

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 15th November 2018 at 5.30pm in the Boardroom of the College.

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Norma Boyes; John Dunn; Phil Jardine; Helen Johnson; Claire Madden; Robert Milburn; Chris Nattress; Andrew Oldham; Denise Rollo; Mark Stanger; Dr Robin Talbot; Tanya Crofts (until Minute No 90/18)

Apologies: Les Agnew; Stuart Williams; John Thinnesen

Also present: Karen Wilson (Deputy Principal); Daniel Braithwaite (Assistant Principal); Mark Birschel (Quality Manager, until minute no 90/18); Jane Murray (Clerk)

86/18 Minutes

Resolved –

- 1) that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.
- 2) that the draft minutes of the Quality Working Group of 11 October 2018 be received and noted

87/18 Declarations of Interest

None received.

88/18 Chairman's Address

There were no changes to the agenda. In respect of self-assessment it was suggested that those with the expertise in the area might like to lead off on the questioning, with the opportunity for others to follow on.

89/18 Principal's Introduction to Self-assessment

The Principal reminded Governors of the operating context against which the college sector was performing and updated them on some recent developments.

The austerity regime continues. Studies into the education sector show that the last seven years have seen a £3.3 billion pound cut to the college sector and there were no new announcements in the budget in favour of the sector. This is in spite of an increased pay grant to secondary schools to support teacher pay and a £7,000 pay gap between colleges and schools.

It was also noted that employer contributions for the 'Teacher Pension Scheme are due to rise from 16.48% to 23.5% (provisional figure) in Autumn 2019 at a cost to colleges of 2% of their income.

There had been some movement on apprenticeships in the budget with levy payers now able to transfer 25% of levy to their supply chain and a reduced contribution for SMEs from 10% to 5%, the impact of which is yet unknown.

It was asked and confirmed that the College was now able to get into schools to put the message across that there was an alternative to 6th form and an opportunity to earn while you learn, which would still offer a pathway to university, governors feeling that this message was still not getting across to parents.

It was noted that not one college in Cumbria had been selected for T Level pilots – only those with 'outstanding' teaching and learning were selected, which included some schools.

Against this backdrop, it was noted that teaching staff were under increasing strain, which makes quality improvement all the more challenging.

At the same time as austerity, the insolvency regime is due to come into force, taking away the safety net that colleges have previously enjoyed. The college is not yet at a position of distress, however, there was a need to be mindful of the challenges that might well be on the horizon.

Externally, some financial distress was beginning to be seen in the higher education sector, according to recent reports, and it was thought that there were equally challenges to other colleges in the area.

On quality issues locally, Progress 8 scores had recently been released for local secondary schools, with no surprises and a comparatively large percentage below average.

The Principal ended on a more positive note, noting the award for best people strategy from the NDA supply chain, the Golden Apple Award for best FE provider and that 50% of those in the Welding final at Worldskills were from Lakes College.

90/18 Self-assessment

The Principal continued with a summary of the Self-assessment findings for Further Education for 2017-18 (the full version of which will be tabled to the December meeting).

He summarised performance as good, as validated by Ofsted, but not good enough to reach the upper quartile performance, which was clearly the ambition. 29% of provision continued to require improvement and it was now

about changing the mind set of staff, about individuals taking ownership and responsibility, and about ensuring that the college returned to financial sustainability.

The Principal continued to summarise the key strengths and areas for improvement. Noting the overall strong areas of performance, including the first outstanding grading for some years (for catering), governors continued to question on Areas for Improvement:

Asked why eTrackr continued to be an area for improvement following a sustained period of intervention, it was felt that it was very effective in a majority of areas, but that the quality of input in some areas was not as good as it should be and these inconsistencies were being addressed.

Asked whether there should not be some of the assessment indicators showing outstanding, it was felt that some of the inconsistencies in performance was holding the College back. It would be anticipated that there would be outstanding elements in next year's SAR.

Some disappointment was expressed about a further RI improvement grading for hairdressing and business management. In respect of hairdressing, staffing issues were being addressed with a recent new recruitment. It was felt that such issues had been addressed in business management, but that there continued to be some legacy issues.

