16th October 2020 summarising how funds would be spent.

Mr Nixon provided an overview of potential projects including:

- contribution to T Level related project in the Construction building;
- improvements to the Construction building roof. He referred members to a condition report at Appendix B;
- some further remedial works were also identified for heating, lighting and water distribution in specific parts of the estate.

Mr Nixon also referred to a Condition Data Collection exercise which was undertaken last year in all colleges by a team appointed by the Department for Education. This fund was intended to be used, at least in part, to address the issues identified which included external decorations to both walls and windows which could be addressed through some combination of cladding and rendering.

Mr Nixon undertook to ensure the Committee and the Board were kept up to date on progress.

Following discussion, the Committee welcomed the additional funding and noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Estate Conduction Funding report.

9. Performance against KPI 2019/20

Mr Nixon presented his report on Performance Against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2019/20 which showed Actuals for 2018/19 along with targets and forecasts for 2019/20. He reported:

- 16-18 numbers;
- 16-18 Apprenticeships and Adult Apprenticeships had been badly impacted by lockdown, particularly in terms of planned new starts in the second half of the year. However, the overall impact was not as bad as initially feared as significant numbers were kept on programme. Original targets for 19/20 were not achieved. However, to have earned more income than in 18/19 represented a successful outcome under the circumstances;
- Adult Education Budget funding would be received in full with no clawback despite the impact of lockdown. Funding body commitments were given as long as providers delivered at least 68% of the contract and the income had been protected;
- cash days had been maintained at a reasonable level, through a variety of compensating cost savings;

- an update on pay costs as a percentage of income.

The Committee noted the report on current performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and agreed that, given the challenging conditions, the KPIs and KPI rag rating movement were encouraging and agreed that the red rated KPIs were beyond the control of College management.

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

10. Enrolment Update

Mr Nixon presented his Enrolment update for 2020. He reported:

- 16-18 recruitment;
- the increased in numbers was related to a number of factors, including a new approach to engaging with schools;
- the College might be able to apply for additional in year funding in 2020/21 for the additional learners;
- necessity to explore why some continuing learners had withdrawn for 2020-21;
- the employer appetite for apprentices was promising given the challenging business environment.
- adult numbers had also started well and it was expected to achieve the contract level;
- recruitment planning of 2021-22 had already started with anticipation that the College would be able to allow prospective learners on campus again in 2021;
- there was a risk that without showcasing the campus to learners, parents and engage with prospective learners. However, virtual tours had been designed for the virtual enrolment events.

During discussion, management undertook to provide:

- further details of learner market share to see if there any shifts;
- the links to the “virtual tours” which had been produced.

The Committee noted the Enrolment Update report and were encouraged by enrolments to date.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Enrolment Update report.

Actions: management to:

- **provide further details of market share to see if there any shifts;**

- share links to the virtual tours with the Board.

11. Staff Satisfaction Survey 2019/20

Ms Thornton, Head of Human Resources, presented her report on the Staff Satisfaction Survey 2019/20. Ms Thornton reported:

- that the College had used the staff satisfaction survey run by York College for the FE sector as in 2018/19. This allowed the College to continue to benchmark against other FE colleges and maintain comparability of the data from one year to another, ability to compare responses and themes, track the direction of travel and build on a culture of continuous employee engagement;
- all responses were submitted anonymously;
- that the questions provided by York College were standardised at Appendix A and included the staff questions used by Ofsted in the new Education Inspection Framework and provided management with insight into how staff might respond to that questionnaire and address any issues in advance of Ofsted's next visit;
- that the staff survey was launched on 3rd June 2020 and closed on 3rd July 2020, hosted internally through Office 365. Staff were given five response options, however York College only included results of either a positive or negative nature. Any responses that were made as 'don't know' or 'not applicable' were discounted from the overall results;
- comparison with the previous year's survey; overall, the College compared significantly well compared to FE Colleges who also participated in the survey;
- positive impact of a number of College wide initiatives, including: increased cross functional working, the IT infrastructure, increased Executive Leadership Team communications and the introduction of 30 hours essential Continuing Professional Development for staff;
- the full results would be shared with staff in due course.

