

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2023

PRESENT:

Arif Patel	Chair
Fran Crossland	Member
Dr Fazal Dad*	Principal and Chief Executive
Michael Lee	Member
Paul Morris	Member
Ridwaan Omar	Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Nathan Rogan	Associate member
Jennifer Eastham	Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
Nicola Clayton	Director of Business Development and External Engagement
Steve Nunwick	Director of Facilities and Estates
Sarah Horeesorun	Director of Governance

* indicates participated via Microsoft Teams

The meeting commenced at 5pm and was quorate.

The Chair welcomed everyone to this, the first Policy and Resources Committee of the 2023/24 academic year. A special welcome was extended to Nathan Rogan as this was his first meeting as an Associate member, and to Steve Nunwick who was to present. There followed round table introductions and Fran Crossland was wished a happy birthday.

The Chair explained that a themed presentation had been introduced at the start of the Policy and Resources Committee meetings. This approach worked well at Audit Committees and there was a rolling programme of future presentations including HR, H&S, Sustainability, Finance, and the student/teacher experience. To start this meeting, Steve Nunwick, Director of Facilities and Estates, had been invited to present on Estates matters and it was agreed that the Director of Facilities and Estates should follow his presentation by covering Items 17 and 21 on the Agenda as these fell within his areas of responsibility.

For presentation reasons, these minutes are set out to follow the Agenda.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received in advance from Steve Waggott and Rachel Tarplee.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair advised those in attendance that should members of the Policy and Resources Committee become aware of any potential conflicts of interest, they should be disclosed at the earliest opportunity during the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 19 JUNE 2023

The Committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 19 June 2023 as a true and accurate record, and these would be signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the updates on the actions from the previous meetings and the Chair highlighted that the action regarding the development of a Campus Master Plan had been carried forward since February 2022 and wondered whether this action should be archived. The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that this action was still very much on the list of things to do. The College had been in the fortunate position of receiving capital grants to fund projects and now that those projects had completed the intention was to develop a Campus Master Plan. The Director of Facilities and Estates added that he had already commissioned architects to produce 3D imagery of the campus, and this would inform the masterplan, future developments and focus the work. More on this would follow in Item 5 on the Agenda.

There followed some discussion of whether to introduce RAG rating to meeting actions and whether BRAG (Blue, Red, Amber, Green) would be an option. Blue being an action that is parked for future consideration. This would be considered further before introduction.

5. ESTATES

The Director of Facilities and Estates introduced his presentation to update the Committee on the campus summer works projects, current and planned projects.

The Director explained the challenges in maintaining the estate and delivering a safe, first-class learning experience whilst also seeking to transition areas of the College estate to be more modern.

Taking the Committee through the slides with photos depicting recent projects, the Director talked through the detail of the Industry Collaboration Zone, Health Ward, Digital Zone, Construction and HEAT 2 developments.

Looking ahead, the next step was development of a Campus Masterplan, mentioned in an earlier Item on the Agenda. This was a big undertaking and would involve looking at each building individually and the buildings collectively as some were currently functioning better than others. This would help inform a structured and prioritised programme of developments to take the buildings from good to great learning environments.

Amongst those areas already identified for improvements were the HE library, Construction Building, remodelling of the Elizabeth Building, and creation of an Immersive Suite. Committee members were also reminded of the major renovation works starting on the Victoria Building and being managed by the DfE.

The Committee was keen to hear that all of the developments and investments in infrastructure considered energy efficiencies and sustainability.

The Principal and Chief Executive added that the Campus Masterplan would include consideration of Martyn's Law requirements, lockdown procedures, risk assessments and the I.T. infrastructure. There followed discussion of Martyn's Law and it was acknowledged that there was still a lot of detail to emerge on this and how it applies to educational establishments, but those with a Business Continuity Plan would be in a stronger position when the detail was released. The Director of Facilities and Estates added that Martyn's Law and safety, evacuation

and emergency procedures would be incorporated into physical buildings and included in policies, procedures, practice, and rehearsals.

The Committee thanked the Director of Facilities and Estates for the update and invited him to cover Items 17 and 21 next.

6. CAPITAL BUDGET 2023/24

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services reminded the Committee that the College had been particularly successful in securing capital grants throughout 2022/23. A number of projects started in 2022/23 would have costs running into 2023/24.

The Vice-Principal talked through the detail of the Report and the business planning cycle, repeating the headline projects listed in Agenda Item 5 and the Colleges' contribution to the DfE led Victoria Building project.

Members noted that capital budgets may need to be revisited once the major projects had been costed; that members would receive regular updates and additional approvals requested, as required, on the larger projects.

