

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on 14th November 2019 at 5.30pm in the Boardroom of the College

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Norma Boyes; Amie Calvin; Elaine Clinton; Beth Gaskell; Phil Jardine; Robert Milburn; Chris Nattress; Mark Stanger; Robin Talbot; Tanya Weston; Stuart Williams

Apologies: Nigel Holliday; Loren Redmond; Denise Rollo

Also present: Karen Wilson (Deputy Principal); Daniel Braithwaite (Assistant Principal); Mark Birschel (to Minute No: 74/19)

71/19 **Minutes**

Resolved –

that the minutes of the meeting held in open session on the 3 October 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

No Declarations of Interest were received for this meeting.

72/19 **Appointment of HE Student Governor**

Resolved – that Leanne Singleton be appointed as student governor (higher education) from 14 November 2019- 13 November 2020, renewable to 31 July 2021 by mutual consent.

73/19 **Self-assessment**

Noting the process, including governor challenge at an earlier stage of the process, the proposal for self-assessment for this year, was ‘good’. This would also be peer reviewed externally with Furness College.

It was felt that each of the key judgements under the new Ofsted framework were good. Students were for the most part positive, respectful and productive and employer and stakeholder engagement strong.

It was questioned whether any of the individual judgements should be outstanding (this had been raised at the earlier challenge session), but it was felt that some areas would need to demonstrate ‘sustained’ performance to have confidence in an outstanding grading.

There was a need to ensure consistency across all the provision, to continue to develop numeracy skills and high-grade outcomes in maths

and to ensure that there were no achievement gaps for those in receipt of additional learning support.

It was asked what issues there might be with achievement gaps and it was felt that there could be more thorough review of Education and Healthcare Plans, which was being addressed through a restructure of management in this area.

Governors referred to the challenge session which had been held...they had appreciated the honesty and felt that it had been a very productive session. They questioned two areas in particular which had not responded to treatment thus far and it was felt that after a significant change of management, that demonstrable improvements were already being seen.

It was asked why retention did not feature in the areas for improvement and it was acknowledged that this could come through more clearly and would be reviewed, but that it had been captured in other areas for improvement, such as course design in some areas. Some entry levels programmes had been redesigned.

It was suggested that the wording overall of the areas for improvement needed to be reviewed to clarify that the improvement was to take provision from good to outstanding, and that there should be a review of the high needs section to achieve greater clarity.

Turning to the higher education self-assessment, there was not a requirement to grade the provision, but generally student outcomes were good, with increasing higher grades. Most students progress on to positive destinations in employment and/or the next level of learning. Achievement gaps were reducing, particularly among females and disadvantaged students.

Areas for improvement included a small minority of students whose progress is slower or who leave before completing their programme. Improvements were needed for the Foundation Degree in Chemistry and the HND in Sport, which were in closer monitoring.

Some Governors reflected on a recent learning walk in the National College for Nuclear, which had been impressive. They wondered whether there should be some evaluation of NCfN provision and whether the NCfN should be mentioned in the document alongside the partnership working with Bridgwater and Taunton College.

Areas for improvement for both FE and HE would be monitored throughout the year.

Resolved –

- 1) That the Further Education self-assessment be approved, subject to the Board's comments and that the Continuous Improvement Plan be approved.
- 2) That the Higher Education self-assessment be approved, subject to the Board's comments and that the Continuous Improvement Plan be approved.

74/19

Confidential Session

Resolved –

- 1) To move into confidential session
- 2) To approve the minutes of the meeting held in confidential session on 3 October 2019.

75/19

Partnership and External Relations -confidential

The Assistant Principal presented an update of the projects and partnerships with which the College was involved.

76/19

Finance Update- confidential

(Noted for the record that while some confidential material was supplied to the Board, the ensuing minute was not classed as confidential)

The Deputy Principal noted that the outturn figures would return the college to 'Good' Financial health on the basis of the EBIDTA figures. It was noted that there was some success with controlling staff costs.

