

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on
Monday 29 March 2021**

Present: Alison Ashworth, Chris Bird, Simon Boyle, Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce, Jonathan Frankham, John Lyne (Chair), Jackie Moores, Elaine Price, Chris Rushton, Joan Ryan

Nils Elgar, Clerk to the Corporation

In Attendance: Leon Dowd (Vice Principal Quality and People), Vicky Hayhoe (Executive Director Finance and Estates), Nicola Welland (Assistant Principal), Suraj Rash (Student Representative)

ACTION

20/21.47 Apologies for Absence

The Board of Governors accepted the apologies of Damien Bourke and Shayer Hussain. **Accepted**

20/21.48 Declarations of Interest

It was noted that Jonathan Frankham had a standing declaration that he was an employee of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the College's principal funder and regulator. **Noted**

20/21.49 Minutes of the Meetings Held on:

(i) 8 February 2021

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2021. **Approved**

(ii) 8 March 2021 (Additional Meeting)

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2021. **Approved**

20/21.50 Matters Arising

On minute 20/21.45 (Estates Strategy), the Executive Director Finance and Estates indicated that the College's had submitted its bids for grant funding from both the Further Education Capital Transformation (FECT) Fund and the T-Level Capital Fund. **Noted**

20/21.51 Self-Evaluation and 2020/21 Quality Improvement Plan

The Vice Principal Quality and People reported the following points:

- (i) the Self-Evaluation (not Self-Assessment) was different this year in that it sought to review College performance against the COVID priorities rather than Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework (EIF);
- (ii) judgements for the COVID themes had been mapped against the EIF;
- (iii) the COVID themes had been RAG-rated and were necessarily more simplistic than EIF judgements as there were no benchmark data;

- (iv) the judgements against COVID themes had been a bottom up approach that began at the curriculum / teacher level;
- (v) all judgements were RAG-rated 'green' except for assessments. This had been given an 'amber' judgement. However, this was not a quality assessment, but one of risk, with much of the work still to be completed in Term 3. Due to the lockdown between January and March 2021, students had not yet been into College to undertake their assessments. Guidance on teacher assessed grades (TAGs) was still being received. Despite this, management were confident that the College would do what was required;
- (vi) that areas for improvement in the current Self-Evaluation were termed 'areas of focus', as these often included ongoing monitoring activities, rather than specific actions to address underperforming areas;
- (vii) summary grades as follows:

Aspect / Type of Provision	Grade / COVID RAG
Rating	
Overall Effectiveness	2 (Good)
Leadership and Management	2 (Good)
<i>How Effective Have Managers Been in Training and Supporting Staff and Students to Adapt to New Approaches, in Maintaining Their Wellbeing and in Evaluating Performance</i>	Green
Quality of Education	2 (Good)
<i>An Appropriate Curriculum Intent is Planned and Delivered During COVID</i>	Green
<i>IAG and Assessment is Robust, Valid and Reliable</i>	Amber
<i>Impact (2019-20 Outcomes)</i>	2 (Good)
Behaviour & Attitudes	2 (Good)
Personal Development	2 (Good)
<i>Professional Standards Are Maintained in the Classroom and Online, Including Attention to COVID Guidance</i>	Green
Safeguarding	Effective
16 – 19 Study Programmes	2 (Good)
Adult Learning Programmes	2 (Good)
Apprenticeships	2 (Good)
Learners with High Needs	2 (Good)

Note: Living with COVID themes are indicated by italic text, with RAG rated judgements; all others were EIF judgements based on the four-point scale used by Ofsted.

- (viii) the strategy was to move to a 'building back better' framework going into 2021/22;

Issues discussed by Governors included:

- (i) that learners had not had the experience that they would have wished for in 2020/21 and, in some cases, a degree of catch up would be required;
- (ii) that input from Malcolm Bruce and Elaine Price had been incorporated into the final Self-Evaluation document;
- (iii) that national average data would be an issue for the College, the sector and Ofsted going forward, with both 2019/20 and 2020/21 data not being used due to the absence of national

- exams in these two years as consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (iv) that assessments and catch up represented a significant workload for the College in Term 3;
 - (v) wellbeing issues for returning students. It was noted that due to the start-stop nature of the year to date, the College had not had the length of time with students to reinforce high aspirations and expectations of behaviour. Although the College had not dealt with as many behavioural issues as in previous years, it was now having to deal with some fundamental behaviour issues. Attendance remained good;
 - (vi) that in the absence of the Curriculum and Standards Committee in 2021/22, the Self-Assessment Report could be considered by a small working group as had been done this year, before coming direct to the Board.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Self-Evaluation and 2020/21 Quality Improvement Plan.

Approved

20/21.52 Committees' Report

The Clerk to the Corporation reported the following points:

- (i) the report covered three committee meetings held during March 2021;
- (ii) the Finance and Resources Committee received the January Management Accounts, which reported an improved forecast outturn of a £1.785m surplus compared with a budgeted surplus of £132k (and a forecast deficit of £56k made in October Management Accounts). The improved outcome was mainly due to an in-year payment for increased 16-19 Study Programme enrolments;
- (iii) the Finance and Resources Committee approved a request for an additional £500k capital expenditure to make classroom alterations to better accommodate the increased number of students, particularly at the Clarendon Sixth Form Campus.

Issues considered by Governors was the impact on the College's forecast outturn following the announcement that the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) would be subject to clawback for delivery below 90% of the allocation. It was noted that this represented only a minor part of the overall College budget that related to out of area provision and so had no appreciable impact on the forecast outturn. It was noted, however, that a decision was still awaited from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in relation to college performance against their AEB allocation.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Committees' Report.

Noted

20/21.53 KPI Report

The Principal reported the following points:

- (i) retention remained high at 97% for both 16-18 and adults, and had probably been aided by the national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (ii) at 89%, attendance was good (excluding English and Maths). English and Maths attendance was 77%, with engagement suffering during the most recent lockdown;
- (iii) behaviour, to date, had been good. The very significant majority of students were pleased to be back to face-to-face learning;
- (iv) an ALPS score of 5 for the 3 A level equivalent vocational qualifications, was a decline from the grade 3 achieved the previous year. A forensic review had shown that when students returned in the summer term in 2020, the overriding aim had been on ensuring students achieved; insufficient focus could be given to the achievement of high grades. An ALPS project was now in place to ensure student students achieved the best possible high grades this summer;
- (v) the College remained strong financially. Previous financial uncertainty had clarified to the benefit of the College. A proportion of growth for 16-19 study programmes had been funded in-year (amounting to £722k) which was part of a larger growth allocation of £1.508m. In 2020/21 the College was on 108% of 16-18 study programme target and 104% of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) adult allocation;
- (vi) teacher utilisation was at 95%, which had helped keep staffing costs down during a period of uncertainty about growth funding;
- (vii) staff turnover was low at 5%. Staff sickness absence was at 8% and had been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Governors were content with the report as presented. It was suggested that COVID related staff absences be separated from other absences.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the KPI Report. **Noted**

20/21.54 Principal's Report

Key points from the report outlined by the Principal included:

- (i) the College had returned to face-to-face teaching;
- (ii) capital projects were proceeding well. The Construction Skills Centre project was on target and all external funding had been received. The refurbishment of F-floor of the Victoria Building (into 10 large classrooms) was due to be completed the following week;
- (iii) curriculum developments. Nicola Welland was the College lead for the T Level in Health, which included the bid for funding to refurbish the C-floor of the Victoria Building. The College had been successful in its bid to offer T Levels in other areas with resulting capital investment opportunities.

- Curriculum planning and timetabling for 2021/22 was underway. Applications were up again on the previous year;
- (iv) apprenticeships achievement rates. These were an area of focus following a trend of three years of decline. Despite this, College performance remained above national average. The maximum achievement rate in 2020/21 was 66%, which was down again on the previous year. Apprenticeships ending due to the COVID-19 pandemic were being monitored and these would impact future achievement rates. For example, with the losses incurred to date, the maximum achievement rate in 2022 was now only 82%. The College was working hard to understand whether low achievement rates in certain curriculum areas were related to COVID-19 losses or a quality issue as, for example, in Hair and Beauty;
- (v) funded projects:
- the College's Centre of Excellence for Maths had received a further four years of funding, which would help the College to trial different "measured risk" approaches to teaching;
 - the Digital Learning Project had helped improve the College teachers' digital skills;
 - the Turing Scheme, the UK's replacement for the (EU's) Erasmus+ Scheme was now running and the College had submitted two bids for trips to Portugal;
- (vi) subcontracting. The College was in discussion with, and undertaking due diligence on, two potential subcontracting partners in or near Tameside, one of whom was already delivering and another new provider (but known previously to the College). The value of subcontracting provision remained less than 2% of two College income;
- (vii) that decisions on the Institute of Technology bids had been delayed, with an outcome expected the following week. Capital funding, however, had reduced considerably and so the College was unlikely to receive the £3m that had been hoped. Despite this, any capital funding only required matched funding 'in kind' over five years and so still represented good value for the College. It was expected that this funding would go towards Mechanical Engineering / Robotics.

Issues considered by Governors included that the ESFA was tightening requirements for subcontracting as there had been some significant fraud in this area of provision. It was suggested that the College adopt a prudent approach and to undertake appropriate due diligence and to understand any prospective subcontracting partners. It was noted that teaching staff had remitted teaching hours to monitor the quality of any subcontracted provision.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Principal's Report.

Noted

20/21.55 January Finance Report

The Executive Director reported the following points:

- (i) the forecast outturn had improved to a surplus of £1.785m. This included £1.3m for in-year growth funding for 16-19 and the 16-19 tuition fund;
- (ii) the pay budget remained unchanged with the College absorbing additional cost of teaching;
- (iii) the non-pay budget had reduced from £5.326m to £5.133m, achieved through cross College savings during lockdown (£109k) and subcontracting (£97k);
- (iv) the College's cash position was strong (£12m);
- (v) the College's ESFA Financial Health was 'outstanding';
- (vi) changes to the FE Commissioner's benchmark / measures for college financial health.

Governors were content with the report as presented.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the January Finance Report. **Noted**

20/21.56 Items to Note

(i) Chair's Action

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note that no Chair's Actions had been taken since the date of the last meeting. **Noted**

(ii) Use of the Seal of the Corporation

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note that there had been no use of the Seal of the Corporation since the date of the last (scheduled) meeting. **Noted**

(iii) Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2020/21

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2020/21 (91%). **Noted**

20/21.57 Time and Date of Next Meeting – Monday 24 May 2021

Suraj Rash withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of the Confidential Item and confidential minutes.

20/21.58 Confidential Item

This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

The Vice Principal Quality and People and Executive Director Finance and Resources withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of the confidential minutes.

20/21.59 Confidential Minutes of the Remuneration Committee Held on 1 February 2021

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Confidential Minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 1 February 2021. **Noted**

20/21.60 Confidential Minutes of the Meeting Held on 8 February 2021

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2021. **Approved**

20/21.61 Date of the Next Meeting – Monday 24 May 2021

Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:

Chair

Date