

Preston College

Redacted and Abridged ¹Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 29th June 2022 at 5.30pm Via Zoom

Present:

Mr J Boydell	Chair
Mr S Browne	
Ms A Dalton	
Miss L Keegan	Staff governor

Apologies:

Mrs L Doswell	Principal and Chief Executive
Ms J Jones	

In attendance:

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

Apologies:

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

It was noted that apologies had been received from Mrs Doswell and Ms Jones.

It was noted that a quorum was present.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk referred to the interest of Senior Post Holders in Item 8. The Committee noted that Mr Nixon, Executive Director of Resources, Mrs Rayner, Clerk to the Board, and Miss Keegan (staff governor) would leave the meeting for the discussion of this item.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Committee agreed the Minutes of the Resources meeting on 5th May 2022 as a correct record.

Resolved: the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2022 were approved as a correct record.

4. Matters arising

The Committee noted the report on 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. Management Accounts

Mr Nixon, Executive Director of Resources, presented his report on the Period 9 Management Accounts.

The Committee noted the Period 9 Management Accounts at Appendix A and the associated commentary at Appendix B.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Period 9 Management Accounts and commentary.

6. Performance against Key Performance Indicators

Mr Nixon presented the Performance against KPIs for Period 9.

The Committee noted the report on KPIs for Period 9.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report on KPIs for Period 9.

7. Budget 2022/23

Mr Nixon presented his draft Budget 2022/23 report.

Mr Nixon and Ms Thornton discussed with the Committee negotiations with the unions to date.

Following queries from members, Mr Nixon and Ms Thornton:

- confirmed that contingency had been included in the budget for staff pay awards for 2022/23 and it was likely that there would be further efficiencies during 2022/23 which could generate savings;
- confirmed that the budget for Agency costs was based on the actual for 2021/22;
- explained how the sensitivity analysis worked and impact of 5% worst case scenario;
- highlighted a risk related to the possibility of increased utility costs in 2023;
- explained that whilst there were significant pressures on teacher scales in the schools sector there was no link to the FE sector;
- confirmed that staff recruitment and retention for some areas remained a challenge and outlined actions taken by the College to make teaching at the College more attractive, including increasing starting salaries and removing unqualified teacher salaries;
- discussion of staff costs as a percentage of income.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend the draft Budget 2022/23 to the Board for approval.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to recommend the draft Budget 2022/23 to the Board for approval.

8. Formation of Special Purposes Committee

The Board noted the inherent interest of Ms Thornton in this item and noted that it was not necessary for Ms Thornton to leave the meeting.

The Executive Director of Resources and the Clerk left the meeting.

Ms Thornton, Head of Human Resources, presented the report on the Formation of Special Purposes Committee.

The Committee noted the proposed changes to the Disciplinary Procedure, at Appendix A, the proposed changes to the Resolution of Grievance Procedure in paragraph 15 of the report, and the terms of reference for the Special Purposes Committee, at Appendix B.

A tracked change had been made Appendix B, Terms of Reference for the Special Purposes Committee, paragraph 13 with the removal of the word preliminary. This was to reflect the fact that a preliminary investigation to inform whether a full investigation was required, would have already been completed before the matter was referred to the Special Purposes Committee.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Board the proposed changes to the Disciplinary Procedure - Appendix 4, Senior Post Holders, and the Resolution of Grievance Procedure (for staff other than Senior Post Holders) contained in paragraph 15. The Committee also agreed the further change to Appendix B, Terms of Reference for the Special Purposes Committee, paragraph 13 proposed by Ms Thornton.

The Committee noted that the Grievance Procedure for Senior Post Holders would be reviewed and submitted for recommendation to Board in the next governance cycle.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to:

- **agreed to recommend to the Board the proposed changes to the Disciplinary Procedure Appendix 4 Senior Post Holders contained in Appendix A and the Resolution of Grievance Procedure (for staff other than Senior Post Holders) contained in paragraph 19;**
- **agreed the amendment to Appendix B, Terms of Reference for the Special Purposes Committee, paragraph 13.**

The Executive Director of Resources and the Clerk re-joined the meeting.

9. Employment Policies Update

The Committee noted the inherent interest of all staff and the staff governor in the Employment Policies and noted that staff were not required to leave the meeting for this item.

a) Performance Improvement Policy

Ms Thornton reported that the Performance Improvement Policy, at Appendix A, had been reviewed and the proposed amendments were shown as track changes. Ms Thornton reported that the main changes were:

- a shift in emphasis from correcting under performance to providing support for staff to improve and achieve high levels of performance;

- a reference had been added to provide support for employees who self-identified to their manager that they required further support;
- to articulate more clearly that when informal support did not result in improved performance, the case would progress to the formal stage and any actions arising during that stage would be taken under the disciplinary procedure.

The Committee discussed the changes with management and discussed with management;

- the culture at the College and agreed the importance of a no blame culture to ensure that near misses were reported and mistakes not repeated;
- the balance to be struck between supporting staff and recognising when staff were not in the appropriate role and taking appropriate action;
- that the formal stage was still in place, if required.