It was asked why attendance had not featured in areas for improvement, it was accepted that it might be addressed more explicitly, however was intended to be covered within the strategies to improve outcomes.

It was also queried as to why there was no mention of teaching and learning in any of the areas for improvement. While accepting that TLA was overall a strength, learner surveys seemed to suggest that there were some areas where it could be still be improved and it was agreed to reflect on this before the final version was tabled.

Tanya Crofts left the meeting.

Turning to the self-assessment for Higher Education, the Quality Manager presented a comprehensive self-assessment report and Quality Action Plan, which drew on a comprehensive data analysis, including individual area self-assessments, outcome data and national and college learner surveys.

This showed that achievement rates were high and improving on most courses; that learners are overall well supported and that programmes were well-managed and well designed to meet local need.

There did continue to be some areas for improvement in specific areas, including some concerns over achievement on the HNCs for Computing, Construction and Art, and retention issues on the FD in Early Years, HND Photography and HNC business.

It was questioned whether some of the spikiness in performance was attributable to a small cohort of students and confirmed that this was the case in some instances.

It was also asked whether there should be any concerns in respect of retention in respect of leavers, however, advised that apprenticeship leavers could have an impact on the overall leaver figures (which do not translate into the retention figures).

Concerns were reflected in the Quality Improvement Plan, which governors verified would return to the Board for monitoring purposes.

Resolved –

- 1) That the Higher Education SAR and QIP be received and noted.
- 2) That the return to the Office for Students in respect of the higher education information received by approved for signature.

91/18 KPIs

The Deputy Principal presented the first set of KPIs for 2018-19, noting that not all data was available owing to software updates. 16-18 recruitment looks like being 855, which would mean a reduction in funding of £60k for next year.

Adult recruitment was looking better than anticipated, but this was a number of small, short courses. Apprentices were looking strong against the national trend of decline. Numbers were up 43% over the same period the previous year. HE recruitment was not where we needed it to be, but with a January recruitment window, expected to come good.

The new strategies for attendance were noted. The extent of TLA which was rag-rated as green was noted and asked why in some instances it wasn't higher. This was attributed to the fact that when there were new members of staff, they were automatically categorised as amber until there had been sufficient observations.

Given the better than anticipated adult recruitment, it was asked whether the forecast should be changed and felt that it was too early in the year to change the forecast.

92/18 Confidential Session and Minutes

Resolved –

- 1) To move into confidential session
- 2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2018 in confidential session be approved and signed as a correct record.

It was noted that the Sellafeld tender for leadership and development training had been let. Lakes College had been involved in two of the tenders, but not the winning tender.

93/18 Finance- confidential

Financial monitoring and third party sub-contracting were discussed.

94/18 Open Session

Resolved – that the meeting be re-opened

95/18 Safeguarding and Prevent Annual Summary

Following their safeguarding and prevent training/refresher session before this meeting, the Board received a comprehensive overview of activity in 2017-18, covering training, partnership working and the achievements of those learners who had been supported through these processes. Some minor changes had been made to the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy, which included the peer on peer abuse.

Resolved – that the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy be approved.

96/18 Governance

The standing orders had been circulated by e-mail. Some minor issues had been advised, but nothing of a material nature. Governors were content to approve the standing orders on the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee.

The draft minutes of the Search and Governance Committee, at which an annual overview of governance had been considered, were received and noted, including figures for attendance.

The Instrument and Articles required to be changed to accommodate changes to disqualification by charity trustees.

The staff governor, Stuart Williams, had been appointed on a 1-year basis initially and it was agreed to extend this for a further 3 years.

Resolved –

- 1) That the standing orders for 2018-19 be approved;
- 2) That the changes to the Instrument and Articles (as tabled) be approved;
- 3) That Stuart Williams be re-appointed from 1 January 2019-31st December 2021

97/18 Equality and Diversity Annual Report

The Board considered an overview of the performance of learners with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Overall, performance was good and achievement gaps identified were being addressed.

Resolved – that the Equality and Diversity Annual Report be approved for publication.

The meeting closed at 1935h.