Preston College

Redacted and Abridged[1] Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 2 October 2025 at 5.30pm Preston College

Present

Mr Neil Garnham	Chair
Mr Simon Nixon	Principal and Chief Executive
Ms Giulia D'Ambrosio	
Mrs Tamsyn Haselden	
Miss Amanda Morey	
Mrs Andrea Willimott	

Apologies:

Mr David Bond	
Mrs Janet Harrison	
Mr Jose Sedano-Martinez	
Ms Gill Thornton	Director of Human Resources

In attendance:

Mr Mark Airey	Executive Director of Finance (Until Minute 16)
Ms Emma Collinson	Senior HR Officer (for Minute 5)
Mrs Clare Rayner	Director of Governance
Mr Iain Stott	Vice Principal Corporate Services (Until Minute 16)

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

It was noted that a quorum was present.

The Committee noted that the meeting would be transcribed.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The Committee noted the inherent interest of staff in Item 16 – Verbal report on the Pay Strategy.

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Director of Governance referred to an error on the year reference (Minute 7) which had been changed from 2024/25 to 2025/26 and that the track changes showed amends that had been made to the minutes since they had been considered by the Board.

With these amendments, the Committee agreed the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2025 as a correct record.

Resolved: The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2025 were approved as a correct record.

[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 the progress of actions from previous meetings.

Resolved: The Committee noted the matters arising report.

Ms Emma Collinson, Senior HR Officer, joined the meeting.

5. **Human Resources – Policy Review**

The Chair welcomed Ms Collinson, Senior HR Officer to the meeting. Ms Collinson referred to the changes that had been made to the Maternity Leave Policy (Appendix 1), Paternity Policy (Appendix 3), Shared Parental Leave Policy (Appendix 5), Adoption Leave Policy at Appendix 7 and Parental Leave Policy (Appendix 9). She reported:

- on changes required in light of the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023;
- that the Employer with Heart Charter, which the College had adopted since 2021, had been updated to continue to provide additional leave and pay for parents whose child is born prematurely, i.e. before 37 weeks gestation;
- changes had been made to the Maternity Leave Policy and Procedure, Paternity Policy and Procedure, Shared Parental Leave Policy and Procedure, Adoption Leave Policy and Procedure in relation to the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023 and the Employer with Heart Charter;
- that the Charter provides additional leave and pay for parents with premature babies;
- that the sections on equality and diversity had been standardised to the wording used in other College policies;
- that references had been updated where necessary;
- the associated procedures had been provided for information: Maternity Leave Procedure (Appendix 2), Paternity Procedure (Appendix 4), Shared Parental Leave Procedure (Appendix 6) and Adoption Leave Procedure (Appendix 8);
- on minor changes to make the documents more user friendly;
- that all proposed amendments were shown as track changes.

In response to questions and comments from members, the Committee noted:

- the College offered enhanced maternity pay, paternity pay and adoption pay and neonatal pay was statutory;
- that many HR policies and procedures might need to be reviewed during 2025/26 once the Employment Rights Act came into force.

Following a query, Ms Collinson undertook to provide benchmarking information on how the College compared to other colleges in terms on maternity pay and other pay.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board the changes to the Maternity Leave Policy, Paternity Policy, Shared Parental Leave Policy Adoption Leave Policy and Parental Leave Policy.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that the College continued to endorse the Employer with Heart Charter.

The Principal and Chief Executive reported that at present only the Principal and Chief Executive had the authority to dismiss staff which meant that the Appeals Committee, a committee of the Board, would hear any staff appeals. It had become apparent in recent months that the College was an outlier in the sector and it was proposed that the College's disciplinary policy and procedures and related documents were changed to allow the vice principals to dismiss staff and for the Principal and Chief Executive to hear the appeal.

The Principal and Chief Executive explained that:

- the Appeals Committee would continue to hear appeals related to Senior Post Holders and if there were any instances where the Principal and Chief Executive or the vice principals had a conflict of interest;

- if the Committee and the Board were supportive of the proposals, the unions would need be consulted about changes to the Disciplinary Policy and Disciplinary procedure;

- the Search and Governance Committee had discussed the matter at its recent meeting and was supportive of the proposal from a governance perspective.

Members were of the view that the current approach was unusual and meant that the Board was getting involved in operational matters.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Board a proposal to change the College's approach to staff appeals following dismissal.

The Committee recorded thanks to Ms Collinson and HR colleagues for their work on the HR policies and procedures.

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

- **Maternity Leave Policy at Appendix 1;**
- **Paternity Policy at Appendix 3;**
- **Shared Parental Leave Policy at Appendix 5**
- **Adoption Leave Policy at Appendix 7**
- **Parental Leave Policy attached as Appendix 9.**

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board:
- **a proposal to change the College's approach to staff appeals following dismissal.**
- **that the College continues to endorse the Employer with Heart Charter.**

Action: Ms Collinson to provide benchmarking information on how the College compared to other colleges in terms on maternity pay and other pay.

