

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held at 1730h on Thursday, 26th January 2023 in FO26 and by teams

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Peter Ellwood; Elijah Bennett; Aaron Groggins; Phil Jardine; Robert Milburn; Chris Nattress; Beth Wordsworth
By teams: Elaine Clinton; Paul Hardon; Nigel Holliday

Apologies: Sarah Allison; Lee Todd; Alison Hampson; Denise Rollo

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

01/23 Minutes

Resolved – that the minutes of the meetings held in open session of the 8 and 15 December 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

02/23 Declarations of Interest

None received.

03/23 Key Performance Indicators

The Deputy Principal reminded the Board of 16-19 growth that had been achieved this year, which had amounted to 910 learners and attributed at least some of that growth to the T-Level offer.

She noted that the development of the T-Level offer did not necessarily mean efficient delivery at the outset as class sizes were small in some instances and it was not always easy to combine the T-Level offer with other classes.

She also noted that the alternative provision for learners, open to those who had found the transition to main college difficult, had helped retention rates. It was asked what the prospects were of them coming back to main college and it was felt that this was the aim, but that some may need more of a stepped approach. For those who were looking to return to mainstream college, an inclusion panel approach would be adopted. With retention rates of 97.6% (and 98% in construction which was generally a challenging area owing to the nature of some provision), it was felt that strategies were having an impact.

She noted that AEB provision remained static and was limited by what provision was fundable (which was not always what people wanted). Partnership work was progressing to explore and expand the offer for unemployment (of which there already was a fair bit of provision). Clawback from the AEB last year had been £300,000, with clawback being instigated for 62% of providers. It was asked whether there were lessons that the College could learn from the 38% who were successful in avoiding clawback and felt that this was what was being explored.

Good growth has been seen on apprenticeships, however the Adult Learner Numbers were low. This contrasted with the National Skills Level 3 Adult provision, which was over-performing.

HE starts had been very strong with 450 being predicted, noting the two start dates of September and January.

16-19 attendance was marginally below target and, in response to questioning, it was felt a factor was the economic situation, which had led to an increased number of students working in part-time jobs to contribute to family finances.

Of this, attendance for maths and English was standing at 71% (this overall figure included some functional skills provision). It was asked about the breakdown between maths and English and for GCSEs it was 71% for maths and 74% for English.

Reference was made by the Assistant Principal to the 75% project, which meant a series of interventions for those failing to secure 75% attendance in maths or English, including parental intervention and motivational/disciplinary meetings. It was asked what the attendance had been for the maths mocks that week and it had been 80%, which the Board felt was very encouraging. The Chair added that those who had attended a Quality Working Group deep dive into maths had been impressed that there had been lots of ideas and that staff were having a real go at improving outcomes.

Study programme learners progress was slightly below target; HE Learners were on target and it was felt that apprenticeship predictions may still be a bit high. Where performance was below target, there would be a concerted effort to address any issues in this term.

It was asked why there was limited data on stakeholder satisfaction and particularly for Employer satisfaction. It was acknowledged that the timeliness of data collection required review but that there was a major piece of work going on to capture that view very comprehensively which should be available for the next quarter.

Moving to the lead indicators, it was felt that early signs were encouraging with early T-Level applications looking strong. It was noted that there had been an apprenticeship academy event where 171 learners expressed an

interest, of which 24 have submitted an application, and 45 apprenticeship places were secured from employers, which was welcomed.

It was noted that staff turnover continued to be of concern, however, there were signs that some leavers were now looking to return.

In respect of staff sickness, which was on the rise, it was asked about Covid policy and confirmed that the policy was as per the latter stages of the pandemic, with most people being able to work from home. It was asked whether the Bradford factor was still in place and confirmed that it was, with both physio and OHT support offered. However, there were some significant long-term sickness absences that the College was dealing with.

It was noted that a number of apprenticeships had gone beyond the end date and the increased risk of not getting the achievement through was acknowledged. It was a priority to get those apprenticeships through and this was being closely monitored (and hence on the lead indicators).

The Chair drew attention to the notes of the Quality Working Group for those who were interested in maths.

04/23 Curriculum Update

Bearing in mind the behaviour issues which were discussed at the previous meeting, the Assistant Principal was pleased with the feedback from the most recent student survey, that 94% of learners feel safe in college. Of the 2% who disagreed, these were being followed up. This would suggest that measures taken were having an impact.

There would be a focus on prevent themes throughout the second week of February (internet safety day), making sure that learners can identify the risk of radicalisation and extremism. It has become apparent that while many learners understand safeguarding, the understanding of specific terms in respect of radicalisation and extremism is not as consistent.

