

## Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 5.30pm in the Boardroom of the College

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Les Agnew; Norma Boyes; Tanya Crofts; Phil Jardine; Claire Madden; Chris Nattress; Denise Rollo; Mark Stanger; Dr Robin Talbot; John Thinnesen; Stuart Williams

Apologies: Robert Milburn

Also present: Steve Naylor, Chair NCfN (Minute No 02/19); Karen Wilson, Deputy Principal; Daniel Braithwaite, Assistant Principal; Jane Murray (Clerk)

### **01/19 Minutes**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

It was asked whether there had been a resolution of difficulties with the service provider for payroll and assurance was given that the money paid over to the service provider sat in a separate account and that the apprenticeship levy money did not need to be paid for 24 months. However, the performance was being kept under review.

It was asked what steps had been taken in respect of some learners' behaviour and explained that a case conference type of approach had been introduced and would be discussed in more detail later on the agenda.

### **02/19 Declarations of Interest**

None received.

### **03/19 National College for Nuclear**

Steve Naylor, of EDF Energy and Chair of the NCfN, gave the Board an overview of progress being made.

In spite of disappointments around nuclear new build, he felt that, with the amount of decommissioning around, that there were continued grounds for optimism, noting that decommissioning required the same level of technical skills, planning and co-ordination as construction. He also felt that the small modular reactors coming on to the market had a great deal of potential as they could be located on existing sites.

In respect of the NCfN, he reminded the Board of the 'light' model, avoiding an overly bureaucratic structure. This gave fluidity, allowing activity to scale up and down according to demand.

He felt that progress had taken much longer than had been originally envisaged in dealing with different Government departments.

The College was now at a stage of review in light of changes in external circumstances. This included the setting up of the National Skills Strategy Group, the voice of the industry, with whom he envisaged a close working relationship. However, the overall vision and mission had not really changed, which was to be the first choice provider of nuclear qualifications.

He noted the good work which had been done in establishing the northern and southern hubs and in introducing new and innovative ways of teaching and the ongoing work in engaging employers. He also felt it was important to establish an international reputation and would be taking opportunities to promote the NCfN in international circles.

He noted that there would be a considered approach to the expansion of accredited providers, that such expansion should bring good collaboration with it. In terms of the business plan, decisions would need to be taken on charges for accreditation.

Equally, the Board would be watchful of Institutes of Technology, in a bid to establish a co-operative relationship and would be considering the introduction of T Levels to the offer.

Mr Naylor was thanked by the Chair for his useful oversight of the industry and for bringing the Board up-to-date on progress.

**04/19 Confidential Session**

**Resolved** – to move into confidential session

**05/19 Strategic Update - confidential**

The Principal advised the Board of sector updates and partnership working.

**06/19 Strategic Options - confidential**

The Principal discussed the scope of a strategic planning piece of work.

**Resolved** – that a consultant be hired at a cost of £5,500 to assist the review.

**07/19 Finance - confidential**

The Deputy Principal discussed the financial situation.

**08/19 HR Update (noting Urgent Action)**

It was noted that the final pay recommendation for 2018-19 by the AOC was 1% (on the grounds that any more was not affordable) or £250 (whichever is the greater). As the recommendation had arrived the day after the previous Board meeting, the Board was consulted before the Chair and Vice Chair took urgent action to implement the recommended pay award backdated to 1 August 2018.

The development of a HR Strategy for the recruitment and retention of staff in this challenging environment was underway.

Governors noted that there would be an internal audit on non-delivery staff efficiency, which was thought would be a helpful piece of work.

Governors noted the excellent work being done on low sickness rates overall and expressed their thanks to all those concerned for their hard work.

*Tanya Crofts left the meeting*

**09/19 Open Session**

**Resolved** – that the meeting be re-opened.

**10/19 Curriculum Update**

The Assistant Principal noted that Teaching, Learning and Assessment was now 84% good or better. Themes were identified through observations and CPD offered little and often.