Ms Collinson left the meeting.

6. **Staff Behaviour Code**

The Principal and Chief Executive presented a report on the Staff Behaviour Code. He reported:

- on the Staff Behaviour Code, at Appendix 1, which had been developed by the Head of Human Resources;

- that as part of the review it was proposed that the Staff Behaviour Code was owned by Resources Committee and the Board rather than the Safeguarding Committee;

- that the unions had been consulted.

Members commented positively on the revised Staff Behaviour Code.
In response to questions and comments from members, the Committee noted:

- that in response to the introduction of a new duty for employers to protect staff from sexual harassment, staff had completed training on sexual harassment over the summer staff. Managers had completed additional training. The feedback had been positive;

- that the College had an Anti-Bulling and Harassment Policy in place which might need further revision and document ownership would be reviewed;

- the proposed changes to governance arrangements in relation to review of the Staff Behaviour Code going forward i.e. that the Search and Governance Committee had agreed to recommend to the Board that the document was reviewed by the Resources Committee with the Board approving any changes;

- that following a suggestion, the gifts amount would be increased from £10 to £15;

- that the Committee could not make a formal recommendation on the code until it been formally delegated by the Board to review the code. However, the Committee's feedback had been noted.

Resolved: The Committee:
- **reviewed the Staff Behaviour Code;**
- **noted the proposed governance arrangements going forward i.e. for the Resources Committee to review the Staff Behaviour Code and make a recommendation to the Board.**

7. **Staff Voice**

The Principal and Chief Executive presented the Staff Voice report. He reported:

- on the key themes which had been considered at the June 2024 round of staff voice meetings with staff;

- on the changes to the format to allow staff to develop the agenda and chair meetings;

- changes that have been made to the car park and campus in response to Staff Voice feedback;

- that the wellbeing room was regularly used;

- that the Memorial Garden was under development;
- positive feedback on the 50th Anniversary event/staff awards at Park Hall;
- that Executive Leadership Team had also conducted town hall question and answer session events with staff.

Members commented:

- that it was great to see the positive impact on the introduction the new phone system;
- that the You Said We Did reports were helpful.

In response to a query, it was noted that there were five Staff Voice groups and attendance varied c.50-60 staff.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Staff Voice report.

8. **Draft Outturn Position and Capital Budget Outturn 2024/25**

Mr Airey presented his report on the Draft Outturn Position and Capital Budget Outturn 2024/25. He reported:

- on the College's draft outturn surplus against budget;
- the College had an original capital maximum cash provision in 2024/25 and draft outturn. The underspend was due to timing of investment from external capital grants which would be carried forward into 2025/26;
- the College had an exceptional year as all three income streams had significantly over delivered;
- the College had an aspirational target of over delivering the Adult Skills Allocation by 10%;
- the only income stream behind budget was Tuition Fees;
- the year end cash balance was, although this sum included some capital grants paid in advance of c. e.g. the transformation grant and the condition grant awarded to the College in June 2025;
- the increased cash balance had pushed the College into "outstanding" financial health in terms of the DfE and the 2025/26 budget was for the College to remain in "good" financial health.

In response to questions and comments from members, the Committee noted:

- significant expenditure over the summer, particularly the roofing work;
- the amount the surplus was ahead of budget.

The Committee noted the report including the draft outturn position at Appendix 1 and the draft KPI report at Appendix 2.

Resolved: The Committee noted the College's draft outturn position and the capital budget outturn for 2024/25.

9. **Update on Capital Expenditure Work**

Mr Stott presented his report on capital expenditure work. He reported on the following work which was completed or ongoing:

- the roofing project, which was ahead of schedule and expected to be completed by November 2025. The benefits were already evident in College;
- purchasing of new furniture across the College, including matching chairs and tables which had improved the learning environment and increased room capacity;
- the ongoing development of the new Memorial Garden;
- smart board replacements, PC replacements and Windows 11 upgrades;
- repurposing rooms which had been rented by the NHS;
- accessible doors at Starbucks, fire suppression system, outdoor seating areas, pothole repairs, new CCTV system and health and safety improvements in workshops.

The Committee noted that the report, at Appendix 1, provided a detailed analysis of spend against the Transformation Grant, and proposed spend against the College Condition Allocation.

Mr Stott referred to the proposal for an amended plan for utilising the College Condition allocation and, subject to tender, an increased budget for the works on the exterior of the Health and Wellbeing building. He reported that the estimated cost had been re-assessed. He explained that the estimate had increased in part due to the need for the windows to be replaced. He explained that the windows could be replaced at a later date but the College would then need to pay for scaffolding twice and scaffolding costs were a significant part of the cost.