The Committee discussed the results of the survey with Ms Thornton and commented positively on the results, and in particular that the survey showed that staff were proud to work at the College and proud of its reputation. In response to queries, members noted:

- the response rate was broadly in line with the previous year. Staff were encouraged to complete the survey but a number of surveys were issued to staff and there was sometimes survey fatigue;
- Ms Thornton would provide further details of the bottom 10 scoring questions.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Staff Satisfaction Survey 2019/20

Action: Ms Thornton would provide further details of the bottom 10 scoring questions.

12. Statutory Trade Union Facilities Time Report 2019/20

Ms Thornton, Head of Human Resources, presented her report on Statutory Trade Union Facilities Time 2019/20. She reported:

- organisations employing more than 250 staff were required by statute to publish an annual Trade Union Facility Time Report, in much the same way as the annual Gender Pay Gap report;
- the date for publication on the government's website had been postponed due to the pandemic;
- the Trade Union Facilities Time Report for 2019/20 contained the costs of all facilities time as a percentage of the College's total pay bill;
- for the period in question there were only two local trade union representatives operating in College. Other unions were represented by Regional Officials for which no costs were attached.

The Committee noted the data contained in the statutory report at Appendix A and noted that at present the Committee could not analyse and compare data until the report had been published for a couple of years.

Resolved: That the Committee noted the data contained in the statutory report at Appendix A which had been uploaded to the government portal and College website.

13. Employment Policy Review - Management of Attendance Policy

Ms Thornton, Head of Human Resources, presented her Employment Policy Review. She reported that, following review by the Resources Committee at on 24 June 2020, the Board approved a revised version of the Management of Attendance Policy on 9 July 2020. Since that time there had been further discussions held with the recognised trade unions.

Ms Thornton asked the Committee to review an addendum to the Management of Attendance Policy, at Appendix A, to include the adoption of the 'Dying to Work' Charter to emphasise the support that the College provided to members of staff diagnosed with a terminal illness.

Ms Thornton explained that the "Dying to Work Charter" provided at Appendix B, was endorsed by the TUC as good employment practice to follow in the case where an employee is diagnosed with a terminal illness. However, the College proposed a change in title to: 'Support for Staff Diagnosed with a Terminal Illness' and the unions were supportive of this.

Ms Thornton explained that the support Preston's College already provided to employees working with a terminal diagnosis was fully in line with the principles and values of the "Dying to Work" Charter and included: access to Occupational Health support, option of reduced working hours on a partial pension and ill-health retirement options to support staff if they did not feel that they were able to continue working full time or at all. In addition, the Counselling service used by the College acted as an Employee Assistance Program, and provided support and advice

to employees about the next steps for them as an individual and their families. She provided assurance that the College would never seek to dismiss an employee purely because they have been diagnosed with a terminal illness.

Members commented on the importance of staff being aware of all the information when faced with this tragic situation and agreed the title 'Support for Staff Diagnosed with a Terminal Illness' was more appropriate.

The Committee noted the report and recommended to the Board the approval of the addendum to the Management of Attendance Policy contained at paragraph 8 of Appendix A in order to include a commitment to operating the principles of the 'Dying to Work' Charter.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report and recommended to the Board the approval of the addendum to the Management of Attendance Policy contained at paragraph 8 of Appendix A in order to include a commitment to operating the principles of the 'Dying to Work' Charter.

14. Resources Forward Work Programme

The Clerk referred members to the draft Resources Committee Forward Work Programme 2020/21. The Committee approved the Resources Committee Forward Work Programme 2020/21.

Resolved: The Committee approved the Resources Committee Forward Work Programme 2020/21.

15. Date of Next Meeting:

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Resources Committee would take place on 26th November 2020.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.05pm