

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 2 JULY 2021 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:

Lillian Croston	Chair
Paul Levet	Vice Chair
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Mark Allanson	Member
Paul Fleming	Member
Ram Gupta	Member
Catherine Hill OBE	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 (for Item 14)
Rachel Tarplee	Assistance Principal: Teaching and Learning (Academic Centre) (for Items 7 (i) and 15 (ii))
Jean Tracy	Clerk to the Corporation

The meeting started at 14:00 and was quorate.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Johnson, Glenys Pashley-Crawford, Kathryn Lord and Steve Waggott.

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 12 MARCH 2021

The minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 12 March 2021 were **ACCEPTED** as a true and accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

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

The Chair informed the Board that Caroline Bracewell had been appointed as Assistant Principal: Higher Education.

5. BOARD AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Having noted the recommendation from the Governance Panel, the Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Taiyab Sufi as a member of the Board and Audit Committee, his term of office being until 31 March 2024.

Taiyab Sufi joined and was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made by all those present.

5a. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR 2020/21

COMMITTEE CALENDARS OF BUSINESS FOR 2021/22

The Board noted the information provided in the Report on the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for Audit Committee, Governance Panel, Learning and Quality Committee and Policy and Resources Committee and also on the review undertaken by each of the Committees on performance against its terms of reference for the previous year.

The Board **APPROVED** the amendments to Committee Terms of Reference as detailed in the paper and the assessments of performance against Terms of Reference for 2020/21. The Board also noted the Committee Calendars of Business for 2021/22 and the continuing work in relation to that for Learning and Quality Committee.

6. (i) REAPPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITORS FOR 2021/22

The Board noted the content of the Report and on recommendation of Audit Committee, **APPROVED** that RSM be reappointed as the College's internal auditors for 2021/22, the fee being subject to an uplift of CPI, as included in the original contract.

(ii) INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2021/22

The Internal Audit Plan 2021/22 covered the activity planned for 2021/22 and had been considered by the Executive in addition to Audit Committee. On the recommendation of Audit Committee, the Board **APPROVED** the Internal Audit Plan 2021/22.

7. (i) SINGLE EQUALITY AND INCLUSION SCHEME 2021-2025

The Assistant Principal: Teaching and Learning (Academic Centre), as Chair of the Single Equality Committee, presented the Report. It was noted that the Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme (SEIS) was a legal requirement and that the Scheme must be available on the College website.

Information on the key issues and areas of focus for 2021-25 were provided in the Report and noted by the Board. The Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) were due for renewal and would be brought to the Board for approval at a later date.

The Board complimented the Assistant Principal on the SEIS and requested that the order of wording of the first and penultimate bullet point under *Aims of the Scheme* be amended (Page 5) so that students were listed first. The College was also asked to check and amend if necessary, the figures quoted for the proportion of the population who were white and BAME (Page 8). A typo on page 17 was to be corrected and a full spelling check would be undertaken before publication of the Scheme.

Action: Assistance Principal: Teaching and Learning (Academic Centre)

With the corrections/amendments as detailed above, the Board **APPROVED** the Single Equality Scheme 2021-2025, noting that the Scheme would then be published on the College intranet and website.

8. (i) **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – 31 MAY 2021**

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Management Accounts up to the period ending 31 May 2021, these having been considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 21 June 2021. The Board was informed that the current operating position was ahead of budget and that the reforecast column again reflected the areas where one-off income and costs were showing in-year. The Report also covered the key issues in the accounts relating to income, pay and non-pay costs, contributions analysis and balance sheet and cash.

The Chair congratulated the Vice Principal on her work in relation to the College finances.

The Board **APPROVED** the Management Accounts for the period ending 31 May 2021 as recommended by Policy and Resources Committee.

(ii) **COLLEGE BUDGET 2021/22 AND FINANCIAL PLAN INC. ESFA COLLEGE FINANCIAL FORECAST RETURN (CFFR)**

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Report which summarised the College's financial planning 2020/21 to 2022/23 and which had been considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 21 June 2021. The key elements of the budget were set out in the paper which also included detailed explanation and budget assumptions in the commentary to the financial plan (Appendix 7). The Board's attention was also drawn to the ESFA Financial Planning Guidance (Appendix 8).

The Board noted the information on the key elements including that there were no concerns regarding the College cash flow, that all the FE Commissioner ratios had been met and that the financial health for 2021 was 'outstanding'. The Board noted that some minor category/timing changes may be necessary due to the timetable available for the preparation of the documents. However, any material changes or challenges to covenants would be raised with the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee.