The Committee **APPROVED** the

- (i) carry forward of unspent capital budget from 2022/23 to 2023/24;
- (ii) spend of the capital allocation for equipment, minor building works and the first instalment of the College contribution to the Victoria Building Project.

7. TUITION FEE POLICIES

(i) FE & HE Tuition Fees Policy 2024/25

The Committee were reminded that the Government requires that Tuition Fees are published a year in advance as Colleges are promoting September 2024 student intakes.

The FE Tuition Fees continue to be linked to the national rate published by Government, with basis of funding determined by funding allocation rules issued by the ESFA.

In summary, the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate services said that the Tuition Fees Policy remained fit for purpose, with a few minor changes proposed to the processes and procedures as highlighted in the attachment.

Having considered the Report and attachment, the Committee **APPROVED** the FE & HE Tuition Fee Policy for 2024/25.

(ii) College Funded Bursary and Scholarships Policy 2024/25

The Report referred to the College Funded Bursaries and Scholarships Policy in relation to both FE and HE for 2024/25.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that small changes had been suggested to the part of the policy re: FE Scholarships to reflect the new academic structure.

In their consideration of the proposed changes to the College Funded Bursary and Scholarships Policy 2024/25 the Committee **AGREED** to accept the changes, the revised Bursary eligibility criteria and **APPROVED** the policy.

(iii) HE Tuition Fees for 2025/26

Having considered this Report the Committee **AGREED** that the HE fees for 2025/26 remain.

8. SUBCONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement presented a Report updating the Committee on the subcontracting arrangements for 2023/24. The delegated responsibility to monitor the subcontracting arrangements falls within the remit of the Policy and Resources Committee. A report of the recent audit of subcontracting arrangements had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2023.

In presenting the Report, the Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement informed members that the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) had introduced the Subcontracting Standard in August 2022. A requirement of this was for colleges to have an independent audit to provide assurance to the ESFA on compliance with the Subcontracting Standard. If the ESFA deemed that the arrangements were compliant with the Subcontracting Standard the college would not need to conduct another audit for three years. The audit report highlighted two recommendations.

The Director of Business Development and External Engagement assured members that mitigating actions were in place to remedy the two recommendations for 2023/24 and that the relevant Team were actively managing the risks involved with the subcontracting arrangements.

The subcontracted provision was subject to the same quality monitoring and curriculum education reviews as all other 16-18 courses provided by the College, and College staff visited the provider weekly to offer support.

The Committee noted that the learner numbers provided in the detail of the Report and that the DfE had published guidance on Governance for Subcontracting on 6 September 2023. The Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement and the Director of Governance would ensure that Governors were briefed on the requirements.

9. GOVERNORS' EXPENSES POLICY 2023/24 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

The Committee noted that the Governors' Expenses Policy, at Appendix 2, had not changed from the version approved last year and that the expenses paid in 2022/23 at Appendix 1, were for travel and training attended by either the Governors or the Director of Governance.

The Committee **APPROVED** the:

- Governors' Expenses Policy for 2023/24
- Governors' expenses claimed in 2022/23.

10. CORPORATION POLICY ON PUBLIC ACCESS TO MEETINGS AND PUBLICATION OF MINUTES AND PAPERS

The Director of Governance highlighted the changes to the existing policy, notably, the updating of the job title from Clerk to Director of Governance.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the policy to the Board for approval.

11. STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2023/24 – UPDATE

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services provided the actual recruitment figures on the day of the meeting, with the caveat that these were changing daily.

The Committee thanked the Vice-Principal for the update and there were no further questions.

12. DRAFT MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS 2022/23

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented this Report and informed the Committee that the time was approaching for the Financial Statements.

The Principal and Chief Executive thanked the Vice-Principal Finance and Corporate Services for her hard work on maintaining healthy finances and financial rigour and acknowledged too that all staff have contributed in some way through efficiencies.

The Committee were reassured that the shortfalls were being effectively managed, noted the content of the Report and Management Accounts at Appendix 1 and **AGREED** that the Report be recommended to the Board for approval.

13. GOING CONCERN STATEMENT/CONSIDERATION OF GOING CONCERN

The Committee considered the current 'going concern' situation of the College in line with the fundamental accounting concept in the preparation of the Financial Statements.

To comply with the Committee's Terms of Reference and under the Scheme of Delegation, the members were satisfied, given the information received, that it was reasonable to prepare the College's financial statements on a 'going concern' basis.

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that there were no material uncertainties leading to significant doubt about the College being a going concern. 'Going concern' would be assumed whilst preparing the financial statements and a statement included therein to this effect.

The Committee **AGREED** recommendation of this report to the Board for approval.

14. COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) 2022

- (i) update as at 31/07/2023 (pre-finalisation)

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services introduced this Report.

