

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Policy & Resources Committee held on Monday 30 November 2020, 3.00pm via
Microsoft Teams**

Present Evelyn Carpenter (Chair of the Committee)
Stuart Fraser (Vice-Chair) (Chair for this meeting)
Carole Ditty
Yvonne Kelly (Principal/CEO)
Forhad Altafi (Staff Governor)

In attendance: Wijay Pitumpe (Chief Finance & Enterprise Officer)
Victoria Eastwood (Chief Governance Officer)
Maxine Deslandes (Director of Finance & Estates)
Veronica Anthony-David (Chief Transformation Officer)
Andreas Galatoulas (Chief Technology & Innovation Officer)
Donald Kij- (Marketing & Communications Manager)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all present. There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare an interest in relation to specific items on the Agenda if appropriate. Evelyn Carpenter and Stuart Fraser declared an interest in agenda item 3.

3. Appointment of Committee Chair and Vice-Chair

The Committee unanimously agreed that Evelyn Carpenter would be reappointed as Chair of the Committee and Stuart Fraser as Vice-Chair of the Committee. It was agreed that Stuart Fraser would take the Chair for this meeting.

Approved: That Evelyn Carpenter be reappointed as Chair and Stuart Fraser be reappointed as Vice-Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee for the remainder of the academic year.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting – Monday 9 March 2020

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on Monday 9 March 2020, were agreed as a true and accurate record.

5. Matters Arising

An update on outstanding actions from the March 2020 Committee meeting was provided:

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	By (deadline)	Update
5.	Future debt write off reports to include actions to mitigate risks, financial management for students and trend patterns.	CFEO/DOFE	March 2021	Noted
6.	Balance scorecard to be emailed to Committee	Clerk	ASAP	Complete

8.	CFEO to consider format of management accounts with regard to including trends.	CFEO	ASAP	Complete
8.	A graph to be provided to show impact on college expenditure.	CFEO	ASAP	Complete
8.	Figures for each subsidiary and a total figure to be included in the balance sheet.	CFEO	ASAP	Complete
8.	Director of Marketing to present the Marketing Strategy at the June Committee Meeting.	CFEO/Clerk	June 2020	Complete
8.	The surplus figure provided in appendix 4 needed to be amended to read 151K.	CFEO	ASAP	Complete
13.	Wellbeing to be incorporated into future H&S reports.	DOFE	ASAP	Wellbeing will now be incorporated into future HR reports.
15.	The timeframe to submit the form for advertising events to be reviewed. The Policy to be resubmitted to the Committee once amended.	HR/Clerk	ASAP	Complete

The Chief Governance Officer (CGO) advised that all recommendations in the actions from the previous meeting had been incorporated into the relevant reports going forward.

6. Marketing Plan

The Marketing & Communications Manager (M&CM) presented the marketing plan to the Committee and highlighted the key points:

- Aim - To support the enrolment objectives of new admissions, the retention of these students and progression of current students.
- Objectives
- Marketing Approach
- Proposed Traditional & Digital Schedule
- Proposed e-Newsletters
- Content Creation to Drive Value Proposition
- Example to Guide Content Creation
- Align Enrolment Campaigns to Procedures
- Support Teams to Deliver a Positive Learner Experience
- Key Internal Challenges

Stuart Fraser, Chair, stated that the plan appeared to be inward looking and focussed on students and queried whether what other elements such as the local community, LBBD, businesses and stakeholders should be included. The M&CM replied that this was the overall plan and the areas highlighted would be addressed in terms of details. Ascertaining content would be the next step to help the College engage with the Borough and stakeholders etc.

Evelyn Carpenter stated that the level of detail was helpful but the marketing budget was quite a large amount of money and questioned how realistic the plan was. In addition, she advised that schools were currently bombarded with emails and it was therefore important that the content within newsletters to schools was purposeful and included information they would want to read.

Evelyn Carpenter advised that it looked as though everything had been put into the strategy and action plan but this was not prioritised enough for the audience. The level of detail, practicality and feasibility of the whole plan needed to be considered.

