

MINUTES



RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 19th January 2021
Time: 5.00pm
Venue: Video Conference

Present:

Dr Andrew Roberts (Chair)
Bill Webster (Principal)
Kate Flood
Tony Unsworth
Professor George Holmes

In Attendance:

Garry Westwater (Executive Director of Finance)
Jane Marsh (HR Director)
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 Tim Openshaw.

1.3 Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. Standing declarations were noted particularly in relation to the University of Bolton reciprocal governance arrangements and also paid positions.

1.4 Request for an item to be unstarred

No requests were made.

1.5 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 29th September 2020

The minutes of the meeting held 29 September 2020 had been previously circulated to members for consideration.

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

1.6 Matters arising from the Minutes and Action Progress Log

The action progress log was reviewed and the following points were noted:

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- HND programmes were part of the College's strategic planning. An update would be provided at the next Resources Committee meeting.

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

2.1 Current COVID-19 situation update

The following update was provided by the Principal:

- The situation had been challenging following the rapidly changing guidance. The College had planned a staggered re-opening and the asymptomatic mass testing of learners and staff with a team appointed to conduct testing.
- The second national lockdown occurred with a re-focus to remote learning. There was the expectation that the next College re-opening date would be after half term with further government guidance to be provided.
- All vulnerable learners, including digitally vulnerable learners, were contacted by the College.
- Since Christmas there had been sixteen new positive COVID-19 cases reported across both learners and staff.
- The College had made the decision not to run BTech programmes with a limited number of BTech examinations completed ie. AAT. A contingency plan had been put in place for BTechs going forward.
- Examination results day had been deferred to July 2021 that would impact on College outcomes.
- An update on the College COVID-19 position would be provided to the Board.

Governor Questions:

- Was there the ability for BTech teacher assessed grades?
Any programme that involved vocational work would require external verifiers. The College awaited further government guidance.

The Committee confirmed that the College had made a timely decision not to run BTech programmes.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update provided and that an update on the College COVID-19 position would be provided to the Board.

ACTION:

Clerk / Board Agenda

(Change in the Order of the Agenda)

4.1 Learner Digital Support

The following update was provided by the Principal:

- The College had moved to remote learning with feedback showing a high level of learner engagement and achievement.

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- Questions had been raised at the Standards and Performance Committee regarding digital inclusion and the need for further digital support, which was a common problem across the sector. GMCA had provided support and the College would explore any further national support that was available.
- The College had ordered laptops and additional connectivity hardware

The Committee noted the update provided.

2.2 Financial Update – LEO1 Update and Cash Flow

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

- As a result of the second national lockdown there had been a loss of income on variable income streams with some savings in pay and non-pay areas.
- There was the potential risk of GMCA funding clawback related to a reduction in adult learner recruitment. GMCA would reserve their decision until March with an indication that there would be low risk of clawback as a number of colleges were reported to be in a vulnerable financial position.
- Non-pay continued to increase as a result of COVID-19 with the purchase of additional software licences and technical products to operate online teaching and learning.
- There were additional partner payment costs that the College would receive lagged funding for.
- The financial health of the College remained good with the cash position stronger than forecast for the year to date. The College intended to request an extension of the FECA grant for spending at the Deane Road campus.
- Agency staff costs had increased due to staff illness.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update provided.

2.3 ADA Commercialisation

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

- The College had signed a confidentiality agreement with JISC (a not-for profit organisation) who had undertaken product market intelligence and financial projections. A further meeting would be scheduled.

Governor Questions:

- How would the commercial value of the product be calculated?
JISC had provided a commercial model that incorporated fees, annual subscription and support costs. Ongoing costs of College staff support would be built into the project to backfill any staffing required.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update provided.

2.4 ESFA Update

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

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- The ESFA annual submissions had been completed.
- The IFMC was currently under review with input from colleges and the AoC. Revision regarding financial health monitoring and reporting under the old and new regimes would continue following a number of colleges being deemed inadequate or underachieving.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update provided.

2.5 Human Resources Mid-Year Annual Report 2020/21

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

- Sickness absence had reduced for the same period in the previous year. There had been some COVID-19 related absence ie. positive COVID-19 cases or workplace return anxiety.
- FTE headcount was on target and workforce diversity was similar to the previous year.
- The College had secured funding to support the training of 50 mental health first aiders. The first tranche of 25 College staff had passed the training with the remaining training placed on hold due to the pandemic.
- Measures were in place to support College re-opening. A review of the risk assessment had been completed and would be reviewed again following a return to campus. The assessment was updated to include asymptomatic mass testing that had been through trade union consultation.
- The internal auditors (PwC) had completed an advisory review on the College workplace return plan that identified good practice with two minor recommendations that had been implemented.
- A Health & Safety Executive (HSE) visit was conducted. A thorough review of all College sites had been completed with a positive review outcome of the measures the College had in place.
- The College continued to look at asymptomatic mass testing with further clarity on some aspects required from government.
- The College was a finalist for an AoC Beacon Award in mental health and wellbeing. A remote assessment visit was completed with the result to be announced in February 2021.

Governor Questions:

- Did mental health first aiders actively support learners?
Yes, teaching and mentoring support had taken place both formally and informally. The mental health first aiders assisted learners and staff members.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the contents of the HR Mid-Year Annual report.

ACTION:

HR Director to share the outcome of the HSE visit with managers and trade unions.

2.6 Staff Development Review 2019/20

The HR Director presented the review and the following points were highlighted:

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- A remote staff development day took place with 300+ staff in attendance. There would be further online and health and safety training.
- A number of College staff had taken advantage of the course fee waiver to enrol on HE programmes at the University.
- Safeguarding training had taken place remotely and staff development continued online with a focus on digital enhancement.

(Prof. George Holmes left the meeting at 6.15pm)

The Committee acknowledged the achievements of the College Training and Development Manager.

Governor Questions:

- How did the College monitor the DBS process?
The College followed Ofsted guidance and there was not the requirement to repeat DBS checks unless there was a reason to do so. The contract of employment provided the requirement for a criminal record disclosure to be made to the HR Director to assess if it would prevent them from working at the College. It was possible that a Governor could make a declaration after 1 year.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the contents of the staff development review. Criminal record self-certification to be included as part of the Governor annual return.

ACTION:

Clerk / HR Director

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

4. SECTION D - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5. SECTION E - FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 23rd March 2021 at 5.00pm

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 6.21 pm

Chair's Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Neel" or similar, written over a white background within a rectangular box.

Date: 23 March 2021