A discussion took place on the staff costs and the need for these to be reviewed on an annual basis, whilst taking account of the need to improve student outcomes and recruitment. The College was also asked for and provided an update on the work being done to increase commercial income, this having been particularly affected by the pandemic.

On the recommendation of Policy and Resources Committee the Board **APPROVED** the College Budget 2021/22 and Financial Planning 2020/21, noting that the CFFR would be submitted to the ESFA and the banks, in line with the financial planning handbook and loan agreements respectively.

The Board wished to acknowledge the outstanding financial performance and the work of the financial and other teams led by the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services.

(iii) **ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY (INCLUDING PROGRESS UPDATE)**

The Report provided information on the changes to the Accommodation Strategy, the draft having been presented to Policy and Resources Committee in March 2020, and the significant progress made over the last year.

The Board requested and received an update on the Victoria Building, this information being confidential at the current time, and also on the College's progress regarding carbon net zero and the wider green/sustainability.

The Board **APPROVED** the Accommodation Strategy 2019-2022, as updated April 2021.

**9. CORPORATION BOARD:
CALENDAR OF BUSINESS 2021/22
BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETING DATES 2021/22 AND 2022/23**

The Board **APPROVED** the Board Calendar of Business 2021/22, the proposed change to the March 2022 Board meeting and the Board and Committee meeting dates for 2022/23.

10. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair congratulated the Finance Team on the strong financial position and noted that an update on developments in the Sixth Form Centre would be covered later in the meeting.

An update on the expressions of interest received for Board and/or Audit Committee membership was provided. Governance Panel members would be meeting with prospective candidates. It was noted that the Panel had also reviewed and was following up on Governor attendance.

The Chair wished to record her thanks to the Principal and Chief Executive and all College staff for the extra work necessitated by Covid to ensure that the College continued to work as best as possible and to provide maximum support for its students.

The Chair had also attended the opening of the Art Exhibition in The Mall. The exhibition had been well received and the College had been complimented on its willingness and ability to put on the display. Governors had been sent information on the exhibition and also on how to access the virtual art display which had run at the same time.

The Chair requested members' views on the format of future meetings. It was agreed that in person meetings would take place from September, subject to Covid guidance, but that the ability to attend via Teams would be facilitated for those unable to attend in person. The need for proper video conference equipment was raised by members of the Board, it being noted that the College would be updating a large room in the University Centre for this purpose.

14:59 – Catherine Hill OBE left the meeting because of wifi connection issues.

11. REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Principal and Chief Executive presented his Report which provided an update on the current student performance statistics, including retention, pass rates and achievement rates. The improvements in overall and timely apprenticeship achievement rates were noted, and the work being undertaken in the College to ensure that recruitment in this area increased.

The Board was informed that maths and English achievement rates remained a critical area of challenge across 16 to 18 year old students. The management structure across this area had been revisited in order to provide a clear focus to ensure that both the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and student attendance improved.

The Board asked that the College explore whether it would be possible to work with schools in an effort to improve the percentage of pupils who gained grade 4 – 9, and also to gain information on best practice on maths/English resit programmes of other colleges. The Principal and Chief Executive stated that the College worked with the Lancashire Colleges

Group to share best practice and would continue to engage with other education providers to further improve the outcome for students.

Further information was provided in relation to Higher Education and covered retention, the focus on student outcomes, the progress against the Office for Students Action Plan, and the appointment of the Assistant Principal: HE. The Board was reminded that a review of the Higher Education portfolio had been shared with Learning and Quality Committee and was included in the agenda for the current Board meeting.

The Report also provided the Board with an overview on external visits, an update on Business Planning and policy updates, and on the new Ofsted handbook, including the priority on sexual harassment and bullying in terms of safeguarding.

The Board discussed how the College could further develop its brand to ensure that it was the College of choice for local employers for the procurement of apprentices and to raise its profile by the continued marketing of student success stories. The College was also asked to take notice of comments about the College on social media as these would be critical for the success of how the College branded itself going forward. In answer to a question from a member of the Board, the Principal and Chief Executive explained the rationale for currently not having a deadline for student applications, and the improvements necessary in quality and reputation before a change in policy would be considered. The Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement also provided information on the employers and organisations, including The Chamber of Commerce, The Hive and The Saffron Group, with whom the College worked regarding work placements, for example.

