

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Policy & Resources Committee held on Monday 25 March 2019, 6.00pm in the
Boardroom**

Present Evelyn Carpenter (Chair)
Yvonne Kelly (Principal)
Andrew Brown

In attendance: Wijay Pitumpe (Chief Finance & Enterprise Officer)
Maxine Deslandes (Director of Finance and Estates)
Janet Curtis-Broni (Executive Director People, Organisation & Development).
Victoria Eastwood (Clerk to the Corporation)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. Apologies for absence were received from Stuart Fraser and Forhad Altafi.

2. Declarations of Interest

Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare an interest in relation to specific items on the Agenda if appropriate. None were anticipated.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting – Monday 19 November 2018

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on Monday 19 November 2018, were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

An update on outstanding actions from the November 2018 Committee meeting was provided:

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	By (deadline)	Update
10.	Clarification on which partner had been issued with an action plan and was scheduled to receive a further observation. (Item 2.1.2)	Principal	ASAP	Complete
10.	Principal to clarify the 0% RAG rating for the contract allocation in Appendix B.	Principal	ASAP	Complete
10.	Subject to clarification on Appendix B, the 2018/19 contract allocation to be approved at the December Corporation Meeting.	Principal/Clerk	11 December 2018	Complete – the allocation was approved by email and minuted at the February Corporation Meeting.
11.	Proposed sale of land options to be presented with a measured/risk based	CFEO	11 December 2018	The Agenda Item was discussed at the December

	approach at the December Corporation Meeting.			Corporation Meeting and would be discussed in further detail alongside the Property Strategy at the April Strategic Planning Event.
12.	The Clerk to speak to the Executive Director – Operational Development to provide clarity on the increase in long term sick.	Clerk	ASAP	Complete
16.	The Committee Vice-Chair to meet with the new Health & Safety and Sustainability Managers.	Clerk	ASAP	Complete

5. Debt Write-Offs 2017/18

The Director of Finance and Estates (DOFE) advised the Committee that approval was sought from the Committee for any debt write offs over £2K. For the period 2017/8 a total of £34K required writing off and this sum had been audited by the College's Financial Auditors as part of the financial accounts. The Committee were informed that all the accounts relating to the £34K figure were over 6 years old and all avenues to recover the debt had been exhausted. The issue was with delays from the Student Loan Company as the student could have already left or be preparing to leave the College by the time the company advised that they were not approving the loan.

Andrew Brown questioned whether lagged approval still applied for loans. The DOFE advised that this was the case and the process was very slow due to communication being via the student. Only the student loan company were able to authorise the applications. The College had appropriate controls in place but there would always be some risk.

Approved: The debt write-offs for 2017/18 over the sum of £2K were approved by the Committee.

6. Tuition Fees Policy 2019/20

The DOFE reported that there had been no changes from the previous year's policy and advised that the Corporation would be informed as and when any legislative changes occurred that may affect the policy going forward.

Andrew Brown asked for clarification on the degree of discretion. The DOFE replied that there were assumed fees and the College considered course demand, fees of other colleges, quality etc. Fee remission was provided at the discretion of the Principal and Chief Finance and Enterprise Officer (CFEO) and bursaries and scholarships had been introduced to ensure progression in some cases.

The Chair queried the size of the learner support bursary fund and how many students had accessed this during the previous year. The DOFE responded that the scheme was first introduced last year to establish who should be targeted in terms of progressing to different levels and had not yet been used for 2018/19. If a student puts a case forward, this would be at the discretion of the Principal/CFEO.

The Chair asked if there was an allocation for the bursary fund. The DOFE advised that there was not an allocation at this stage, all cases would be based on merit and eligibility and whether the student had the

capacity to progress within the course. The must ensure that students were assessed on a case by case basis.

The Chair referred to Appendix 1 and questioned whether the international students' tuition fee of £19/hour was too low. The DOFE replied that this was benchmarked against other FE Colleges but the College did have discretion to increase fees.

Approved: The Tuition Fees Policy for 2019/20 was approved by the Committee.

7. Horizon Scanning Presentation

The CFEO provided a presentation highlighting the following issues:

FE issues

- OfS – administrative costs passed to colleges, c£30k for admin fees
- Apprenticeship levy changes – from 1 April 2019 employers fees reduced from 10% to 5%. Large employers would be able to transfer 25% of their levy to supply chain instead of the previous 10%.
- Government consultation - review of post 16 qualifications at Level 3 and below in England. Currently no recommendations as to what the qualifications will be replaced with. T-levels will not meet the College's needs.
- Continued increase flexibility for learners in receipt of low wage to continue to 2020.

