

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 29th June 2023 at 1730h in Room FO26

Present: Phil Jardine (In the Chair); Michael Priestley (from Min No: 50/23)
Elijah Bennett; Elaine Clinton; Aaron Groggins; Nigel Holliday; Robert Milburn;
Chris Nattress; Denise Rollo; Beth Wordsworth

Apologies: Sarah Allison; Peter Ellwood; Alison Hampson; Paul Hardon; Lee Todd;
Kirsten Williamson

Also Present: Karen Wilson, Deputy Principal; Jane Murray, Clerk
From Min No 46/23-52/23: Eliza Treme-Swales. Director of Curriculum; Neil
Anderson, HR Manager. (Apologies from Daniel Braithwaite, Asst Principal)

46/23 Chair

The Chairman, Michael Priestley, had tendered his apologies for the beginning of the meeting, but had asked that the Vice Chair should Chair the whole meeting to avoid any disruption.

Resolved – that Phil Jardine take the Chair for the duration of the meeting.

47/23 Minutes

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held in open session on 18 May 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

48/23 Declarations of Interest

None received.

49/23 Key Performance Indicators

The Deputy Principal presented the latest performance, with little change at this point of the year. Apprenticeship starts continued to be strong and it was noted that the first ever review of the value of apprenticeships (for funding purposes) had taken place, with an increase in value of the health and social care apprenticeship to £4,000. HE learner recruitment was above target and progress was strong, with the last review point anticipated at 30 June 2023.

Attendance was static and while retention was below target, assurance was provided that there were groups analysing why learners had dropped out to better understand the causes and implement measures to reduce the instance in the coming year. Asked whether there were some areas which were more problematic for retention and thought that ITC, Early Years and Business were three areas for consideration.

In turning to the lead indicators, the outlook for apprenticeship recruitment remained strong. In response to questioning, there were 120 learners beyond their end date and 38 more on the horizon, however reassurance offered that every effort was being made to get those learners through as soon as possible.

50/23 Curriculum Update

The Director of Curriculum presented the update, drawing attention to the good attendance (comparatively) at the maths and English GCSE exams.

She noted that the first learners who participated in the DoE award programme were to collect their Gold awards from the Palace of Holyrood House in the summer and that a bronze group from construction was currently on expedition.

In consideration of adult learning programmes, it was noted that there was now a diverse and complex range of provision on which to build. Apprenticeship activity had already been discussed, but it was reiterated that a good deal of focused work was taking place to get those 'late' learners through their apprenticeship.

It was asked what would happen if the apprenticeship programmes and initiatives were oversubscribed and reassurance was offered that if they joined a regular qualification and then moved over to an apprenticeship, that this should not impact on retention.

A group of high needs learners had participated in their first residential, assisting with their independence and confidence. It was anticipated that the next round of internships would take place in Workington and will include Age UK; British Heart Foundation and the Washington Central Hotel.

Governor Elaine Clinton had met with the High Needs team on several occasions and reported back to the Board. She noted that new systems were allowing for more individualised feedback. She was concerned that those with an EHCP were being offered the resources identified therein and this new process would help to evidence this.

51/23 Confidential session and minutes

Resolved –

- 1) To move into confidential session
- 2) That the minutes of the meeting held in confidential session on 18 May 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

52/23 Pay framework - confidential

The Board discussed amendments to the pay framework.

Eliza Treme-Swales and Neil Anderson left the meeting

53/23 Finance Update - confidential

The Deputy Principal updated the Board in respect of the current and anticipated financial position.

Resolved –

- 1) That the FEE Policy 2023-24 be approved;
- 2) That the Financial Plan 2023-24 (inclusive of Capital Funding allowance of £300,000) be approved;
- 3) *This resolution is redacted under commercial in confidence.*

54/23 Strategic Plan

This minute is not redacted

The final strategic plan was presented for approval, there having been some additions following discussion with the student governors which had proved valuable. It was requested that there should be a review after the first quarter to test where the College was against targets.

- 1) That the strategic plan 2023-24 be approved (and published);
- 2) That there be a termly review of progress against targets.

55/23 Strategic Update - Confidential

This minute is partially redacted.

