

# MINUTES



## RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

**Date:** Tuesday 4 June 2024  
**Time:** 5.00pm  
**Venue:** Boardroom / Videoconference

### **Present:**

Dr Andrew Roberts (Chair)  
Dr Bill Webster (Principal)  
Dr Tony Unsworth  
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)

## **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 5.03pm.

### **1.2 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Professor George Holmes.

### **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 19 March 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held 19 March 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 the outstanding action relating to the Health and Safety update would be provided at the next Resources Committee meeting.

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

### 2.1 ESFA Financial Health Update and Financial Update

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

- The deficit was estimated to be -£699k for financial year 2023/24. This was before the costs of the voluntary and compulsory severances would be taken into account.
- Action was underway to rectify the deficit via other savings and income growth with the expectation to move from a deficit position to a surplus of more than £2m in the next academic year.
- Post LEO3 work would be completed to provide a detailed budget to be shared with the Board and the bank ahead of the covenant waiver being secured by 31 July 2024.

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

- *How much movement and control are we gaining around agency staffing?*  
Agenda item 2.7 can be covered at this point to identify aspects of agency control.
- *Have the severances been separated as an exceptional item?*  
Yes, this has been put into pay, £300k of exceptional items due to restructuring.
- *Is there any report on the change of financial year end?*  
We expect an additional return from April 2025 to March 2026.

#### **(Change in the Order of the Agenda)**

### 2.7 Agency Staff Expenditure Audit Scope

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

- The Audit Committee had requested that the agency staff audit scope be presented to the Resources Committee for consideration.
- The scope proposed was to obtain an understanding of the processes and controls around agency staffing, identify the key risks and evaluate the controls in place to address the risks. The audit approach would also test the operating effectiveness of the key controls in place.

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

- *Was this area of focus requested by the Audit Committee?*

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It was already proposed as part of this academic year's audit review, which has fallen at an opportune time.

- *Do we need to undertake this activity as part of the College's financial due diligence?*  
The internal audit will address both the finances and processes relating to quality assurance.

- *Do we already know that these systems and controls aren't in place?*  
To some extent. However, the audit will identify best practice from across the sector.

- *If the operational team don't have visibility of who is in the College at any one time, there will never been any control. There is no mention of quality within the scope, only cost and sign off controls. What helps to ensure that we have value for money and quality? Can this go into the scope?*

The auditors would not be able to make a judgement on teaching, learning and assessment. However, the audit can look at the systems and processes in place to assure this. The quality aspect is where the curriculum Heads of Area are crucial as they know what staffing skills are required. Quality checks and balances come at different stages with poor agency staff leaving the College. Bolton Talent Solutions and the HR Team have developed an induction scheme.

- *If there is so much onus on the Curriculum Leader, where is the accountability? There should be evidence-based sign-off that agency staff are competent and are value for money.*

If you consider a £30k starting salary with a top-end of £40k for teaching staff and include a pension contribution this would equate to around £50-£60 per hour, which is what we are paying for those agency staff in the hard to recruit to curriculum areas and hopefully we are getting better quality staff and organisational buy-in. It's about supply and demand.

- *Do agency staff complete marking and assessments?*  
Agency staff don't prepare and mark work as much as the permanent staff members.
- *Who does the marking and preparation work if there is a long-term agency situation within an area?*  
It is a combination of the Curriculum Leader or other lecturers picking up additional work. There are some agency workers that do more.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the Agency Staff Expenditure Scope.

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## **ACTION:**

Quality and value for money to go into the agency staff expenditure internal audit scope.

## **(Change in the Order of the Agenda)**

### **2.2 College KPI Dashboard**

The KPI dashboard was reviewed and the following points noted:

- The financial data reflected the current budget forecasting and LEO2.
- Applications were strong for the next academic year with offers moving in a similar direction.
- The Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) was included within the quality section.

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

- *Can you over recruit on T Levels?*  
T Level recruitment is not capped and across the country very few colleges have recruited to their target so far. The number of 16-18 years has increased to more than 200 with less to go onto T Levels.
- *What strategy do we have to grow T Levels for 2024/25?*  
We have widened the T Level offer with more to come on stream this year. Further engagement has taken place with schools and career leads around T Levels and this message does seem to be sinking in. Further clarity is required on Level 3 outcomes as defunding continues, in addition to clarification on the offer and universities acceptance of T Levels.
- *Is there duplication with Maths and a T Level with Maths? Do we have students capable of completing T Level with Maths?*  
Yes, we have learners that have achieved grades 7, 8 and 9 at GCSE.
- *It is possible for our foundation learners to get to T Level standard?*  
There is some flexibility on certain T Levels to recruit without either an English or maths GCSE. However, this would be a big undertaking in terms of work and time with T Levels being equivalent to three A-levels and very demanding.
- *How much of the learner achievement gap is application as opposed to intelligence?*  
It is difficult to answer. Our learners, as a demographic, tend to have lower starting points than others. It's more that they have had a difficult start, not that they are less academically gifted. Our learners achieve their core objectives, gain meaningful outcomes and progress into work or continued education.

