

## Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on Monday 24 May 2021

**Present:** Alison Ashworth, Chris Bird, Damien Bourke, Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce, Jonathan Frankham, Shayer Hussain, Karen James, 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 (Acting Vice Principal Curriculum), Richard Caulfield (Association of Colleges (AoC) Regional Director)

### ACTION

#### 20/21.62 Sector Update

Richard Caulfield gave a presentation on sector updates, which included:

- (i) the high level of activity in the sector;
- (ii) the Department for Education's (DfE's) case for change:
  - too many people leave full-time education with low skills, and too few have higher technical skills;
  - participation in lifelong learning is low and declining
  - too much learning is done in subjects with relatively low value;
- (iii) other policy drivers for change
- (iv) reform taking place via the Skills for Jobs White Paper and Skills and Post-16 Education Bill;
  - putting employers at the heart of skills system so that education and training leads to jobs that improve productivity and fill skills gaps;
  - investing in higher-level technical qualifications that provide a valuable alternative to a university degree;
  - making sure people can access training and learning flexibly throughout their lives and are well-informed about what is on offer through great careers support;
  - reforming funding and accountability to simplify how funds are allocated, give providers more autonomy, and deliver value for money;
  - supporting excellent teaching in further education;
- (v) Greater Manchester Colleges Group vision for technical education by 2030;
- (vi) White Paper suggests funding and accountability reform:
  - simplify FE funding and prioritise high-value provision;
  - provide certainty through multi-year funding agreements;
  - hold colleges to account on outcomes, rather than volumes;
  - duties to co-operate with Local Skills Improvement Plans;
- (vii) key themes that the AoC would be working on:
  - maintenance support;
  - benefit entitlement rules;
  - extending the Lifetime Skills Guarantee to include subsequent level 3 courses;

- 10-year education and skills strategy;
- collaboration with schools and universities;
- increased investment;
- (viii) key questions for college boards:
  - How can you balance energies on quality, teaching & learning, student experience, with longer term strategic issues?
  - How do you ensure you are meeting local labour market and inclusion needs? What is 'local'?
  - What are opportunities & risks of more collaboration with other colleges & with universities?
  - How can you build stronger, longer-term partnerships with employers?
  - How might your governance need to develop to meet the needs of the next few years?
  - How do you manage your reputation locally and nationally?
  - How do you act as local systems leaders:
    - Other colleges locally and beyond?
    - Universities, schools, ITPs, adult education providers?
    - Business organisations, local government, major employers?

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) the GMCA's response to the White paper reform proposals – that would see employers at the heart of the skills system. It was noted that GMCA would retain control over the AEB and would remain a significant partner but, alongside Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), would not be eligible to run the proposed skills system; the Secretary of State for Education was keen for this to be run on the German system;
- (ii) whether businesses would have the time to engage with all the government's initiatives;
- (iii) whether a balanced scorecard approach would be the best way to judge sector accountability. It was suggested that the government was not focussed on this at the moment, which would lead to a complexity for the various purse holders, regulators and Ofsted.

*Richard Caulfield left the meeting at the end of this item.*

**20/21.63 Apologies for Absence**

The Board of Governors accepted the apologies of Simon Boyle. **Accepted**

**20/21.64 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**

**20/21.65 Minutes of the Meetings Held on:**

**(i) 29 March 2021**

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2021. **Approved**

**20/21.66 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. Results were expected for the FECT fund before the summer break and for the T Level fund in September. **Noted**

**20/21.67 Committees' Report**

The Clerk to the Corporation reported the following points:

- (i) the report covered two committee meetings held during May 2021:
- (ii) the Remuneration Committee considered a proposal from the Principal for the replacement of the Deputy Principal. This will be taken forward at the Board meeting on Monday 5 July. The Remuneration Committee also reviewed its terms of reference. No changes were proposed, which was also recommended to the Board of Governors for approval. This would be taken forward at the July Board meeting within the annual review of governance arrangements;
- (iii) the Search Committee noted that long standing members Alison Ashworth and Joan Ryan would be standing down as Governors at the end of their terms of office (both 31 August 2021). The Committee also recommended to the Board of Governors for approval that Phill Brown be re-appointed for a further term of office of one year ending 31 August 2022

Governors were content with the report as presented

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

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the re-appointment of Phill Brown for a further term of office of one year as an Independent Governor from 1 September 2021. **Approved**

**20/21.68 Curriculum Update**

The Principal and Acting Vice Principal Curriculum reported the following points:

- (i) changes to the College's curriculum had been driven by developments that had been externally imposed and some that had been led internally, taking into account the external skills shortage areas and government policy.

