

MINUTES



RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 8th June 2021
Time: 5.00pm
Venue: Video Conference

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Garry Westwater (Executive Director of Finance)
Jane Marsh (HR Director)
Tim Openshaw (Assistant Vice Chancellor, Planning & Student Experience) (UoB)
Deborah Bradburn (Clerk)
Jill Hebden (Secretary)

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 5.00pm.

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. 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 23rd March 2021

The minutes of the meeting held 23 March 2021 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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- There was no expectation of clawback from AEB within the current academic year. Discussions were ongoing regarding the potential for over-delivery in 2021/22.
- Some HND provision had moved to apprenticeships.

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

2.1 ESFA Financial Health Update

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

- Confirmation had been received from ESFA that the College was not under early intervention.
- Following a review of the College's financial statement, the ESFA financial health for 2019-20 was 'Good' with the College provisionally regarded as 'Outstanding' for 2020-21. Only 18% of FEC's were 'Outstanding'.

The College had received a congratulatory message from the UoB Chair on its outstanding financial health achievement.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update provided.

2.2 Funding Allocations 2021/22

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

- Expenditure was slowing and cash was very strong.
- £590k would be available from T Levels, that would be spent before the start of the next academic year.
- The budget for 2021-22 mirrored the budget assumptions for 2020-21, with an increase in confidence that next academic year would return to normality.
- Catch Up Funding may be extended that had not been factored into the budget.
- Any pay award would be subject to satisfactory student recruitment and reviewed in Autumn.
- The budget had been set taking into account over delivery of AEB and additional T Level provision. An achievable budget had been set that was compliant with the College Statement of Focus.
- A minimum cash generation of £2 million had been budgeted, that would be used to increase capital expenditure and a loan 'bullet' payment in 2022-23.

Governor Questions:

- Is the College comfortable with the downward trend of £100k?
An increasing number of students are entitled to the fee waiver, as the funding reduced Council grants increased.
- Staff costs as a percentage show an increase, with the benchmark being 65%. Has this been looked into?
£300k is budgeted for pay inflation that will be deferred until the College is confident on recruitment and £300k is for T Levels.

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- What has the College assumed for agency costs?
It is assumed that it will be at the same level with expenditure slowing.

Concerns were raised on the College's ability to attract appropriate staff in key areas notably construction and IT. These industries sector-wide were paying higher levels of remuneration to professionals. Growth would be hindered if the College could not implement appropriate pay levels. The College was not in isolation regarding this position.

The College had introduced various recruitment solutions in response to the concern. Further consideration would be given to ideas to attract the right people eg. potentially moving provision times to accommodate teaching with a day job.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update provided and the outstanding results considering the financial position the College had previously been in, recommended the budget for 2021/22 and forecast 2022/23 to the Board.

ACTION:

- Executive Director of Finance to provide additional commentary on pay for the Board.
- Clerk / Board

2.3 ADA Commercialisation Update

The Executive Director of Finance provided the following update:

- JISC had shared a draft contract that was currently under review with a follow up meeting arranged.
- The College would look to move forward with three pilot sites for market intelligence and product feedback.
- With ADA in educational settings, additional products developed by the College would be a natural progression of ADA.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update.

2.4 College KPI Dashboard

The KPI dashboard was reviewed and the following points noted:

- The dashboard had built in the FE Commissioner benchmarks.
- There were potential risks on English and maths regarding assessments with national comparison data unavailable.

Governor Questions:

- What is the College doing to increase HE numbers?
Although there was a decline for the College, across the University Group there was a neutral outcome as learners were going to UoB. The College and UoB worked closely to ensure course provision was not duplicated. There may be useful opportunities to

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deliver Level 4 courses as a result of the FE White Paper and new product areas ie. international hospitality.