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- *Do we have a plan for HE recruitment?*  
There will be a continuing increase on the Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) side. There is a longer-term discussion ongoing with the University of Bolton on how foundation degrees are delivered.
- *What more can we do for English and maths?*  
This is a standing agenda item on the Standards and Quality Committee and is discussed at length. There has already been a great deal of work done which is reflected in the KPI dashboard narrative with higher than the national college rates. The KPI RAG rating is currently 'Red' as the national rates fell due to the boundary change. We know that there is still work to be done and that we still need to recruit high quality staff. We have a pipeline from the University and we have redeployed staff to English and maths who are qualified teachers to strengthen the existing teams.
- *Did Ofsted identify an issue with not being aspirational enough?*  
Yes. However, to achieve a Grade 4 is aspirational to the majority of our students.
- *What is the risk of the bank covenant not being waived?*  
We are going through the process now. However, it is more difficult as the two contacts that we have had at the bank have both recently left which has meant answering additional questions that has taken more time. The College is now in the public sector and the covenants are at odds with the ESFA and need to be revisited or relaxed.
- *When will the next learner satisfaction survey take place?*  
There will be an end of year survey as there is every year. We need to complete a 'You Said, We Did' exercise. There will also be a Learner Voice forum taking place next week which has class representatives from across the College, with messaging from the Learner Voice being fundamentally positive. Regarding the PIAP, there are further learner and staff forums.
- *Is the learner and employer satisfaction measure, right? What intervention action is being taken?*  
The KPI RAG rating of 'Amber' in this area is due to the issue around staffing. Most dissatisfaction was related to staffing shortages, the disruption this caused and tutor inconsistency.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the KPI Summary Dashboard.

### **2.3 Annual Statement of Focus and College Strategic & Operating Plan 2024-25**

The College Operating Plan had been developed from the College Strategic Plan and the University's direction as laid out in the Annual Statement of Focus. The Operating Plan was

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developed across all areas and detailed the College challenges and drivers. Both documents reflected those areas identified within the PIAP.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee reviewed the contents of the Statement of Focus and Operating Plan and recommended the Operating Plan 2024-25 for Board approval, following amendment to the 'Indicators of Success'.

## **ACTION:**

- Amendment to the 'Indicators of Success'.
- Clerk / Board Agenda

## **2.4 Health and Safety Update**

The Executive Director of HR and Estates provided an update and the following points were highlighted:

- The lift replacement programme had commenced and would continue to early September 2024.
- Planning for the summer works programme was primarily focused on the health and safety planned maintenance.
- Considerations were underway for the new STEM and Digital building, to ensure that systems within the main building were linked to the new building and vice versa.

## **Governor Questions/Comments:**

- *Are the lifts different to the existing ones?*  
Yes, they will look slightly different.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the Health and Safety update.

## **2.5 HR Equality & Diversity Annual Report 2023/24**

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

- The report provided an overview of the College's workforce / diversity profile and associated activities.
- The age range and gender split of staff remained consistent with the sector.
- There had been a broad range of staff training and development delivered that supported equality, diversity and inclusivity. Volunteer diversity champions represented all areas of the College and were involved in College events and acted as advocates within their teams.

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- The College had invested in an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) that enabled staff to have access to 24/7 free counselling. There was also a financial wellbeing portal that provided staff with access to free financial planning and personal advice provided by qualified advisors.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the HR Equality & Diversity Annual Report 2023/24.

## **2.6 Financial Regulations**

The Executive Director of Finance noted that the financial regulations would be updated and presented at the next Resources Committee, following the work undertaken by the internal auditors on 'Managing Public Money'.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the Financial Regulations update.

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

None

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

### **4.1 Meeting Evaluation**

The Committee noted their appreciation for the work that staff had undertaken and also the Committee's role in supporting and challenging the Senior Management Team.

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

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 5.00pm

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 6.40pm

**Chair's Signature:**

**Date:** 24 September 2024