The M&CM responded that the key issue was to acknowledge the starting point and the highlighted challenges that the College needed to overcome. The proposed strategies were constantly driving leads and the team was looking to work smarter through working with internal teams and students to improve the enrolment process and drive new enrolments.

The M&CM reported that he had previously worked in schools and understood the challenges they were facing and the amount of information they received. The Marketing team were trying to reach schools in different ways to change what they were pitching. The type of content was addressing what students were interested in by adding meaning and adding value, there would be school liaison which would be supported by newsletters. Evelyn Carpenter stated that the person to person engagement would be an important first point of contact.

Carole Ditty noted that the marketing presentation was very well developed and it was pleasing to hear the recognition there was a lot of ground to cover. The College needed to focus on reforecasting – trying to find the focus that did not sacrifice the USP's of the College. Some of the most successful engagements would need to work together with the College to better understand the practical impact with employers and the community. The M&CM responded that the team were creating new and refining existing channels to reconsider the audience and to improve the right platforms in the right way.

The Chair stated that this was a very detailed and comprehensive plan focussed on enrolment but lacking who were the competitors and the College's USP's. He questioned if learner numbers may be increasing was there a piece of work specifically around this for the Marketing team to focus on. The Principal/CEO replied that work was taking place to drive the USP's down to specific areas – some of the strengths of the curriculum were to showcase what they did and it was about partnership and relationship building. The scale of the newsletters may cause a distraction from interfacing with schools and stakeholders and a balance was required between the two. Some client groups were dependant on the personal touch.

The M&CM advised that one of the bigger plans working with the Chief Technology & Innovation Officer (CTIO) was to undertake research to understand priorities, positioning of the College, USP's and student opinion. This would be addressed as a research piece.

Evelyn Carpenter questioned the impact of the marketing strategy and whether there was a view on how the College would look at what was working and what was not working. The M&CM agreed that there was a need to improve on reporting. Work would take place with the team to ensure this was something constantly available. The CTIO shared the dashboard with the Committee providing digital marketing metrics.

In response to a query from Forhad Altafi, the M&CM advised that the College was promoting T-levels and IoT and a virtual tour of ELIOT with 30 attendees had taken place and this had been passed to the admissions team to keep the students engaged. The next big push for these areas would take place after the Christmas break into January 2021. Progression was key and the College need to ensure existing students were made aware of the offer.

The Chair thanked the M&CM for the plan and advised that the Committee looked forward to seeing the plan further developed in the near future.

Agreed: The current Marketing Plan was noted.

The M&CM left the meeting.

7. Committee Terms of Reference

The Chief Governance Officer (CGO) reported that the Committee Terms of Reference remained unchanged from the previous year.

Approved: That Policy & Resources Committee Terms of Reference 2020/21 were approved for future use, to be ratified by the Corporation.

8. Committee Schedule of Business 2020/21

The CGO advised that given the uncertain times it was difficult to predict exactly what business would need to be discussed at each meeting but the proposed schedule ensured all statutory business was included. It was noted that the re-arranged November date for the meeting needed to be reflected on the schedule.

The Chair suggested that it would be helpful to review the Marketing Plan in March and it was agreed this would be added to the schedule. The Principal/CEO added that the Balance Scorecard would be reintroduced at each meeting which would provide the Marketing KPI's.

Carole Ditty stated that Brexit needed to stay on the radar and could need to be factored in at any moment. It was agreed to include Brexit as a standing agenda item.

Approved: That Committee Schedule of Business 2020/21 was approved subject to the inclusion of the Marketing Plan for the March 2021 meeting and Brexit and the Balance Scorecard featuring as standing agenda items going forward. The Schedule of Business would be ratified by the Corporation.

9. Committee Risks

The CGO reported that the risks highlighted were those specific to the Committee and advised that the budget was an overall Corporation risk.

