

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2024

PRESENT:

Arif Patel	Chair
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Michael Lee	Member
Nadeem Memon	Member
Paul Morris	Member
Ridwaan Omar	Member
Steve Waggott*	Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Corinne McMillan	Co-opted member
Jennifer Eastham	Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
Rachel Tarplee	Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Nicola Clayton	Director of Business Development and External Engagement
Steve Nunwick	Director of Facilities and Estates
Sarah Horeesorun	Director of Governance

The meeting commenced at 5pm and was quorate.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the academic year.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received in advance from members, Fran Crossland and Bryan Welch.

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 17 JUNE 2024

The Committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 17 June 2024 as a true and accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted that agenda items on Martyn's Law and the Campus Masterplan would feature on the agenda of future meetings when timely to do so.

5. PRESENTATION ON A TOPICAL THEME - RECRUITMENT

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services talked the Committee through a presentation on student recruitment, reflecting the current position and the impact that this had on funding and staffing.

In discussion, the following was covered:

- Funding arrangements differ for FE and HE
- ESFA targets and performance against predictions
- Potential impact of student over/under recruitment on staffing, courses, and financial position
- Marketing opportunities
- Local demographics and skills need
- Challenges of delivering HE in an FE College and sector wide concerns
- Planning for the future, local and national politics

The Chair thanked the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services for the presentation.

The Chair proposed that Items 12,13, and 22 be presented by the Director of Facilities and Estates before returning to the Agenda. This was agreed by the Committee, but for the purposes of the recording of these minutes, items reflect the agenda order.

6. CAPITAL BUDGET 2024/25

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services reminded the Committee that the College had been particularly successful in securing capital grants throughout 2023/24. A number of projects started in 2023/24 would have costs running into 2024/25.

The Vice-Principal talked through the detail of the Report and the business planning cycle, listing the headline projects listed in Agenda Item 22 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 proposals.

The Policy and Resources Committee **AGREED** for this Report to be recommended to the Corporation Board for approval at its meeting 5 July 2024.

7. TUITION FEE POLICIES:

- i) FE & HE Tuition Fees Policy 2025/26
- ii) Bursary and Scholarships Policy 2025/26
- iii) HE Tuition Fees for 2026/27

The Committee were reminded that the Government requires that Tuition Fees are published a year in advance as Colleges are promoting September 2025 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 2025/26.

(ii) College Funded Bursary and Scholarships Policy 2025/26

The Report referred to the College Funded Bursaries and Scholarships Policy in relation to both FE and HE for 2025/26.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that small changes had been suggested to the policy, and these were highlighted on the attachment.

Having considered the proposed changes to the College Funded Bursary and Scholarships Policy 2025/26, the Committee **AGREED** to accept the changes and **APPROVED** the policy.

(i) HE Tuition Fees for 2026/27

Having considered this Report the Committee **AGREED** that the HE fees for 2026/27 remain as they were for September 2026 starts.

8. SUBCONTRACTING ARRANGMENTS 2024/25

The Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement presented a Report updating the Committee on the subcontracting arrangements for 2024/25. The delegated responsibility to monitor the subcontracting arrangements falls within the remit of the Policy and Resources Committee, and reports were also considered by the Learning and Quality Committee and Audit Committee.

The Report set out the subcontracting arrangements for delivery of 16-18 BTEC Sports provision and the Director explained that significant quality and assurance activities had been undertaken throughout the partnership, now in year three, providing positive achievement outcomes for learners in core sports programmes. The College would be delivering maths and English.

The Committee noted that the learner numbers provided in the detail of the Report and the requirements of the ESFA Subcontracting Standard, including the Governance responsibilities as listed.

The Committee ¹**APPROVED** the Subcontracting Arrangements for 2024/25 and, subject to due diligence review, **APPROVED** the proposal to contract out £50,000 of Adult Education Budget funding for provision of digital skills for harder reach members of the community.

The Committee thanked the Director of Business Development and External Engagement for this Report.

9. GOVERNORS' EXPENSES POLICY 2024/25 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

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 2023/24 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 2024/25, and the Annual Report of Governors' expenses claimed in 2023/24.

10. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

¹ * Governor, Mr Steve Waggott, did not participate in this discussion or vote on the matters decided in this Item. Abstaining from this Item did not impact on the quoracy of the decision-making Committee for this Item.

The Director of Governance introduced this item and explained that the Conflicts of Interest declarations completed by Senior Managers, budget holders and Governors on an annual basis, informed the College's central Register of Interests.

The Committee noted that the only proposed change to the policy was the inclusion of reference to the new Financial Handbook for Colleges, and the Chair suggested that the annual Declarations of Interest form be a Microsoft for rather than paper copy in the future.

Action: Director of Governance

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the Conflicts of Interest Policy with proposed change to the Corporation Board for approval.

11. 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.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

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 Health and Safety monitoring system was working well to maintain a regime of monitoring and action. The new Health and Safety Manager is due to start in October.

The Chair asked if there were any considerations for the College as a consequence of the Grenfell Report and the Director of Facilities and Estates explained that there was an increased awareness of fire protection in the design, specification and materials used for new building projects and renovations, now, as a matter of course.

