

Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 1730h in the Boardroom (with participation by teams)

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Elijah Bennett; Rachel Bass; Aaron Groggins; Paul Hardon; Phil Jardine; Robert Milburn; Chris Nattress; Denise Rollo; Lee Todd; Beth Wordsworth (from 61/22)  
By teams: Sarah Allison; Alison Hampson; Elaine Clinton (Until Minute No 64/22)

Apologies: Peter Ellwood; Nigel Holliday

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

## **60/22 Appointments**

*Paul Hardon and Rachel Bass left the meeting*

Rachel Bass had put herself forward for the business support staff governor.

Paul Hardon was due to complete his first, 1-year, term of office and the Search and Governance Committee were recommending the re-appointment for a further three years.

### **Resolved –**

- 1) That Rachel Bass be appointed staff governor from 6 October 2022-5 October 2023 (renewable by mutual agreement);
- 2) That Paul Hardon be reappointed from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022-31<sup>st</sup> July 2025

*Paul Hardon and Rachel Bass re-joined the meeting*

Both Sarah Allison, whose first meeting it was, and newly-appointed Rachel Bass, were welcomed to the Board by the Chair and fellow Board members.

## **61/22 Minutes**

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held in open session on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **62/22 Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were declared for the remaining items of business.

## **63/22 Safeguarding & Prevent**

In his annual update and Boardroom Briefing, the Assistant Principal (and Designated Safeguarding Officer) reminded the Board of their responsibilities under safeguarding and prevent legislation and drew their attention to key policy and guidance updates.

He reminded them of a far greater focus on sexual violence and harassment between children. The message was getting across that this form of behaviour was not acceptable and would be challenged.

### *Beth Wordsworth joined the meeting*

It was clarified that the behaviour was predominantly male on female, with only a few incidences of female on male harassment. It was asked whether the fact that such behaviour was being reported was publicised, as it was felt that this would give confidence to others that they were not alone in being subjected to such behaviour. Although not currently done, it was accepted that this might be worth considering.

Governors were reminded that children may not feel ready or know-how to speak up and were reminded of the process for disclosure. It was asked about how they were encouraged to report and noted that there was a whisper button that they could use, but always more work to be done.

He also drew attention to the challenges that those with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 may face, particularly with transition to a new environment.

Online safety continued to be a high-profile activity and the College continued to use a monitoring system which alerted members of the Safeguarding Team when there was an issue (generally triggered by key words being typed into the search engine). There was also work to support and disseminate information to parents and carers. It was asked about volumes and felt there were large volumes of students on a weekly basis, who there then advised, and between 5-10 members of staff (which tended to be inadvertent).

He confirmed that the extension of safeguarding guidance to include online social media checks in addition to other checks such as DBS had been implemented.

In reminding Governors of the Prevent Duty and drew attention to the biggest issue in the area, that of right-wing extremism. There had been no referrals to Channel in 2021-22.

The Board was given reassurance that all their responsibilities were being met and that learners on the safeguarding register were achieving. It was noted that Michael Priestley was the Safeguarding link governor who attended some meetings.

It was noted that, in 2021-22, there had been 168 learners in receipt of counselling and 100% achievement & positive destinations for Looked After Children.

There had been 32 learners who had been monitored as part of the SG & P register, with core themes of mental health; substance abuse; police investigations; domestic abuse; neglect; suicidal ideation and missing from home.

100% of staff had completed safeguarding and prevent training.

It was asked whether the current cost of living crisis was seeing increased numbers of vulnerable learners from a welfare perspective. It was felt that this was certainly the case, but that there was access to free breakfasts for all students and an increased uptake of free school meals. It is asked in the application form about hardship for adult learners and the experience this year has been that there has been greater disclosure. The position would be monitored throughout the year.

Noting the updated guidance from the DfE, the Safeguarding and Prevent policy had been updated.

**Resolved** – that the Safeguarding policy be approved.

## **64/22 Key Performance Indicators**

The Deputy Principal presented the outturn figures for 2021-22. As had been previously indicated, study programme numbers were below target with anticipated £44,000-£50,000 clawback, however this would be offset with funding rate increases and formula updates. Adult activity was also down on numbers and clawback anticipated and included in budget planning.

Following an in-year revision of apprenticeship progress monitoring, there was an improving trend, and it was noted that, while still not at target, there had been a 91% outturn for industrial placements. Retention had suffered towards the year end, which would affect achievement rates. Maths and English, and ALPs would be covered in the next agenda item.

Turning to provisional recruitment figures, these were looking strong, but Governors were reminded that there was a six-week rule whereby students could drop out before they become a validated start.

As at 25<sup>th</sup> September 2022, numbers were over target by 50, but you would expect this to fall. It was thought there had been a strong recruitment to T-Level provision. Adult numbers may fall into the 16-19 contract as continuing learners, but a reasonable start in comparison to the same point the previous year. Apprenticeship starts were showing relatively strong over the same point the previous year.

It was asked whether the curriculum reshaping had had an impact and felt that it took time, noting that in the current market it was necessarily the case that upskilling was required to secure a job. Not in the adult budget, but being progressed was the college participation in bootcamps.

It was asked about facilities for increased numbers, and while it was recognised that early timetabling had led to some pressure points, it was felt that most of the issues had been resolved and that there was capacity on paper. It was also noted that horizon scanning for capital monies continued and that this might also include capital works for HE.

