

THE TRAFFORD COLLEGE GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Committee held at 6.00 pm on Wednesday 16 March 2021 via Microsoft Teams

Present:	Janet Grant	(Chairperson)
	James Scott	(Principal & Chief Executive)
	Sue Derbyshire	
	Sabine Van der Veer	
	Louise Richardson	
In Attendance:	Michelle Eyres	(Executive Assistant to the Principal & CEO)
	Andrea Bennett	(Director of Finance & Strategy)
	Michelle Leslie	(Vice Principal Corporate Services & Planning)
	Naomi Harrop	(Head of HR)
	Simon Hannett	(Director of MIS)
	Anthony Gribben-Lisle	(Data Protection Officer)

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RES/01/21 **Apologies for Absence**

The Chairperson reported that apologies for absence had been received from the Corporation Secretary.

RES/02/21 **Declarations of Direct or Indirect Interest in any of the meetings business items**

There were no declarations of either direct or indirect interest in any of the meetings business items.

RES/03/21 **Election of Vice Chairperson of the Resources Committee for the Academic Years 2021/2023**

The Chairperson sought nominations for the position of Vice Chairperson of the Resources Committee for the Academic Years 2021/2023.

Jeremy Woodside was the sole nomination and it was unanimously resolved that he be elected as Vice Chairperson of the Resources Committee for the period outlined.

RES/04/21 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 November 2020**

The minutes of the meeting were approved and accepted as a correct account of the meetings proceedings.

RES/05/21 **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

RES/06/21 **Digital Strategy – Mid Year Update**

The Data Protection Officer (DPO) presented a report that provided members with a mid-year update for 2020/21 in terms of the implementation of the Group's Digital Strategy.

The DPO briefly outlined the progress towards the commitments made for this year against each of the Group's five priorities for digital with each priority RAG rated to indicate current and anticipated progress for the year.

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The DPO highlighted the red risk areas as follows: -

- In terms of the priority #2 for digital solutions for staff and updating the current iCreate space at Altrincham to create the Centre for Teaching Excellence, time spent working remotely due to COVID-19 has prevented progress with this commitment.
- In terms of priority #3 for universal enablers working with a commercial partner to deliver a cost effective Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Programme, little progress has been made to date and focus will be given to this project in the second half of this academic year. The DPO added that Government funding to support digital poverty had reduced the priority of this project.

The DPO updated the Committee in relation to the following:-

- Merger – TCG/CAMSFC working well together in terms of the digital agenda and the merger IT strand is very active.
- Digital Teaching, Learning and Assessment Excellence Projects – priority projects prioritised for support are inclusion for students who are unable to attend college and flexibility in the academic year for adult courses.
- Development of the Strategy – after a recent workshop with the Group's Leadership Team looking at key themes and recent learning it was noted that the Group will continue to develop key themes emerging from the initial discussions which include: -
 - Development of the curriculum with a focus on digital and the new opportunities now available using the knowledge gained from twelve months of lockdown and remote delivery.
 - Building on the recent Government investment in tackling digital poverty.
 - Further improve business efficiency and effectiveness.

The DPO concluded that the next steps would be to ensure that the most important commitments for the year are achieved, that the Information Governance Group will continue to monitor the implementation plan for 2020/21, consult on the development of the next 3-year strategy with stakeholders including the link Governor for Digital and any other interested Governors.

A member asked about other Governors joining the consultation meetings to explore the strategy and future ambitions and the DPO explained that expressions of interests to join focus meetings will be sought with meetings scheduled to take place during April and May and an updated report will be brought to the next meeting of the Resources Committee.

The Chairperson thanked the DPO for the report. There were no further matters raised by members and it was resolved that the report be noted.

RES/07/21 Employee Relations Update

The VPCSP presented a report, which provided members with an employee relations update.

The report covered pay claim discussions including the following issues:-

- National pay claim in terms of join unions' claim and UCU local claim elements.

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- COVID update and the Group's active engagement with accredited trade unions throughout the pandemic.
- Merger discussions.

The Chairperson thanked the VPCSP for the update. There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that it be noted.

RES/08/21 Accommodation Update

The VPCSP presented a report which updated the Committee on the Group's accommodation strategy activities in respect of the following key issues:

- Stockport College Redevelopment – The VPCSP advised that the project progress and costs are monitored in detail regularly by the Strategic Property Working Group.
- Phase 1 – The VPCSP reported a slippage of circa 18 days in this project due to a number of factors and advised that as Seddon Construction Limited (SCL) were not able to provide a commitment to recover the delay, the current revised completion date is recorded as 10 August 2021. The VPCSP added that Phase 1 remains within budget with good progress being made and nothing causing concern.
- Phase 2 – The VPCSP advised that the project managers were reviewing SCL's tender for this phase with key points to note as follows: -
 - Budget cost of £7,135,499.97.
 - Construction period – January to October 2022.
 - Decant period until 1 December 2022.

