

Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporation held on
Thursday, 30th June 2022 at 1715h in Room F026 (and by teams)

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Elijah Bennett; Elaine Clinton; Peter Ellwood;
Aaron Groggins; Nigel Holliday; Phil Jardine; Robert Milburn; Chris
Nattress; Lee Todd; Tanya Weston
By Teams: Alison Hampson; Denise Rollo; Beth Wordsworth

Apologies: Paul Hardon

Also Present: Karen Wilson (Deputy Principal); Jane Murray (Clerk)
By teams: Daniel Braithwaite (Assistant Principal); Paul Fairclough
(Dean of HE) (Min nos 46-50/22)
Helen Higgs, Chair of National College for Nuclear (Min No 48/22)

46/22 Minutes

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held in open session on the 12
May 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record, subject to an
amendment in respect of attendance.

47/22 Declarations of Interests

None received

48/22 National College for Nuclear

The Chair welcomed Helen Higgs, Chair of the National College for Nuclear,
to the meeting to provide the Board with an update on NCfN activity. She
outlined the tremendous amount of activity in the sector currently on skills,
noting the energy security strategy and the review, including skills, being
carried out by the cabinet office, of which the National College was likely to be
a key plank of skills' delivery.

The college was also contributing to work streams in the Great British Nuclear
Project, focused on new nuclear activity.

The role the College had to play in the Net Zero agenda, with the National
College for Nuclear represented on the BEIS net zero group, was further
noted.

There was also collaboration between the nuclear advance manufacturing
centre and NCfN and an intention to breathe new life into the the
Memorandum of Understanding with the ECITB.

Karen Wilson joined the meeting

The Chair noted that Sizewell C was expecting to receive Government go-ahead in July; the role of NCfN in facilitating expertise between Hinkly Point C and Sizewell, liaising with local colleges and universities, was encapsulated in an MoU. There was a recognition that best use of activity was to use existing education system and work in partnership.

The Chair felt that the next steps for NCfN was to review the model, the support, charging and fees, to ensure the model is robust. Thanks were offered to Karen Wilson for the Finance Director support of a re-write of the commercial strategy.

It was asked whether she felt that the National College for Nuclear now enjoyed better political support. What she did feel was that the founding members got the model absolutely right, that the federated model supported the sharing of curriculum and the sharing of risk, and that Government were quite supportive and happy with the way in which NCfN had evolved.

The Chair of Lakes Corporation thanked Helen Higgs for her time and update of NCfN activity.

Helen Higgs left the meeting

49/22 Lakes College NCfN Provision

It was noted that Lakes provision accounted for the largest provision of engineering and science HE in Cumbria. It was well resourced bringing in expertise where necessary to fill skills gaps from industry.

There were five foundation degrees now offered, two offers at HNC and HND level; and four honours degrees (top-ups). In order to facilitate progression, there was also a level 3 entry level course for those who perhaps didn't have the traditional stem qualifications. Commercial courses were a growing area, particularly around nuclear behaviour programmes.

Working was continuing around validation of further foundation and honour degrees to support future developments. In addition to this, there was some partnership working with an employer and university around their requirements, which would allow some amendments to our new degrees, future-proofing their relevancy.

All degrees mapped to apprenticeships and the work down on this approach was recognised by Ofsted during their level 5 deep dive.

An impressive track record of results was shared, which included 42 x first class degrees, and noted that progression rates stood at 95%.

The Board felt that the results were strong. They noted that to maintain such attendance rates coming out of a pandemic was to be commended. It was asked where the students were coming from and these were mostly from

employers, but the team does scrutinise and evaluate students before registration.

It was asked about the significance of the HE apprenticeships coaches and felt that this role provided the learner with appropriate support.

50/22 HE Strategy and HE CIP

The Dean of HE noted that, while there had been good development work and a strong picture of achievement, there were a few areas where more work was needed. They had noted that target setting could be stronger, with around 10-15% of learners not making the anticipated progress at reviews.

Learner satisfaction continued to be an area for improvement. At 86% satisfaction rates for an area of very high achievement would suggest that low participation rates of 44% may be influencing figures. Action planning was continuing around satisfaction rates and target setting.

The HE Forum continues to focus on continuous improvement, aligning the quality cycle to the University of Cumbria's requirements as a validation partner. The strategy sets very challenging targets.

New degrees were being developed, including a digital foundation degree, sharing HE practice across the College to support growth. While appreciating the anticipated growth, it was asked whether there were the resources to deliver. It was felt that the use of associate staff, working in partnership with the College helped to provide some flexibility and additional expertise. It was asked whether there was appropriate training in place and assurance given that all CPD was in place for associates, including mandatory training such as safeguarding. It was, however, recognised that a more formal framework for the use of associates/guest lecturers would be required if greater use was to be made of this resource.

