



**MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON MONDAY 1 MARCH 2021**

**PRESENT:**

Paul Levet	Chair
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Michael Lee	Member
Kathryn Lord	Member
Paul Morris	Member
Roger Spensley	Member
Steve Waggott	Member

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Nicola Clayton	Director: Business Development and Employer Engagement
Jennifer Eastham	Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
Andrew Pickles	Assistant Principal: Student Support and Engagement
Damian Stewart	Assistant Principal: Teaching and Learning (Technical Centre)
Jean Tracy	Clerk to the Corporation

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Arif Patel and Rachel Tarplee (Assistant Principal: Teaching and Learning (Academic Centre)).

**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 30 NOVEMBER 2020**

The Committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 30 November 2020 as a true and accurate record, and these would be signed by the Chair when able to do so (Covid-19 restrictions).

**4. MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee noted the updates against actions from previous meetings included in the agenda document. The following updates were also provided:

Agenda Item 28 – Related Party Transactions

Wording in relation to related party transactions had been amended as requested.

Agenda Item 37 Part II – Pensions Update

Ongoing

## **5. COVID-19 – COLLEGE UPDATE – QUALITY, FINANCIAL, BUSINESS OPERATIONS**

As agreed by the Board at its meeting on 3 June 2020, the Report provided the Committee with an update on the impact of Covid-19 on College business. It was noted that since the paper had been produced, a number of government announcements had been made. All staff were now working from College and the Lateral Flow Testing for staff and students was in place prior to being able to issue home-testing kits. The College was now working to ensure that all students returned to College for face-to-face delivery from Monday 8 March 2021.

The Committee was reminded that the Harrison Centre, University Centre and Saturn Centre had remained open during lockdown. During lockdown, a large number of works had been completed on the internal decorations of the College and over 700 laptops had been issued to staff and students to facilitate online learning.

The Committee was informed that over 100 Apprentices had been furloughed. It was noted that the College was supporting these students to ensure that all underlying knowledge was being gained. Information on the financial impact and impact on recruitment was provided in the Report.

A member of the Committee offered to assist in the Lateral Flow Testing, should this be required, and his appreciation of the work which would have been done to support staff and students was also noted.

## **6. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – YEAR TO 31 JANUARY 2021**

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Management Accounts up to the period ending 31 January 2021.

Performance against income targets was included in the Report. The Committee noted that the current deficit was significantly better than that in the previous year and that there were no issues to report in relation to cash balances and the key performance indicators. Information on the key issues – income, pay costs, non-pay costs, contributions analysis and balance sheet and cash – was noted by the Committee.

In answer to a question from a Committee member, the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services did not expect that the furlough retention bonus would be available at the end of January. The Government's announcement of a £3k incentive payment to employers to support the recruitment of new apprentices was noted.

Policy and Resources Committee **APPROVED** the Management Accounts for the period ending 31 January 2021 for recommendation to the Corporation Board on 12 March 2021.

## **7. COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2020/21 – UPDATE AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020**

The Committee considered the first report on progress against the agreed targets for 2020/21.

Of the 23 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), 10 were on target, 3 were on target in part, 5 were under target and 5 were not reportable. The table included 'direction of travel' and information was provided in the Report on the explanations and reasons for those KPIs which were under target.

It was explained that the difference in the figures for staff appraisal in this paper and that included in the HR Report (Agenda Item 14) was due to the time when the reports were produced.

## **7a. FE COMMISSIONER'S LETTER TO CHAIRS AND PRINCIPALS – 22 FEBRUARY 2021**

The paper provided information on the changes to the FE Commissioner's metrics, the rationale for these being included in the FE Commissioner's letter to Chairs and Principals. The changes would come into effect from the following month and the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that none would present a challenge to the College.

## **8. STRATEGIC PLAN – PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Report had been produced, as previously requested, to enable Governors to monitor the College's position against the additional ideas identified at the Governors' Strategic Seminar in November 2018. The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services informed the Committee that the list had been shortened, those ideas which were covered elsewhere having been removed.

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services noted that the report format had not yet been amended to take account of request made at the November 2020 meeting to include information on the desired achievement and on whether a failure to take forward the proposals would have an impact.

**Action: Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services**

In answer to a question from a member of the Committee, the Principal and Chief Executive provided an update on the development of the newly branded Sixth Form and the College's intention that it be the college of choice in the local area.

## **9. STRATEGIC PLAN 2019/2022 ANNUAL OPERATING STATEMENT – PROGRESS UPDATE AS AT 31 JANUARY 2021**

The Report provided the Committee with an update regarding progress towards the Strategic Plan targets for 2020/21. Full details were provided in the appendices. The Committee was informed that due to the impact of Covid-19 in 2019/20, a number of projects had not progressed as quickly as planned and that a number of KPIs had been severely impacted, the details being as per the Report. It was noted that outcome of a number of the targets currently being reported as on target in part would not be known until the end of July.

## **10. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE 2020/21**

The College had been allocated a £893k Further Education capital grant. The Report provided information on the projects completed and underway, it being noted that the College expected to fully expend the grant by the 31 March 2021 deadline.

The full rebranding and relaunch of the Sixth Form Centre had been expanded to include the remodelling of the ground floor circulation space and to create access from Blakey Moor. A tender process to deal with the 'floating roof' was due to go out to tender in March, with the project completed by the end of August. Further details would be shared as the project progressed.

An update on the Victoria Building was included under Part II Agenda Item 20.