## **65/22Curriculum Update**

In an annual overview, the Assistant Principal noted that there had been an issue with retention in construction towards the end of the year, which was likely to have an impact on overall achievement rates, coupled with a significant drop in pass rates in Business and Digital. This would be examined in more detail during self-assessment (and in Governor sessions). In respect of GCSE English and maths, while English had fared better, outcomes were below predictions particularly for maths.

It was questioned whether the Springboard programme had failed to produce anticipated results and it was felt that it had given an accurate starting point, and had worked well in English, but less so in maths. There had been attendance issues and, staffing issues in maths, and challenges in getting students to the exams, particularly when they had felt they had not done well in the early papers. There would be work undertaken to see what lessons from the approach could be transferred from English to maths.

The Principal noted that the sector had been facing this challenge for over six years, where the failure from schools became the issue for colleges. He noted that functional skills should be the answer, but the syllabus was now out of reach of many of these students.

Noting the challenges faced, nevertheless the Board asked what else could be done. It was confirmed that closer monitoring would be undertaken, together with an improvement plan. It was confirmed that national benchmarking data would be available at self-assessment. It was asked what kind of exam preparations were used and confirmed that there were different levels of exam preparation offered, but not all had been attended.

The Board asked for regular performance monitoring reports in respect of maths to come to the Board throughout the year.

Moving on to ALPs value added, the overall grading was below target at grade 4. Analysis would be carried out to determine the factor at play, which may have included teacher inflated grades coming out of the pandemic. It was asked whether scorings in some areas felt like a surprise and it was felt that digital computing had certainly been a surprise and teaching and learning assessments would be reviewed.

Of the Level 3 graded programmes which were not part of the ALPs dataset, there had been good performance with above target improvements from the previous year.

A review is taking place of specific Level 3 programmes to address inconsistencies and gain a deeper understanding of approaches.

The Board was pleased to note that the T-Level offer was gaining ground.

### **Resolved –**

- 1) That the Board receive regular monitoring updates of maths performance this year;

- 2) That digital and business be included in self-assessment sessions, alongside English and maths (and previously agreed monitoring areas).

*Elaine Clinton left the meeting*

### **66/22 Stakeholder Report**

The Deputy Principal presented the Stakeholder report noting that both complaints and compliments had increased, of which complaints were 17 and compliments 24. In providing an analysis of complaints, Governors could see that the nature of a complaint, which had been categorised as staff professionalism, were of a fairly minor nature and agreed that there should be a further category which was more appropriate and which would be discussed with the Quality Manager on his return.

Study programmes looked quite strong, with responses generally above target, and apprenticeships quite positive although the low response rate of the latter was noted. There had been a good response rate for Higher Education (HE) in contrast to previous years which was pleasing.

The HE student governor drew attention to the IT issues raised in the NSS survey and the Deputy Principal explained that some Wifi issues were being addressed, sharing a heat map of coverage in the building. It was quite technical, but the issue seemed to lie in shaking awake some of the access points in the building, which digital services were progressing. She added that there were some software issues, and in particular that the software should be accessible online. This was again being progressed with the Dean of HE and the Head of Digital services. Progress would be shared with the HE forum.

### **67/22 Confidential Session and Minutes**

**Resolved –**

- 1) That the Board move into confidential session
- 2) That the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

### **68/22 High Needs Action Plan – Confidential**

The Principal shared action being taken.

### **69/22 Strategic Update – confidential**

The Principal shared some local and national developments including partnership projects.

### **70/22 Finance Update - confidential**

The Deputy Principal gave an update of financial issues.

**Resolved –** that the treasury management policy be approved.

### **71/22 HR Report (Annual Summary) – confidential**

The Board received an overview of staff activity in 2021-22, including a positive staff survey return and discussed the pay award.

### **72/22 Open Session**

**Resolved** – that the session be re-opened.

### **73/22 Governance Review**

On the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee, the Board was asked to appoint Shirley Collier to carry out the external review of governance which was a mandatory requirement every three years. All those considered were of a similar cost and the Search and Governance Committee felt that the breadth of Shirley's experience just gave her the edge, noting at the same time, that there had been another strong candidate.

The Clerk also requested the Board's approval for the approach to the review of how the College meets local need, which would be modelled on the scrutiny review approach from (local government).

**Resolved** –

- 1) That Shirley Collier be appointed external reviewer;
- 2) That the approach to the local needs review be adopted.

### **74/22 Health and Safety Annual Summary**

The Board received the annual overview of health and safety performance. They were pleased to note that it was a strong performance and that the College was showing comparatively strongly in the staff survey. They were also pleased to note the work going on in respect of retention of staff in their first year.

### **75/22 Governance**

The Board received the report of the use of the Corporation Seal in 2021-22 academic year. They also noted both Data Protection and Freedom of Information activity. That the audit minutes of the June meeting and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2022 be received and noted.

On the recommendation of the Audit Committee, that the Regularity Audit be approved for signature.

**Resolved** – that the Board approves the regularity audit for signature by the Chair and Principal.

*Staff, staff and student governors withdrew*

*The Principal and the Clerk withdrew for their respective reviews*

### **76/22 Performance Reviews**

The Board received and noted the performance reviews of the Principal and the Clerk.  
**The meeting closed at 2015h.**