- (ii) both external and internal drivers were outlined, together with future developments and opportunities;
- (iii) where curriculum changes were planned or in place, there were project groups in place to ensure a smooth transition for teachers and learners;
- (iv) where external training was available, this was utilised to support change;
- (v) internal teacher CPD was also in place to support curriculum changes. There were established regional and national curriculum groups in place and the College was a member of these groups to ensure the sharing of best practice;
- (vi) the expected impact of an out of date curriculum offer was that the College would not continue to attract learners or employers, with the resulting loss of income. However, the College had grown its income significantly at a time when others in the sector had contracted.

Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on the requirement of the new T-levels that students undertake 45 days work placement during their 36 week course. It was noted that the success rates of the pilot had been poor, but better than some other providers. It was felt that there would need to be some flexibility allowed here;
- (ii) the nature of Springboard provision. It was noted that this was for those learners not ready for Level 1 and tended to include learners with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or those with emotional / behavioural issues. It comprised taster sessions over 35 weeks that focussed on improving skills and social skills alongside English and Mathematics.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the Curriculum Update. **Noted**

## **20/21.69 Target Outstanding Strategy**

*Karen James left the meeting towards the end of this item.*

Key points from the Target Outstanding Strategy presentation made by the Vice Principal Quality and People included:

- (i) the journey to date;
- (ii) whether the current approach would facilitate the College reaching 'outstanding' – including whether the leaders were creating an outstanding and sustainable college;
- (iii) a review of research and best practice – including the TQM Framework for Organisational Excellence;
- (iv) planning activities, including strategic and business planning, estates strategy, risk management and external influences;
- (v) performance activities including various frameworks, KPIs and performance management;
- (vi) culture and College values

- (vii) processes – including digital / business systems strategy, IT strategy, and process improvement projects;
- (viii) people (staff and student) related activities;
- (ix) proposed next steps.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) how long it would take to reach outstanding and whether the College had the appropriate level of resources to achieve this. It was noted that it was expected to take two to three years for this strategy to have an impact;
- (ii) the view of the Vice Principal Quality and People, that if the College could make the required transformation, it would not need to spend as much time trying to address individual issues;
- (iii) that while the College was moving in the right direction, the COVID-19 pandemic would likely be a set-back. It was noted, however, that the pandemic had helped push the College's digital agenda;
- (iv) a view that the College, as a general further education college with lots of different types of provision, should not underestimate how difficult it would be to get to achieve Ofsted 'outstanding'. The Education Inspection Framework (EIF) required that the quality of education be 'exceptional' which would likely prove to be an enormous challenge;
- (v) the view of the Principal that if the College could get its processes right, then this would lift performance across the entire College;
- (vi) that despite the significant challenge, the leadership must set high expectations as this was the first step in driving improvements from staff.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the Target Outstanding Strategy.

**Noted**

## 20/21.70 Governance Developments

The Clerk to the Corporation provided a summary of recent governance developments including:

- (i) proposed changes to College's governance arrangements in 2021/22 (including discontinuing the C&S Committee and F&R Committees);
- (ii) the results of the Governor skills audit 2021;
- (iii) the impact of FE White Paper (Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth) on the governance of further education corporations;
- (iv) Governor training / development opportunities;
- (v) Governor attendance target – a proposal to increase from 75% to 80%, in line with an Internal Audit Service recommendation;
- (vi) Increased use of the Governors' Portal.

Governors were content with the proposed direction of travel.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the Governance Developments. **Noted**

**20/21.71 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. It was reported, however, that the lease for T1 had been signed as a deed. **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**

*Shayer Hussain withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of the confidential minutes that followed.*

**20/21.72 Confidential Minutes of the Meeting Held on 29 March 2021**

*This minute is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*

*Academy officers withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of the Confidential Minutes of the Remuneration Committee.*

**20/21.73 Confidential Minutes of the Remuneration Committee Meeting Held on 6 May 2021**

*This minute is confidential as it contains personal information about a member of Academy staff.*

**20/21.74 Date of the Next Meeting – Monday 5 July 2021**

**Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:**

**Chair**

**Date**