

# MINUTES



## RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

**Date:** Tuesday 19 March 2024  
**Time:** 5.00pm  
**Venue:** Boardroom / Videoconference

### **Present:**

Dr Andrew Roberts (Chair)  
Dr Bill Webster (Principal)  
Mrs Kate Flood

### **In Attendance:**

Garry Westwater (Executive Director of Finance)  
Jane Marsh (Executive Director of HR and Estates)  
Tim Openshaw (Asst. Vice Chancellor, UoB)  
Deborah Bradburn (Clerk)  
Jill Hebden (Minute Taker)

## **1. SECTION A - BUSINESS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE**

### **1.1 Welcome to Members**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, which commenced at 5.02pm.

### **1.2 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Prof George Holmes and Dr Tony Unsworth.

### **1.3 Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed.

### **1.4 Request for an item to be unstarred**

No requests were made.

### **1.5 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 January 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held 16 January 2024 had been previously circulated to Members for consideration.

**Agreed:** that the minutes are approved as a correct record and authorised for publication.

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## 1.6 Matters arising from the Minutes and Action Progress Log

The Clerk presented the action progress log and confirmed that all actions from the previous meeting had been completed.

### Governor Questions/Comments:

- *Are 'Golden Hellos' classed as a bonus payment?*  
No, it is a one-off payment that is not consolidated.

## 2. SECTION B - COLLEGE MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE

### 2.1 Financial Update

The following update was provided by the Executive Director of Finance:

- The deficit was estimated to be c. £750k - £1m for financial year 2023/24. Action was underway to rectify the deficit through cost savings and income growth for 2024/25.
- The learner enrolments for 16-18s were at their highest level with lagged funding to benefit the College into financial year 2024/25.
- Local and national benchmarking data showed that the College spent below average on non-pay costs.
- The College had sought to self-assess its financial health grade from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Good' for financial year 2022/23. Following a discussion with the ESFA, the College concluded not to do so. The 'Requires Improvement' financial grading would be of no detriment to the College.

### Governor Questions/Comments:

- *What is the disparity between the 'Requires Improvement' and 'Good' financial health grades? What did the ESFA not agree with?*

The ESFA did not agree with the College's argument that the grade reflected an exceptional year of one-off circumstances related to the utility costs and adult education funding shortfall.

- *It doesn't look good in terms of 'Requires Improvement' at Ofsted and now in the ESFA financial judgement.*

As this assessment doesn't fit into the year-end schedule our self-assessment of 'Good' was recorded within the year end accounts.

- *We have gone through 2022/23 saying that we are 'Good' when we are not. Is this a reflection that we do not know what is happening?*

It was an exceptional year in terms of the utility costs being over £1m higher than predicted.

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- *In terms of non-pay spend and the College being 15-20% below the benchmark average, does it leave us exposed in any particular areas?*

No, low costs are maintained across all areas. We complete the budgets with the smallest element being non-pay.

- *Is there a risk there?*

The College would like to spend more on certain things but there are no underlying risks. There may be an impact on learner experience in keeping costs low. However, this is not a deterioration in spend, it has been lower than average for a number of years. There are a lot of resources which are fixed and we focus on that which we can spend on learner facing activity.

- *How is the spend on building improvements treated?*

This is capital spend and is seen on the balance sheet as a grant that is divided into smaller pots.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the financial update provided.

## **2.2 College KPI Dashboard**

The KPI dashboard was reviewed and the following points noted:

- The quality concerns that had been noted focused on the detail within the Ofsted report. A Post inspection Action Plan (PIAP) was in place and was monitored by the PIAP Task and Finish Group.
- There were a number of 'red' RAG ratings that highlighted the challenges with cost control measures in place.

## **Governor Questions/Comments:**

- *Why is the financial section on apprenticeships rated as 'amber' and not 'green'?*  
This could be rated as 'green' as we are sitting at 107% of funding. The numbers carried forward into next year are lower than we would like but we are still actively recruiting.
- *The T Level volumes are RAG rated as 'amber', should this be 'red'?*  
There remains the issue of staffing for maths and English and whilst this is still challenging the numbers have improved since last year.
- *What will the cash position look like at year end? Will it improve?*  
It will improve on the current position which is around £2.4m. There is an additional £1.2m in capital funding coming in next month, £180k for Local Skills Improvement Funding, an additional in-year grant for the teachers pensions costs of £92k and cuts on agency staffing.

