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RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday 17 January 2023
Time: 5.00pm
Venue: Boardroom / Videoconference

Present:

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

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 5.15pm.

1.2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Kate Flood.

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 17th October 2022

The minutes of the meeting held 17 October 2022 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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1.7 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.

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

2.1 ONS Reclassification Update

The Principal provided an update on the ONS re-classification, the following key points were highlighted:

- Following external legal advice from Eversheds Sutherland, it was considered that substantive changes to the current College structure were not expected and that the College would continue within its existing formation.
- The DfE were to undertake work to review colleges that were Designated Institutions and the implications that may emerge. For example, possible impact to the governing documents.

Governor Questions:

Why are colleges different to schools in relation to the academic year and consolidation of national accounts?

At this point we do not know what will happen. The Executive Director of Finance has been involved in the consultation and has provided feedback on lessons learnt from the reclassification in Scotland. The College Annual Strategic Conversation has been arranged for February and further feedback is expected at this point. Following the reclassification, guidance in relation to the grounds and amount of intervention from the Secretary of State for Education would be circulated to the Board.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the ONS reclassification update provided.

ACTION:

Circulate Secretary of State for Education intervention powers for the FE sector guidance.

(Prof. George Holmes joined the meeting at 17.25pm)

2.2 Financial Update 2021/22 and 2022/23

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

- The smaller bank loan facility had been repaid.
- The GMCA AEB funding clawback for 2021/22 had been confirmed at £488k to be repaid between December 2022 and March 2023.

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- The College continued to forecast a £0.5m deficit, which in the main was as a consequence of the increase in utility costs.
- There had been an under recruitment of T Levels, any potential clawback had not yet been confirmed by the ESFA.
- GMCA had advised that there was a possibility of a 'one off' financial uplift in 2022/23 and a review of tariffs for 2023/24.

Governor Questions:

Have all colleges in Greater Manchester returned a portion of the adult education funding?

The majority have with the College not out of kilter with others, although not all Greater Manchester colleges deliver the same level of adult education as Bolton. Adult numbers are returning to 'pre-COVID' levels but they are not yet there.

Why are the HE numbers below expectation?

The College has met with the University to review programme delivery. The Level 4/5 NTQ's will sit with the College with Level 4/5 programmes coming under the HTQ banner. At this point it remains relatively easy to gain employment without the need to retrain and currently this is the preferred option. There were some issues with adult numbers and retraining but we hope a focus on digital, construction and childcare will attract further learners. There was not a net effect to the Group and HE numbers was back on the agenda for discussion.

The College has created a digital piece of marketing around the NTQ's which the DfE will be launching as part of its national campaign.

Has the College exhausted all ideas of how money can be saved?

There isn't a great deal more that can be streamlined but it is an ongoing matter. Keeping staff costs under control whilst not losing the quality of service is a balancing act.

Has the College met with the bank?

A meeting with the bank to discuss the ONS classification and covenants has not been arranged until internal work/discussions have taken place.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the financial update provided.

2.3 College KPI Dashboard

The KPI dashboard was reviewed and the following points noted:

- Good improvements had been made in maths and English with the RAG rating updated from Red to Amber.

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- Preparations for Ofsted continued with the majority of SAR panels completed and intensive support in place where required.

Governor Questions:

What plans are in place to correct the T Level learner shortfall?

The numbers are improved on last year with the message starting to filter into schools with more points of intervention from post-16 education providers throughout the final year. It is a requirement to have T Levels more embedded within schools.

One main issue which is still outstanding is the lack of certainty around whether universities will accept T Level results.

Could the College do more to market the partnership with the University and have a predestined 5-year study programme route?

Yes, this is something the College will look into.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the significant progress made in maths and English and the contents of the KPI Summary Dashboard.

2.4 HR Mid-Year Annual Report

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

- Sickness absence had increased by 1%, most notably from September to Christmas with coughs, colds and flu.
- COVID-19 absence was now being reported as part of the regular sickness reporting.
- Employee related matters had reduced with historical complaints resolved.
- The 'social side' of the College had been re-launched with colleagues able to come together that included a menopause café and a staff theatre group.
- There had been over 100 reported cases of COVID-19 for staff and students, the government guidance continued to be followed.
- The College continued to be involved in projects with the AoC and other agencies. For example, a sexual violence tutorial that had been used by other colleges as a learner resource.

Governor Questions:

Are there any initiatives to bring down sickness and absence levels?

Yes, there are various well-being activities to make staff feel more connected. There aren't any patterns emerging i.e. from the same team or a particular reason for absence so it is difficult to have a targeted response. There is an increase in coughs, colds and flu, we are

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unsure if other organisations are reporting these same absences. There is a data lag in the North West comparison data of around 18 months.

ACTION:

Provide comparison data of academic to non-academic staff sickness/absence in the next report.

RESOLVED:

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

2.5 Staff Development Review 2021/22 & Key Priorities 2022/23:

The Executive Director of HR and Estates provided the following overview:

- The staff development programme was closely linked with the College Strategic Plan and Ofsted priorities.
- The August 2023 staff development day would include an afternoon of well-being sessions following positive feedback the previous year.
- Teaching staff external industry updating was relaunched this academic year.
- The College received exceptional feedback on its safeguarding training provision.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Staff Development Review 2021/22 & Key Priorities 2022/23.

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 challenged the officers and all Committee Members had participated in the meeting.

5. SECTION E - FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 21st March 2023 at 5.00pm

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 6.26pm

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Chair's Signature:

Date: 23 March 2023