The VPCSP further advised that the project team are aiming to reduce the initial budget against the £7.5m allocated to allow for probable further costs and the design team are now engaging in briefings to develop the first stage of the design of the scheme. The VPCSP added that the project contract cannot be agreed until receipt of the Stockport disposal sum.

- Stockport Surplus Land Disposal – The VPCSP reported that although the planning for the Investar scheme for the surplus land was agreed in November and that TCG have been advised that the planning and car parking arrangements for the Art Gallery have now been agreed, one aspect of the s106 agreement still needs to be agreed between Stockport Borough Council and the developer. The VPCSP added that progress is being made but the legal firms for the council and the developer are taking time to agree clauses and wording but is hopeful of a conclusion this week.

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- Timperley Sports Pitch and Overflow Car Park Disposal – The VPCSP advised that both applications are now expected to be considered in June 2021. Discussions have been continuing with the local authority regarding the planning application. The key challenge for TCG has been to provide a sports mitigation package which includes a financial contribution for an identified scheme and is therefore proposing to support the improvement of sports facilities at Sale Sports Club from disposal proceeds. TCG understands discussions are continuing between the Sports Club and Council. The outline terms for a s106 agreement have been agreed and will be recommended to Planning Committee subject to the sports club application being approved. The VPCSP concluded that Lexington Communications had been engaged to support the application process TCG.
- ESFA Capital Funding – The VPCSP reminded members that the Group had received c£1.35m capital funding to address areas of the estate and IT infrastructure graded as B or worse and that originally works were required to be complete by March 2021, however, as a result of the pandemic TCG applied for an extension for completion of works and this has now been agreed as September 2021.
- T Levels Capital Fund (TLCF) - The VPCSP reported that the Group is currently submitting a further application as part of wave 3 due to the revision to the Phase 2 scheme and the multi-purpose hall now being demolished.

The VPCSP added that TCG will receive and SEA grant of £475,055 ,to be spent by the end of 2021, for the purchase of equipment to support T levels with the expectation that the grant will be match funded by TCG at 50% although this isn't an absolute requirement.

A member asked for clarity in relation to the timing of the Stockport Disposal. The VPCSP advised that a decision was hopeful this week and that normally once plans are approved you have a judicial review period which last six weeks but because the College is out of contract Investar took a commercial decision to take out insurance to cover the judicial review so it's their risk and the College will receive payment.

A member asked what the impact would be if Phase 1 runs into September. The VPCSP advised that no concerns are being flagged that delays will go into the academic year and as the lease of Greek Street continues into the Summer, she is hopeful that the College can continue to operate with just snagging issues to be resolved.

A member asked what's plan B if the T Level application in wave 3 isn't successful. The VPCSP advised that part of the area in Phase 2 of the new build is designated for T Levels and if the application is unsuccessful the plan will be more restricted but existing plans can become more basic in terms of classrooms, science labs and equipment.

In response to a query from a member the VPCSP confirmed that the ESFA monies being spent to improve the building condition at the Stockport site are in addition to the £16m grant funding being provided by GMCA.

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that it be noted.

RES/09/21 People Strategy – Mid-Year Update

The Head of Human Resources and Performance (HHRP) presented a report that provided members with a mid-year update in relation to the progress of the People Strategy Action Plan (PSAP).

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The report provided a progress update in respect of the Strategic aims as follows:

- Attract – all KPIs are currently RAG rated as green and a point to note is the increase of just under 5% of staff who would recommend the Group as a ‘Great Place to Work’.
- Develop – most KPIs are RAG rated as green apart from one rated amber due to the agreed deadline being unlikely to be met because of the reprioritisation work as a result of the pandemic. There is a small increase in relation to 2019/20 survey results in that the outcomes of the staff survey have indicated 60.58% of staff believe they have sufficient professional development to make them effective in their work.
- Retain – all KPIs are currently RAG rated as green.
- Excellence in Leadership and Management – all KPIs are currently RAG rated as green. It was noted that significant work had taken place with respect to the proposed merger to ensure staff are fully involved in the process.
- Supportive, Collaborative and Health Working Environment – all KPIs are currently RAG rated as green. The outcomes of the staff survey have indicated that 78.28% of staff are positive about their workload and wellbeing which is in line with the previous year.

There were no further matters raised by members and it was resolved that the report be noted.

RES/10/21 Financial Report and Management Accounts for the 6 Months ending 31 January 2021

The Director of Finance & Strategy (DFS) presented a report, which informed members of the financial performance of the Group for the 6-month period up to 31 January 2021.