Carole Ditty referred to the risk regarding pensions and questioned if the College had received the benefit of or access to independent advice. The Chief Finance & Enterprise Officer (CFEO) responded that the College received advice from the actuaries every year in terms of the valuation and an in-depth analysis would be brought to the March 2021 Corporation meeting. The TPS pension scheme contribution had now been confirmed by the Treasury until March 2022. The big risk was the LGPS which was a statutory obligation and the College needed time to prepare a report paper as this would be a long term issue if the economy was going the wrong way. The Principal/CEO added that all Colleges were in the same position as the impact was on the balance sheet. The AoC were leading on this alongside work taking place with the Government.

Evelyn Carpenter stated that she had expected the risk for Health & Safety to have changed due to the implications of Covid and therefore the increased risk. The CFEO replied that the Risk Register was in the process of being updated for the Audit Committee on 7 December 2020. This would then be discussed at the December Corporation meeting. The CFEO advised that the College had a separate corporate risk register for Covid safety.

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

10. Financial Regulations Annual Review

The CFEO reported that this was the annual presentation of the Financial Regulations and there were no changes to report.

Evelyn Carpenter stated that she supported the Financial Regulations and questioned whether there had ever been any breaches of the regulations within the College and what happened for learner fees that were not paid. The Director of Finance & Estates (DOFE) replied that if there were any breaches within the College this was not because of staff not abiding by the regulations. In some cases a payment or order had to be issued very quickly and the procedures were not strictly adhered to but this was always the exception to the rule. Procedures were reiterated to staff to ensure compliance. The Tuition Fees Policy provided the procedure for non-payment of fees. If fees were not paid followed this was followed through by debt collection agencies, however, extra support was in place for students affected by the pandemic.

The Chair stated that the Committee could advise the Board that the College was compliant with the Financial Regulations. The CFEO added that every order in the College was currently scrutinised.

Approved: The Financial Regulations were approved.

11. Health & Safety Annual Report

The DOFE reported that the purpose of the report was to provide assurance on the adequacy of the College's Health & Safety arrangements across all sites for 2019/20. It was noted that the Headjogs site had now ceased and the H&S team had changed to include a 0.5 H&S Manager and 1.0 FTE specialist to provide strategic approach to H&S. The team were working closely with HR in terms of signage, leaflets, guidance etc and there was also an emphasis on wellbeing. The H&S Committee was in place and continued to meet online throughout the year. Risk assessments and regular audits continued to take place with an emphasis on covid and training for all staff continued to take place online.

The DOFE advised that the H&S policy and procedures had been reviewed and a separate meeting was requested to review these. This was agreed.

The Committee were informed that there had been an increase in H&S incidents as staff had been encouraged to report near misses to ensure issues on the estate were resolved and a campaign was taking place with marketing to promote this. It was intended to revisit sustainability going forward and the College needed to look at the smartlog system to strengthen and promote best practice and work was taking place to encourage staff to become H&S champions.

The Chair thanked the DOFE for a very comprehensive report and advised that sustainability was becoming of increasing importance on the agenda. He added that there had been a lot of work undertaken in the context of estates and health and wellbeing and this had been a huge issue this year. It was pleasing to see a new H&S Manager and members of the team which would encourage greater compliance.

Carole Ditty stated that she understood the rationale for the increased number of near misses but queried the rise in the number of cuts reported as incidents. The DOFE replied that this was due to the increase in reporting and the majority of cuts would have occurred within the workshops where students were using tools and implements.

The Chair advised that during his last walkabout as H&S Governor, compliance with PPE needed to be improved. The DOFE responded that this was being addressed and some areas were using PPE as part of their induction.

The Chair queried whether working groups had suffered because of the impact of Covid. The DOFE replied that the H&S Committee continued to take place via Microsoft teams. The H&S manager and team walked the College site as much as possible including visiting the TSA to ensure a physical presence.

Action: CGO to arrange additional P&R meeting to review H&S policies and procedures.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Health & Safety Annual Report.

