

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 5.30pm in FO26 of the College with participation by teams.

Present: Michael Priestley; Peter Ellwood; Paul Hardon; Phil Jardine; Robert Milburn; Chris Nattress; Denise Rollo; Kirsten Williamson;

By teams: Sarah Allison; Elaine Clinton; Nigel Holliday; Lee Todd; Alison Hampson.

Apologies: Beth Wordsworth; Aaron Groggins; Elijah Bennettt

Also Present: Shirley Collier, External Reviewer of Governance (Min No: 28/23)  
Karen Wilson, Deputy Principal; Daniel Braithwaite, Assistant Principal;  
Jane Murray (Clerk)

### **28/23 External Review of Governance**

In presenting her findings (the Board having received a summary report), Shirley Collier had concluded that the College is well governed. She felt that structures and processes were strong; that Governors were skilled, knowledgeable, have integrity and behave ethically; that the culture and interactions within the Board and Exec/SLT are positive and aligned; and that the Board has a positive impact and is effective.

Her priority areas for development were to prioritise in-person board meetings, to enable governors to better to know one another and college staff better; to consider developing areas of special interest (possibly by extending the link Governor scheme); and to discuss and better articulate the impact that governance has, with a post-meeting review format contributing to the discussion.

Governors noted that the Search and Governance Committee would receive the full report; that priorities would be agreed and added to the Governance Improvement Plan and that the Executive Summary would be published on the website.

Shirley Collier was thanked by the Board for her work on the review, which had been well received.

### **29/23 Minutes**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held in open session on 23 March 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

### **30/23 Declarations of Interest**

A declaration of interest was received in a confidential business item, the details of which are in the confidential minutes.

### **31/23 Key Performance Indicators**

In addition to the strong performance in the current year, it was noted that 16-18 applications were again strong this year. In discussion of the adult offer, it was noted that the Level 3 entitlement for adults had been well received and had been over contract, however it was clear that adults were not willing to pay for full qualifications and consideration was being given nationally to another model, with modular activity. The Board agreed that it was a complex landscape.

It was noted that work had been undertaken to access as much of the Adult Education Budget as possible and that consideration was being given to better targeting, such as the access course to HE (whereby the loan is discounted when they get to university), in addition to online delivery models.

While it was acknowledged that employers were more savvy about using the levy, the Board did reflect on the burden to employers of releasing the apprentice for 6 hours a week and the commitment by other members of staff to mentor the apprentice through the programme.

In respect of apprenticeship performance, a rebasing of targets had taken place and it was questioned whether we now felt we had the right performance measures for next year. It was confirmed that a recovery plan was having an impact and there was confidence that progress was being made.

It was asked about the covid legacy still and it was felt that the care sector in particular was still feeling the impact, but noted that motor vehicle apprentices had just gone for their End Point Assessment for the first time.

It was felt that attendance had now steadied out across the board and in English and maths was at 75%.

While industrial placements for study programme learners was marginally behind target, there was confidence that this was on an upward trend. It was noted that T-Level students had all had their work placements with one student gaining a choice of two jobs from their industry placement.

The Deputy Principal noted that work was already taking place to understand the root causes of any retention issues in-year. This needed to be understood in order to ensure that processes and procedures were different in the coming year.

Returning to applications again for next year, these were strong, with the success of the apprenticeship academy noted by the Board.

### **32/23 Curriculum Update**

It was felt that some progress had been made on maths and English attendance and noted that there had been a whole raft of interventions and half-term coaching sessions.

There continued to be a lot of interest in T-Levels from DfE, with a lot of reporting and monitoring. It was felt that the college had embraced T-Levels, but it was also noted that the skills level for staff was more demanding. It was asked whether there was not an opportunity to celebrate success locally on T-Levels, however, felt that DfE marketing campaigns were very focused on areas of population density. It was asked whether any problems had been encountered in respect of the recognition of the qualification by Higher Education Institutions and it was felt that none had been apparent.

It was noted that the new Stems Skill centre was getting good feedback from employers, who felt that it was a fantastic resource.

Safeguarding and prevent activity was discussed, including awareness raising events with students, with feedback from the learner voice strong that learners felt safe in college. Assurance was sought and received that the Designated Safeguarding Officer was content that the processes and procedures for handling incidences were even-handed and sensitive, with good co-operation with partner organisations.

CPD activity was noted, including some of the themes, such as SEND which had been an area of focus over the year. It was asked whether the College offered some of the College courses to staff and noted that there was a bidding system when staff wanted support for certain types of training and that those new to teaching would undertake a full teaching degree with Uclan.

The Board received and noted the update.

### **33/23 Stakeholder Surveys**

The Quality Manager presented the Stakeholder Surveys, which he felt presented a very positive picture overall. The Board remarked that the addition of the actions being taken in response to the surveys was very worthwhile.

This included deep dives into some areas to triangulate some of the survey results, to be able to determine whether there was an underlying trend to be addressed.

Complaints were low overall for the size of the College and where there were trends emerging, those areas would be identified for a deep dive. However, it

was also felt that compliments were still not being appropriately logged and work continued to capture the wide range of compliments that were received.

There was also a feeling that the college was over reliant on surveys and alternative ways to engage stakeholders were being considered.

It was asked how the college knew that any issues had been addressed and it was felt that the deep dive process gives visibility of any issues and progress being made. Reference was also made to the quality cycle, for example plan; do; check; act, which would feature in the refreshed quality strategy.

### **34/23 High Needs**

The Principal noted that the change to the curriculum had been successful with a better set of programmes on offer and evidence of a more ambitious approach to achievements. The Board was reminded that an expert had been brought in to support and that this had proved effective. The task now would be to ensure that staff were upskilled to provide that internal expertise.

While engagement was better with prospective students, it was still not as good as it could be. However, consideration was now being given to a summer school, noting that transition was important in understanding any retention issues.

Asked about the High Needs scorecard, this was about self-assessment and making sure across all provision that services was meeting the need.

### **35/23 Confidential Session**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held in confidential session on 23 March 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

It was noted that the final agreement for the IoT, which was slightly different from that tabled to the last meeting (as KPIs had been set for this year), had been circulated to the Board, noting that the number of students advised at the last meeting would be incorporated into next year's version of the KPIs.

### **36/23 Finance Update – confidential**

The Deputy Principal discussed the current financial situation and the future outlook.

### **37/23 Strategic Plan - confidential**

The Board discussed the content and direction of the strategic plan.

### **38/23 Accountability Agreement and Review of Local Needs**

*Held in confidential session the minute of which is not redacted.*

The Principal presented the Accountability Agreement, which was now a statutory requirement tied to funding, which gave some high level targets to work to in line with delivery of the Local Skills Improvement Plan. The Chair of the working group, which had reviewed local needs, noted that there had been six sessions where there had been review of the SDF programmes, deep dive into apprenticeships, review of questionnaires of stakeholders carried out by a third party, ending with a good session with the Chamber of Commerce and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Board welcomed the documents and noted how both these documents and the strategic plan were aligned.

**Resolved** – that both the accountability agreement and the review of local needs be approved for submission to the ESFA or publication on the website as appropriate.

### **39/23 Strategic Update - confidential**

The Principal updated the Board on national and local policy and partnership developments.

### **40/23 Collaboration – confidential**

The Board considered potential partnership opportunities.

### **41/23 Open Session**

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

### **42/23 Facilities Report**

The Board received and noted an overview of health and safety performance and estates management, with particular mention and recognition of the extensive programme of capital projects coming to an end (including the aforementioned STEM facility).

### **43/23 Governance**

The Clerk sought approval for Alison Hampson to take on the role of the Higher Education Governor to be appointed to the Higher Education Academic Board which was required under the recent contract with the Open University.

A mature terms of reference for the Academic Board and approval was sought and received to give Alison Hampson the authority to approve the final version on behalf of the Board.

**Resolved** –

- 1) That Alison Hampson be appointed as the Higher Education Governor

- 2) That delegated authority be given to Alison Hampson to approve the final terms of reference for the Higher Education Academic Board.

*Nigel Holliday left the meeting*

#### **44/23 Confidential Session**

**Resolved** – to move into confidential session.

#### **45/23 Remuneration to a Governor for provision of services**

The Board received a thorough report requesting the remuneration of a governor for services they would be providing to the College which were not connected with their governor role. This was permissible under the Charities Act 2022, was for a defined period and the skills and experience that they brought were considered to be unique and value for money. The maximum amount of the remuneration was set at £4,000 at £50 per hour. This was subject to a formal letter of agreement. The specific terms and conditions and resolutions are contained in the confidential minute for this agenda item.

**The Board meeting closed at 2000h.**