The Committee discussed the proposed expenditure with management and noted the age and condition of the Health and Wellbeing building.

Following discussion on whether the Committee should progress the expenditure, the Committee noted the report and agreed to consider the report on the Sports Pitch before agreeing its recommendation to the Board on changes to capital expenditure plans.

Resolved: The Committee noted the update on the Capital Expenditure Works.

10. **Sports Pitch**

Mr Stott presented his report on the sports pitch. He reported:

- that the pitch had been originally installed in 1995 and converted to a 3G pitch 17 years ago;

- the pitch required annual maintenance and repairs;

- that following a survey conducted over the summer, it was apparent that the pitch had reached a point where minor repairs were no longer sufficient due to significant health and safety concerns;

- that a decision had been taken to close the pitch for health and safety reasons and potential liability concerns;

- following the closure, the College was renting pitches externally and if the pitch was not repaired this expenditure would continue;

- that the pitch would need to be resurfaced if College wanted to retain its FA accreditation;

- on the potential impact on the College's relationship with Preston North End (PNE) if the College did not have a pitch;

- that a number of options had been researched, with staff reviewing the approaches of different colleges;

- on options 1 to 7 which were outlined in the report with associated costs and the advantages and disadvantages of each option;

- that Option 1 involved seeking FA funding, which would require additional investments in stands, changing facilities, and event infrastructure, approximate costs with a lengthy two-year bidding process and no guarantee of success. The ongoing maintenance costs would also be prohibitive;

- that Option 2, which management recommended, proposed self-financing the pitch resurfacing through the condition grant. This option would allow the pitch to be operational by the end of the academic year, restoring FA accreditation and extending the pitch's lifespan by 10-15 years. It was noted that while initial maintenance costs would be low, they would increase over time;

- on Options 3 – 7 which included patch repairs, repurposing the area and mothballing the pitch. However, partial or temporary repairs were considered inadequate due to liability issues and short-term effectiveness;

- on the impact of losing the pitch from a community and commercial point of view.

The Principal and Chief Executive highlighted that there were risks involved in pursuing Option 2 and that he recognised that it was a significant sum of money for a relatively small curriculum area. However, there was a commercial element and opportunities for further expansion of the partnership with PNE, potentially in women's football or other sports. He highlighted that there were also other benefits that were less tangible, such as the pitch provided students with opportunities for wellbeing activities during breaks.

Staff governors commented that the pitch had been missed by students during breaks and it would be disappointing to see the pitch permanently closed.

The Committee discussed the options with management. In response to comments and queries from members the Committee noted:

- students could still practise on a sand based pitch but would not be able to play matches, the College would not be able to rent the pitch commercially and it would impact on the relationship with PNE;

- if the College pursued Option 1, the College would need to add stands and updated changing facilities;

- the closure of the pitch would not necessarily end the College's sports programme, but it would end the football element and probably the partnership with PNE;

- the new pitch would fit into the criteria for either of the two condition grants; the Condition Grant or the Transformation Grant;

- the College currently had between 110 – 120 students with PNE and funding received funding per student;

- background information on the partnership with Preston North End, including co-delivery of the curriculum with some staff were employed by the College and some employed by PNE.

The Committee discussed the commercial and community benefits of maintaining the pitch, noting its role in generating income and providing a valuable resource for students and the local community. The Committee noted the success of the partnership with PNE, with potential to expand into other sports in the future.

The Committee discussed various options for addressing the pitch issue, including external funding opportunities, self-financing the repairs or not taking any action. The implications of each option were considered, including impacts on curriculum, commercial activities and community.

The Chair referred the Committee to the previous discussion regarding the recladding of the Heath and Wellbeing building.

The Chair highlighted that progressing the recladding would mean that other projects such as the fire compartmentation and toilet refurbishments would need to take place over a longer period and queried if this raised any health and safety risks.

Following discussion with management, the Committee noted:

- that fire compartmentation would continue to be implemented as rooms were refitted and there were no health and safety risks in deferring this work;

- that moving the construction staff room would remove the issues with the dust and therefore change the scope of the dust suppression work;

- that of the £370,000 of the transformation grant which had been uncommitted, further budget had since been allocated to pay for lintels. Mr Airey undertook to update the table at Appendix 1;

- the Transformation Grant must be spent by March 2026;

- that another table would be added to the capital report which showed the College's funded capital budget and spend to date against budget.

Following discussion, the Committee concluded that the pitch resurfacing should proceed and agreed to recommend to the Board that the College progress Option 2 - to use the Condition Grant.