The Committee agreed to recommend the proposed changes to the Performance Improvement Policy to the Board.

b) Recruitment of Employees and Casual Workers Policy

Ms Thornton reported that the Recruitment of Employees and Casual Workers Policy, at Appendix B, had been reviewed and the proposed amendments were shown as track changes. Ms Thornton reported that the changes were cosmetic.

Ms Thornton explained:

- how the principles of the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance was embedded within the policy;
- that members of the armed forces and applicants with a disability were guaranteed an interview for any post if they met the minimum requirements in the essential criteria.

The Committee agreed to recommend the proposed changes to the Board.

c) Pay Principles Policy

Ms Thornton reported that the Pay Principles Policy, at Appendix C, had been reviewed and the proposed amendments were shown as track changes. Ms Thornton referred to her report which listed a number of changes including:

- changing the month in which pay awards approved by Board would be implemented i.e. from 1 April to 1 August in line with Association of Colleges (AoC) practice;

- reference to the Board’s commitment to pay the FLW, subject to affordability;
- reference to Board approval to introduce an advanced practitioner role from 1 August 2022 to support professional development in teaching, learning and assessment; these roles to be known as Quality Practitioners;
- all other changes outlined in the report.

The Committee discussed the changes with management. A member highlighted the potential risk of salary drift within the same role when selected staff were awarded permanent discretionary point increases for additional project work, rather than a permanent job change and queried whether there were opportunities for all team members to apply for project work.

Ms Thornton provided assurance that all increases were reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team, and a change of role would be progressed if the substantive role had significantly changed as a result of additional project work. Ms Thornton also confirmed that interviews were held for additional project work.

Members discussed the proposed changes to the policy which would allow discretionary point arrangements for project work to be made permanent.

Following discussion with management, the Committee agreed that project work should be time limited and proposed changes to reference ‘permanent changes’ in the Award of Discretionary Pay Points section should not be progressed.

With this amendment, the Committee agreed to recommend the proposed changes to the Board, subject to a successful conclusion to the on-going trade union consultation.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board for approval:

- **the revised Performance Improvement Policy, at Appendix A;**
- **the revised Recruitment of Employees and Casual Workers Policy, at Appendix B;**
- **the revised Pay Principles Policy, at Appendix C, subject to a successful conclusion to the on-going trade union consultation and revision of the policy to remove reference to permanent changes when staff were awarded discretionary pay points for time limited project work.**

Action: Ms Thornton to revise the Pay principles Policy as agreed.

10. Heath, Safety and Welfare Policy Review

The Clerk highlighted that as Miss Keegan, staff governor, was also the College’s Health and Safety Officer, she would not count as part of the quorum for this item.

Miss Keegan presented her report on the College’s Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and the College’s General Statement of Intent. She reported that, with input from the Principal and Chief Executive, the policy had been significantly revised and the scope of the policy had been extended to include welfare and the policy’s title had been changed to reflect this.

Mr Nixon commended Miss Keegan's extensive work in redrafting the policy and making it more accessible for all College stakeholders.

A member referred to language in the policy and following discussion it was agreed to remove some redundant references. Miss Keegan undertook to review and amend the draft policy. With this amendment, the Committee approved the revised Health, Safety and Welfare Policy, including the General Statement of Intent, for recommendation to the Board.

The Committee thanked Miss Keegan for her report and commended her work in revising the policy.

Resolved: The Committee approved the revised Health, Safety and Welfare Policy, including the General Statement of Intent, for recommendation to the Board, subject to a review of the text to remove redundant references.

11. Freedom of Speech and Expression Code of Practice

The Clerk presented the report on the Freedom of Speech and Expression Code of Practice. She reported that:

- the College was required to have a Freedom of Speech Code of Practice by the Education Act 1986 and Office for Students required colleges to have arrangements in place for ensuring freedom of speech as one of its Public Interest Governance Principles;
- a draft Freedom of Speech and Expression Code of Practice (the Code) had been developed at Appendix A for review, which was based on an Eversheds template, alongside the Procedure for Holding Activities in College, at Appendix B, which was based on an existing College procedure;
- sharing the first draft with the Committee was the first part of the planned consultation. The draft would also be shared with other stakeholders including staff, students, the unions and the College's solicitors;
- under the draft Procedure for Holding Activities in College, the Executive Director of Resources would make decisions on external speakers and hire or use of College premises by external organisations, in line with the policy, with the option of appeal to the Principal and Chief Executive. The Clerk asked for a steer on whether the Committee were of the view that a further appeal to the Board should be added.

The Committee discussed the draft Code and associated procedure with management and the Clerk and provided feedback.

During discussion members commented on the importance of ensuring that organisations could not hire the college which could cause disruption or negatively impact on the reputation of the College.

