

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 13 December 2018 at 5.30pm in the Boardroom of the College.

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Les Agnew; Norma Boyes; Tanya Crofts; Stuart Williams; Claire Madden; Chris Nattress (Principal); Andrew Oldham; Denise Rollo; Mark Stanger; Dr Robin Talbot; Elizabeth Walker

Apologies: John Dunn; Phil Jardine; Helen Johnson; Robert Milburn; John Thinnesen

Also present: Karen Wilson (Deputy Principal); Daniel Braithwaite (Assistant Principal); Jane Murray (Clerk)

98/18 Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held in open session on 15 November 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

99/18 Declarations of Interest

None received.

100/18 Agenda Management

The Chair took the opportunity to bring to a close the earlier discussions held during the strategic session.

It was agreed that the Executive should bring the scope of an independent piece of work looking at future options for the College to the Board for their approval.

There were no other changes to the agenda, other than the thanks extended by the Chairman to outgoing governors Helen Johnson, Elizabeth Walker and Andrew Oldham for all their work and valuable contributions over the years. The work of Andrew Oldham as Chair of Audit for eight years was also noted and recognised by the Board.

101/18 Confidential Session and Minutes

Resolved –

- 1) To move into confidential session
- 2) That the minutes of the meeting held in closed session of 13 December 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

102/18 Strategic Update - confidential

The Principal updated the Board on various strategic issues, following the AOC conference, in a confidential session, including:

- There looked like being very little in the way of change in respect of college finances in the immediate future and the tone adopted by the responsible Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills did not give rise to optimism.
- 16-19 funding levels were being maintained for 2019-20 in a recent letter from the ESFA.
- The AoC continued to fight for Further Education with policy makers, who still did not fully understand technical education. T-Levels were seen to be a cornerstone of technical education.
- The criteria for inclusion on the Register of Apprenticeship Providers were being strengthened and all existing providers on the register would need to reapply in the New Year, including the College. Like-for-like apprenticeship numbers continue to fall.
- Ofsted were reviewing their inspection framework with change anticipated for September 2019 and a review of Post-18 education was underway.

103/18 Risk Register- confidential

The Deputy Principal presented the risk register to the Board in confidential session. While overall the Board was content with the risk register in its new format, it was requested that the Safety Criteria in respect of the impact levels be reviewed in that any serious health and safety incident could be catastrophic to the College.

104/18 Self-Assessment Report and QIP - confidential

The Board had received the headline SAR at the previous meeting. The Board were content overall with the report, maintaining a 'good' grading. It was again questioned whether there was an element of under-selling of performance. The Assistant Principal felt that there were still some areas of inconsistency and felt that when these had been addressed, then this would be reflected overall with some areas of outstanding provision anticipated for next year.

While achievement rates were slightly above the national average, and retention rates were strong, inconsistency was also attributed to the slight drop in pass rates. The QIP reflected those areas, where there would be closer monitoring of performance.

The steps being taken in respect of GCSE maths were again noted and the challenges being faced by the College had been witnessed by a Governor in a recent learning walk, where some students were clearly struggling with some quite basic concepts. It was hoped that the Maths Centre for Excellence, revitalised teaching with different approaches would assist in gaining the hearts and minds of those still attempting their GCSE maths.

The Quality Improvement Plan was felt to be a fair reflection and would be monitored by the Board.

Resolved –

- 1) That the self-assessment report be approved for submissions to Ofsted;
- 2) That the Quality Improvement Plan be approved.

For the record, it is noted that while the sessions were confidential, the minutes arising are not redacted.

105/18 Open Session

Resolved – to re-open the session.

106/18 Audit Committee Annual Report and Financial Statements

The outgoing Chair of Audit presented the Annual Report of the Audit Committee, which summarised the nature of the work carried out during the year and noted the reasonable assurance offered by the Internal Auditor's Annual Report. Performance had been strong both in the quality of work carried out by internal and external auditors and also the quality of work which had been scrutinised. Particular note was made of the 100% profile of recommendations closed off, for which staff were congratulated. The Board was content with the annual report, which they were happy to submit to the ESFA.

Turning to the External Auditor's management report and the financial statements, as demonstrated by the draft minutes of the Audit Committee, these had already been well scrutinised and the Board, having given them their due attention, were content with the financial statements and congratulated the Audit Committee on the work they continued to carry out. They were content for the Chairman to sign the Financial Statements as a true record and for the letter of representation in favour of Armstrong Watson to be signed.