It was asked whether there were sufficient physical resources to accommodate more students and noted that there were other areas of the college that could be used.

The HE strategy had been drawn up in line with anticipated demand from the Learning Skills Improvement Plan and had six main themes running through it; that courses were accessible; that they were focused on technical and vocational programmes; that experiential models were used; that employers lead the content and that each programme embeds work readiness.

By 2025 it was intended that admissions should increase to 590 per annum with survey completions of 70% and learner and employers satisfaction of 95%, while continuing high achievement rates.

Resolved –

- 1) That the HE strategy, including the academic framework, be approved
- 2) That the HE CIP be received and noted

51/22 Key Performance Indicators

The Deputy Principal presented the KPIs, noting that at this time of the year the messaging would be familiar to the Board. Although numbers were now standing at 642 adult learners, this continued to be below target. Apprenticeship starts continued to be strong; HE learners were above target.

Attendance was around target, however, English and maths attendance continued to be a challenge. It was asked about attendance in Construction which appeared to be lower than other departments and it was felt that this would largely be attributed to some foundation learners on a carousel course who were traditionally difficult to engage.

It was again asked about apprenticeship progress; it was recognised that this was a new system which aimed to look at a broader basket of measures than had traditionally been the case and assurance was offered that there was not felt to be a fundamental problem on apprenticeship progress.

52/22 Strategic Plan Targets

Noting that there was still data to be collected for 2021/22, the Deputy Principal noted progress on a number of the strategic targets supporting the strategic plan. She felt that there were positive indicators on achievements, but that full outturn would not be known until later in the year. There was confidence that achievement gaps were being addressed.

There was clear evidence that the College was becoming an employer-driven organisation, responding to employer need through effective partnerships in areas such as: civil engineering; nuclear; construction; digital; quantity surveying; civil engineering, scaffolding; steel work and digital.

In respect of staffing matters, there remained some challenges on turnover and recruitment; on pay awards and the pressures of work (teaching was a tough profession). New ways of working were being employed, including working with employers to train the trainer.

The Board noted both progress and the issues highlighted which had been a theme throughout the year.

53/22 Confidential Session

Resolved –

- 1) to move into confidential session;
- 2) that the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record;
- 3) that the confidential minute of Remuneration (independent governors only) be approved and signed as a correct record.

54/22 Improvement Plans – confidential

The Principal discussed the improvement plan for an aspect of curriculum delivery.

55/22 Business Development – Confidential

The Principal updated the Board in respect of several projects in support of the strategic plan.

56/22 Finance – confidential

The Deputy Principal updated the Board in respect of the financial position of the College.

57/22 Risk Policy and Register

(Held in confidential session due to the nature of the content, the minute is not deemed to be confidential)

On the recommendation of the Audit Committee, approval of a revised Risk Policy and Register were sought. There had been agreement that the revisions to the policy were both welcome and thorough. The risk register, it was felt, was comprehensive.

Resolved –

- 1) That the revised risk policy be approved;
- 2) That the risk register be received and noted.

58/22 Open session

Resolved – that the meeting be re-opened.

59/22 Governance

The Clerk sought the Board's approval of the Standing Orders for 2022-23 following consideration by the Search and Governance Committee.

The Board received and noted a checklist pulling out key elements of the funding agreement which is circulated on an annual basis.

The Quality Working group minutes of 040522 were received and noted for information.

On the recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Board approved the Internal Audit Plan noting the Chair of Audit's observations that it was a comprehensive and well-balanced plan.

Both the Committee Memberships and the Board Calendar for 2022-23 were approved.

There had been two attempts at advertisement in 2022-23, including LinkedIn, which had, on this occasion, a response. This being the case, the Search and Governance Committee had authorised an approach to Sarah Allison, who was a former student and currently promoting business innovation for the University of Cumbria. It was asked whether having another governor from the University of Cumbria would create an issue and it was felt not as this had been an approach in a personal capacity and they operated in two very different areas. Sarah Allison had met both the Chair and the Principal, who noted a diverse range of skills and experience, which would be helpful to the Board, and the Board were content to appoint.

In respect of the external review of Governance, the Clerk requested the guidance of the Search and Governance in providing oversight and recommendations to the Board which was agreed.

Resolved –

- 1) That Sarah Allison be appointed to the Board from 1st September 2022 – 31st August 2023 in the first instance, extendable by three years by mutual agreement and subject to references and a DBS check.
- 2) That the standing orders be approved;
- 3) That the Committee memberships 2022-23 be approved;
- 4) That the Board Calendar 2022-23 be approved.
- 5) That the annual overview of compliance with the funding agreement be received and noted;
- 6) That the Search and Governance Committee take the lead on the external review of governance.
- 7) That the Board approves the audit plan for 2022-23 on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

The meeting closed at 1950h