

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 12 MAY 2025

PRESENT:

Arif Patel	Chair
Dr Fazal Dad*	Principal and Chief Executive
Asif Ali	Member
Paul Morris	Member
Ridwaan Omar	Member
Bryan Welch	Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Corinne McMillan	Co-opted Committee member
Jennifer Eastham	Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
Nicola Clayton	Director of Business Development and External Engagement
Sarah Horeesorun	Director of Governance

*Denotes joined the meeting via Teams.

The meeting commenced at 5pm and was quorate.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received in advance from Governors, Michael Lee and Steve Waggott, and from staff members, Steve Nunwick 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 3 MARCH 2025

The Committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 3 March 2025 as a true and accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted that agenda items on Health and Safety and Human Resources would feature on the agendas of future meetings when timely to do so, and the Director of Governance confirmed that both were on the Committee's Calendar of Business. Members were content that these actions be marked as completed.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services reported that the College KPIs Report had been updated as suggested at the March meeting and KPIs would be covered in Agenda Item 09.

5. PRESENTATION ON A TOPICAL THEME – READY TO LEARN CENTRE

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented this Report and informed the Committee of the background to this new venture.

In response to the Governments 'Get Britain Working' ambition, the Skills Agenda and local need, the College had been working with BwD LA and would be opening a Future Focused Ready to Learn Centre in September to support those not in education, employment or training (NEETs). There was an estimated c350 NEETs in the Borough aged 16-24, 75% in Blackburn.

The new centre will be in the Town centre and shared with New Ground, who, as part of Together Housing, undertake work helping unemployed adults back to work. The College offer would be short courses, learning and pastoral support to young people aged 16-19 to re-engage them in learning and help them back into College.

The Report set out the business plan, premises, staffing, facilities and risks. Copies of the floor plan were shared with members.

Members were keen to learn more, sought assurance about the undertaking and asked questions about management of the lease, relationships with the partners, staffing, security, and explored the risks listed.

The performance of the centre and students would be monitored through this Committee, Audit and Learning and Quality.

The Committee agreed that this was a laudable venture, particularly as with lagged funding, the College would not receive any funding for these students until next year, but acknowledged that as an anchor institution, the College had a corporate social responsibility to meet the needs of those hardest to reach in the local community. Noting the risks and mitigations in place, the Committee **APPROVED** the budgets as presented in the Report.

6. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31 MARCH 2025 INC. REFORECAST

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that this Report provided the position as at 31 March 2025 and a reforecast of where finances would be at 31 July 2025.

The Vice-Principal informed members that a Report on the College Budget 2025/26 and Financial Planning would be presented to the Committee's June meeting. A member commented that the College would need to account for a full year of employer NI contributions next year.

The Chair commented on the healthy financial position and the Committee asked that thanks be passed onto the Team.

Members **AGREED** to the spend on proposed projects and **RECOMMENDED** the Management Accounts to the Corporation Board for approval.

7. CAPITAL PROJECTS

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services referred to the photographs of the Victoria Building renovations that had been shared by the Director of Governance ahead of this meeting and provided an update on the current work and planned undertakings.

Despite the challenges of finding the right roof slates and rot being more prevalent than originally thought, the Victoria Building renovations were still on track to complete by September 2026.

The Vice-Principal provided the status on the 2024/25 campus works listed in the Report and informed members that proposals were being developed and costed for the summer works including projects to refurbish science labs, hair and beauty salons, and hospitality kitchens, and to relocate offices creating more teaching space, install a building lockdown system and provide aircon in Elizabeth and Harrison buildings. These projects would be put to tender for quotes and final design work, and, including the fit out of the Ready to Learn centre, were all within budget.

The Committee provided headline **APPROVAL** of the spend for the summer works and **RECOMMENDED** the Report to the Corporation Board for approval.

8. STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-25 – ANNUAL OPERATING STATEMENT – UPDATE AT 31 MARCH 2025

Members noted the progress made so far in year and the updates within the attachment. The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that at this stage in the year, some of the targets were not reportable and the data was not available until the end of the year.

No further comments were made.

9. COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) 2024/25 – PROGRESS at 31 MARCH 2025

The Committee reviewed the progress made to 31 March 2025 on the KPIs for 2024/25 and noted:

- 10 - on target
- 5 - on target in part
- 5 – under target
- 2 – not yet reportable

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that the five KPIs under target would be so until the end of the academic year.

10. BUSINESS PLANNING UPDATE

The Report provided the Committee with an update on the process of Business Planning, the end result of which would be the Colleges' budget for 2025/26 and a set of student number targets.

The draft budgets would continue to meet the DfE Outstanding Financial Health criteria, loan covenants and FE Commissioner metrics.