In respect of the Executive Summary to the accounts, it was reported that the overall performance in the six-month period was a surplus of £564k compared to the budgeted deficit of £(74)k. The DFS advised that the positive position was due in part to savings on depreciation and the phasing of the budget for non-pay costs.

The DFS added that in terms of the overall positive position confirmation had been received that additional in year funding of £786k will be made available by the ESFA in 2020/21 plus a smaller upside in pension funding in year has been received which is more than expected.

The DFS advised the year to date position six months in in terms of the EBITDA position is £514k better than plan, however, this is due in part to phasing but is a positive position for this time of year.

The DFS confirmed that the forecast shows mid case as a small deficit which is £609k better than budget, best case significantly better than budget and worst case more in line with budget which is all positive. The DFS added that there is risk with the mid case in terms of income affected by COVID namely apprenticeships and AEB and a risk reserve has been built in to offset this.

In terms of the cash position, is at £9.5m which is a strong position. The DFS added that the land sale haven't yet been received and this will improve the position further. DFS highlighted the phasing benefits around the Stockport redevelopment and the benefit of funding from the GMCA so can't get too comfortable with cash position.

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Looking forward to 2021/22 the DFS reported that detailed curriculum planning, resource planning and budget planning had commenced. The DFS added that the 16-18 funding allocation for 2021/22 will be approximately £476k high than planned due to the 16-18 classroom-based number being ahead of target. The 2020/21 allocation statement also confirm that TCG will also receive the Teachers' pension scheme grant again in 2020/21.

A member asked what considerations had been given for the budget and how it flow out for next year. The DFS advised that the Group would normally look at the current year for planning purposes but due to the pandemic, this year the Group were looking at two years data rather than one so that the right targets are set.

The link Governor for Apprenticeships and Adults added that she is pleased with the amount of effort and work going on in these particular areas and the innovative ways of working to bring income in.

There were no other issues raised by members arising from the report and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that the Management Accounts for the 6 months ending 31 December 2020 be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

Action: Board of the Corporation**RES/11/21 Learner Numbers and Funding Update 2020/2021**

The Committee received a report from the IDMIS which report detailed the Group's Learner numbers and funding update.

The report covered the following funding streams:

- Study Programmes – The DMIS advised that the group currently has 3646 'countable' learners with a small number not currently meeting conditions of funding (relating to maths and English) but this does not present any financial risk. Performance against target of 3348 has resulted in an in-year increase of £750k which has translated to an allocation increase to 3503 for 2021/22.
- AEB – The DMIS advised that the Group is currently earning £3.16m of its ESFA/GMCA allocation which relates to 53% of its allocation to date. A summer programme is due to commence after Easter to address the remaining allocation.
- Apprenticeships – The DMIS advised that the funding currently stands at £3.2m and a lot of work is being done to maximise the approach to this cohort as they have been significantly impacted by COVID.
- Higher Education – The DMIS advised the total number of learners 416 which is down in numbers by 148 to the previous year. The DMIS advised that the Group has been selected for an Office for Students Audit on it's 2019/20 data and processes which is due to commence week commencing 22 March 20201.

A member asked from a commercial point of view how the Group will make the most of opportunities relating to the AEB summer programme. The Principal advised that indicative information in terms of activity had been received and the Group will work flexibly with the GMCA to ensure there is no clawback but felt the risk is minimal. The Principal added that a comprehensive summer programme is planned and in previous years there is very little activity post Easter. The Principal concluded that the biggest risk is apprenticeships as £400k away from the mid-case but there is a risk reserve built in to forecast to mitigate and the Group will ensure there is limited risk in AEB or elsewhere.

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A member asked about the decrease in numbers in HE. The Principal advised that HE numbers are down but in line with forecast and plans are in place to mitigate for future.

A member asked whether there are any encouraging opportunities for the Group as a result of the chancellor's budget. The Principal confirmed that teams were working to promote any new incentives with employers.

There were no other issues raised by members and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that the report be noted.

RES/12/21 Partner Sub-Contracting Activities Update 2020/2021

The DMIS presented a report, which detailed the up to date position in respect of partner subcontracting provision for 2020/21.

The report also provided the Committee with details of the Group's partnership subcontracting activities in 2020/2021 in terms of 16-19 and AEB funding and highlighted the sub-contractor declaration which had been submitted to the ESFA on 4 February 2021.

There were no other issues raised by members and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that the report be noted.

RES/13/21 Any Other Business

There were no matters raised under any other business.

RES/14/21 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Committee meeting would be held on Wednesday 21 April 2021.

Action: Corporation Secretary

The meeting closed at 18.10 pm.

The DPO left the meeting at 17.12 pm after consideration of the Digital Strategy.

VPCSP/Head of HR left the meeting at 17.43 pm after consideration of the People Strategy.

DMIS left the meeting at 18.10 pm after consideration of the Sub-Contractor Activity Update.