12. STAFF GOVERNORS' REPORT

The Staff Governors' Report covered the key issues as the College returned to on-site delivery. These included the activities and preventative measures put in place re Covid, the College refurbishments and the investment in the Sixth Form Centre, the challenges around the delivery of work experience and technical and IT issues. The Board was informed on the number of smartboards that had been ordered to help ensure standardisation of classroom equipment.

The Board noted that the pay increase approved by the Board and an additional day's leave in August 2021 had been well received.

13. STUDENT GOVERNORS' REPORT

The Board noted that a report from the Student Governors had not been submitted and that, as neither were at the meeting, a verbal update was also not available.

15:41 The Assistant Principal: Higher Education (HE) joined the meeting.

14. HE CURRICULUM REVIEW

The review of HE curriculum had included both an internal and an external audit. Operational and Strategic plans had been produced for the HE Centre to ensure both quality improvement and improved financial sustainability. The Report had been discussed in detail by Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 17 June 2021 and the comments and suggestions for amendment/change had either already been included in the paper presented to the Board, or were under further development.

The 3-Year Plan provided information on proposals for new programmes and on those which were to close, the focus being on providing a curriculum which would lead to employment. The move to the HNC/HND model for Engineering was explained, together with the potential for changes to the Office for Students (OfS) metrics to impact on the HE portfolio. The FE White

Paper would also provide opportunities for the College in terms of the higher-level technical programmes.

The Chair of Learning and Quality Committee commented that the paper was very detailed and would have taken a lot of time to produce. He commented that the Board wanted performance to improve but that there was a need for more strategic position of the HE Centre going forward. Learning and Quality Committee had given a steer to concentrate on the few core things which needed to be addressed and had wanted more information on the 'why' rather than the 'how'. Discussions had also shown that the link to employers and employability should be at the core of the Blackburn offer and that the College must offer high quality delivery and outcomes.

The Chair noted the Board's concerns about the pace of change in HE which was required. The link between HE and employability was critical, with the need for the College to take on the views and input from employers in course development. The Assistant Principal: HE was also asked for and provided information on the actions being taken to effect good conversion rates of applicants to enrolments.

15:58 The Assistant Principal: Higher Education left the meeting.

15. SIXTH FORM CENTRE

(i) UPDATE ON PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (INC. OTHER CAPITAL PROJECTS)

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the paper and also shared photographs of the Sixth Form development which showed the current position of the work being done. The work would be completed before the start of term – the 2nd to 3rd week of August.

The Report also provided an update on the ESFA Further Education Capital Allocation.

The Board confirmed its continued support and **APPROVAL** for the enhanced Sixth Form project and increased budget.

(ii) UPDATE ON PROPOSED CURRICULUM OFFER

The Assistant Principal: Teaching and Learning (Academic Centre) presented the Report which provided an update on the proposed curriculum offer for the Sixth Form Centre. Additional A level subjects would be offered and the Board noted the information provided in relation to the coaching and mentoring of High Achievers. The Board was fully supportive of the College's drive to be the best and this was agreed to set the standard required.

The number of applicants was significantly higher than at the same time in the previous year. In answer to a question from the Chair, the Assistant Principal: Teaching and Learning (Academic Centre) described the actions being taken to ensure that the applicants were retained. The importance of extra curricular activities was highlighted by members of the Board, together with the need to develop students' wider skills such as academic writing, perceptual thinking and people related skills. Information was provided to the Board on the activities already in place and the Board **AGREED** that resources should be allocated to further develop the enrichment activities and the personal development required to deliver these.

16:20 The Assistant Principal: Teaching and Learning (Academic Centre) left the meeting.

16. COVID-19 UPDATE: QUALITY, FINANCE AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The Report provided an update on the impact of Covid-19 on College business, as previously requested by the Board. The Report had also been considered by Policy and Resources

Committee and Learning and Quality Committee at meetings held in May 2021 and June 2021 respectively.

The Board noted that a number of items had already been covered and was provided with an update on the total number of positive cases to date and the number of live Covid cases.

The Board noted the information provided in the Report on the organisational impact, the financial position, including Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding clawback, and the impact on recruitment of Covid-19.

17. STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022 – ANNUAL OPERATING STATEMENT UPDATE AS AT 30 APRIL 2021

The Report provided the Board with an update regarding the progress towards the Strategic Plan targets for 2020/21. Of the 25 targets for 2020/21, 4 were on target, 9 were on target in part, 2 were under target, 9 were not yet reportable and 1 was not applicable. The Board again noted that the impact of Covid-19 in 2019/20 had resulted in a number of projects not progressing as quickly as planned and thus a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had been severely impacted. An explanation of each had been covered elsewhere on the agenda.