## **11. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE UPDATE INCLUDING HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE POLICY 2021/22**

Health and Safety Update Report – The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented an update on key Health and Safety activities during the academic year 2020/21, which included accident statistics, risk assessment monitoring, audits and inspections, off site visits and EVOLVE, the Lateral Flow Test Centre, other activities, external events and legislative changes. The Report had not been considered by any other Committee.

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services reported that during the period 1 September 2020 – 31 December 2020, 27 learner incidents had been recorded; none being reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The Committee noted the decrease in the number of incidents in comparison to the same period in the previous three years.

Health, Safety and Welfare Policy 2020 – The Committee was advised that the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy had been reviewed, updated and would be considered by the Health and Safety Committee on 3 March 2021. The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services advised that minor changes had been made and the Policy remained fit for purpose.

Policy and Resources Committee **AGREED** to recommend the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy to the Corporation Board for approval at its meeting on 12 March 2021. The Principal and Chief Executive and Chair of the Corporation Board would then sign the Policy.

## **12. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY 2020/21 TERMLY UPDATE**

The Director of Business Development and External Engagement provided an update on the Commercial Provision and External Funding bids, noting that the Report had not been considered by any other Committee.

It was reported that income continued to be behind profile, in the main this being due to the current pandemic, with Health, Sport and Hair and Beauty being the areas most affected. The Report provided further information on the steps being taken by the College to increase income including new provision, an increased on-line offer and marketing activity using all social media platforms. The Committee also noted that the College had continued with the established programme of focused networking events and that these would increase in number.

The Committee also received a summary document which provided an update of the External Funding bids that had been secured, those which had been submitted and were awaiting an outcome and those which were in the process of being submitted.

The Chair thanked the Director of Business Development and External Engagement and her team for their continued hard work.

## **13. HUMAN RESOURCES MID-YEAR REPORT 2020/21**

The Report provided information on the core Human Resources (HR) data set for the period 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021. The key issues identified within the Report were considered and the following were noted:

- As at 31 January 2021, 786 staff (552.71 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)) were employed by the College on different contracts; the actual head count was 731. This was a reduction from the same point in the previous academic year, where the number of staff employed on different contracts had been 830 and the head count had been 772.
- The College population remained predominantly female (65%) which remained consistent compared to the same period in the previous year and sector norm of 63%<sup>1</sup>.
- The proportion of Minority Ethnic staff at the College currently stood at 19.47%, which was now stable compared to the previous year and end-of-year report.
- The proportion of staff with a declared disability increased to 9%; the College continued to welcome and support staff with declared disabilities, investing in occupational health support and the College Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- There was still a requirement for the College to continue its pursuit of taking on more apprenticeships as the under-20 age group remained under-represented. It was again noted

---

<sup>1</sup> AoC College Workforce Survey – Summary of Findings – 2017/18 (published 2019)

that sector data (AoC 2019) indicated that apprentices accounted for only 1.3% of college sector employees.

- Annual staff turnover was 11.08%, which had remained stable compared to the 2019/20 end-of-year report. This was below the FE sector national norm of 18.2% (AoC 2019) and showed a significant reduction from last year (17.84%) which was due to the uncertainty caused by Covid-19 and lockdown.
- Case Management had reduced compared to the previous year with 13 new cases, as compared to 22 in the previous year.
- The annual rolling absence rate stood at 4.37%. This was higher than the FE sector norm of 2.4% (AoC 2019) and the North West College sector norm of 3.1%. The absence rate for the three-month reporting period was slightly less at 3.93%.
- The Government had confirmed that the National Living Wage would increase from £8.72 to £8.91 on 1 April 2021. This would remove the pay differential between posts graded at 4-10 and 11-12.

In answer to a question from a member of the Committee, the Principal and Chief Executive informed the Committee on the actions which had been taken to support staff in terms of mental health well-being during the pandemic, including the subscription to the health support organisation EAP.

#### **14. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2020/21 – HALF-YEAR TO JANUARY 2021**

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Report which provided an update on the Organisational Development (OD) activities for the period 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021. The Report also provided an overview of progress to date in key development areas. The Committee noted the information provided on appraisal completion rates, and that this was behind because of the restructure in HE. Support and additional training were in place and appraisals in HE would be completed by the end of February 2021. The continued focus on staff development had been to establish and embed a strong knowledge of online and blended learning, awareness of key technologies, and keeping students engaged with online learning during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Information on the staff satisfaction results was contained in the Report, the Committee noting the low return of evaluations and thus the impact of the negative responses to externally provided training and the work being undertaken to improve the response rates.

#### **15. STREAMLINED ENERGY AND CARBON REPORTING FOR COLLEGES**

The Report provided information on the guidance from the Department for Education which was intended to increase the awareness of energy costs within colleges and to provide data to inform the adoption of energy efficiency measures to help reduce the impact on climate change.

A member of the Committee commented on the potential difficulties which could arise in benchmarking data which was not fit for purpose.

#### **16. FE FUNDING UPDATE**

The Committee received the FE Funding Update 2021/22 for information, noting the detail provided against the various student cohorts and that, at the time of writing, the allocations had not yet been received by the College. The Committee was informed that the allocations had now been received but information was still awaited on the funding rates for the coming year.

#### **16a. LANCASHIRE COLLEGES HEADLINE BENCHMARKING 2019/20**

The Report, which was provided for information, provided detail on the headline benchmarking figures for Lancashire colleges and for two local universities. It was noted that, with the exception of the smaller sixth forms, most had reduced in size.

**17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Business.

**18. REVIEW OF MEETING**

The Chair thank Members present for their attendance and contribution at the meeting.

**19. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday 17 May 2021 at 5.00pm.

Signed: .....

Date: .....