Most recent correspondence from the ESFA agreed a return to good financial health on the basis of the latest outturn figures supplied and the financial plan and this was expected to be confirmed by the financial statements for 2018/19.

It was cautioned that the actuarial figures for the LGPS should be treated with caution as this varied significantly from year to year and every organisation had a pension deficit.

The Board noted performance in respect of sub-contracting with Learning Curve. They considered a sub-contract with Lancaster and Morecambe College in respect of Higher Education sub-contracting, and were assured that there had been thorough due diligence carried out, in which case they were content that a sub-contract for approximately 45 students be approved, on the basis of a 20% top slice for Lakes College in respect of administration.

The draft minutes of the Finance and Corporate Working Group were considered and it was noted that the Group had carried out a review of treasury management and were recommending that there should be no change, which was agreed.

Turning to the management accounts, it was noted that numbers at the six-week count looked like being 821. Additional funding promised for next year would be absorbed by this reduction in learner numbers.

Resolved –

- 1) That Lakes College enter into a sub-contract with Lancaster and Morecambe College for the provision of higher education to approximately 45 students, noting that due diligence has been carried out and that due process will be carried out with the awarding body and the Office for Students;
- 2) That there be no change to the Treasury Management Policy.

77/19

Civils' Field Funding - confidential

The Principal briefed the Board in confidential session on project progress, requiring an updated minute for funding bid reasons.

Resolved –

- 1) That further to minute no 46/19, the Board is content to proceed with the Civils' Field project on the basis of £350,000 employer funding, with the expectation of further funding to be secured in the longer-term;
- 2) That the Board is content to consider a legal charge by the CLEP on the field it is intended to purchase, subject to review of the detailed proposal.

78/19

Open Session

Resolved – to re-open the meeting to public scrutiny.

79/19

Key Performance Indicators

The new format KPIs were considered by the Board at an early stage of the year. It was intended that the new KPIs should give Governors a very clear overview of performance.

As had previously been mentioned, 16-19 recruitment was down, as was adult recruitment, the latter having an impact on finances for this year.

With the inclusion of the Lancaster and Morecambe sub-contract, higher education was strong with further recruitment expected for the January intake at the National College for Nuclear. Apprenticeships maintained a relatively steady pattern.

Attendance was just under target.

Asked about work placements, while noting that work placements were behind target, it was early in the year and anticipated that the target would be met. The complexities of organising work placements with students who were also studying maths and English were noted.

80/19

Safeguarding and Prevent

The Assistant Principal presented an annual overview of activity. He noted the confidence levels for both full-time learners and apprentices, in respect of their feeling safe and knowing how and where to report any concerns, were strong.

He noted that online monitoring systems were very effective and led to securing swift interventions where needed.

It was noted that demand for counselling continued in line with the pressures on mental health support services. The services were under monthly review.

There had been one referral under the Prevent Duty, which had enabled swift intervention and support, resulting in a positive outcome for the student and progression to a higher level for this year.

Monitoring of achievements for all students on the register showed good achievements, however, it was noted by one governor that all students that the expectation under the new Ofsted framework would be that all students would achieve.

The updated policy for Safeguarding and Prevent was presented and was approved.

Resolved –

- 1) That the annual summary be received and noted;
- 2) That the Safeguarding and Prevent policy be approved.

81/19

Governance

Governors received and noted correspondence from the Office for Students in respect of a late payment of an invoice for the Quality Assurance Agency. It was explained that one invoice had already been paid and that this second invoice was being queried as it was not evident what it was for and that while querying the invoice, the deadline had been missed.

It was noted by Governors that a significant number of other colleges had also missed this payment and were perhaps equally as confused and questioned whether the AOC might make this point on behalf of all the Colleges affected. They noted that it was now understood what the payment was for and that there were safeguards in place to ensure it would not happen again.

The draft minutes of the Search and Governance Committee were noted.

Governors who had participated in a recent learning walk gave their feedback, which was overwhelmingly positive, and the Health and Safety link governor fed back from a recent meeting where a demonstration of virtual reality training had been impressive.

The meeting closed at 1930h.