

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation Held on Monday 24 September 2018

At City Centre campus, Room H102A at 4.45 pm

Carole Stott	Chair
Andy Furse	Vice-Chair
Laurel Penrose	Principal
Victor da Cunha	
Erica Draisey	Apologies
Paul Blenkinsopp	
Mike Oram	
Andy Parker	Apologies
Jane Shaw	
Gary Waylen	Apologies
Jenny Williams	Apologies
Neil Wilson	
Julian Young	Apologies

In attendance

Heather Cross	Clerk to the Corporation
Barbara Owen	HR Director (until item 5)
Jonathan Creed	ICCA (until item 6)

- 1. Apologies** **ACTION**
Apologies for absence were received from Erica Draisey, Gary Waylen, Jenny Williams and Julian Young. Apologies were also noted from Jayne Davis.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
None
- 3. Confidentiality of Items**
None
- 4. Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held 16 7 18 and any matters arising**
The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2018 which had been circulated previously were accepted as a true record.

There were no specific matters arising.

5. GDPR update

A report had been circulated previously, giving an update on the College's implementation of GDPR taking into account the on-line tool provided by the Information Commissioner's Office to measure performance. Barbara Owen spoke to this item as she had taken over temporary responsibility for this area with the previous FD's departure; the report was written prior to her departure.

Governors were reminded that the regulations came into force at the end of May 2018 and the requirement was to be progressing towards compliance by then. The College had moved in performance terms against the ICO assessment from amber to green, with many required tasks completed. In response to a question it was explained that not all tasks had to be complete for the outcome to be classified as 'green'. A general data protection statement for public purposes was still required, together with a systematic review of the risk register and the implementation of a training programme. An internal audit on progress would be carried out some time during the year.

In answer to Governors questions concerning any breaches or significant enquiries it was reported that there had been one subject access request and notification that another was imminent. There had been no data breaches. This position was noted as positive; the ongoing performance would be reported to the Audit Committee on a regular basis including nil returns.

In response to another question concerning IT systems and databases governors welcomed that much work had been done to make systems compliant. Governors recommended that retention policies be made as long as reasonable and compliant in order to help minimize data problems. There was encouragement of the use of on-line training which would provide monitoring to show that staff had participated.

Barbara was thanked for her report and she left the meeting.

6. Principal's update including enrolment report

The Principal gave a verbal update on a series of matters.

Enrolment was beyond target which was very positive and governors thoroughly welcomed this news which would mean an increase on the anticipated income for 16 to 18 year olds of over £200,000 if numbers were retained.

The College had been through an ESFA funding audit over the past week which had been very time-consuming for all involved.

This was a significant exercise which assessed all main income streams, sub-contractors and all loans. In advance of the audit there had been notification that 349 points would be required to be checked. It was anticipated that there potential for clawback of income of about £50K and although the audit was not quite finished it was anticipated that it would not be qualified. Governors recorded their significant thanks to all staff who had been working to make the audit a success. The Principal recorded her thanks to ICCA also who had been assisting staff. It was confirmed that final audit findings would be reported to governors.

UCU had advised that as the college could not provide confirmation of a 5% pay increase that a ballot for industrial action would be implemented. Governors commented that the government's announcement that it would fund the 3.5% rise for school teachers was not helpful when assistance to the FE sector was not currently being offered. Should a strike take place the college would work to ensure that students were not disadvantaged. although was being pursued. The forthcoming Colleges week could assist in raising the profile of the issue. The meeting discussed the programme of activities for the week and governors were encouraged to support the campaign as they felt appropriate. The Principal was to circulate a briefing and other publicity material concerning Colleges Week.

Money had been secured from BANES for the work for SLDD in the Wellow building at the Somer Valley campus and work had taken place over the summer; the result was very pleasing and student recruitment for students with mild to moderate disabilities was increasing. Further work would need to be undertaken in order to accommodate those with severe disability. The Somer Valley site had been found to have high Radon levels during the summer, but corrective work had been successfully carried out to bring readings to acceptable levels across all rooms.