Adopting the same model as before – the collaboration of the four colleges and the university – an expression of interest had been submitted for the Learning and Skills Improvement Fund (the successor to SDF funding). This followed three key themes under the LSIP – low carbon and green energy; digital and visitor economy.

The submission of the accountability agreement – approved at the last Board meeting - was confirmed.

NCfN activity was received and noted.

56/23 Treasury Management Review - confidential

The policy is confidential. This minute is not redacted.

The Board received and noted treasury management activity in the previous year. Following consideration by the Finance and Corporate Working Group, the Board agreed that their recommendation that the policy be reviewed for consideration of the most appropriate thresholds in each account and that the accounts be reviewed for best interest rates.

It was asked whether if the banks were to get into difficulty whether there was a way in which these assets could be safeguarded, perhaps through insurance. It was

thought not and noted that under the public sector guidance, it was likely we would be asked not to tender for our own insurance in future.

Resolved – that the Treasury Management Policy be reviewed (for November Board meeting).

57/23 Risk Register – confidential

This minute is not redacted. The risk register is confidential.

The Board received and noted the risk register, where the additions of the actions being taken against each individual risk were welcomed by the Board. The impact of a move to public sector was reflected in the plan across the Board.

58/23 Write-offs - confidential

This minute is not redacted. The contents of the report were confidential.

The Board received some proposals for write-offs over a five-year period, which amounted in total to £20,945.00, well below the guidance in respect of thresholds for public sector organisations. The public sector guidance had been taken into account in tabling the proposals including the action which had been taken and the way in which safeguards would be put in place to avoid such instances in future. It was noted that some of the cases involved people who would be considered vulnerable. The Audit Committee had considered the write offs and the Deputy Principal noted that she would not expect a similar level to be tabled next year.

Resolved –

- 1) that the write-offs be approved;
- 2) that a policy be drawn up to consider write-offs in respect of vulnerable people.

59/23 Capital Project Evaluation – confidential

This minute is partially redacted.

It was felt that it would be a helpful exercise to consider the outcome against the original business case in terms of income and asked whether the scale of opportunity could be included.

Resolved – to reconsider the evaluation against the original business case.

60/23 Open Session

Resolved – to re-open the meeting

61/23 Governance

The Clerk noted that she had a confidential item to discuss in respect of senior postholders at the end of the meeting (with the approval of the Chair).

The Board noted the recommendation from the Search and Governance Committee for the appointment of Claire Dunn as a Governor effective from 1st September 2023.

The Board was also happy to appoint Sarah Allison for a further three years, making a full-term of office. Interest from a further applicant was warmly received and agreement reached that due process would take place with a written resolution at the end of the summer for appointment if appropriate.

The Board considered and was content with the proposed response to the recommendations from the external review of Governance which had been considered by the Search and Governance Committee.

The Committee memberships and diary for 2023-24 were considered and approved. The internal audit plan for 2023-24 was approved following consideration by the Audit Committee and on their recommendation.

The ends of term of the student governors for 2022-23 were noted and both student governors were warmly thanked for their input. The Board had very much appreciated their enthusiasm and commitment, not to mention the quality of their input and the best wishes of the Board for their future success were offered. The resignation of Beth Wordsworth was also received with regret and thanks offered for her input and commitment.

Resolved –

- 1) That Claire Dunn be appointed as a Governor from 1st September 2023-31st August 2024, renewable for a further three years by mutual agreement;
- 2) That the re-appointment of Sarah Allison be approved from 1st September 2023-31st July 2026;
- 3) That any further summer appointment be carried out by written resolution;
- 4) That the responses to the recommendations of the External Review of Governance be approved;
- 5) That the diary and Committee memberships for 2023-24 be approved;
- 6) That the resignation of Beth Wordsworth be noted from 30th June 2023;
- 7) That the end of terms of office for the students governors, effective from end of term (14th July 2023) be noted.
- 8) That the internal audit plan for 2023-24 be approved.

The student governors Aaron Groggins and Elijah Bennett left the meeting

62/23 Confidential Session and Public Sector Implications

The Clerk discussed a confidential item about Senior Post Holders, the minute of which is redacted.

The meeting closed at 1945h