- Was this something to discuss at UoB Resources Committee?
Originally, those students on Access courses came to the College. However, UoB had started to deliver some pre-degree courses. One of the main drivers behind pre-degree courses was the fast track in place for nursing students that was geared towards the NHS workforce requirement.
- Is the College confident that the student numbers were going to UoB and not elsewhere?
Although this information was not available, the number of students going from the College to the UoB has been at an all-time high since the merger and the College was confident that learners were not going elsewhere. If they did, it was due to UoB not running a particular course eg. paediatrics.
- Is there a reason that the College learner figures dropped to 88% against the benchmark on 19+ quality?
This is the best result in adults for the College and continued on an upward trajectory. This would continue to be reviewed.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the contents of the KPI Summary Dashboard and requested the inclusion of the inability to recruit to key areas.

ACTION:

Inclusion of inability to recruit to be included as a risk in the KPI dashboard.

2.5 College Strategic and Operating Plan 2021-22

The following update was provided by the Principal:

- The Strategic and Operating Plan reflected the core strategic objectives. Due to the pandemic these had not changed greatly from 2020-21 and a caveat had been applied with the uncertainty of what would happen in the Autumn term.
- Cyber security had been added as an extra level with the recruitment of a dedicated role.

Governor Questions:

- Should there be points around the HR People Strategy for recruitment and retention in the operating plan?
Yes, this can be included in under the 'Road to outstanding' section.
- Is there a set target to increase SAR measures of 'outstanding' for areas?
The detail and progress along with each SAR is presented at the Standards and Performance Committee.
- Is the Operating Plan used as a reference document at the Standards and Performance Committee during SAR discussions?

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The SAR and SPoC process are focussed on this, which is reported at the Standards and Performance Committee. The Operating Plan will go to the next Committee as a reference document.

- Is the 'Road to Outstanding' message known across the College?
The first item discussed at corporate induction is the 'Road to Outstanding'.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the College Strategic and Operating Plan 2021-22 presented and subject to further amendment recommended it for approval by the Board.

ACTION:

- Include recruitment and retention and explicit referencing to 'Road to Outstanding'.
- Strategic and Operating Plan to become a reference document at Standards and Performance Committee.
- Clerk / Board Agenda

2.6 Financial Regulations Review

The Executive Director of Finance presented the financial regulations and it was noted that there were no significant updates. The key changes were the updated Board and sub-committee Terms of Reference.

Governor Questions:

- There is no reference to OfS Reportable Events within the regulations?
Reportable events have not been referred to within the regulations, as there were significant risk notification protocols in place. Reference could be made to the OfS as a regulator.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the contents of the Financial Regulations Review and subject to amendment recommended it for approval by the Board.

ACTION:

- Reference to the OfS as a regulator to be included.
- Clerk / Board Agenda

2.7 Equality and Diversity Annual Report

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

- The College currently has circa. 550 staff, with a diverse range of experience and skills.
- Benchmark data from AoC and census data had been included within the report.
- Staff development had moved online ensuring that training could continue with EDI.
- 17 diversity champions had been involved in promoting EDI and completed work on online platforms.
- The aim was to recommence mental health First Aid training next year and other projects.

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RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the contents of the Equality and Diversity Annual Report.

2.8 Barclays Loan Variation – LIBOR Transition

The Executive Director of Finance presented the report and noted that the Bank had sent a variation asking the College to move to the Bank of England base rates following the cessation of LIBOR on the smaller loan facility. There was limited risk and exposure due to the duration of the facility that was scheduled for repayment by 2023.

Governor Questions:

- Are there plans in place for the payment at the end?
The payment would be affordable by the time we get to the point of repayment.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update provided and subject to legal review recommended it for approval.

ACTION:

- External legal review of variation by Eversheds Sutherland LLP
- Clerk / Board Agenda

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

4. SECTION D - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Executive Director of Finance informed the Committee that the previously reported overpayment made to employers; the vast majority had been repaid with £4k outstanding. There were checks in place to ensure this situation did not occur again.

5. SECTION E - FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 28th September 2021 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', written over a white background.

Date: 28 September 2021