12. Covid Update

The Chief Transformation Officer (CTO) reported that since the commencement of the new academic year 11 staff (including 1 agency member of staff) and 28 students had contracted Covid-19. 140 staff members had been self isolating at one point or another and there were 40 members of staff with underlying medical conditions, 10 of which had been working from home. During the summer the College had rolled out a return to college survey and the results had helped to put in place key measures and inform the action plan. Feedback from the College Health Protection team was that the College was doing well. There was a need for the College to understand the impact of staff working from home permanently as these were critically extremely vulnerable. There were also a number of staff above the age of 60 and the College was doing everything possible to minimise risks e.g these staff must wear visors, had been moved to quieter areas etc dependant on the outcomes of their risk assessments. One member of staff had asked to take unpaid leave and this had been accommodated. Six staff members who were pregnant were also being supported to work from home. The College had also introduced FAQs and flowcharts to ensure staff knew how to report cases which had worked very well. Management action letters were being issued to staff who were not complying with covid measures.

The Chair asked whether the College had access to testing facilities. The CFEO reported that the College had been allowed a restricted number of home testing kits but most staff used the NHS website as the first point of call.

Evelyn Carpenter reported that Barking & Dagenham Council had their own testing facilities for teachers in the Borough and it may be worth the College contacting Matthew Cole to see if this was something that could be extended to the College. The CFEO advised that he had contacted the Council but had been directed to the NHS. Evelyn Carpenter added that the take up may have been low so it may be worth the College trying again. The CFEO confirmed that the College had not had an issue with testing but he would contact the Council again to see if the position had changed.

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

13. People & Organisational Development Report

The CTO reported the College's workforce profile advising that the teaching staff percentage was higher than the national profile but 10% lower for support staff and the College needed to identify where the real issues were and whether there was a genuine explanation for this. In terms of gender, 59% of the workforce were female which was close to the national position but at management level only 39% of the workforce were female and middle or senior managers. The College had work to do to understand why it was not attracting female employees into management positions. The Principal/CEO added that middle management in curriculum areas is heavily male but the benchmarking report would provide some further indications of the reasons behind the proportion of pay in relation to teaching none teaching.

The Chair noted that the College had a strong position regarding the employment of under 25 year olds. The CTO responded that this was something the College were actively working on with apprenticeships to help fill the skills gaps.

The Chair stated a significant amount of turnover would not be expected this year but 2% for teaching staff was remarkably low and questioned whether this compared with previous years. The CTO replied that reasons for leaving were mixed but the College was in a better position in terms of retention which may be linked to pay and hours.

The CTO advised that colleges struggled to fill posts as there was a lot of competition from schools. STEM was a difficult area to recruit to and interventions to actively headhunt had been put in place. It had been challenging to recruit to the HE management role and a job evaluation had been undertaken for the Industrial Placement and Schools Engagement position. The Assistant Director – Engineering & Industry for IoT had been recruited to. The Chair questioned how the College salaries compared with other colleges in London. The CTO replied that when compared to London the College was pretty much aligned and the College monitors against similar roles advertised by other colleges in London.

Discussion took place on the following key elements of the report:

- The College was looking at how to reduce agency costs to focus more on utilisation.
- Pay awards - most colleges were in favour of a 1% pay rise to boost employee morale. The AoC would release a paper shortly asking Colleges to make a decision based on their financial position.
- Furlough – 11 staff remained on furlough
- College absence – higher than national average.
- CPD position
- Wellbeing – engagement and wellbeing champions
- Mental health training
- Partnership with Trade Unions – meet every fortnight
- Cross section of HR activities across the year
- Employment Law Changes – Brexit
- Regulations regarding lockdown arrangements
- Restriction on Public Sector Payments 2020
- Paid parental bereavement leave
- Termination payments

The Chair queried with increasing employer engagement and students doing work off site if there was any area of CPD for staff that would involve changes in practice, industry awareness etc. The CTO replied that this would be critical for 2021 and the College would be focussing on industry.

The Chair asked how reliant the College would be next year in terms of bringing in staff from the EU. The CTO responded that this was not a cause for concern – the College could confidently recruit locally. EU members of staff within the College planned to settle in the UK.