It was asked whether financial pressures at home were having an impact on safety and safeguarding, for example was there scope for coercion and an increase in petty crime. It was felt that this was a different way of looking at things, which was welcomed and there was no evidence thus far. Those where there may be home issues were added to the safeguarding register, and there was always a watchful presence for signs of crime, but there had not been a discernible issue. The main issue was the attendance of learners working in part-time jobs as previously discussed.

Turning to apprenticeship provision, assurance was given that there was a focus on quality improvement work in a 100-day plan. There was development work in play to align and improve onboarding processes for apprenticeships and it was suggested in response that there might also be an additional action for onboarding of employers. It was noted that the apprenticeship team was

working closely with employers, but it was a complex process which took some understanding.

Turning to TLA (Teaching, Learning and Assessment), it was noted that there had been a deep dive into each curriculum area and had generally been welcomed. The Assistant Principal was particularly pleased with the changes to staff induction to better support and retain new staff. He also drew attention to the success of a T-Level tutor who had been approached by an Awarding Organisation to assist in the development of training and assessment materials for the Health and Social Care T-Level.

A refreshed TLA strategy was due to be launched at the February staff conference day.

05/23 Confidential Session

Resolved –

- 1) To move into confidential session
- 2) To approve the minutes of the meetings held in confidential session of 8 and 15 December and sign as a correct record.

06/23 High Needs/RIP

The Principal updated the Board in respect of high needs development work.

Nigel Holliday left the meeting

07/23 Strategic Update

This minute is not redacted.

The Principal gave assurance that work on the strategic plan was progressing. The opportunity had been given to senior staff to input into the process and a special meeting had been organised for 9th February 2023 to update the Board.

There was no more to update on ONS reclassification at the moment, except that the College was in a good position with no borrowings. A college in the North West had been in the middle of a capital project for which they had a bank loan agreed and this was withdrawn with the announcement of a return to the public sector.

Nigel Holliday re-joined the meeting

Attention was drawn to an imminent DfE audit for the bootcamps initiative (that initiative being led by the LEP). It was noted for the record that Lakes College was the only one of the Cumbrian Colleges that had agreed to

contract for this provision, with the rest being delivered by independent training providers.

The Lancashire and Cumbria Institute of Technology was progressing for provision for 23/24. Before formally signing up, there was some groundwork to establish to bring clarity to the cost of doing so.

Finally, it was noted that the Baker clause had been strengthened to include the requirement of secondary school pupils having at least six meaningful encounters with technical education providers in their time at school.

08/23 Financial Update – Confidential

The Deputy Principal gave an update of the financial position.

09/23 Open Session

Resolved – to reopen the session

10/23 Facilities Update

Following up on health and safety discussion at the Student Board earlier in the day, the Deputy Principal noted that the ‘riskiest’ parts of the business (engineering, construction, catering for example) were all represented on the Health and Safety departmental representatives group.

She noted that there had been no Riddor Reportable incidents so far this year. Asked about the increase in the near-miss reporting, this was welcomed as it demonstrated good Health and Safety awareness and learning could be taken from the near misses and was attributed to awareness raising.

She drew attention to the sustainability overview and noted that she was questioning the energy rating of the Civil Engineering Facility as it didn’t look correct in comparison with other parts of the building. There had been good engagement with students during Cop 27. Part of the capital allocation, £82,000, was to improve sustainability and options were being considered.

The Board welcomed the good take up of Activzone facilities, including student uptake which they felt was very welcome both from a health and a financial perspective.

The Board noted that the intention was to continue to piggy-back on the utility contract, which was negotiated by the Yorkshire Procurement Organisation on behalf of local authorities and colleges. Comparative figures for the past three years demonstrated how costs were increasing.

In respect of capital projects, the T-Level Engineering refurbishment was now due for completion in March 2023.

Digital Hub reconfiguration was tendered and Cubby Construction Ltd was successful with the tender. The work should be completed by the end of April. A further capital project, to reconfigure classrooms, Science, Hair and Beauty and Catering, is out to tender and is being evaluated. This should be completed by the end of August.

The capital allocation previously mentioned, received in December 2022, is being reviewed in line with priorities, however, some form of upgrading of the outside brickwork areas is a certainly seen as a top priority.

Activity for Lakes College Enterprises was received and noted.

11/23 Governance

Resolved –

- 1) That Norma Boyes be re-appointed for a further three years as a co-opted member of the Audit Committee until 31/12/25;
- 2) That Lee Todd be re-appointed as teaching staff governor from 17/03/23 to 31/12/25.

The draft minutes of the Search and Governance Committee and the proposals for the review of local needs were received and noted.

The meeting closed at 1945h