It was noted that the final out-turn position for the college which would be evident in the Accounts for the 2017/18 year would need careful explanation. The operating position was a deficit and the impact of the pension adjustments is outside the control of the college and does not represent funds available.

The Principal was thanked for her report.

7. Quality update – student and apprentice performance

A quality update report had been circulated previously.

The performance position was close to the previous year although there were 695 results still to be processed. However

performance on English and Maths GCSE and functional skills had declined significantly, although still above the national benchmarks on English. Functional skills numbers had reduced because of the need to enter students for GCSEs and the cohort entered for functional skills were performing even lower. The meeting discussed the policy requirement that students continue to be entered for these exams otherwise the college would lose total funding for a student's course and noted the detrimental effect this was having on student stress levels and some otherwise very competent vocational students withdrawing. It was also noted that where students moved on to an apprenticeship or a job this affected retention even if in itself successful. New styles of delivery were being discussed and to go for earlier end point assessment. This would be further discussed by the Quality Working Group and would be clearly identified in the College self assessment report.

Governors commented that inevitably success became harder to achieve when resources were significantly reduced and remarked on a recent Ofsted report that showed improvements nationally were reducing, which mirrored funding reductions. The final national benchmarks were expected to be available in January, although it was expected that the numbers for Maths and English would not vary significantly.

It was agreed that MPs should continue to be advised about the negative effect the exam entry policy was having on young people's life chances. The meeting deplored the fact that students were being put off from continuing their vocational programmes because of this, with over 100 withdrawals being seen in the year

The Principal was thanked for the report.

8. Management Accounts and Progress towards the end of year accounts 2017-18

The latest management accounts had been circulated showing the year end position. The budget for 17/18 was expected to be improved upon, with a lesser operating deficit. This was the most important feature, irrespective of an anticipated significant cash surplus as that largely reflected the shifting values of the pension scheme. The operating loss was not sustainable as it meant amongst other things that bank covenants would not be met. A supplementary sheet was tabled which showed the likely final result from audit. Pay costs were broadly on budget and in non-pay the most significant feature was the increase on subcontractors.

The summary position was noted that the college was on course to deliver an improvement on the budget and governors applauded college management's efforts in doing so in the face of reducing resources. It was noted though that the financial position at current funding levels would remain very challenging. It was agreed that funds to meet a 1% pay increase for staff must be found if at all possible.

9. Internal Audit – recommendation for appointment

A report on the recent tender exercise for internal audit conducted by Audit Committee members had been circulated previously. The recommended company's tender had been circulated for information. It was confirmed that there was a clear divide between the Internal Audit and the college support team in the company.

The recommendation for the appointment of ICCA-ETS was **approved, subject to final confirmation of the basis on which savings generated were to be covered in the contract.**

10. Student Governor update

A verbal report was given that the Student President elections and hence the student governor, were being promoted to students on 2 October and the election result should be known by half term. The Chair and the Clerk were available to the student executive to promote and explain the role of student governor.

11. Minutes of the Audit Committee

The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 25 June 2018 which had been circulated previously were received.

12. Minutes of a special meeting of the Senior Staff Employment Committee held on 13 September 2018

These minutes were not yet available but it was formally reported to the Board that the Director of Finance had tendered her resignation. The Chair had conducted an exit interview with her. The Committee had discussed arrangements for recruiting a replacement. It was agreed that the salary should reflect what was required to recruit the best calibre.

It was also formally reported that the Clerk had tendered her resignation, effective from the beginning of February 2019 to take partial retirement, although would be continuing to work in the sector. Governors expressed their regret at her departure. The Committee had discussed arrangements for recruiting a replacement.

13. Date of next meeting

This meeting was confirmed for 22 October at 4.45 pm at the City Centre campus.