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- *Does 42 days cash in bank equate to £1m?*  
Twenty days is £1m, it should be noted that this is always the low point of the year for cash in bank.
- *Are we at risk of going less than 25 days?*  
No, we are not.
- *The staff costs to income ratio benchmark is less than 65% and the forecast is 66.8% at LEO2. Is this benchmark of 65% similar to other colleges?*  
This is an ESFA benchmark that has not changed and is an external indicator/metric. It would be more meaningful to have a different benchmark.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the KPI Summary Dashboard.

## **2.3 Annual Statement of Focus to inform College Planning**

The annual statement was a standard governance practice between the University and College that detailed a draft set of priorities for consideration by the College when formulating its Annual Strategic and Operating Plan for the year, following discussions between the College and University that would be presented to both College and University Boards.

### **Governor Questions/Comments:**

- *Does this need updating, particularly around compliance with the bank covenants and status of at least 'good'?*  
This document is an expectation of where the College should be. It is meant to be forward looking and a statement of intent of where we want to get to rather than where we are. The University takes the parental lead and determines what it wants and we work together to create the statement of focus. Next time you will see this is with the Annual Strategic Operating Plan at the next Board meeting. The statement reflects our aims and how we will achieve them is detailed in the operating plan.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee reviewed and noted the contents of the Statement of Focus.

## **2.4 Gender Pay Annual Report**

The Executive Director of HR and Estates presented the report and the following points were highlighted:

- It was a legal requirement for all companies with 250+ employees to report and publish their gender pay gap.

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- The College pay gap for 2023 was at 8.67% (mean) that was a positive improvement from the previous year. There was also a positive improvement on the median data.
- The College had implemented all Government advice and guidance on making improvements to close the pay gap and continued to work further on those strategies.

## **Governor Questions/Comments:**

- *The upper quartile for females is a 50/50 split. There was an expectation of a 2:1 ratio.*  
This is an area that we closely look at. The upper quartile are middle manager/co-ordinator roles which is very broad. Our workforce profile is 70% female, so you would expect to see more females in the upper quartile and in those higher management positions.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the Gender Pay Annual Report

## **ACTION:**

Gender Pay Annual Report to be published on the website.

## **2.5 Health & Safety Update:**

The Executive Director of HR and Estates presented the report and the following points were highlighted:

- There were no further updates with regards to RAAC from the local authority. The College awaited the local authority to complete the required surveys.
- The Greater Manchester Fire Service fire compliance check had been completed with minor amendments and work identified that had either been completed or had been scheduled for completion.
- There had not been any new litigation claims. Any previous claims reported were ongoing and being managed by the insurance company.
- The lift project schedule had been completed with works to commence in May 2024 for completion prior to the start of the new academic year in September 2024.
- The new build remained on schedule. There had been a road closure to the rear of the building that would be in place for approximately four weeks.
- There had been 53 accidents on site this academic year, which was equivalent to previous years.

## **Governor Questions/Comments:**

- *The accidents statistics were presented on a total to date vs full year basis. Could a comparison be made like for like with the removal of the full year total?*  
Yes, this can be completed for the next presentation of the report.

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- *Is there an explanation as to why there has been a significant increase in visitor accidents and burns compared to previous years?*

There has been a change in the classification of visitors which now includes school visits that are under the supervision of their own teachers. There are no particular trends or course changes to explain the increase in burns, although there has been an increase in recruitment to the catering programmes.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the Health and Safety update.

## **ACTION:**

Statistics to be amended to reflect the year-to-date information.

### **3. SECTION C - UNIVERSITY GROUP MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED**

### **4. SECTION D - ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **4.1 Meeting Evaluation**

The Committee Members confirmed that the meeting had met requirements. The Committee had robustly and fairly challenged the officers and all Committee Members had participated in the meeting. The Committee noted the comprehensive and detailed nature of the reports provided.

### **5. SECTION E - FUTURE MEETINGS**

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 5.00pm

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 6.04pm

**Chair's Signature:**

**Date:** 4 June 2024