

Preston's College

Redacted and abridged¹ Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held
on 11th February 2021 at 5.30pm
via Zoom

Present:

Mr J Taylor	Chair
Dr E Smith	Principal and Chief Executive
Mr S Anyon	
Mr J Boydell	From Minute 9
Mr S Browne	
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:

Mr S Edwards

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair welcomed Mr Anyon to his first meeting of Resources Committee since he joined the Board as staff governor, Business Support, in December 2020.

It was noted that a quorum was present.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk explained that, as per the Instrument and Articles, staff governors did not need to declare a financial interest when pay and conditions of all staff, or classes or staff, were considered. However, the general interest of all staff present in the HR related items was noted.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Committee agreed the Minutes of the Resources meeting held on 26th November 2020 as a correct record.

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2020 were approved.

4. Matters arising

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

5. Management Accounts

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.

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

The Committee noted the Management Accounts for Period 5 and, following questions from governors and discussion with management, noted;

- that most colleges with adult provision faced similar risks in relation to AEB clawback;
- the likely rationale for the ESFA not publishing the tolerance levels until later in the year;
- the impact of the pension deficient on the balance sheet and discussions with the College's bank;
- possibility of savings on examination costs;
- it would consider the pay award options under agenda item 8 - Harmonised Pay Spine - Review of Low Pay and that whilst management recommended on balance that the 1% pay award outlined was approved an alternative option of addressing the lower pay bands had also been provided.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Period 5 financial position.

6. Performance Against KPIs

Mr Nixon presented his report on Performance Against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – Period 5 and the KPI summary report at Appendix A and dashboard snapshot at Appendix B.

The Committee noted the report on Performance against KPIs.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report of on Performance Against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – Period 5.

7. Fees Policy

Mr Nixon presented a report on the Fees Policy 2021/22. He referred members to the revised Fees Policy 2021/22 at Appendix A. He outlined the key changes:

- charging of fees to learners from EU and EEA countries, due to the UK leaving the EU;
- the requirement for non-levy paying employers to use the Digital Apprenticeship Service to reserve funds.

The Committee noted the report on proposed changes to the Fees Policy and agreed to recommend the changes to the Board.

Resolved: The Committee recommended to the Board approval of the Fees Policy 2020/21.

8. Harmonised Pay Spine - Review of Low Pay

Ms Thornton, Head of Human Resources, presented her report on Harmonised Pay Spine - Review of Low Pay. She referred to:

- the College pay framework which was founded on the Association of Colleges (AoC) harmonised pay spine with the agreement of all the trade unions recognised in the FE Sector and this pay spine was used by Colleges as a sector benchmark for recruitment and retention purposes;
- some drift in terms of the monetary value of each Spinal Column Point (SCP) or salary increment on the harmonised pay spine due to the affordability at local level of past AoC recommended annual pay awards, however, this gap had narrowed in recent years;
- adjustments had been made to the bottom SCPs on the harmonised pay spine to ensure the College complied with the statutory National Living Wage (NLW), which increases every April.

The Committee discussed the report and developed a recommendation to the Board.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report and agreed to recommend to the Board Option three which had been developed by the Committee.

9. Pay Framework for Business Support Staff and Management Pay Framework - Review of Job Family Group 1

Ms Thornton, Head of Human Resources, presented her report on Pay Framework for Business Support Staff and Management Pay Framework - Review of Job Family Group 1.

The Committee discussed the option outlined in the report and agreed its recommendation to the Board.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report agreed its recommendation to the Board.

10. Employment Policy Review

Ms Thornton presented her Employment Policy Review report. She reported that a scheduled review had been undertaken of the Maternity Leave, Parental Leave and Adoption Leave policies. She referred members to the revised policies: Maternity Policy, at Appendix A, Paternity Policy, at Appendix B Parental Leave Policy at Appendix C and Adoption Leave Policy at Appendix D, with the proposed changes to these policies shown in track changes.

She referred members to the *Employers with Heart Charter* at Appendix E which has been developed by the Smallest Things Premature Baby Charity. She explained that:

- the Charter was designed to support parents whose baby had been born premature (i.e. before 37 weeks' gestation) as these parents could spend weeks and months in hospital with babies who could have an array of medical difficulties and subsequently this could affect parents who could also experience mental health problems;
- following discussions with the recognised trade unions on the review of the Maternity and Paternity policies, the College proposed the adoption of the *Employers with Heart Charter*;
- a review of the Paternity Policy was undertaken in 2019/20. However, a reference to the *Employers with Heart Charter* was proposed to align with the draft Maternity Policy.

The Committee discussed the adoption of the *Employers with Heart Charter* and were supportive of the ethos of the charter. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that the charter should be adopted with a caveat re eligibility.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board:

- the proposed changes to the Maternity Policy and Paternity Policy, subject to the caveat that only parents with premature babies (i.e., before 37 weeks' gestation) that required medical treatment or hospitalisation were eligible for additional leave;
- proposed changes to the Parental Leave Policy and Adoption Leave Policy.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board:

- **adoption of the Smallest Things Premature Baby Charity's *Employers with Heart Charter* subject to a caveat re eligibility;**
- **proposed changes to the Maternity Policy and Paternity Policy, subject to clarification re eligibility;**
- **proposed changes to the Parental Leave Policy;**
- **proposed changes to the Adoption Leave Policy.**

11. Gender Pay Gap Report

Ms Thornton presented the draft report on the College's Gender Pay Gap (GPG) as March 2020. The Committee considered the Gender Pay Gap Report and referred to:

- that as a public sector body, the College was required to publish its Gender Pay Gap data on the Government and College website by 30th March 2021 using a snapshot of data based on the staffing establishment on the 31st March 2020;
- the analysis showed that the College GPG was significantly lower than average across the sector, which was encouraging as the College strived for equality;
- the mean College GPG for 2021 was 2.36%, up ever so slightly from 2.09% in 2019 i.e. the last GPG report. The median GPG is 12.46%, which had increased from 6.01% in 2019 and the reasons identified for this increase;
- management initiatives in the Continuous Improvement Action Plan to further reduce the College's GPG;
- likely impact of Covid on 2020 GPG data with some vacancies not being filled during 2020.

The Committee noted the Gender Pay Gap Report agreed to recommend to the Board its publication.

Resolved: The Committee:

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

12. Workforce Profile report

Ms Thornton presented the Workforce Profile Report for 2019/20. She reported:

- the Workforce Profile Report for the 2019/20 academic year at Appendix A provided an analysis of the profile of the workforce against key employment performance indicators and protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010;
- analysis for 2019/20 did not include national benchmark figures as the ETF no longer had a contract to collect the Staff Individualised Records (SIR). However, the AoC published the findings from their 2018/19 Workforce Data survey in November 2020 and relevant data had been used as a comparator where applicable;
- as census data was nine years old it should be viewed with caution;
- the indicators showed that the College's performance was on par with comparator organisations and did not raise any significant issues of risk;
- as the report was based on 2019/20 data it would not show the progress the College has made in recruitment in the last year;
- a significant decrease in the percentage of staff turnover which was likely to be related to the impact of Covid.

The Committee noted the Workforce Profile Report 2019/20. During discussion with management members noted that for confidentiality reasons the College did not know how many staff used the confidential counselling services. However, anecdotally reports from staff indicated that the services were valued and a question on the services possibly could be added to the next staff survey to gain more data on this.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Workforce Profile Report 2019/20.

13. Equality and Diversity Corporate Objectives Update

Ms Thornton presented her report on the Equality and Diversity Corporate Objectives. She referred to:

- the College's statutory duty to publish strategic equality objectives every four years. The College must now refresh the Corporate Equality Objectives for the four year period beginning 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2025;
- the equality and diversity landscape had evolved since the objectives were set with a greater awareness of the need to be more inclusive in order to create a culture and environment where all learners and staff feel welcome and engaged and not solely focus on the nine protected characteristics defined in the Equalities Act;
- this shift towards inclusivity was reflected in the use of language for example the term Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) has become Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and included people of colour; similarly the Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender (LGBT) wider community had become LGBT+ to include people who do not define themselves against the definitions

of sexual orientation used at the time the Equalities Act was drafted;

- as the College demonstrated many examples of good practice in its policies and processes for both learners and staff it was proposed that the terminology was updated from Equality and Diversity (E&D) to Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) which was a more current descriptor;
- the proposal to retain the existing Objective 1;
- the proposal to revise Objective 2 to move away from referencing specific activity relating to the statutory defined protected characteristics to reflect a more inclusive culture for learners and staff with the proposed wording of - *To actively enhance our inclusive College culture, providing opportunities for all, regardless of individual characteristics*;
- plans to establish an Inclusion Cross College Working Group to refine the detail of the Corporate Equality Objectives and oversee the development of a Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Operational Plan with deliverables to guide the College to achieve progress against the Objectives.

The Committee noted the report and agreed to recommend to the Board the proposed Corporate Equality Objectives for 2021 to 2025:-

- Objective 1. To develop and deliver action plans focusing on narrowing gaps in student performance; and
- Objective 2. To actively enhance our inclusive College culture, providing opportunities for all, regardless of individual characteristics.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board the proposed Corporate Equality Objectives for 2021 to 2025.

14. Any other Business

The Chair reported that this would be the Principal and Chief Executive's final Resources Committee meeting and on behalf of the Committee he recorded thanks to the Principal and Chief Executive for her support and her contribution meetings. The Principal and Chief Executive thanked the Chair and members.

15. Date of Next Meeting:

The Committee noted that the date of the next meeting was 6th May 2021.

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm.