

# MINUTES



## RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

**Date:** Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020  
**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)  
Mr Tim Openshaw (Assistant Vice Chancellor, Planning & Student Experience) (UoB)  
Deborah Bradburn (Clerk)

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

### **1.1 Election of Committee Chair**

Members were invited to put forward a nomination and elect a Chair for the Committee.

Dr Andrew Roberts was nominated.

#### **RESOLVED:**

Dr Andrew Roberts be elected Chair of the Committee for the current academic year

### **1.2 Welcome to Members**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, which commenced at 5.03pm.

### **1.3 Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence to receive.

### **1.4 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.

With regard to Item 2.3 of the agenda (Community Hubs Contract) Mrs Kate Flood declared a potential conflict of interest that the Committee considered was not a risk to the discussions or decisions.

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## 1.5 Request for an item to be unstarred

No requests were made.

## 1.6 \* Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020

The minutes of the meeting held 9 June 2020 had been previously circulated to members for consideration.

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

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

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

- The request for a fortnightly financial update was related to those matters that the Committee wanted to maintain oversight of. The Executive Finance Director, Principal, Vice Chancellor and University Assistant Vice Chancellor (Resources) met on a weekly basis to discuss those areas. Financial reporting would continue to be formally reported to members on a monthly basis with any other matters to be addressed at Committee meetings.
- The College was to pursue commercialisation with JISC, as an organisation that was sector renowned. It was confirmed that there were no legacy issues in not pursuing a collaboration with Barrachd (Capita).
- The development of HND programmes would be ongoing. The College would consider its overall HND portfolio with a clear FE and HE proposition by summer.

**(Prof. George Holmes joined the meeting at 5.14pm)**

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

### 2.1 Financial Update 2019/20 and 2020/21

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

- The College achieved an operating surplus of £390k for 2019/20. There was an underspend on non-pay costs - with savings made in other areas. The College had deferred partnership payments that allowed the College to match cost against the lagged ESFA income for this activity.
- The DfE capital grant of £888k would be allocated to improve the College infrastructure with all monies to be spent by 31 March 2021.
- The direct costs of ensuring the College was COVID-19 secure had been budgeted for but would continue to rise.
- The external auditors enquired if the College Board had considered an impairment to reduce the valuation of its land and buildings post COVID-19.

### **Governor Questions:**

- Why had the auditors raised the matter of an impairment?

The College was not aware of any other college that had made an impairment for COVID-19. The fixed assets were accounted for on a depreciated replacement cost and not on a fair market value basis. It was concluded that replacement costs of these assets would likely be higher than the present book value and that no impairment was required.

- Had there been any reaction from partner organisations as a result of deferred payments?

None had been received. Partner payment deferral was an accounting principle to match lagged ESFA income. The partners had received all relevant payments.

- Was there a risk to the College in relation to the capitalisation of ADA?

The College was in a stronger position as there was further scope with JISC. The College demonstrated ADA and there was a lot of opportunity to develop and capitalise ADA with the University.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the update provided and recommended to the Board that an impairment was not made to land and buildings in 2019/20.

## **ACTION:**

Clerk / Board Agenda

## **2.2 College KPI Dashboard**

The KPI dashboard was reviewed and the following points noted:

- The figures and RAG rating related to the 2020/21 budget and reflected a better than expected performance.
- The quality indicators were not yet finalised but based on last year's figures it would likely reflect a good position taking COVID-19 into consideration.
- GCSE had improved but there were no national comparisons currently available although it was known that the teacher-led assessments had resulted in increased figures.
- There were ongoing merger benefits with the main focus and priority on the re-opening of campus and maintained business operations.
- Overall it was a good report and reflected the achievements of the team.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the KPI Summary Dashboard.

## **2.3 Community Hubs Contract**

The Principal presented the report and the following points were highlighted:

- The College had a long term partnership with Bolton Council in running community learning. The community learning contract was funded by Greater Manchester Combined Authority and sub-contracted to the College was due to expire in 2022.

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- There was a linked 'concession' agreement related to leased community learning hubs that ran in parallel to the main learning contract.
- The College wanted to have a single line of adult education provision to bring it in line with the current main contract as part of the College's existing Adult Education Budget.
- Discussions regarding the hubs should be progressed and a detailed cost benefit analysis completed related to taking ownership of the learning hubs.

## **Governor Questions:**

- Was the concession agreement renewable each year?  
The College had not signed last year's concession agreement. The College would not sign a contract without guaranteed revenue.
- What was the risk to the College regarding the lease of the buildings?  
The rent on the buildings was £28k per annum and approximately 70% of the College's community activity took place at Deane and Derby. The College would try to negotiate a new lease.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the Community Hub contract report.

## **2.4 Staff Sickness / Absence Report 2019/20**

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

- The College remained committed to reducing absence levels and had achieved a reduction since last year. This had been the lowest sickness absence recorded for many years irrespective of COVID-19. The College sickness absence position was in line with current sector benchmarks.
- Current long term sickness absence continued to be managed in accordance with the College's long-term sick procedure.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the Staff Sickness and Absence Report.

## **2.5 Tribunal and Legal Proceedings Report**

The HR Director presented the tribunal and legal proceedings report and it was noted that there were no live cases.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the Tribunal and Legal Proceedings Report.

## **2.6 \*HR Annual Report 2019/20**

The report which provided the Committee with an update on some key areas of HR activity during 2019/20 was reviewed and noted.

## 2.7 HR Strategy 2020/21

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

- The strategy supported the scope and direction of the College over the mid to long term and reflected the objectives of the HR team in contributing to the Colleges mission and strategic direction.
- The strategy provided an overview of how HR supported safeguarding, performance management, equality and diversity, curriculum development, staff wellbeing and staff development in light of the move to online and blended learning.
- The College had its staff CPD training in July 2020 that was delivered entirely online.

### Governor Questions:

- How did the College celebrate success and diversity during COVID-19?  
There were events for staff on the online platform. The College was at the early stages of reviewing the alternatives available for celebration events. It would also look to identify and celebrate those staff that had gone above and beyond inside and outside of work.

### **RESOLVED:**

Members noted the contents of the HR Strategy report.

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

## 4. SECTION D - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 4.1 COVID-19 Update

The following update on COVID-19 was provided by the Principal:

- The College's systems and processes in place were working well with issues being addressed when raised.
- There were pinch points related to English and Maths tutorials with the decision to return tutorials to online delivery.
- There was high compliance on social distancing rules and face coverings. The College issued circa. 200 face coverings per day. Learning could not be refused if a learner did not have a face covering.
- 20 COVID-19 positive cases (18 students and 2 staff) with 50% returned to the College following self-isolation. 70 staff were self-isolating as a result of either direct contact with a positive case or household members presenting symptoms.
- The Principal sat on the Health Protection Board that met twice a week and received the latest COVID-19 statistics and guidance. Testing had improved in Bolton and the local response had been good. There was a spin-off group for all educational providers that shared best practice.
- The protocol for fire evacuations had been improved in relation to social distancing and the good practice would be shared with the University.

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- Guidance had been provided by Public Health England that defined direct contact and proximity contact that would assist in minimising potential multiple self-isolation events.

## **Governor Questions:**

- Was the College promoting the test and trace app?  
Yes. However, the College had good track and trace controls in place.
- How were other colleges doing compared to Bolton College?  
Other colleges' experiences were broadly in line with Bolton College with similar numbers of COVID-19 positive cases.

The Committee acknowledged that the College had appropriate and sufficient COVID-19 resilient plans in place.

## **ACTION:**

HR Director to provide the summary of the Public Health England proximity guidance to the University.

**(All officers save for the Principal left the meeting at 6.25pm)**

## **4.2 RESERVED BUSINESS MINUTES**

Agreed that: the minutes are approved as a correct record.

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

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 5.00pm

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 6.30pm

**Chair's Signature:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Reelto'.

**Date: 19 January 2021**