

**Open Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held via Microsoft Teams
24 May 2021 at 17:00**

Present

Andy Salmon (AS) Chair
 Andy Furse (AF) Vice Chair
 Dan Ball (DB) Student Governor
 Victoria Downing-Burn (VDB)
 Erica Draisey (ED)
 Lisa Ford (LF)
 Mike Oram (MO)
 Laurel Penrose (LP) Principal & CEO
 Ian Tavener (IT)
 Gary Waylen (GW)
 Neil Wilson (NW)
 Julian Young (JY)

In attendance

Jayne Davis (JD) Deputy Principal & Deputy CEO (up to 10.1)
 Jon Domaille (JonD) Assistant Principal, Learner Journey and Customer
 Relations (for item 10.1 only)
 Sally Eaton (SE) Assistant Principal, Inclusion, Welfare and AL (up to 10.1)
 Paul Fletton (PF) Interim Director of Finance & Corporate Services (up to
 10.1)
 Anne Roberts (AR) Head of Governance (Secretariat)

Attendance: 92%

ITEM
1. Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence were received from Paul Blenkinsopp
2. Declarations of Interest
AF, AS and LF in relation to IStart. It was noted that neither of them had any involvement in this matter.
3. Confidentiality of Items
The Board agreed that all papers marked confidential on their cover sheet were confidential. These are marked as (c).
4. Minutes
4.1 Open and Closed Minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2021
The open and closed minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2021 were considered and approved as an accurate record subject to one amendment

in relation to minute 6.6 Safeguarding (open minutes). ED reported that she met with SE monthly and received termly (not monthly) reports. These would be signed by the Chair by electronic signature following the meeting.

Matters Arising

Minute 9 – the Board would celebrate the former Chair and the Principal when it was Covid safe to do so. It was hoped to do this in the College Restaurant.

4.2 Action Register

All actions had been recorded on the Action Register. PF reported that the contribution by curriculum area had been discussed by Finance & Estates Group in May and further work was required. Ian Tavener was appointed as the H&S link governor.

5. STRATEGY

5.1 Learning for Work

Sally Eaton presented the Learning for Work programme which had been established to provide education and training opportunities to a core group of young people, most of whom had an EHCP and complex needs.

Members thanked SE for the work that had been done which was very beneficial and inspiring. The college partnership with Youth Connect had changed lives and provided direction for young people. In relation to a question about costs, SE confirmed that high needs funding was used which covered college costs (and was non-profit making). The programme could be further expanded but bigger premises were needed. The cost of not doing the programme would significant to the community. MO suggested a contact point for premises that might be worth exploring.

5.2 Principal's Update

LP reported verbally on the following matters:

- The Queen's Speech on 11 May 2021 focused on jobs and skills. The Skills & Post-16 Education Bill had its first reading on 18 May 2021, with the 2nd reading in the Lords on 15 June and legislation early autumn
- There were many external initiatives taking place, including Bootcamps (3 bids with partners of which two had been successful), Skills framework, College Collaboration fund (with Swindon and Leicester), Skills accelerator programme, Community renewal fund, Post-16 Capacity Fund for 16-18 growth, In Work fund. All of these required bids, were short term funding, most to be used by end of March 2022.
- The HSE were doing spot checks of colleges. This had been done last week with JD and confirmation had been given that all was in order
- Internally, a key focus was now on teaching assessment and grades. There were no external exams for GCSEs and Technical . Every awarding body had different criteria. Submissions were due by 11 June 2021.
- The Institute of Technology refurbishment was almost complete with sign off expected on 28 May 2021
- The T Qualifications building work had commenced with the expectation of completion by September 2021
- Recruitment was going well, up from last year figures

- Employer Boards had been established and invitations extended to governors to attend
- The ESFA had requested an audit on free school meals and bursaries. This was the 4th ESFA audit in 4 years and LP had raised the frequency with the ESFA given the workload implications. This would be reported to the Audit Committee.

Members asked about staffing for T levels. LP confirmed that most staff had been recruited with some gaps on Digital. The ESFA had delivered training. A tour of the new IoT and catering facilities would be arranged for governors once covid restrictions allowed. I Tavener offered to discuss employers' views in relation to digital skills needed.

6. SCRUTINY

6.1 Student Governor Update

Dan Ball presented a verbal student governor report as it was his last meeting before his term of office ended in June. He reported on:

- the work done on Learner Voice and the transition of students back to physical learning e.g. for sports and practical assessments.
- the personal development framework sessions for students. This would have a larger menu of options in future
- the positive feedback from students, particularly SEND students, on the Macaulay Building ground floor refurbishments
- Covid restrictions had limited the use of the social space to LILS students
- A hidden disability group had been established
- The voluntary paid opportunities undertaken by some learners

Members asked about the social space, given its restrictions in use. LP stated that it was recognised that more space was needed and this was planned from September. The Board thanked Dan for his contribution and for his service to the Board over the last two years.

6.2 Future Governance Structure

The Board considered recommendations from the Governance & Search Committee in respect of the governance structure 2021/22 and succession planning for governors. The Chair stated that the aim was to have a structure that was as proactive and efficient as possible which allowed challenge, engagement and oversight to meet the Board's responsibility for accountability and good governance. It was suggested that the working groups (finance and estates, curriculum and quality) could be more outcome focused and there could be slightly fewer Board meetings, but with two strategic half days. He was meeting with each governor on a 1:1 basis to ascertain their areas of specific interest and ideas for development of their role.

During discussion, members expressed the view that there was value in increasing the number of informal or virtual sessions whilst having slightly fewer formal Board meetings (5 or 6 p.a.). Any change to the model should be reviewed after one year. The Governing body was in a period of change with the Vice Chair and Chair of Audit's terms of office ending and these were risks that needed to be managed carefully. There were also changes in the SMT

personnel and therefore not having too many changes would provide greater stability.

It was also noted that the new Code of Good Governance for Colleges was awaited and legislation going through in relation to the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill which would require further governance work to be undertaken. These would be an item on the next meeting of the Governance and Search Committee.

The Board AGREED to:

- Approve the governance structure arrangements for 2021/22 as outlined (6 Board meetings and 2 half day strategic discussion days, with some informal focused sessions), with the draft business plan/committee cycle and Committee TOR to be considered at the July Board. Meetings to be a mixture of blended and face to face
- Invite expressions of interest for the Vice Chair role with an invitation for anyone interested to discuss confidentially with the Chair/Head of Governance
- ask that an Eol be sent out to all staff in September for the Staff Governor role

6.3 Quality Improvement Plan/Quality Dashboard

Quality Improvement Plan (c)

Members considered the Quality Improvement Plan. It was noted that the HR and Workforce planning rating had changed from amber to green and that all sections were expected to be green at the end of the academic year (after R14 for achievement rates).

JD went through each section of the plan, highlighting points of significance. The Plan and its format would be reviewed in detail by the Curriculum and Quality Working Group in June.

Members asked how development plans aligned with the strategic plans, particularly on the green agenda and digital. JD reported that an audit of curriculum plans had been undertaken and this highlighted threads and opportunities across these areas. Curriculum Development panels met regularly to discuss key criteria. LP reported on examples of the green agenda in relation to local space/housing development and a bid had been submitted to address the skills deficit in this area.

Quality Dashboard

Members considered the outcomes on the Quality KPIs as at May 2021 and it was noted that these would be discussed in more detail at the next meeting of the Curriculum & Quality Working Group. Under Quality of Education, members noted asked what the process was for reviewing those that did not meet expectations in relation to lesson planning. JD stated that support was given to them by learner practitioners and lessons would be re-observed within a few weeks to check on progress.

6.4 Management Accounts – March/April 2021 and Year End Forecast (c)

The Board considered the management accounts March/April 2021 which included a commentary and notes, an income and expenditure account, a

balance sheet and a rolling 12-month cash flow forecast. The Chair of Finance & Estates Working Group confirmed that these had been subject to detailed review by the Group in May.

The papers also included a detailed summary of the key variances in the reforecast. PF went through the more significant variances and the combined impact was that the forecast out turn would be in line with budget.

The position at the end of April showed that the cash position had improved from March and was better than predicted despite the large capital schemes. Cash now represented 63 cash days. The modest surplus reported in March had been maintained and was consistent with delivering the revised year end forecast. Risks included a) the delivery to WECA growth b) while apprenticeship growth was strong, there was no guarantee that the funding in excess of non-levy allocations would be paid, although historically it had been c) cost pressure being experienced in teaching supplies and legal costs, but work was progressing to limit the impact of this by management.

The Chair of Finance & Estates stated that this year showed a better level of consistency compared to previous years and this was due to the huge amount of work undertaken by PF in managing complex issues and improving processes. Members confirmed that the finance papers were clear and provided them with sufficient information to be sighted on the key financial information.

The accounts and reforecast were approved.

6.5 Covid-19 Update

The Board considered the actions taken on the steps out of lockdown and the plans in place in relation to organisation-wide oversight. JD was the College lead and she reported that Ofsted were doing spot checks. Members asked if resourcing was adequate. JD responded that it was in respect of Teaching, Learning & Assessment but welfare support might require further resource. A lot of planning was taking place on lessons learned and will be used to bid for resources. Members also asked whether tracking was taking place on numbers of staff vaccinated and this was confirmed.

7. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

7.1 Bank Mandate

The Board resolved to APPROVE the revised Bank Mandate.

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

8.1 Finance & Estates Working Group (FEWG) –29 April and 19 May 2021 (c)

The notes of the meeting of the FEWG held on 29 April and 19 May 2021 were received for information.

8.2 Governance & Search Committee– 20 May 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2021 were received for information.

9. Any Other Business

None

10. CONFIDENTIAL BOARD

10.1 Student Union Arrangements 2021/22 (c)

Confidential Minute
10.2 Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2021 and matters arising
Confidential
10.3 Senior Postholder Recruitment (c)
Confidential Minute
11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING
12 July 2021 17:00

Approved: 12 July 2021