

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 13 May 2021  
at 5.30 pm by Microsoft Teams

Present: Michael Priestly (Chair); Amie Calvin (from Minute No:40/21); Elaine Clinton; Beth Gaskell; Alison Hampson; Nigel Holliday; Phil Jardine; Chris Nattress; Denise Rollo; Brooke Robson; Tanya Weston; Stuart Williams

Apologies: Norma Boyes; Peter Ellwood; Arraon McCarthy; Robert Milburn

**35/21 Governor Re-appointments**

Noting that there had been an administrative error, the Board agreed to the immediate re-appointment of Phil Jardine on the advice of the Search and Governance Committee. It was noted that, while this would be a 3<sup>rd</sup> term of office, that there had been regular refresh of the Board membership in the past few years and would be further fresh appointments shortly.

**Resolved** – that Phil Jardine be re-appointed with immediate effect until 30 December 2024.

*Phil Jardine joined the meeting*

**36/21 Minutes**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021 in open session be approved and signed as a correct record.

**37/21 Declarations of Interest**

Phil Jardine and Mike Priestley in their re-appointments.

**38/21 Agenda Management**

No changes

**39/21 KPIs**

The Board received and noted the Key Performance Indicators. As previously advised it was unlikely that the College would meet its Adult Education Budget, with a tolerance set by the ESFA at 90% in comparison to 68% the previous year.

However, apprenticeship starts were the same as the previous year, which would assist with financial sustainability and certainly contrary to the sector trend, which had seen a drop in the apprenticeship market overall. There may

be a need to reconsider the staffing establishment for next year in line with increasing demand.

Attendance is under target, but given the circumstances considered to be strong, with improvements to maths and English as activity returned to site. It was noted that different strategies had led to improvements in attendance and progress.

There was renewed focus on work placement activity, which given the circumstances, was below target. A targeted effort was being made to get work placements completed and some work placements were taking place in College. There was confidence that the rate would be improved, but it was unlikely that the target would be fully met.

Retention rates had maintained from the previous year.

It was asked about progress data for higher education, which had changed from the previous figure, and noted that data was accurate at a certain point in time. The measurement was against aspirational targets of the learner. It was noted that some work required to be done with HE staff to ensure that the targets set were realistic. However, assurance was given that good progress was being made as 97% were anticipated to pass.

It was asked about measures being taken to progress maths and English (grade 4 or above 26% for English and 18% for maths, below target). Grades had to be submitted to the exam Board by 18<sup>th</sup> June and a lot of effort was going in to ensure there was sufficient assessment evidence for all learners to be considered at the assessment Board on 14<sup>th</sup> June.

In response to follow up questioning on the impact of maths and English on achievement rates, there was not the same concern about GCSEs as there was about functional skills and particularly functional skills maths. It was acknowledged that there was lost learning through a failure to engage online and that this was being given top priority (and included employer engagement work with apprentices), with special catch up sessions scheduled.

#### **40/21 Curriculum Update**

It was felt that CPD is effective, with staff members actively involved in their personal development and 91% of teaching good or better. It was felt that a change of approach to quality assurance activity had brought about a change of culture, with staff owning their own development and benefiting from the peer sets.

Preparation for T-Levels was gathering pace, with funding achieved to help support implementation. Approval had been secured for all T-Level routes with appropriate awarding organisations. Special events were being maximised to secure interest in the offer and schools had been largely cooperative in their access and IAG.

English and maths had been considered in the previous item, but attention was drawn to the activity taking place as outlined in the Continuous Improvement Plan attached. In particular areas of concern, the use of disciplinary action was being reluctantly being taken where sustained refusal to engage had taken place.

Higher Education showed strong levels of learner engagement with 95% attendance and recent student liaison forums had been helpful in gauging levels of satisfaction. The strategy was due for refresh and would be brought to the Board for approval. In the interim, the Board noted the Continuous Improvement Plan for higher education and the successful outcomes of the NCfN higher education provision.

It was asked the extent to which T-Levels would undermine the apprenticeship offer and acknowledged that there would be some risk that one would undermine the other. However, employers have been very supportive in respect of the T-Level provision and had contributed to the curriculum design.

It was felt that some routes would be easier when working with employers, for example 'Health and Social Care' as the existence of the nurse cadet programme was a strong foundation on which to build.