The Committee also agreed to recommend to the Board the proposed changes to the capital expenditure work:

- the amended plan for utilising College Condition Allocation;
- that, subject to tender, the increased budget allocation for the works on the exterior of the Health and Wellbeing building.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board the following proposed changes to the capital expenditure work:

- **that the pitch resurfacing should proceed and agreed to recommend to the Board that the College progress Option 2 paid for by the condition grant;**
- **the proposed amended plan for utilising College Condition Allocation;**
- **that, subject to tender, the increased budget allocation for the works on the exterior of the Health and Wellbeing building.**

Actions: To update the capital expenditure report as agreed.

11. **College Enrolment Update**

Mr Stott presented his College Enrolment Update report. He reported:

- 16-18 enrolment continues to be positive and to date the College had exceed its allocation by 80 students to date, although there was possibility of attrition;

- whilst T Levels in engineering had recruited well, T Level recruitment remained a challenge and would continue to do so until the alternative qualifications were withdrawn;

- the College had 160 high needs students to date and anticipated that this could increase further;

- apprenticeship enrolments had exceeded the August and September profiles. However, October might be more challenging, but could be achieved;

- capacity issues with some apprenticeship standards;

- adult recruitment was going well.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the enrolment update report.

12. **Review of Progress of the Procurement Strategy**

Mr Airey presented the report on the Progress of the Procurement Strategy. He reported:

- the Procurement Strategy was first approved by the Board in December 2024 and the policy was approved by the Board in March 2025 so both were relatively new;

- good progress had been made to date and the College had made some savings;

- the report at Appendix 1 summarised progress to date;

- the College's Senior Procurement Officer, Steve Eaves, would leave the College in October and the new Senior Procurement Officer, Eleanor Wolf, would start in October;

- there was a significant amount of ongoing procurement work due to the number of capital grant projects.

In response to comments and queries from members the Committee noted that the actions in the reports would be rag rated going forward.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report on Progress of the Procurement Strategy.

13. **Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy**

Mr Stott referred members to the Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy 2025/26 and the proposed amendments which were shown as track changes at Appendix 1.

The Committee noted that the main change the reference from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to Department for Education (DfE), and also current salary details.

The Committee agreed to recommend the proposed changes to the Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy to the Board.

Resolved: The Committee reviewed the proposed amendments to the Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy for 2025/26 and agreed to recommend the revised policy to the Board for approval.

14. **Data Protection Policy**

Mr Stott referred members to the Data Protection Policy. He reported that he policy has been reviewed and no revisions have been made for the 2025/26 academic year,

Resolved: The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that no changes were required to the Data Protection Policy.

15. **Updated Forward Work Programme**

The Director of Governance referred members to the updated forward work programme and outlined the updates which had been made since the Committee reviewed the programme at its previous meeting.

Following discussion, the Director of Governance undertook to add the capital expenditure report as a standing item for all meetings.

With this amendment the Committee approved the updated Resources Committee Forward Work Programme.

Resolved: The Committee approved the updated Resources Committee Forward Work Programme.
Action: The Director of Governance to add the Capital expenditure report as a standing item for all meetings

16. **Verbal report – Pay Strategy**

The Principal and Chief Executive distributed copies of a letter from one of the College's unions, dated 1 October 2025.

The Principal and Chief Executive reported:

- negotiations and information provided to unions to date;
- that the next meeting with the unions would be held on 16 October 2025;
- that the Association of Colleges had made a recommendation of a 4% pay award, subject to affordability;
- that the College had increased its pay award to 4% following receipt of additional government funding to colleges to assist with costs pressures and the Board had allocated the remaining funds for contingency;
- the 4% pay award was aligned with school teacher pay award but did not narrow the gap between school and college pay;
- the difference between FE and school teachers' pay;
- that no decisions were required at this meeting and more formal discussions could take place at future committee or Board meetings.

The Committee discussed the matter with the Principal and Chief Executive. The Committee discussed the report, noted the verbal update and provided a steer to management.

The Committee noted the verbal update.

Resolved: The Committee noted the verbal update.

Mr Airey and Mr Stott left the meeting.

17. **Governance Self Assessment - Annual Review of Committee Terms of Reference**

The Director of Governance explained why questionnaires had not been issued for the Board and Committee self assessments of 2024/25. The Director of Governance highlighted suggested topics the Committee might wish to discuss alongside any other matters members wished to raise.

The Committee agreed that it was important to record that as most members of the Committee had not completed a full year, that this year's governance self assessment would be more challenging.

The Committee completed its annual governance self assessment and review of its terms of reference.

The Director of Governance reported that the Search and Governance Committee would be interviewing a candidate for co-option to the Resources Committee.

Resolved: The Committee completed its Governance Self Assessment and reviewed the Resources Committee Terms of Reference.

18. **Items to draw to the attention of the Board**

There were no items to draw to the attention of the Board on this occasion.

Resolved: The Committee agreed that there were no items to draw to the attention of the Board on this occasion.

19. **Date of Next Meeting:**

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 4 December 2025.