The CTO advised that the College was trying to change the approach for SLD by moving from face to face to online. There would be a lot of emphasis around the digital agenda and staff learning and development needed to be ongoing. There would be an increased focus on business support teams next year and work was taking place on an onboarding platform.

The Chair thanked the CTO for her report.

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

14. IoT Licence Agreement

The CFEO reported that initially the College's core partner for the IoT was Coventry University alongside TfL, Huawei and Saint Gobain. Saint Gobain had now stepped down from the IoT and therefore the College had asked ISG to step up which they had agreed to. ISG needed to sign the commercial agreement and sub-licencing agreement and the College were waiting for these to be returned. The DfE were in agreement for the College to change partner.

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

15. Amended Guest Speaker Policy

The CTO reported that further to the action from the previous meeting, the timeline to submit the guest speaker requests had been increased from 2 days to 10 days.

Approved: The amended Guest Speaker Policy was approved for future use.

16. Budget Discussion

The Chair advised that this discussion was following on from the November Corporation Meeting to look at the non pay position compared to last year to consider whether there were any areas worth pursuing, particularly non-pay for estates which was 12% of the overall budget.

Evelyn Carpenter stated that there were other non-pay items in the budget and referred to the £1m for small items of capital spend disbursed across the College. She advised that the College needed to look at this in a short term way and required additional information on expenditure where the short term options may be.

The CFEO stated that the Corporation had considered the forecast at the November meeting and mitigating actions would be provided at the December Corporation Meeting. The actions from the last Corporation were to look at the big ticket items from the estates budget. The £1m capital included the F Block which was a fully funded capital programme from the GLA, FECA capital was a specific programme and in terms of this year the normal capital programme is £0.5 million.

The Chair stated that he was slightly worried that the Committee gave a commitment to the Corporation to consider the non-pay and this was not taking place. It was noted that it was only one week since the Corporation meeting.

The Chair asked whether at the December Corporation meeting a comparison of non pay against this year and next year under each heading would be provided. The CFEO replied that the College needed to go through non pay to identify savings but this was difficult at present but would be included in the next Corporation forecast. The Chair stated that Governors would be looking to see that the College did have a handle on the opportunities to reduce costs as at present the position was still in limbo – it would be helpful for the Corporation to be able to have a conversation reflecting the scale of the issue.

Evelyn Carpenter stated that the Corporation had previously agreed a balanced budget and at the next Corporation meeting it needed to be demonstrated to the Board as a whole how the College was going to make those savings to get to that point. The savings could not all fall on staffing and non staff costs needed to be considered. The Principal/CEO replied that the savings may all fall on staffing as there were a lot of staff inefficiencies in classes and utilisation. There were some big ticket items bound by contracts and the mitigations of savings needed to be considered. The CFEO added that so far the

College had managed to mitigate costs. The Principal/CEO added that changes needed to be made internally to reduce energy.

In response to a query from the Chair, the Principal/CEO advised that a lot of work was required to understand the position – the College knew where the inefficiencies were and the aim was to re-timetable for January to achieve 100% utilisation.

The Chair stated that the College needed to prepare for the next Corporation meeting. The Principal/CEO advised that there was now a need to agree the position for this to be closed off.

Agreed: That the current position be noted and further discussion take place at the December Corporation meeting.

Any Other Business

There was no further business. Evelyn Carpenter recorded her thanks to Stuart Fraser for chairing the meeting.

**Date and time of next meeting – Monday 8 March 2021, 4pm
Additional Meeting to consider Health & Safety report to be convened at the beginning of 2021.**

The Chair thanked all those in attendance for their contributions and reports. The meeting concluded at 5.04pm.

Signed.....
Evelyn Carpenter (Chair)

Date.....

**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
ACTIONS**

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	By (deadline)	Update
8.	Committee Schedule of Business 2020/21 to include the Marketing Plan for the March 2021 meeting and Brexit and the Balance Scorecard to be included as standing agenda items going forward.	CGO	ASAP	Complete
11.	CGO to arrange additional P&R meeting to review H&S policies and procedures.	CGO	January 2021	