

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 30th June 2021 at 1730h by Microsoft Teams

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Amie Calvin; Elaine Clinton; Peter Ellwood; Beth Gaskell; Phil Jardine; Aaron McCarthy; Robert Milburn; Chris Nattress (Principal); Denise Rollo; Tanya Weston; Stuart Williams

Apologies: Norma Boyes; Alison Hampson; Nigel Holliday; Brooke Robson; Aaron McCarthy

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

52/21 Minutes

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held in open session on 13 May 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

53/21 Declarations of Interest

None received.

54/21 Agenda Management

No changes to the agenda.

55/21 Key Performance Indicators

It was noted that 16-19 learners were above target and apprenticeship performance was strong. As previously advised, it was doubtful that the contract would be reached on the Adult Education Budget and a clawback was anticipated for December 2021.

Attendance remained flat, as previously advised and below target, however, to be anticipated under the circumstances.

Functional Skills maths remained a concern, however, Functional Skills English and GCSE maths and English were showing improvement, with GCSE maths currently showing a 14% increase in high grade achievement.

It was noted that while work placements were below profile, that some activity had been achieved in more recent weeks with simulated and video activity playing a part.

Tanya Weston joined the meeting.

56/21 Curriculum Update

The Assistant Principal gave an overview, noting that GCSE outcomes were looking quite positive, with significant increases in high grade predictions of English at 45.6% and maths at 51.4%. There had been a request for five students to be moderated, selected at random.

It was asked to what the increase could be attributed and felt that many students did not react well to exam conditions and assurance was offered that the grades had been subject to robust scrutiny. Overall pass rates are likely to be slightly down owing to cohort size.

It was asked whether the Maths Centre for Excellence had helped to contribute to high grade improvements and felt that it had certainly added value, but that there had been continuing changes and sharing of best practice which had assisted.

A real improvement had been secured in Functional Skills English, but maths remained a challenge and it was noted that there needed to be some significant change to secure improvement.

Robert Milburn joined the meeting.

Moving to apprenticeships, it was felt that staff had closed down apprenticeships well, although circumstances remained challenging for health and social care, in respect of access to the workplace during the pandemic.

It was felt that there had been some really positive results for Higher Education degrees, but a slight drop in results for HNC/Ds. It was felt that students on those courses had not prepared as well as they might and that best practice would be shared with all staff. There was also a review of provision as part of the HE review of strategy with good input from staff about the vision for the next three years.

There was confidence that the T-Level programme was on track. Awarding organisation approval had been secured, in addition to funding for teaching programmes. Asked about progressions routes, it was noted that a level 2 programme was being developed, which would assist learners to apply for the level 3 in due course.

It was asked whether the issue over staffing had been resolved and it was under review, after the recruitment exercise had failed to secure any significant interest. It was felt that the construction lead might have a role to play in overseeing the offer.

It was asked where it was felt that the offer might attract additional students, and it was felt that the Level 2 offer might capture 'new' students who just missed out on a Level 3 place and that as the offer matured, that it would become more attractive to a wider market.

57/21 Student Governor Report

The Board received a report from the student governor (Brooke Robson), who had participated in some discussions with individual students for both Further Education and Higher Education about their experience of learning in the pandemic.

It was noted in her report, that there was some consistency from those participating that they felt that they had been well equipped by the College to enable access to learning and that any issues were more to do with motivation and connectivity. However, students had felt well supported by staff and by well-being coaches, and all the students spoken had continued to achieve.

The Board was pleased to have a student view. It was questioned about the apparent different levels of rapport with tutors arising from the blended learning model (ie some students felt that they didn't know the tutors as well if they were only 'meeting' them online), and it was accepted that there would be some fine tuning to blended learning for the coming year.

The Board recognised the contribution of Brooke to the Board. They thought it a balanced report and that she had made an excellent contribution to the Board, which had been very much appreciated and were pleased for her that she was moving on to university, but would miss her input. The Chair noted that he had written to Brooke and to the other student governor and students who had assisted this year.

Beth Gaskell left the meeting

58/21 Confidential Session and Minutes

Resolved –

- 1) That the Board moves into confidential session.
- 2) That the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

59/21 Strategic Plan Targets – confidential

(The minute is not redacted)

Following the strategic sessions held on 8 June 2021 (notes tabled), the Board approved the subsequent amendments to targets, including equality and diversity. It was noted that, in the face of very challenging circumstances, that there had been good progress in meeting targets for the existing year.

Resolved – that the strategic plan targets be approved.

Beth Gaskell rejoined the meeting

60/21 Strategic Update - confidential

The Principal updated the Board on a range of local and national policy initiatives, and business opportunities.

61/21 Budget 2021/22 – confidential

The Deputy Principal presented the draft budget for 2021/22, which would see a return to good financial health. Given uncertainties, she requested the Board to approve a downgrade of financial in year 3 to Good (from outstanding

Resolved –

- 1) That a capital programme budget of £300,000 be approved for 2021-22;
- 2) That the financial plan for 2021-22 be approved;
- 3) That the financial health grading for year 3 be downgraded to 'good'.

62/21 Finance Update - confidential

(This minute is not redacted)

The Deputy Principal presented the May management accounts, which looked more promising than earlier versions as some of the apprenticeship income was now included. It continued to be the case that the Adult Education Budget would not be reached and provision had been made for a clawback in December.

The cleaning contract with Lakes College Enterprise Ltd was performing well and catering would be taken over as previously agreed. Two members of staff had transferred over, but not the catering manager and the company was out to advertisement.

The Board received and noted the Treasury Management Review, considered by the Finance and Corporate Group and had no further questions, and noted the opportunities register which had also been considered by the Working Group.

63/21 Risk Register - confidential

The board received, considered and reviewed the Risk Register, which had been considered by the Audit Committee, with some amendments approved in respect of fraud control. It was felt that the register reflected risks well.

64/21 Open Session

Resolved – reopen the session.

65/21 Audit Committee Recommendations

The Board received and noted the draft minutes of the audit committee.

The Board received and approved the Internal Audit Plan which they felt struck a good balance. It was asked whether the civills project would feature, but felt not in the coming year, although a post-project analysis would be presented to the Board.

The discussion had at the Audit Committee in respect of the Data Protection Officer was noted by the Board and it was felt that in order to achieve the necessary overview, that the Deputy Principal continue to hold the role but the decision-making process be documented to demonstrate sufficient impartiality in the decision-making process.

A review of the financial regulations was received, noted and approved.

Resolved –

- 1) That the internal audit plan be approved;
- 2) That the Deputy Principal continue her appointment as Data Protection officer;
- 3) That the financial regulations 2021-22 be approved.

65/21 Policies and Procedures

It was noted that the College required to re-apply for End Point Assessment status and as part of the process, that a review had been carried out of the conflict of interest policy, of the anti-corruption and bribery policy and of the gifts and hospitality policy to ensure a better balance between the financial risks and the academic risks. With some minor amendments, it was felt that this had been achieved and the Board was happy to approve them.

The Standing Orders had been reviewed in consultation with the Search and Governance Committee and the Board was content with the amendments proposed.

Resolved –

That the following policies be approved:

- 1) Conflict of Interest Policy
- 2) Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy
- 3) Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- 4) Standing Orders

66/21 Governance

The Board received a periodic review of confidential minutes and agreed the conclusions reached.

Governors had been consulted on their membership of committees in the coming year and the proposals were agreed.

The Board received and noted that the key requirements of the funding agreement had been carried out.

Resolved –

- 1) That the confidential minute review be approved;
- 2) That Committee memberships and Link Governors for 2021-22 be approved.
- 3) That the Board receive and note the funding agreement checklist for 2020-21

The meeting closed at 1910h.