Members noted the status on the KPIs 2022/23.

- (ii) 2023/24 proposed targets

The Committee considered the proposed KPI targets for 2023/24 as set out in the Report and supporting Appendix. Members reviewed the targets from 28 onwards as those 20-27 related to the budget and this had already been agreed.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the KPIs for 2023/24 to the Board for approval.

15. STRATEGIC PLAN – ANNUAL OPERATING STATEMENT

- (i) 2022/23 update as at 31/07/2023.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services talked through the Report and highlighted the detail within the attached Appendix.

The Committee noted that progress was positive on, for example, investment in facilities and the estate and Gatsby Benchmarks.

- (ii) 2023/24 proposed targets

Following on from the Item above, the Committee considered the proposed targets for 2023/24 and were broadly content but would wish that the actions above be considered.

On this basis, the Committee **AGREED** to recommend the KPIs proposed for 2023/24 to the Corporation Board.

16. COMMERCIAL AND EXTERNAL FUNDING REPORT

The Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement elaborated on the detail within the Report and the mention of successful bids and grants mentioned within other Agenda Items.

The bids and funding had contributed to the significant investment in the estate, for example, the Cyber Space was near completion and the College would be launching the Industry Collaboration Zone and holding its first event early in October.

The Report detailed the variety of different funding bids in the pipeline and the Director explained that work was underway to develop projects that were ready to go when the funding was confirmed, rather than the other way around. The Team were also horizon scanning for future funding bid opportunities.

The Committee were pleased to learn more about the Farm to Fork project, where the College is leading, and the Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) in Engineering.

The Committee noted the content of the Report and thanked the Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement for the comprehensive update.

17. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

The Director of Facilities and Estates talked the Committee through this Report highlighting that performance on health and safety was generally positive. The detail was in the Report. The new Health and Safety and Compliance manager will start in November 2023.

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

18. HUMAN RESOURCES ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

The Report and supporting Appendix provided the core Human Resources (HR) data for the period 1 August 2022- 31 July 2023.

Having reviewed the Report, members were pleased to note that staff turnover and sickness had reduced.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services informed members that an update on the People Strategy would feature as a presentation at the February 2024 meeting of this Committee.

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

19. MODERN SLAVERY ACT (BOARD STATEMENT)

To ensure continued compliance with the Modern Slavery Act, the Committee considered the Board statement to be published on the College website.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the statement to the Board for approval and the continued adoption by the College.

20. VALUE FOR MONEY REPORT 2022/23 AND PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24

The Report outlined the purchasing activities for 2022/23 and provided the priorities and objectives for cross-College procurement for 2023/24. The Report was produced on an annual basis to update Governors on the progress and plans for delivery of Value for Money.

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

21. NET CARBON ZERO

The Director of Estates and Facilities Management provided an update on progress towards the 31 step FE Climate Change Roadmap. Steady progress had been made and this was detailed in the Report, however there was much more to do.

There followed some discussion on whether the targets were too ambitious at this time and whether smaller easier targets would demonstrate progress towards the bigger, longer term aims. The Committee would look forward to future updates and baseline figures where possible.

The Committee thanked the Director of Estates and Facilities Management for this Report.

Steve Nunwick left the meeting by prior arrangement at 17.45pm.

22. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The Director of Governance updated the Committee on the changes to the Scheme of Delegation.

The Committee was reminded that an exercise to review the Terms of Reference for each Committee was completed annually. This had implications for the Scheme of Delegation, and these were detailed in the report. Some were minor changes, such as amends to a job title, others more significant, for example, the inclusion of references to the ONS reclassification, HMRC Managing Public Money guidance and HE strategy and supporting Action Plan.

The Committee noted the changes and **AGREED** to recommend the changes to the Schemes of Delegation to the Board for approval.

23. OVERSEAS ANNUAL VISITS REPORT 2022/23

The Report on the Overseas Visits for 2022/23 for Staff, Students and Governors was for information.

The Committee noted that there had been:

- No overseas business trips by any staff
- No trips funded through the Research and Scholarships Committee/Staff Development
- One educational visit to an overseas destination.

24. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS 2022/23

The Report was for information and provided members with analysis on the volumes and types of Freedom of Information Requests received in 2022 and 2023 to date.

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items additional items under any other business.

The Chair thanked Committee members for their contributions to the discussions.

26. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair commented that it had been a good meeting and that the 'focused' presentation at the start had worked well. However, the timing of presentations would need to be strict to enable thorough discussion of the other items on the agenda. The Chair thanked all participants for their contributions to the meeting.

27. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT POLICY AND RESOURCES MEETING

Monday 27 November 2023 at 5pm in the Exchange Boardroom and via MS Teams.