The Chair asked if the Corporation would see the College's response to the government consultation. The Principal advised that the College would respond, as part of the AoC's response on behalf of the sector as a whole, but both the consultation and AoC response will be shared with the Corporation.

The CFEO provided the Committee with the average deficits for London Colleges. He advised that Barking & Dagenham College had consistently made a surplus over a six year period.

The Committee were informed that if the teachers' pension scheme valuation increased from 16.78% to potentially 23%, the impact for the college would be c£500K. Lobbying was taking place by Colleges to urge the Government to provide extra funding for colleges in line with the funding for schools. In addition, the current contribution rate for the LGPS pension scheme was 25.2% - triannual valuation was scheduled for 31 March 2020.

The CFEO provided the advice received from the AoC regarding the unknown Brexit position and the potential affect on Colleges. He advised that there was a lot of data gathering and analysis taking place within the College whilst an outcome was awaited.

The Chair thanked the CFEO for a very helpful report.

Action: That the consultation document and AoC response to the government consultation on the review of post-16 qualifications at Level 3 and below be shared with the Corporation when available.

8. Management Accounts to end January 2019 inc Risk Lines (income)

The DOFE reported that the College was forecasting to achieve its projected full year operating forecast surplus budget of £0.350m. However, the budget was under pressure and there were anticipated shortfalls in Advanced Learner Loans (FE), HE Loans, Operating income and tuition fees of £637k. Compensatory savings have been identified to address the shortfall.

The Committee were informed that the management accounts would now be uploaded to the E-Governance portal on a monthly basis for Governors to access/reference.

The Chair asked whether the College was aware of the impact of compensatory savings. The DOFE reported that there was a spending freeze at present and any costs must be teaching, legal or estates

critical. Staffing vacancies were being frozen until May/June unless critical and agency staff would be released early if appropriate.

The Chair queried whether it would be highlighted if these savings were not working. The DOFE advised that the Executive Team and SLT were discussing savings weekly and any potential savings were being set aside each month.

Andrew Brown questioned why less money was being generated by the refectory. The DOFE replied that student numbers were down and students entitled to free school meals were now being paid directly and could therefore choose to eat outside of the College.

The Chair referred to the adverse variance and asked if the College had more flexibility to generate increased income from the popular courses. The DOFE stated that if the courses were popular then they were hitting the targets. The Principal added that there were potentially ten courses that recruited very well and the College was exploring re-running these or providing short courses in these areas. There was also the possibility of opening up the campus for FCR during July.

The DOFE referred to exam fees and advised that the way students were being examined was no longer one single exam. The policy stated that the first resit was free but that the student would need to pay for further resits. If a student could not afford the fee then this was often waived to allow them to be able to progress. Subsequently, the budget may need to be increased to allow for new types of assessment.

In response to a query from the Chair concerning the Subsidiaries, the DOFE advised that Broadway and Apprenticeships Works were doing well but Headjogs and Aspire were running at a deficit. The cash balances provided in the report were deceiving as this was cash that could be spent. The Subsidiary Boards were reviewing whether the companies operating at a deficit were viable.

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

9. Capital Development Update

The CFEO reported that work with ISG was going well to date and the College was benefitting from their supply chain. The Committee were referred to Appendix 1 and the CFEO advised that the plan had been to move into the new building by November 2019 but it was hoped that the College would be able to access the site earlier.

The CFEO stated that the College was monitoring cash flow carefully and had not yet drawn down on the loan

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

10. Partnerships Progress Report

The Principal informed the Committee that the partnerships were doing well. As of 1st March 2019 the overall actual drawdown including possible achievement funding from BDC's seven subcontracted AEB, three carried over apprenticeship and one supported internship delivery partners was £827,235 or 89.6% of target. This comprised AEB actual drawdown of £783,961 (89%); carried over apprenticeship of £14,112 (99%) and Supported Internship of £29, 161 (100%). All partners received 80% of the funding in line with the College's Supply Chain Management and Fees Policy (August 2018).

The Chair referred to the managing agent type arrangement. The Principal clarified that the College was undertaking delivery on behalf of six prime contractors under the managing agent type arrangement. 209 learners are supported through this arrangement, the bulk of which were electrical learners belonging to JTL.

The Chair asked if this was a useful opportunity to increase income in the future. The Principal responded that potentially some areas could be increased but there was a need to look at the standard developments. The College would be considering becoming an end point assessment organisation.

