

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 at 1730h in room FO26 with participation by teams.

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Sarah Allison; Elaine Clinton; Peter Ellwood; Nigel Holliday; Phil Jardine; Robert Milburn; Chris Nattress; Denise Rollo; Beth Wordsworth; Kirsten Williamson (from Min No 14/23)

By teams: Alison Hampson; Aaron Groggins; Paul Hardon; Lee Todd

Apologies: Elijah Bennett

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

In attendance: Shirley Collier (External Reviewer)

### **12/23 Minutes**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held in open session of 26 January 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

### **13/23 Staff Governor Appointment**

**Resolved** – that Kirsten Williamson be appointed as a staff governor from 23 March 2023 to 22 March 2024 (to be renewed for a further 3 years by mutual agreement).

### **14/23 Key Performance Indicators**

The Deputy Principal presented the most recent key performance indicators, reminding governors of the growth in full-time numbers, aided by the T-Level offer.

It was noted that adult numbers remained below contract (clawback anticipated) although that the level 3 entitlement has been very successful and exceeded contract and an uplift received.

Apprenticeships were considered to be a success story, with the STEM academy proving very popular, in addition to provision in Carlisle. It was good to see 50-60 'would-be' apprentices attending to go through their pre-apprenticeship interview coaching.

Higher Education figures were above target (and would be feeding into the apprenticeship numbers) and their progress was on target.

Looking at progress measures for FE, it was felt that the vocational progress was looking very strong at 88% and strong pass rates anticipated. This was a mixture of learners and staff both carrying out self-assessment.

In respect of Apprenticeship progress, it had been rebased in February and was being monitored on a monthly basis. Asked about issues, it was felt that there was still a concern about timely achievements. In response to questioning it was confirmed that progress was recorded by the professional judgement of staff.

It was asked whether there could be more specific monitoring of progress in the areas of most concern in respect of apprenticeships and felt that this could be identified from the rag rating table below.

Turning to maths, it was noted that the figures presented reflected those students who had sat both papers and this reflected 17% against a target of 35%. It was noted that there had been a parents' evening and general improvements in attendance, but that this continued to be a challenge. There were opportunities for catch up and 1-2-1 interventions.

It was felt that, from Governors' review of Maths in the quality working group, that there were very many strategies being used and some frustration at a lack of impact. It was asked whether there was some external input that may be worth considering. It was felt that there were no easy answers to any of it and that the college was plugged into the Maths Centre of Excellence. It was felt that the changes that had been made would have an impact, but that it was a slow burn.

It was asked whether there were options for the curriculum, but it was a universal curriculum (although consideration was being given to changing awarding body). It was asked whether consideration was being given to whether the KPIs were right, in that there needed to be risk management of the maths and English strategy. Acknowledged that this would be factored into the planning cycle from September.

It was felt that there were signs of improvement, in that attendance had improved with parental intervention – it was noted by the Chair from conversations had with parents that they had felt that they could have been brought in earlier – and that 70% of learners felt that they were learning things. There was a third paper to be sat at Easter and it was volunteered that those results would be brought back to governors and that greater visibility would be given in each curriculum paper of the state of progress.

Asked about benchmarking, English was performing well, but it was acknowledged that maths was performing in the bottom of the benchmarking data.

**Agreed** – that paper 3 maths mock results return to the board and that greater visibility of progress be offered to governors with a view to review at the end of summer term.

Moving to retention, there had been a decrease in retention, some on the basis of behaviours and some moving onto apprenticeships. Asked about any other reasons, and it was acknowledged that analysis should be carried out as it was felt that the availability of work in a time of high cost of living would also be having an impact. It was also felt that the College was working in higher risk areas. It was asked whether there was a need to flex the target if 94% was not achievable, but felt that the target was part of the overall national data sets. Both early years and service industries were of concern from a retention perspective.

Retention rates could have an impact on overall achievement rates and the fact that all indicators were that vocational programmes were strong would help to offset any disadvantage.

Turning to the lead indicators, student applications were very strong for the time of year, 200% up on the same point as last year with apprenticeship academy applications very strong at 296 applications and a strong interest in T-Levels.

