

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 12th December 2024 in Room FO26 of the College.

Present: Nigel Holiday (Chair); Elaine Clinton (Vice Chair); Peter Ellwood; Alison Hampson; Elizabeth Hull; Phil Jardine; Michael Priestley; Chris Nattress; Val Pallister; Denise Rollo; Jill Stewart; Andrew Ward.

Apologies: Claire Dunn; Sophie Kelly; Jacob Leach; Robert Milburn

Also Present: Karen Wilson (Deputy Principal); Iain Glendinning (Vice Principal); Paul Fairclough (Associate Dean HE); Jane Murray (Clerk)

102/24 Minutes

Resolved - that the minutes of the meeting held in open session of 5th December 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

103/24 Declarations of Interest

None received.

104/24 HE Self-Assessment

The Associate Dean presented the HE SAR. Like the FE SAR, this was not graded this year but focused on strengths and areas for development.

It was noted that there had been a lengthy programme of review of foundation degrees, with established degrees reviewed and enhanced and new degrees mapped to apprenticeship standards. The process was now completed and the University of Cumbria had provided the validation. It was felt that there were fewer modules and greater efficiency as a result. The Board was reminded that they had been approved as an OU delivery centre, an important factor in bringing credibility to the offer.

There was strong employer engagement with HE, which helps to sustain the offer with current technical input. There were high numbers of 2:1 and above degrees; 45% first class and 30% achieving 2:1, above the national average. He pointed to an efficient delivery module covering 8-9 different pathways across 5-6 degree programmes, reducing assessment loadings. There were also high levels of progression into employment or further study.

Of the challenges faced by the team, staffing was an issue with high attrition rates, with staff moving to employers with higher salaries or in some instances, retirement. Skills gaps were being identified and solutions being

considered. Albeit an efficient delivery module, HE was nevertheless an expensive option to deliver if it was to remain relevant and meet employer need.

In concluding the discussion, he noted that the Universities were also finding it challenging to recruit and pondered a collaborative group to work together on this issue.

It was asked about the research route lever in funding, but it was noted that there were now limitations and unlikely to generate income. It was noted by the another governor that you had to use some courses to generate the income to offset the potential losses on stem.

It was also hoped that a collaborative approach with another organisation would open a lot of doors to further collaboration, using the block approach.

It was asked whether there was a leadership and management HE module that could fit in with something else and this was being designed to fit in with many other sectors, but not yet at a point where it could be launched.

The sector experts programme was discussed and noted that there would be a pilot, bringing in expertise.

The minutes of the Higher Education Board were received and it was noted that there was some positive work going on.

The Self-assessment was received and noted, and the CIP would be monitored.

105/24 Key Performance Indicators

It was pleasing that the 16-18 numbers at RO4 had been 1021 which was significantly above target and this would give increased funding in the next financial year under lagged funding.

There had been a slight reduction in funding for adults (remains under target) of £49,000. There had been under recruitment on T-Level numbers and claw back was anticipated at £60,000.

New starts for HE were anticipated in January, both through NCfN provision and OU digital. Good start for the year on apprenticeships, noting the 3-4 year length programmes and a cumulative effect that can arise.

It was noted that attendance for maths and English was low, but alongside this, the fact that learners were being retained had to be recognised. Nevertheless, work was going on with learners in respect of their attendance as part of a trauma-informed approach.

It was asked and confirmed that there was the necessary support in place for all learners as part of the new approach, that they all had targets set and that those at risk were identified.

It was asked about the number of learners working at target and noted that a re-balancing act had taken place to make sure that starting points were accurate and progress reviews appropriately recorded.

It was noted from an earlier session that apprenticeship reviews of Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour would be reworked to better understand what was being measured.

Apprentices beyond their end date remained too high. There was a funding impact and delay could be for a variety of reasons, including the learner themselves who might not have finished their portfolio or achieved their English or maths grades, or the Endpoint Assessment not taking place owing to an employer error (for example). Staff turnover in this area remained a challenge.

The cash position is marginally ahead of where the College was, but a lag in income on one contract was noted.

106/24 Curriculum Update

The Vice Principal noted the positive recruitment figures, the reduction in outstanding apprenticeship reviews, an increase in high needs funded places, that curriculum reviews were ongoing and the challenges for recruitment in some areas of provision.

The increase in high needs funded places was welcomed and it was asked whether there was the capacity to deliver the increased numbers. It was confirmed that this was under review.

While acknowledging the overall positive recruitment, it was asked whether what the underlying reasons might be for lower T-Level recruitment. It was noted that the UTC, for example, had run their own T-Levels and that more students were likely to have stayed on at 6th form. It was also the case that confirmation of places following assessment had been comparatively late in the day and this was being addressed for the coming year recruitment.

It was also noted that it had very recently been published that the 3-month industrial placement for T-Levels was under review and this would be shared with Governors.

It was asked about bootcamps and felt that this was a not a huge aspect of the provision at Lakes College and that there had been some communication that the Councils were intending to keep the provision in-house. Through experience, it was felt that any provision would need careful consideration to make sure that it is what was needed.

It was asked about to the revised approach to apprenticeship delivery more generally and felt that there had been largely positive feedback, although there remained some challenges with health and social care.

107/24 Equality and Diversity Annual Report

The Board received and noted an update report of Equality and Diversity activity at Lakes College, was reminded of the good grading for provision for learners with special educational needs in the Ofsted report and considered performance between learners with different characteristics. The action plan for this year was shared.

Asked about the benefits of securing the chartermark, it was felt that this would give objectives to aim for and provide a framework for activity. It was asked whether there were concerns about barriers for users of the building, but felt that the building was compliant.

It was requested that consideration be given to disadvantage, which was felt was relevant to this area and that care leavers also be considered in the action plan and benchmarking data.

Agreed - that an edit of the report would be added to the website.

108/24 Confidential Session and Minutes

Resolved –

- 1) To move into confidential session
- 2) That the minutes of the meeting held in confidential session of 5th December 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

109/24 Single Improvement Plan - confidential

The Board received an update noting progress.

110/24 Procurement of Gas and Electricity Services - confidential

The Board considered the renewal of utility contracts.

111/24 Open Session

Resolved – to reopen the meeting.

112/24 Annual Summaries

The Board received an overview of annual activity for Freedom of Information; for Data Protection and the use of the Corporation SEAL. There were no issues arising.

The meeting closed at 1920h.