In response to a query from Andrew Brown, the Principal advised that the partnership under concern last year had now been finished.

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

11. HR Termly Report inc Performance Management

The Committee were informed that the gender pay gap data was about to be published. The percentage for the College last year (2016/17) was 8% and for 2018 it was 10%. The Executive Director of People & Organisational Development (EDPO) explained that the metrics were based on a snapshot of the pay data as at 31 March 2018 and not from over the whole year.

A breakdown of quantitative HR transactional activities compared to 2017/18 was provided for the Committee, to include formal performance management cases – under capability, disciplinary and sickness. Employment law updates relevant for the next few months were explained including the current Brexit position.

Andrew Brown asked whether the increase of 50% in terms of activity for HR performance data was putting pressure on HR and what was generating it. The EDPO advised that an additional apprentice was now employed in HR and this year the College had normalised the agency roles to fixed term which could involve increased internal advertisements.

The Chair asked for clarification on the average hourly rate comparison. The EDPO explained that the College had increased a number of business support roles, particularly learning support and progress coaches. Metrics took the actual figure not the full time equivalent and a couple of variations at SLT level could also affect the figures. The key issue was about women in some roles and the College knew where to target. Last year there was a 100% gap in the bonus figures and this had been corrected by appointing sales consultants.

The EDPO advised that the College had achieved IIP Gold, focussing on five areas in the amnesty review. The next steps were to update the action plan and the College would be aiming for platinum in 2021. IIP would undertake a health check review next year.

The Chair congratulated the EDPO and the College on achieving IIP Gold status.

Agreed: That the position be noted.

12. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Report

The EDPO provided an up to date analysis of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) focussed on age/gender and advised that this was an externally facing report and would be uploaded to the College website.

Andrew Brown referred to the performance of looked after children and the difference between the curriculum areas. The EDPO stated that there had been an issue the previous year regarding achievement for looked after children but the College had ensured it was now collecting the data as early as possible, training curriculum areas on their roles re interfacing with agencies and establishing quick interventions to support the students and personalising their learning. Training for teachers was now online to enable it to be undertaken as and when required.

The Chair suggested it would be useful for the College to access Community Solutions in Barking and Dagenham. The Principal advised that the College had a meeting with them to discuss wrap around support with adults but it would be useful to also link in with young people and this would be suggested.

In response to a query from Andrew Brown, it was clarified that Appendix A referred to date for 2018/19 (not 2017/18) and had been updated as at January 2019.

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

13. Health & Safety Termly Update

The DOFE provided an update on the range of training that had taken place and advised that the College was trying to grow its bank of first aiders and fire wardens. There had been No RIDDORs or potential claims since the previous report.

The Chair asked for clarification on the incidences of fainting and acts of violence. The DOFE advised tht there had been four separate incidents of fainting which were all related to medication apart from one report of a Portacabin becoming too hot which had been remedied. Three acts of violence had been reported and these were all acts of violence between students. If the Health & Safety Manager or First Aider is called to an incident is recorded as a Health & Safety incident

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

14. Subsidiaries Performance Report

The DOFE highlighted the key issues discussed at the Subsidiary Board since October 2018.

The Chair asked for further information regarding the plans for College maintenance for BDC Aspire students. The DOFE advised that part of the work experience was to help maintain the site/estates. The students had recently painted the refectory and talks were underway to include planned maintenance. A balanced was needed to ensure students gained experience but that a competitive price was also achieved.

The Chair referred to the alternative accommodation for the salon being sought. The DOFE explained that Headjogs was based in Ilford Exchange, positioned on the second floor next to M&S with an entrance out of the centre. A new gym has been installed and the entrance now accessed only the gym resulting in the salon losing footfall. In addition a, new Hairdressers had moved into the Exchange in a more central position. The Salon Manager was therefore in discussions with the landlord to either reduce the rent or to look at alternative premises.

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

Any Other Business

There was no further business.

Date and time of next meeting – Monday 17 June 2019 – to be re-arranged.

The Chair thanked all those in attendance for their contributions and reports. The meeting concluded at 7.20pm.

Signed.....
Evelyn Carpenter (Chair)

Date.....

**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
ACTIONS**

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	By (deadline)	Update
7	That the consultation document and AoC response to the government consultation on the review of post-16 qualifications at Level 3 and below be shared with the Corporation when available.	Principal	As soon as available	Consultation closed on 10 June – only draft response document is available at present. The College is hosting a BTEC showcasing event alongside Pearson to inform the review.