The Clerk thanked members for their comments and undertook to progress the consultation as outlined in the report. The Committee discussed the importance of a thorough consultation with stakeholders to ensure that all perspectives had been considered.

The Committee noted the draft Freedom of Speech and Expression Code of Practice and consultation plans.

Resolved: The Committee noted the draft Freedom of Speech and Expression Code of Practice and consultation plans.

12. Trade Union Facilities Report 2021/22

Ms Thornton presented the Trade Union Facilities Report. Ms Thornton reported that:

- organisations employing more than 250 staff were required by statute to make an annual Trade Union Facility Time Report, in much the same way as the annual Gender Pay Gap report;
- the Trade Union Facilities Time Report for 2021/22 included 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 there are no costs attached;
- the report for 2021/22, at Appendix A, showed the total cost of union facilities time as a percentage of the overall pay bill was 0.04%; this figure was slightly reduced compared with the previous year's percentage of 0.05%;
- a comparison of the data from 2020/21 to 2021/22 was included at Appendix B to highlight the differences in the information.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board approval of the Trade Union Facilities Report.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board approval of the Trade Union Facilities Report.

13. Staff Voice

Ms Thornton presented her report on Staff Voice which outlined the key headlines for 2021/22, ongoing actions and plans to report to the Committee on Staff Voice after each round of Staff Voice meetings in the 2022/23 academic year. Ms Thornton referred members to the You Said It, We Did It report at Appendix A, which summarised actions taken by management in response to feedback from Staff Voice.

The Committee noted that the Staff Voice reports would provide quantitative and qualitative information which would help inform Board and committee discussions on staff matters and members' engagement with staff.

A member queried the reference to a third of staff not feeling safe. Management confirmed that this outcome had been investigated by management and related to the Covid situation in general rather than any particular concerns with Covid precautions in place at the College.

The Committee noted the report on Staff Voice and welcomed management's intention to report after each Staff Voice meeting in the 2022/23 academic year.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report on Staff Voice and welcomed management's intention to report after each round of Staff Voice meetings in the 2022/23 academic year.

14. Social Value Pledge

Mr Nixon presented the Principal and Chief Executive's report on the Lancashire Social Value Pledge. Mr Nixon reported:

- the Central Lancashire Social Value Network (CLSVN) had recently formed to enable key stakeholders in Lancashire to build a network of organisations committed to developing a Social Value framework for all to follow;
- the final draft of the framework was approved by the Central Lancashire Partnership Board (CLPB) in March 2022 which consisted of five key domains outputs for which are in development: a) People; b) purchasing; c) property; d) planet and e) partners;
- the ELT had developed a draft Social Value Pledge and the Committee was asked to review the draft pledge and recommend its adoption to the Board.

In response to a query, Mr Nixon described the concept of a green classroom. It was noted that environmental issues were already embedded into College curriculum programmes.

The Committee noted the report and agreed to recommend to the Board adoption of the Social Value Pledge.

Resolved: The Committee reviewed the Social Value Pledge and agreed to recommend to the Board the adoption of the pledge.

15. Forward Work Programme

The Clerk highlighted the following additions to the programme:

- reporting to the Resources Committee on the College's environmental activities, initiatives and targets;
- inclusion of post investment appraisal review for large investments;

- Staff Voice reports;
- adding the Social Value Pledge;
- moving the Committee's evaluation to October 2022.

In response to a query, the Clerk confirmed that any proposed revision to policies would come under HR policy review papers and that the Head of HR would advise the Clerk which policies would be reviewed at which meeting as part of a rolling review programme.

The Clerk also explained that further additions might be required to the programme as the new Association of College's Code of Good Governance for English Colleges was adopted by the College. The Committee approved the Forward Work Programme.

Resolved: The Committee approved the Resources Forward Work Programme.

16. IT Infrastructure Update Concessionary Days

Ms Thornton presented her report on IT Infrastructure Update Concessionary Days. Ms Thornton explained that:

- critical updating of key business applications meant all access to College systems would need to cease whilst a new dedicated physical server was installed. This installation would require the College to be closed, including access to the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI), the system in place that enabled staff and learners to work from home;
- during business planning the three working days: Monday 19th December 2022, Tuesday 20th December 2022 and Wednesday 21st December 2022 had been identified as College closure on these days would minimise the impact on learning and business functions;
- the closure days would be designated as Concessionary days which the Principal and Chief Executive had the discretion to grant where circumstances require a closure;
- separate well-being arrangements would be made for those IT and Estates staff who were required to work on site during the concessionary days to deliver the Oracle project.

In response to a query, Ms Thornton confirmed that staff required who would normally work on the dates identified would not be required to use their annual leave. The Committee noted the report.

Mr Nixon gave a verbal update on the outcome of the penetration tests the College had commissioned on its IT systems.

The Committee noted the closure of the College from 19th December 2022 to 21st December 2022 inclusive as concessionary days to facilitate the Oracle migration.

17. Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the date of the next meeting would be confirmed after the Board meeting.