Some concern was expressed about one issue, which had been noted about some unsatisfactory performance in respect of payroll by a company contracted to carry out this function. This could lead to regulatory and financial risk and the Deputy Principal was asked to review arrangements.

The student prize fund accounts were noted and the revised financial regulations, scrutinised by the audit committee, approved.

On the recommendation of the audit committee:

Resolved –

- 1) That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 27th November 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.
- 2) That the internal auditor's annual report be received and noted;
- 3) That the Audit Committee's annual report be received and approved for submission to the ESFA;
- 4) That the External Auditor's Management Letter be received and noted;
- 5) That the Financial Statements 2017-18 be approved for signature of the Chair and Principal;
- 6) That the letter of representation for Armstrong Watson be signed by the Chair on behalf of the Board;
- 7) That the financial regulations be approved;
- 8) That the student prize fund accounts be noted.

107/18 Management Accounts & Financial Monitoring

The management accounts to the end of October were presented to the Board, having been considered by the Finance and Corporate Working Group. It was noted that a national software error on key financial reports had impacted on estimates of apprenticeship income, however overall it was felt that the College was largely on target for its financial plan.

The Tuition Fee Policy was presented and agreed, there being little change to the previous year. This was subject to any changes in funding regulations.

An update of sub-contractor performance was received and noted, and increased monitoring and contingency planning around one contractor in particular was noted.

Resolved –

- 1) That the management accounts be received and noted;
- 2) That the Tuition Fee Policy 2019/20 be approved;
- 3) That the update of sub-contractor performance be noted;
- 4) That the draft minutes of the Finance and Corporate Working Group of 29 November be received and noted.

108/18 Key Performance Indicators

The key performance indicators were received and noted. 16-19 recruitment had been below target, which would have an impact of circa £70,000 on funding for the following year.

While attendance remained below target, it was stronger at this point than it had been the previous year.

It was questioned why study programme learners with the NCfN were looking below target and it was noted that this referred to one Level 3 course and agreed that there was a need to look into that further during the academic performance review.

Noting the briefing received previously from the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, it was requested that at some point in the academic year that the Board should take a more in-depth look at progression/destinations.

109/18 Curriculum Update

The Board noted the update, including:

- Digital learning was being embraced by staff;
- New approaches to sharing best practice in English and maths and digital learning were successful;
- CPD was being reviewed in light of feedback;
- Observations and learning walks continued to provide the evidence and analysis to align with Quality Improvement Plans;
- Student engagement had been refreshed, leading to a new group of ambassadors and some learner led social groups and focus groups with the Senior Leadership Team.

The Board's attention was drawn to an increase this year in some poor learner behaviour, which had led to some cases of abusive and violent behaviour, which was unusual. This had led to three learners being excluded, with a further three on final written warning and a college-wide approach to tackling persistent low level behavioural issues. On further questioning, it was felt that there was some work to do in co-operation with the schools to offer a different form of transition for some learners.

110/18 Facilities Update

An update on health and safety and estates management was received and noted. It was noted that there had been no Riddor reportable incidents in the past three years.

It was noted the successful tenderer for insurance was FE Protect (Brokers) using Aviva insurance, resulting in a £20,000 per annum saving on the cost of insurance, with increased cover as follows:

Cover	
Employer Liability	£25m
Public Liability	£25m
Governors	£5m
Professional Indemnity	£5m
Business Interruption	£34m
Cyber Attack	£250k
Full commercial crime	£1m
Employment Practices Liability	£250k

Resolved – that the insurance cover be approved.

111/18 **Governance**

Resolved –

- 1) To note the resignations of Elizabeth Walker (staff governor), Andrew Oldham and Helen Johnson effective from 31 December 2018
- 2) To approve the amendments to the Barclay's Bank Mandate authorising the following signatures on the Lakes College accounts:

“A” List

K Wilson

D Braithwaite

C Nattress

M Southward

“B” List

N Hamblin M Birschel

J Irving V Pallister

C McGuinness N Anderson

S Rogers

- 3) That the Office for Students registration be received and noted, including the issues requiring specific attention of the Board raised in Annex F.

Staff and staff governors withdrew

112/18 Confidential Session

Resolved – to move into confidential session.

113/18 Performance Reviews – confidential

The performance reviews of the Principal and Clerk were received and noted by the Board.

The meeting closed at 1920h.