11. COMMERCIAL AND EXTERNAL FUNDING UPDATE

The Executive Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement elaborated on the detail within the Report and attachment informing members that the College had benefited from investment and funding bids and was working with students, local schools and employers on an e-sports facility.

The College continued to focus on the relaunched Blackburn College Trades centre, Motor vehicle provision and new developments in low carbon, HEAT, Engineering, cyber, and had been successful in its tender for Wave 6 of the Skills Bootcamps.

Working with external partners, the College was working to maximise opportunities for funding and to engage the local community in events, building on the success of the CyberFest.

Investment was being made in upgrading digital classrooms and hospitality and catering to create high-quality learning experiences for students and supporting industry placements raising

aspirations and boosting career opportunities. The College had been nominated for several prestigious Awards in catering and hospitality and this recognition would further extend the brand and reputation of the College.

The Committee noted the content of the Report and thanked the Executive Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement and her Team for their hard work.

12. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE AT 31 MARCH 2025

The Report and supporting Appendix provided the core Human Resources (HR) data for the period 1 August 2024 - 31 March 2025 and benchmarking data against other institutions.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services highlighted the headline information, and the detail was provided in the Report and Appendix.

The new Executive Director of HR would be starting next month and would scrutinise sickness across the organisation to establish any patterns in short-term sickness to be addressed. A member enquired if staff were signposted to external support to help manage sickness and the Principal and Chief Executive confirmed that there was an Employee Assistance Service available 24/7.

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE AT 31 MARCH 2025

This report provided an update on key health and safety activities during the academic year 2024/25 including incident statistics, Health & Safety Committee, off-site trips and visits (Evolve), and legislative changes.

The new Health and Safety manager had started 1 April 2025 and was getting to grips with the health and safety of the College as a multifaceted and diverse organisation and would seek to identify any trends and mitigations.

Planning and risk assessments ahead of the numerous students trips abroad had been complex.

The Health and Safety Committee had met, and health and safety inspections completed by the new manager demonstrated a good level of compliance, with a few issues now rectified.

14. NET ZERO CARBON UPDATE

Further to the detailed Report and attached Roadmap, the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services informed members that an exercise to populate the Roadmap has been completed. The Consultants engaged to establish the Scope 3 baseline were finding it hard to calculate and aimed to complete this activity by the end of May. A member asked if work was completed (in May), that it be brought to the June meeting as the Committee needed to understand the College emissions, in order to effectively monitor progress.

A summer priority was to build on and integrate more ESD within the curriculum, including research elements.

The Chair commented that the Roadmap did look much better now that it was populated.

15. SUBCONTRACTING ACTIVITIES UPDATE

The Executive Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement said a Quality Summit of the Subcontracting provision had examined the detail and provided robust assurance of quality and delivery. The College had met with the new Lead at Blackburn Rovers and would continue to provide support and quality assurance monitoring in 2025/26.

The Executive Director referred to the detail within the Report and reminded the Governors of their responsibilities including the oversight of subcontracting activities.

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

16. BAD DEBT WRITE-OFFS

This Report was supplied for information and provided an update regarding the activities to collect debts and bad debt write offs. The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that the College had followed due process and completed efforts to collect outstanding debts and only when all other recovery activities were exhausted, would the College write-off these as bad debts.

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

17. DfE COLLEGE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS LETTER

This Report and copy of the DfE College Financial Health letter was provided to the Committee for information and included, at Appendix Two, an example of the DfE financial Dashboard showing key funding information benchmarked against the sector.

Members noted the letter and Report and asked that the Principal formally thank staff on behalf of the Committee.

18. NEW STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-28 – UPDATE

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services updated members on the current position on the development of the new College Strategy 2025-28. Some members had attended the Board and College Leadership session in January and since then the draft Strategy had been developed and was currently being consulted on with key stakeholders. The latest versions of the Strategy would be considered by the upcoming L&Q and next P&R Committee before recommendation to the Board for approval at its July meeting.

19. THE LANCASHIRE COLLEGES Ltd – YEAR-END ACCOUNTS 2023/24

The Committee is briefed on the ventures in which the College has an interest. The College is a member of the Lancashire Colleges Consortium Ltd (TLC). This Report provided the Committee with background on the TLC and highlighted the TLC income generated, surplus, cash balance and the need for planning around the staffing structure, an investment plan and how to best utilise funds.

The Report and TLC year-end Accounts were supplied for information.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of any other business.

21. REVIEW OF THE MEETING

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services for her Reports and members confirmed that they had all had the opportunity to contribute and say what they wanted to say throughout the meeting.

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

Monday 16 June 2025 at 5pm in the Exchange Boardroom and via MS Teams.