The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the Report on the Strategic Plan Key Performance Indicators 2020/21.

18. COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2019/20 – UPDATE AT 31 MAY 2021

The paper listed performance against the shortened list of 24 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) monitored by the Board, it being noted that the full list had been reviewed by Policy and Resources Committee and Learning and Quality Committee.

Of the 24 KPIs, 8 were on target, 1 on target in part, 5 under target and 10 were not reportable/no longer relevant. The Board noted the information provided on those KPIs which were currently under target and commented that the direction of travel arrows were useful to the Board.

In answer to a comment from a member of the Board, the Principal and Chief Executive explained the position regarding the Student Progress Snapshot and confirmed that work was continuing with staff to bring about improvements in the timeliness and detail of the information recorded.

19. WRITTEN RESOLUTIONS – APPOINTMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF GOVERNOR

The Board **RECEIVED** the update on the outcome of the written resolution on the appointment of the Academic Staff Governor.

20. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

- (i) Audit Committee – 8 June 2021
- (ii) Governance Panel – 24 June 2021
- (iii) Policy and Resources – 17 May 2021 and 21 June 2021
- (iv) Learning and Quality – 17 June 2021
- (v) Student Voice – 12 May 2021

The Board was informed that Chair approval of the minutes of the Learning and Quality Committee meeting had been delayed because of annual leave and that the minutes would now be uploaded to Governors' OneDrive folders.

21. AS APPROVED BY AUDIT COMMITTEE:

(i) **EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2020/21**

(ii) **COMPLIANCE**

- **CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR ENGLISH COLLEGES**
- **RSM – A BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The Board **RECEIVED** the above reports, noting that the External Audit Plan 2020/21 had been approved under delegated authority by Audit Committee.

22. HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) REPORTS

(i) OFS INITIAL AND ONGOING CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION UPDATE

The Board **RECEIVED** the Report which provided an update on the College's progress on the Office for Students Improvement Plan to address HE student outcomes. The Report also confirmed that the College continued to adhere to the on-going condition C1, which related to guidance on consumer protection law. The Board noted that the Report had been considered by Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 17 June 2021.

(ii) ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN – MONITORING RETURN

The Report provided the Board with information on the Access and Participation Plan monitoring return, as submitted to the Office for Students. The Report had been considered by Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 17 June 2021 was thus **RECEIVED** for information.

23. FE COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020/21 – PROGRESS UPDATE

The Report provided an update on the actions included within the FE College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2020/21. Learning and Quality Committee had also considered the Report at its meeting on 17 June 2021 and had requested that final progress against the actions in the QIP be updated once results were confirmed and that this would be shared with Board Members by the end of September.

24. RISK MANAGEMENT – RISK REGISTER

The Risk Register had been considered by Audit Committee at its meeting on 8 June 2021. The Board noted the risks which were currently rated as red and that action plans were in place to mitigate each of those risks.

25. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE – 30 APRIL 2021

The Report provided a summary of core HR data sets for the period 1 February 2021 to 30 April 2021, and where appropriate, monitoring data against the protected characteristics as defined within the Equality Act 2010. It was noted that the Report had been considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 17 May 2021.

Headline information included College headcount, gender and BAME, disability, staff turnover, absence and sickness levels and case management.

26. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2020/21 – TO APRIL 2021

The Report provided a summary of the Organisational Development activity for the period 1 January 2021 to 30 April 2021 and an overview of progress to date in key development areas.

Key issues were identified in the Report and the Board noted the information provided on appraisal completion rates, the focus on staff development in relation to improving data accessibility and online-cyber awareness and mandatory training. The results of the Staff Survey 2021 launched in April 2021 were currently being analysed and would be shared at a later date.

27. SINGLE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2020/21 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

The Board noted the content of the Report which provided the Board with the final update for 2020/21 on the College's Single Equality Action Plan and the Single Equalities Annual Report 2019/20.

28. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Business.

29. REVIEW OF MEETING

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

The Vice Chair informed the Board that he was working with the Principal and Chief Executive and the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services to ensure that appropriate IT equipment was installed in the new Board Room.

30. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Corporation Board and Governors' Strategic Seminar – Friday 15 October 2021.

Signed:

Date: