

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 25 MARCH 2022 IN THE HARRISON CENTRE BOARD ROOM (HC012) /
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:

Lillian Croston	Chair
Paul Levet	Vice Chair
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Ram Gupta *	Member
Catherine Hill OBE	Member
Chris Johnson *	Member
Michael Lee	Business Support Staff Governor
Mark Moren	Academic Staff Governor
Paul Morris	Member
Arif Patel	Member
Roger Spensley	Member
Taiyab Sufi	Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jennifer Eastham	Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
Nicola Clayton	Director: Business Development and External Engagement
Caroline Bracewell	Assistant Principal: Higher Education (part)
Andrew Gadsdon	Head of Quality of Education (part)
Christopher Hepworth	Head of Quality and Standards: Higher Education (part)
Jean Tracy	Clerk to the Corporation

* indicates attendance via Microsoft Teams

The meeting started at 14:00 and was quorate.

The Chair informed the Board that Kathryn Lord had tendered her resignation because of the demands of her work.

The Chair also reminded Board members that this was the last meeting for Roger Spensley. Mr Spensley was thanked for his contribution over a number of years.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Allanson, Paul Fleming, Steve Waggott and Jade Wellings.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair advised those in attendance that should members of the Corporation Board become aware of any potential conflicts of interest, they should be disclosed at the earliest opportunity during the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2021

The minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 15 December 2021 were **ACCEPTED** as a true and accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising, the Board having noted the status of actions from the previous meetings.

5. (i) RE-APPOINTMENT AND PROBATIONARY REVIEWS

Having considered the report and on the recommendation of Governance Panel, the Board **APPROVED**:

- a) The re-appointment to the Board and Committees of
 - a. Mark Allanson – to 31 March 2024 and as Chair of Learning and Quality Committee and as a member of Governance Panel
 - b. Paul Fleming o to 31 March 2024 and as a member of Audit Committee and Student Voice Committee
 - c. Catherine Hill OBE – to 31 March 2024 and as a member of Learning and Quality and Committee and Student Voice Committee
- b) The satisfactory completion of the probationary review of
 - a. Ram Gupta – to 31 March 2024 and as a member of Learning and Quality Committee
 - b. Mark Moren – to 31 March 2024 and as a member of Learning and Quality Committee

(ii) ELECTION PROCESS FOR FE AND HE STUDENT GOVERNORS

The Board considered the proposed changes to the election process for FE and HE Student Governors which had been made to reflect changes in title and a minor change to the process itself. On the recommendation of Governance Panel, the Board **APPROVED** the proposed changes to the election process for FE and HE Student Governors.

(iii) CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CORPORATION MEMBERS

The Clerk to the Corporation presented the Report which provided information on the changes to the Code of Conduct for Corporation Members. The main changes covered updated information on the documents with which Board members should be familiar, the College Value statements, reference to virtual meetings and written resolutions and an update on the summary of the main provisions of the College ESFA Funding Framework. The changes also included specific governance requirements in relation to the appointment of the clerk/head of governance and Board annual self-assessment, including the requirement for an external governance review at least once every three years, these being as previously reported to the Board.

Having considered the proposed changes, the Board **APPROVED** the Code of Conduct for Corporation Members, noting that the College Value Statements would be updated to reflect the Board discussions at the Seminar Mid-Year Review held that morning, and that numbering in the Code would be checked and amended as necessary.

6. (i) APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services provided an update on the outcome of the tender process for the appointment of the College's Financial Statements (External) Auditors.

The Board was informed that the tender exercise had been undertaken via the Crescent Purchasing Consortium which listed seven companies against the framework. Two applications for tender had been received but one had withdrawn before interview as they no longer had the capacity to take on additional work. Beever and Struthers had been invited for interview/presentation on 25 January 2022.

Following a detailed presentation and interview process, the Panel had requested that the College discuss further the number of days and staff level being proposed. This had taken place and a reduction in the number of days and change in the staff mix had resulted in a reduction in the total price. Audit Committee had considered the appointment at its meeting on 22 February 2022 and had agreed to recommend the appointment of Beever and Struthers to the Board.

On the recommendation of Audit Committee, the Corporation Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Beever and Struthers as External Auditors of the Financial Statements for an initial period of three years, subject to annual review. The Board also **APPROVED** the fee of £x plus VAT for 53 days work and £x plus VAT for the Teachers' Pension Scheme Year End audit.

(ii) RISK MANAGEMENT – RISK REGISTER

The Board considered the Report which provided an update on the issues that were included in the College Risk Register and which had been considered by Audit Committee at its meeting on 22 February 2022.

Three risks were currently rated as red and it was noted that actions were in place to mitigate each of these. Five risk ratings had been reduced and it was proposed that three risks be removed as they were no longer a high risk. The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained the rationale for removing the three risks. No new risks had been identified.

The Board was informed that when the review of the Strategic Plan had been completed, a review of the risks would be undertaken and the Risk Register amended as necessary. The observations of the Chair of Learning and Quality Committee in relation to the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) were noted and it was **AGREED** that a comment would be included in the Risk Register to indicate that the College would be mindful of the impact of the new TEF.

Action: Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate

Having considered the detail on the risks as above, the Board **APPROVED** the Report and the proposed amendments to the Risk Register.

Agenda Items 7 (i) and 7 (a) were considered together.

7. (i) MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS - YEAR TO 31 JANUARY 2022

7. (a) MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – YEAR TO 28 FEBRUARY 2022

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Management Accounts up to the period ending 31 January 2022, these having been considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 28 February 2022. The management accounts to 28 February 2022 were also included in order that the Board was aware of the latest position

Performance against income targets was included in the Reports which also contained information on pay and non-pay costs, contributions analysis and Balance Sheet and Cash. The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that there were no areas of concern at the current time, the financial position being very positive for this point in the year.

A discussion took place on the increase in energy costs, it being noted that the College had budgeted for an increase for next year.

The Board **APPROVED** the Management Accounts for the period ending 31 January 2022, as recommended by Policy and Resources Committee and **APPROVED** the Management Accounts for the period ending 28 February 2022.

(ii) **HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE – INCLUDING THE UPDATED HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE POLICY 2022/23**

The Board considered the Report which provided information on the key health and safety activities during 2021/22, legislative changes (where relevant) and key health and safety risks.

The College was asked for information on the current situation in relation to Covid, it being noted that the number being very ill was low. Whilst certain signage was being removed, the College was sensitive to staff concerns, for example regarding screens. The Board also asked for and received information on the use and location of CO2 monitors.

The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy 2021/22 and 2022/23, noting that this would now be signed by the Chair of the Corporation Board and the Principal and Chief Executive.

(iii) **SENIOR POST HOLDER POLICIES – DISCIPLINARY, GRIEVANCE, SICKNESS**

The Report provided a summary of the key Human Resources policies which related to senior post holders and which had been reviewed as part of the usual cycle of business and considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 28 February 2022. There were no legislative reasons/requirements or any other significant reason which would require amendments to the policies.

Having considered the Report, the Board **APPROVED** the amendments to the policies as detailed in the Report and **AGREED** that all references in the Senior Post Holder Policies to “Clerk to the Corporation” be amended to “Director of Governance” following the appointment of the post holder.

7(a)MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – YEAR TO 28 FEBRUARY 2022

The minutes for this agenda item were as above, including that the Board **APPROVED** the Management Accounts for the period ending 22 February 2022 as presented by the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services.

8. SINGLE EQUALITY ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

The Board noted that the Single Equality Annual Report (the actual title being “Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2020/21”) as presented to Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 10 February 2022 was incorrect. In addition to general formatting and typographical changes, detail on the additions which had not been presented in the original Report was provided to the Board.

The Board considered and **APPROVED** the updated Single Equality Annual Report 2020/21, noting that the Single Equality Action Plan 2020/21 had been included in the Board papers as ‘for information’.

9. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

(i) REMUNERATION COMMITTEE – INCLUDING PERFORMANCE AGAINST TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR 2020/21

The Board considered the Report which provided an update on Remuneration Committee's review of its performance against Terms of Reference for 2020/21. It noted that Remuneration Committee did not wish to recommend changes to its Terms of Reference going forward.

On the recommendation of Remuneration Committee, the Board **APPROVED** the Report, including that the Committee had satisfied the requirements of its Terms of Reference, and that no amendments were required to its Terms of Reference going forward.

(ii) LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

The Board considered and **APPROVED** the amendment to the Terms of Reference of Learning and Quality which had been made to clarify the title by which the Single Equality Committee Annual Report was known.

It was **AGREED** that the Part II Item would be taken at this point of the meeting. The minutes would be included at the end, as usual.

The Board returned to the remainder of the agenda items.

10. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair thanked Board members for their time and commitment. Board members were assured that after the Ofsted inspection, the College was continuing to move on apace, this being evident at the recent Quality Summit meetings, a number of which she and other Board members had attended.

The Board was informed of the resignation of Glenys Pashley-Crawford, who had moved to Edinburgh. Kathryn Lord had also resigned because of her work commitments. Letters of thanks had been sent to both.

The Chair also provided an update on the recent ESFA Annual Strategic Conversation which had taken place in January 2022. The letter, received yesterday, had congratulated the College on the outcome of the Ofsted inspection and the continued drive for further improvements in the quality of teaching and the student experience which this benefitted. The letter also referred to the external governance review, the Board being informed that the organisation of the review was in hand. It was **AGREED** that the letter would be forwarded to all Board members.

Action: Clerk to the Corporation¹

11. REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Principal and Chief Executive presented his Report which included an update on the latest position in terms of retention and student achievement rates. The areas of further improvement were noted.

The Report also provided updates on the Ofsted Inspection, the FE Commissioner's Visit, curriculum, partnership and estates developments, the financial position of the College,

¹ Completed – letter emailed 28 March 2022

recruitment and an update on Covid. The Principal and Chief Executive's meetings with students and staff was also included.

The Principal and Chief Executive confirmed that he had written to the Office for Students. The OfS had replied to say that the College would be assessed against the new Condition B3 ('the provider must deliver successful outcomes for all its students') and that it would not remove the current condition at this stage.

The following minute (in italics) would be classified as confidential .

12. STAFF GOVERNORS' REPORT

The Board considered the items covered in the Staff Governors' Report. The Board noted the reported improvement in staff morale and the other content of the Report. The College was asked to obtain more information on the reasons for the negative feedback received from some students on the HE tasters which had been offered.

Action: Principal and Chief Executive

13. STUDENT GOVERNORS' REPORT

A Report from the Student Governors had not been received and as neither Student Governor was present, a verbal update to the Board was not available.

14. CURRICULUM LINKS – FE, HE AND APPRENTICESHIPS

The proposed format of the Curriculum Link for FE, HE and Apprenticeships was explained by the Clerk to the Corporation. The Link Scheme was intended to provide Board members with a more detailed insight into a specific area of curriculum: meetings with the relevant Assistant Principal would be arranged and there was no requirement to attend a committee meeting.

Board members were asked to contact the Clerk to the Corporation to express an interest in the Scheme.

Action: Board Members

15. PERFORMANCE AGAINST COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2021/22 – TO 28 FEBRUARY 2022

The Board considered the Report, noting the performance against each of the KPIs together with information on the two KPIs which were currently under target.

A discussion took place on the timing of the appraisals and it was **AGREED** that the College would reflect on whether actual examination results were needed, or whether discussions could be based on predicted rates/results and to allow for the timing of the appraisals to be brought forward.

Action: Principal and Chief Executive

16. STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022 – ANNUAL OPERATING STATEMENT PROGRESS AS AT FEBRUARY 2022

The Report provided the Board with a progress update on the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 Annual Operating Statement as at February 2022. Full details were provided in the appendices and were noted by the Board. The impact of Covid was again noted.

The Assistant Principal: Higher Education, the Head of Quality of Education and the Head of Quality and Standards (Higher Education) joined the meeting.

17. FE COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - 2021/22

The Head of Quality of Education presented the Report which provided the Board with an update on the actions included within the College Further Education and Work-Based Learning Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2021/22.

The Board was informed that quality assurance measures were still continuing and improvements were being shown in all measures. However, there was still work to do to bring about further improvements.

A member of the Board commented that improvement was still required in maths and English attendance and the Chair informed the Board that she had attended the maths/English Quality Summit meeting which had been held that week. The Head of Quality of Education confirmed that the College was working hard to improve attendance and provided an update on the appointment of an Interim Head of Maths and English. The Report confirmed the improvements in attendance to date which had resulted from the interventions in place.

18. HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) STUDENT PERFORMANCE 2021/22 REPORT

The Assistant Principal: Higher Education and the Head of Quality and Standards: Higher Education presented the Report which provided the Board with an update on the in-year performance of HE students, including reference to progress against the OfS metrics. Information was also included on the final 2020/21 performance.

The Assistant Principal: Higher Education informed the meeting that whilst attendance was an issue, it did not necessarily mean that the students were not engaging and producing work which would result in achievement. In answer to questions from the Chair of the Corporation Board, information was provided on the specifics of the interventions in place, these included additional workshops and catch up sessions. The Assistant Principal: Higher Education also confirmed that poor attendance was not linked to dissatisfaction with the course but that a number of students preferred studying at home/ a hybrid model rather than in-person teaching.

In answer to a question from a Board member, information was provided on the number of students whose current attendance indicated that they would be at risk of not continuing and/or achieving and on the impact on the data. The Assistant Principal: Higher Education was confident that were the problems with attendance resolved, continuation and achievement would not be an issue for those students.

The Assistant Principal: Higher Education also confirmed that applications were up on last year's figures and that numbers were returning to pre-Covid levels for those areas affected by Covid.

19. HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021/22

The Report provided an update on the actions included in the Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan (HE-QIP), it being noted that the HE-QIP mirrored the areas for development identified in the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document (SED). The Board was informed that the number of actions flagged as 'amber' reflected the mid-year position, rather than that the actions were not having an impact.

The Head of Quality of Education confirmed that the areas of particular concern related to continuation rates and recruitment for the coming year. He also provided an update on the work being undertaken by the Quality Unit to further identify the issues in terms of delivery, student feedback, etc. Quality Standard Reviews had been undertaken in all areas and had shown that the standard of teaching was higher than had been expected and thus the College was looking into the other reasons for poor continuation. Staff sickness was noted to be a factor and was also delaying the opportunities to do the work on quality improvement/CPD. A number of development activities had been undertaken with the managers, the timing of which was being

reviewed to ensure that staff could remain focussed on examinations, etc. The Head of Quality of Education confirmed that the proportion of staff who were supportive of the drive for improvement was relatively high, but that the College now needed to work very quickly with those staff who were not.

The Assistant Principal: Higher Education, the Head of Quality of Education and the Head of Quality and Standards (Higher Education) left the meeting.

20. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Chair approved minutes off the following Committee meetings were received for information:

- (i) Audit – 22 February 2022
- (ii) Learning and Quality – 2 December 2021 and 10 February 2022
- (iii) Policy and Resources – 28 February 2022
- (iv) Student Voice Committee – 2 February 2022

21. SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE REPORT

The Report provided a summary assurance in relation to safeguarding arrangements and had been considered by Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 10 February 2022. Catherine Hill OBE attended the Safeguarding Committee meetings in her role as Safeguarding/SEND Governor Champion and gave an assurance to the Board on the safeguarding work, etc. within the College.

The College continued to prioritise safeguarding arrangements for students across all aspects of provision and effective internal structures and processes supported statutory expectations and positive external agency interventions. The Board noted the key messages and the Safeguarding Assurance Brief and Care Experienced Young People and Counselling Assurance Brief.

22. HIGHER EDUCATION SELF-EVALUATION DOCUMENT 2020/21

The Report presented the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document (SED) for the College's HE provision, the HE SED having also been considered by Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 2 December 2021.

23. CAREERS STRATEGY 2020-2022 AND GATSBY BENCHMARKS PROGRESS UPDATE

The Report, which had previously been considered by Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 10 February 2022, provided the Board with an update on progress against the Careers and Employability Strategy and the Gatsby benchmarks. The Careers and Welfare Assurance Brief (September 2021 to January 2022) was also included in the papers.

24. SINGLE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2020/21 FINAL UPDATE

The Report provided a final update on the key points of information on the Single Equality Action Plan 2020/21 and on the achievement of all five Learner Equality Objectives (also known as EDIMs – Equality and Diversity Impact Measures). The Report had previously been considered by Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 10 February 2022.

25. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE – 31 JANUARY 2022

The Report provided information on the core HR data set for the period 1 August 2021 to 31 January 2022. The Gender Pay Report (March 2021), which would be published that month, was also attached. Policy and Resources Committee had considered the Report at its meeting on 28 February 2022.

26. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2021/22 – AUGUST-JANUARY 2022

The Report which had been considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 28 February 2022, provided information on the Organisational Development data set for the period 1 August 2021 to 31 January 2022.

27. NET ZERO CARBON – UPDATE

The Report provided Board members with information on progress against the 31-step FE Climate Change Road Map, a copy of the Action Plan being included in the papers. The Report had been presented to Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 28 February 2022.

28. CORPORATION BOARD MEETING DATES

The Report provided information on the agreed changes to the Board meeting dates for December 2022 and July 2023. Board members were reminded that the full schedule of Board and Committee meetings was also uploaded to the Governors' Portal.

29. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Board members were asked to consider the role of Sustainability Link Champion.

Roger Spensley was again thanked for his commitment to the Board and was wished well for the future.

There were no other items of Any Other Business.

30. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair thanked College managers for their reports and Governors for their attendance and contributions.

31. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 1 July 2022 at 2pm.

Signed:

Date:

The meeting closed at 16:15pm