#### **41/21 Stakeholder Report**

The Board received a comprehensive report of surveys, complaints and compliments of which a few key points were discussed:

- Some variable participation rates for surveys (study programme learners at 61% but apprenticeships at 26%) and work continued to improve participation rates
- Satisfaction rates overall were good with learners and parents, but lower with Higher Education satisfaction rates at 89%, with liaison meetings being used to improve engagement in this area.

The Board felt that overall it was a very positive report, but still had some unease about the level of participation and was pleased to hear that efforts were still continuing and that a new HE strategy would target this activity. In respect of parents, it was felt that they had not been in the college and therefore staff had been unable to personally approach them on their way in and out of parents evenings to secure feedback

A member of the Board reflected on a recent conversation with a student about their experience of the pandemic and online learning, who had said that staff had been absolutely brilliant and that there was nothing more that they could have done, which they felt should be recorded as a compliment.

#### **42/21 Facilities Report**

It was noted that there would be changes to the rules for face-coverings, with the recent change in government guidance, with no coverings required in class from Monday, but based on risk assessment we would still require in communal areas.

Health and Safety performance was received and noted, including the fact that there continued to be no RIDDOR reportable incidents.

It was noted that the College was working towards achieving ISO14001 Environmental Management Standard and that it was displaying the necessary information in line with the Streamlined Energy Carbon Reporting requirements on the College website.

The Civils project was progressing well and continued on budget and the latest contractor update states that no issues will impact the practical completion date of 23 July 2021.

TUPE discussions for Lakes College Enterprises with catering staff continued and were progressing positively. It was a tight timescale, but staff and students would be consulted on what they would like from the new service.

(In the context of the catering competition from the new service station across the main road), it was asked what plans there were for the Pelican crossing to be commissioned. It was thought this had been part of the planning permission and suspected that highways rules and regulations would be holding up proceedings.

#### **43/21 Confidential Session and Minutes**

**Resolved -**

- 1) To move into confidential session
- 2) That the minutes of the meetings of 11 and 18 March 2021, held in confidential session, be approved and signed as a correct record subject to an amendment to replace 'Port of Workington with Workington; in respect of minutes of 18 March 2021. .

#### **44/21 Financial Recovery Plan – confidential**

The Deputy Principal discussed projects to bring the College back to good financial health, as measured by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

#### **45/21 Strategic Plan Update – confidential**

*The minute of this item is not redacted.*

The Board considered the evaluation of progress against the strategic plan after nine months of operation. It was felt that good progress had been made, that a more detailed consideration would take place in June and that

fundamental changes arising from the White Paper could have an impact on the way of working with employers. The Board concurred that it was a strong performance.

**46/21 Strategic Update – confidential**

The Principal updated the Board in respect of various tender, funding and collaboration projects.

**47/21 Finance Update – confidential**

The Deputy Principal update the Board on the current financial situation.

**48/21 Open Session**

**Resolved** – to re-open the session

**49/21 Boardroom Briefing: Safeguarding and Prevent**

The Board was reminded of their responsibilities under safeguarding and prevent legislation and received feedback from the link Governor on his impression of the way in which safeguarding and prevent was dealt with by college.

He noted that there was good debate on rag ratings; that both the college counsellor and the police were involved now giving a much better sense of partnership working; he also noted that some more challenging students were being given every opportunity to succeed, and that there had been a high take up of staff training.

**50/21 HR strategy**

It was noted that a new HR system was being implemented, which was being well received. An overview of a recent leadership and management survey was shared, which was largely positive and an opportunity for reflection on what staff were saying.

The impact of sickness from Covid was also received and noted, however, overall, the college had not been as badly affected as some others.

**51/21 Governance**

The draft minutes of the Search and Governance Committee were received and noted, as was the issue of new Post-16 Audit Code of Practice and a draft code of Governance.

It was noted that the HE code of governance was suggesting an independent Governor. Following review by the Search and Governance Committee it was proposed that the terms of reference of the search and governance committee be reviewed be reviewed instead, to reflect a backbench, independent view.

The search and governance committee was also recommending the re-appointment of Michael Priestley for a 3<sup>rd</sup> term of office noting that there were opportunities for a refresh of membership with two vacancies and a third anticipated in December.

**Resolved –**

- 1) That the Terms of Reference for the Search and Governance Committee be reviewed;
- 2)

*Michael Priestley left the meeting*

- 3) That Michael Priestley be re-appointed from 1 July 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

**The meeting closed at 1945h.**