

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held at 1730h on Thursday, 30th January 2025 in room FO26 with some participation by Teams.

Present: Elaine Clinton (in the Chair); Clarie Dunn; Elizabeth Hull; Phil Jardine; Michael Priestley; Robert Milburn; Chris Nattress (Principal); Val Pallister; Denise Rollo

From Minute No 03/25: Elaine Jordan; Alistair Mason; Yvonne Bannister

Present online: Jill Stewart; Sophie Kelly; Jacob Leach

Apologies: Nigel Holliday; Peter Ellwood; Andrew Ward

Also present: Karen Wilson (Deputy Principal); Iain Glendinning (Vice Principal); Jane Murray (Clerk)

Sue Thompson, DfE; Rob Lawson (online), FEC NLFG

01/25 Chair

Nigel Holliday having presented apologies, Elaine Clinton took the Chair.

02/25 Appointment of New Governors

The Chair sought the agreement of the Board to proceed directly to appointment of new Governors (without any request to absent themselves) given the extensive interview process funded by the DfE and prior consultation with the Board This was agreed.

Resolved-

- 1) That Yvonne Bannister be appointed as a Governor from 30th January 2025-29th January 2026, renewable for a further three years by mutual agreement;
- 2) That Elaine Jordan be appointed as a Governor from 30th January 2025-29th January 2026, renewable for a further three years by mutual agreement;
- 3) That Alistair Mason be appointed as a Governor from 30th January 2025-29th January 2026, renewable for a further three years by mutual agreement;
- 4) That all appointments be subject to satisfactory DBS clearance.

Yvonne Bannister, Elaine Jordan and Alistair Mason formally joined the meeting

03/25 Minutes

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held in open session on 12th December 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

04/25 Declarations of Interest

None Received

Sue Thompson joined the meeting

05/25 KPIs

The Board noted the latest numbers for 16-18 at 1018, which would increase funding for next year under lagged learner numbers.

Work continued on the adult offer, with some good and innovative activity. The DfE/FEC had suggested contacts on the adult offer in support of ongoing activity, although it was also noted the extent to which other colleges used the adult offer for ESOL courses which were not relevant to this area. Some of the offer was sub-contracted provision.

Apprenticeship new starts were under plan; this would be profiled as these were 3-4 year apprenticeships and therefore would have an impact for a number of years. However, with a shift to engineering and construction, these were higher value apprenticeships than others and a significant impact on income was not anticipated. Asked about any underpinning reasons for the drop off, it was felt that the employer market would be under some pressure with budgets being squeezed, with a particular impact in the supply chain.

It was noted that there were relatively few breaks in learning and that overdue progress reviews had seen a significant drop. Apprentices beyond their planned end date were marginally above national targets at 8.8%, although unfunded apprenticeships were at 9.9% but subject to closer monitoring. HE Learners were below target currently, but anticipated to grow with the January/February intake.

It was asked about underlying performance on apprenticeships outside of a recent contract and requested whether the Board could have some visibility of underlying performance at the mid-year point.

Some disappointment was expressed about attendance figures (noting that HE and 19+ were strong) and in response to questioning, it was noted that in many instances this was being brought down by maths and English attendance and staff were targeting students and engaging parents. Retention, however, remained strong at this point in the year.

Consideration was being given to staff utilisation and it was asked about how a more agile workforce could be achieved. It was noted that

consideration was being given to how resources could be utilised in different areas of the business, however, in a small college, it was also the case that, in some cases, highly technical specialists were not always a good fit in some of the skill shortage areas.

The Financial KPIs were at or marginally above plan, noting that £1.25 m of the loan was still within the cash balances.

Staff sickness is above target, but generally below sector averages and within the figure were a number of long-term absences. The College had some success with its OT approach to staff sickness. The high staff turnover continued to be of concern and reflected higher pay rates elsewhere which was also a concern nationally.

The KPIs were received and noted.

06/25 Curriculum Update

The Vice Principal noted that apprenticeship base data is improving, noting the positive impact of the new compliance team with achievement data looking strong. This was welcomed by the Board.

Curriculum planning is continuing for next year and on-track, including further training for curriculum managers.

In-year retention is positive which is likely to impact positively on achievement rates at the end of the year. Assessment boards in February will identify forecast achievement across the college and areas for targeted intervention.

Training and development activity in support of the TLA Strategy was shared. The Board welcomed the news that the College had a seat on a national project to look at innovation in curriculum reform.

It was asked about resit results in maths and English. These had not gone well and every opportunity, including those provided by the Further Education Commissioners team, to learn from others' experience was being taken. (Action since: to be considered at the Quality Working Group in February).

Asked about the seven referrals to Prevent from the local area (through police and education generally), it was noted that each would be considered on a case-by-case basis and that the increase would also reflect a heightened national profile for prevent referrals.

Asked about the Barrow apprentices, this had been a shift in provider to Lakes College.

07/25 Confidential Session and Minutes

Resolved –

- 1) to move into confidential session
- 2) that the minutes of the meeting held in confidential session of 12th December 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.
- 3) that the notes of the strategic session held in confidential session of 12th December 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

08/25 Risk Register – Confidential

The Board considered an amended risk register from their scrutiny at the December Strategy meeting.

Resolved – that the risk register be approved.

09/25 Financial Intervention – confidential

The Board received an update of activity

10/25 Finance Update – confidential

The Deputy Principal updated the Board on financial matters.

11/25 Strategic Update

The Principal outlined a number of national and local policy developments, noting the close monitoring of developments at Skills England given potential risks to the apprenticeship funding.

An update of NCfN activity was noted, including a potential name change in the next year to National College for Nuclear and Clean Energy, with no objections being raised.

The meeting closed at 1945h.