Work had been going on to engage more parents in a bid to address some poor behaviours. There had been meetings with the Principal in a 'case conference' approach with limited success to date.

In respect of Higher Education, the very positive employer engagement into newly developed qualifications had been a very welcome move. Consideration is being given to engaging in the Teaching Excellence Framework, for which it was believed the College could achieve 'silver'. The HE improvement plan was making progress and would be brought to the next meeting for consideration by the Board.

Curriculum intent had started for next year and it was reported that the work which was being done in respect of considering external information, such as labour market and market share, in shaping the offer was gaining the respect of local networks.

It was asked whether the curriculum intent of the College could continue to include subjects such as Art, as there was not a huge demand locally for

artists. The Assistant Principal noted that there were a number of pathways arising from art, including digital skills and computer design, which would serve those students well.

As part of the work going on, the impact of Brexit was also being considered in respect of skills gaps, working with the Local Enterprise Partnership and local authorities.

## **11/19 KPIs**

The Deputy Principal noted that there had been some stabilisation on finance and curriculum performance, with learner progress overall looking strong. It was asked why Sport and Public Services was looking so low and explained that the issue was with the first year (last year) of a new level 3 programme. It was coming good this year, but there was an historical impact. Attendance was still under target, particularly on English and maths and Management were looking at different methods to tackle this issue.

In respect of English and maths November resits, the results had now been received with a pass rate of 52% for English and 50% for maths, which the Board were pleased to note.

## **12/19 Governance**

The Board noted the resignations of Les Agnew (from 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019) and John Dunn (from 31 January 2019).

The Chairman paid tribute to Les Agnew, who had been a governor for nine years, during which time he had demonstrated considerable commitment to the role and support of the College, participating in many of the committees and working groups. He would be very much missed as a colleague and friend of the College. The departure of John Dunn, who had been a big support during Ofsted re-inspection, was also recognised.

Following advertisement and interview with the Chair and Principal, and consideration by the Search and Governance Committee, recommendations for four new appointments were being made and were accepted. These would be for 1 year in the first instance, followed by 3 years by mutual agreement, aggregated to a 4-year first term of office. All the appointments would be subject to reference checks and DBS standard checks.

The student governor's, John Thinnesen, first term of office was due to expire in March and it was agreed to extend this to the end of the academic year.

Following consideration by the Search and Governance, jointly with the Remuneration Committee, it was recommended that the AOC's remuneration code for Senior Staff be adopted and the Code of Good Governance amended accordingly. This was agreed as was the Pay Statement for publication on the internet (the terms of reference of the

Remuneration Committee could be found in the standing orders already published on the internet).

The minutes of the Search and Governance Committee were noted and the attention of the Board was brought to the recently published guidance in respect of the FE Bodies (Insolvency) Regulations 2018, which had been circulated in advance of the Board meeting. The Board noted their current sufficient cash reserves to note some comfort and that they were considering viability in the long-term.

**Resolved –**

- 1) That the Board notes the resignations of John Dunn (from 31 January 2019) and Les Agnew (from 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019);
- 2) That Alison Hampson; Nigel Holliday; Loren Redmond; Elaine Clinton be appointed as Governors from 1 March 2019 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020, renewable for a further three years by mutual agreement and subject to satisfactory DBS standard checks and references;
- 3) That John Thinnesen's appointment be extended to 31 July 2019.
- 4) That the Remuneration Code for Senior Staff be adopted and the Pay Statement be approved for publication.

*Staff and students withdrew*

**13/19 Confidential Session**

**Resolved –** that the Board move into confidential session

**14/19 Senior Postholder Reviews and Remuneration**

**Resolved –**

- 1) that the confidential minute of the performance reviews of the Principal and the Clerk of 13 December 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.
- 2) the minutes of the meeting of the Remuneration Committee of 15 January 2019, giving the Senior Postholders and the Clerk the same pay award as staff for 2018-19, backdated to 1 August 2019 be received and noted.

**The meeting closed at 7.40 pm**