

# MINUTES



## RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

**Date:** Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**Time:** 5.00pm

**Venue:** Video Conference

### **Present:**

Dr Andrew Roberts (Chair)

Bill Webster (Principal)

Kate Flood

### **In Attendance:**

Garry Westwater (Executive Director of Finance)

Jane Marsh (Executive Director of HR)

Deborah Bradburn (Clerk)

Jill Hebden (Minute Taker)

## **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 and a vote taken.

### **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 5.00pm.

### **1.3 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Professor George Holmes, Tony Unsworth and Tim Openshaw.

### **1.4 Declarations of Interest**

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

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

No requests were made.

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## 1.6 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021

The minutes of the meeting held 8 June 2021 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 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 Financial Update 2020/21 and 2021/22

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

- The report reflected the pre-audit position of 2020/21, recruitment for 2021/22 and provided a brief update on the budget for 2021/22.
- Marginal underspends were made against pay and agency costs with significant underspend on non-pay costs in 2020/21.
- GMCA had requested a business case to justify the retention of grant funding for any under delivery in 2020/21 to be submitted by 5 November. The College remained confident on funding retention due to the effort made to deliver the contract, significant costs incurred and efforts to deliver additional activity.
- Information technology for students and staff had increased significantly to operate during lockdown and CAPEX in 2020/21 exceeded £1.5 million.
- The 2020/21 year-end and in-year 2021/22 cash position was the highest it had been compared to previous years with the College in line to pass its covenants.
- Over-performance on apprenticeships continued into 2021/22 and although T Levels had under-recruited, with the potential for in-year clawback, the College had financial contingencies to make good on any shortfall in order to maintain surplus/covenant compliance.

#### **Governor Questions:**

- Does the College know when the GMCA will respond to the business case provided and what the response may be?

This detail had not been shared with the College yet but would be pursued, as the auditors would require the information. GMCA had indicated that they would not clawback any funding; the College may need to defer income and/or over-deliver any shortfall in 2021/22.

- Was there any opportunity to recover in-year?

The College was still recruiting with little potential for in-year recruitment as the recruitment cut-off date was November 2021.

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- Had the College done enough to advertise T Levels and had it formulated a plan for next year?  
There had been limited national marketing towards T Levels but the College would double its marketing efforts with social media posts for parents and students. There would also be an increase in T Level delivery programmes.
- Was the under recruitment to T Levels a national trend?  
The recruitment to T Levels appeared to be dependent on what alternative provision there was available within the geographic area.
- What is actuarial gain?  
It is the actuarial assessment of net liabilities and assets, with the stock market and bonds being drivers of the assessment.
- How many members of staff are on the final salary pension scheme?  
There were 200+ live members and some legacy members.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the financial update provided.

## **ACTION:**

- Provide information outlining the GMCA business case for further discussion at the Greater Manchester Chair's Group.
- Increase T-Level marketing efforts.

## **2.2 Community Asset Transfer – Deane and Derby Community Learning Centre**

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

- The College was keen to apply for the transfer of the Deane and Derby Community Learning Centre from the Council to the College, as it was pivotal to the delivery of the adult and community-learning contract.
- The Community Learning Centre had been designated as an education facility with the expectation that there would be caveats related to non-change of usage.
- The building would require maintenance, repairs and capital investment that would form part of the long-term estates strategy. It would be used for work experience and curriculum projects for construction trades.
- Transfer of the hub would be a change to the College asset register and would require University Board and bank approval.

## **Governor Questions:**

- Would the College want the asset?

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Yes, this was the busiest learning centre and delivered circa. 50% of community-learning activity and would require some repair investment. There would be longer-term benefits to the College by its acquisition and it would be beneficial to have ownership of the asset.

- Would the College be looking to acquire any other learning hubs?

Not at this point. The Deane and Derby learning centre had less challenging issues. There was no space at the College to accommodate students and it was at the centre of the community that it served. The Brownlow site was conjoined with a school and therefore could not be disposed of. The College had also entered into an arrangement for accommodation in the Farnworth library.

- Has a survey been carried out and is there any asbestos?

Yes, a survey has been carried out and an asbestos report has been seen. There are no major worries.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the Community Asset Transfer report and recommended the application proposal to the Board.

## **ACTION:**

Clerk / Board

## **2.3 College KPI Dashboard**

The KPI dashboard was reviewed and the following points noted:

- The budget had been updated on the dashboard with supporting text for 2021/22 and quality indicators refreshed.
- There had been no downward movements from the previous update and financial health remained as 'outstanding'.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the KPI Summary Dashboard.

## **2.4 Staff Sickness / Absence Report 2020/21**

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

- There had been a slight increase on overall sickness compared to 2019/20. Given the period of scope, this was not a concern. From benchmarking data, it was evident that public sector sickness absence was slightly higher than in the private sector.
- 70 members of staff were absent from work due to long-term sickness. Long-term sickness was classed as anyone with 4 weeks or more absence. Of those 70, 62 were back in work.

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- 93 members of staff had reported a positive COVID-19 test in the last 12 months with a small number suffering with 'long covid'.

## **Governor Questions:**

- How is absence currently?

There is anxiety amongst some members of staff returning to work due to COVID-19. However, these are very small numbers and in the main, those with student facing roles; overall staff and learners are pleased to be back on campus. Sickness absence at the moment is mainly due to coughs and colds.

- Are the absence figures masked due to staff working from home?

It is most likely that the figures from the last 2 years will not be a true reflection.

- Are there any patterns of repeat sickness?

HR monitor sickness and patterns of sickness from a trigger point perspective.

- Is the College content that it has everything it needs in terms of mental health support?

Yes, the mental health support for staff is different to that provided for learners. Internal and external counselling is available to the College including 1:1 intensive sessions with a psychologist. When looking at work related stress or anxiety, it is often related to other personal circumstances.

## **RESOLVED:**

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

## **2.5 Tribunals and Legal Proceedings:**

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

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the Tribunal and Legal Proceedings Report.

## **2.6 \* HR Annual Report 2020/21**

The report, which provided the Committee with an update on some key areas of HR activity during 2020/21, was reviewed and noted.

## **Governor Questions:**

- Can the amount of staff who have successfully achieved a qualification following the use of the Fee Waiver Policy be included in the report?

This will be included going forward.

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- Have any staff from the University attended courses at the College?

The fee waiver is a reciprocated offer with a small number of University staff having attended specific vocational courses.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee suggested that the iHASCO online health and safety compliance training would be beneficial to the College.

## **ACTION:**

- Successful programme achievements to be included in the HR annual report.
- iHASCO online health and safety compliance training to be considered.

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

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

### **4.1 Reserved Business Minutes**

Agreed that the minutes are approved as a correct record.

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

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 5.00pm

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 6.32 pm

**Chair's Signature:**

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

**Date:** 18 January 2022