### **15/23 Curriculum Update**

The success of T-Levels, as demonstrated by the continued growth in applications, was noted in contrast to sector unease in respect of T-Levels. It was noted that, through NCfN and NSSB an off-site work placement package had been drawn up which, if approved by the DfE, would give comfort to Sellafeld Ltd and the supply chain in their ability to offer placements without the risks involved in on-site activity. It was also noted that employer incentives for work placements had been re-introduced by the DfE.

A broad range of personal development activity for students was outlined to the Board, who sought assurance that the social impact measures were being appropriately recorded and confirmed that there was a log of activity.

Adult learning continued to be challenging and work continued to look to develop an offer which was more attractive, such as a hybrid model.

The new teaching and learning strategy had been launched in February, which included techniques which supported SEND students, and had been well received.

In conclusion, the Assistant Principal noted some very strong results in the Higher Education final awards.

It was felt that there was some strong performance in the update, and notable achievements, which were worthy of celebration.

### **16/23 Equality and Diversity Strategy and Performance**

An earlier draft had been considered by the Board and revisions had taken place. It was asked what benefit the quality mark would bring and felt that it was an external review, which would add weight to the action plan.

It was asked whether the strategy conformed to DDA guidelines and whether we were also confident that the website conformed to guidelines and it was confirmed that there was an inbuilt control to the website which was reviewing on a daily basis.

It was requested that some change around some of the terminology be effected to bring clarity to building access.

It was asked whether there was a diverse offer of catering and acknowledged that the offer had to be commercial, so not as diverse as might be desired.

It was asked about the gender pay gap (it was reminded that this was in the financial statements) and noted that it was slightly better, but that the tendency for women to take part-time admin roles had an impact.

It was asked whether hearing disability was adequately reflected and this would be reviewed.

**Resolved** – that the Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action plan be approved.

### **17/23 High Needs Monitoring**

In presenting the action plan, the Principal felt that significant improvement had been made. In response to questioning, the Principal was supportive of a suggestion to look at green transport initiatives for those with special needs, encouraging independence as well as low carbon footprint through bus travel.

In response to questioning, the Equality and Diversity link governor was able to confirm that the remaining 'red' rating was the formal recording of parental input and not the fact that there had been no contact with parents.

### **18/23 Confidential Session and Minutes**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the meetings held in confidential session of 26 January 2023 and 9 February 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

### **19/23 NCfN Update - Confidential**

The Board received an update of activity and discussed amendments to the articles.

**20/23 Lancashire and Cumbria Institute of Technology - confidential**

The Board discussed the nature and extent of their involvement.

**21/23 Finance and Corporate Update - confidential**

The Board discussed financial information and other updates.

**22/23 Strategic Update**

The Principal presented an update of strategic and partnership activity.

**23/23 Risk Register**

The Risk Register was received, noted and discussed.

**24/23 Open Session**

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

**25/23 HR Update**

Picking up on previous requests, the detail of staff turnover was noted in the report presented. As there had already been some discussion of HR issues, discussion focused on sickness absence and it was confirmed that all the previous practices were in place including the Bradford factor, counselling service, physio and it was considered that there was a lot more coughs and colds in terms of short term absence.

It was noted that the annual summary report for HR would give the overview of absence picture, but in the interim it was requested that there should be greater detail from the past year.

**26/23 Whistle-Blowing Policy**

The Clerk presented a slightly revised whistle-blowing which had been considered by the Audit Committee and recommended to the Board for approval.

**Resolved** – that the amendments be approved subject to the provision of an alternative email address in case of allegations against the Clerk.

**27/23 Governance**

The Clerk noted that both written resolutions E01 and E02/2023 had been carried by 11 and 12 votes in favour respectively.

The review of local needs was progressing, with several meetings now held, the evidence from which would support the final report.

The draft minutes of the Student Board were received and it was noted by the student governor present that there had been good engagement and continued interest in the sustainability agenda, in addition to channels of communications with learners.

The minutes of the Finance and Corporate Working Group were received and noted.

**The meeting closed at 1950h.**