A member asked if there were any shared learning opportunities between the College and large local employers to discuss, for example, emergency evacuation drills in relation to Martyn's Law and Grenfell. The Director explained that there was a resilience forum and local strategic group, and that the College had participated in a recent co-ordinated evacuation exercise in the town. The College had a Disaster Recovery Plan in place and routinely holds fire drills, with post drill follow-up to share any learning points.

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

13. 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.

The Director highlighted that the heating plant renewal in the Elizabeth Building had been completed over the summer, and that the next Report would provide more detail on the plans related to Scope 3 emissions and decarbonisation.

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

14. STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2024/25 – 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 discussion on Student Recruitment had taken place earlier on the Agenda in the presentation at Item 5.

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

15. DRAFT MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS 2023/24

The Pre-finalised Accounts to 31 July 2024 were discussed, with the caveat that these were pre-final and with the External Auditors, Beever and Struthers as part of their year-end activities.

The detailed figures were contained within the Report and attached Management Accounts. The Committee discussed the variances and performance against the FE Commissioner's financial metrics. All of metrics and the Bank covenants were being met and the Colleges' 'outstanding' financial health maintained.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the Management Accounts, pre-finalisation to 31 July 2024 to the Corporation Board for approval.

16. 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.

17. VALUE FOR MONEY REPORT 2023/24 AND PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25

The Report outlined the purchasing activities for 2023/24 and provided the priorities and objectives for cross-College procurement for 2024/25. 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.

18. COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) 2023/24:

- i) update as at 31/07/24 (prefinalisation)
- ii) 2024/25 proposed targets

- (i) update as at 31/07/2024 (pre-finalisation)

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services introduced this Report. The Committee noted that the status, pre-finalisation, of the KPIs for 2023/24 was:

- 13 - on target
- 1 - on target in part
- 8 - under target
- 1 - TBC

A member asked if the College staff survey had been completed, and the Vice-Principal confirmed that it had and that the Quality Team were analysing the results. This would be presented to the Learning and Quality Committee in the Organisational Development Report.

The Committee noted the content of this Report.

(ii) 2024/25 proposed targets

The Committee considered the proposed KPI targets for 2024/25 as set out in the Report and supporting Appendix. The Vice-Principal talked members through the proposed targets.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the KPIs for 2024/25 to the Board for approval.

19. **STRATEGIC PLAN – ANNUAL OPERATING STATEMENT:**

- i) 2023/24 update as at 31 July 2024(pre-finalisation)
- ii) 2024/25 proposed targets

(i) 2023/24 update as at 31/07/2024

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services talked through the Report and highlighted the detail within the attached Appendix. This was the pre-finalisation Report and as at 31 July 2024, the status of the targets was:

- 11 - on target
- 4.5 - on target in part
- 0.5 - under target
- 7 - not yet reportable

The Vice-Principal explained that the not yet reportable targets were informed by the ILR which was due on 17 October. The Committee noted that progress was positive on, for example, investment in facilities and the estate, and Student Surveys.

(ii) 2024/25 proposed targets

Following on from the Item above, the Committee considered the proposed targets for 2024/25 and **AGREED** to recommend the KPIs proposed for 2024/25 to the Corporation Board.

20. **COMMERCIAL AND EXTERNAL FUNDING REPORT**

The Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement elaborated on the detail within the Report.

The bids and funding had contributed to the significant investment in the estate, covered by other Items on the Agenda, and the Industry Collaboration Zone was proving a popular venue and well used by various external businesses and organisations.

Investment in HEAT through SDF and LSIF funding continued to provide opportunities for commercial income, Skills Bootcamps, and business engagement.

Levelling up funding was supporting improvements in the Colleges' digital infrastructure.

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

21. HUMAN RESOURCES ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Report and supporting Appendix provided the core Human Resources (HR) data for the period 1 August 2023- 31 July 2024.

The Committee commented that this was a good Report, and noted that the inclusion statistics were positive, and the need for more Apprentices.

22. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

The Committee were pleased to learn of all of the progress made on the refurbishments and enhancements across the campus during the summer.

The Director of Facilities and Estates sought the Committees approval to the headline budgets for the projects as set out in the Report.

The Chair commented that the Campus Masterplan would inform the College Strategy and confirmed that this would need to be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee before going to the Corporation Board.

The Committee noted the progress made on the campus projects and **APPROVED** the budgets for the projects within the Report.

The Committee thanked the Director of Facilities and Estates for his Reports.

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

23. 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 Report title, others more significant, for example, the inclusion of references to the Financial Handbook for Colleges.

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

24. 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 Committee noted the content of the Report.

25. OVERSEAS VISITS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Report on the Overseas Visits for 2023/24 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
- Two educational visits to an overseas destination.

26. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS 2023/24

The Report was for information and provided members with analysis on the volumes and types of Freedom of Information Requests received in 2023/2024 to date.

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

27. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of any other business.

28. REVIEW OF THE MEETING

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services for her Reports.

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

Monday 25 November 2024 at 5pm in the Exchange Boardroom and via MS Teams.

Signed:

Date: