

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held at 6pm on 17th October 2022 at Aylesbury Campus

Governors Present: Max Hailey (Chair), David Bainton (Vice Chair), Jenny Craig (Principal & CEO), Ian Harper, Bethan Waters, Chris Oakley, Amir Khaki, Caroline Hargrave, Eddie Weiss, Nick Bevan, Ian Greggor, Adam Poland, Kish Sidhu, Martin Tugwell

In Attendance: John McGrath (VP, Corporate Services (VPCS)), Clare Rooney (VP, Learning & Quality (VPL&Q)), Rachael Murray (Executive Director, Planning & Growth), Isobel Ellison (Executive Director, Human Resources), Alex Reynolds (Elected Staff Governor Observing), Claire Wood (Senior Safeguarding and Prevent Officer, items 1 and 2 only) Anna Smith (Clerk to Corporation)

Apologies: Julie Gillespie

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| 41.22 | <p>CHAIR'S WELCOME</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular the Principal to her first Corporation meeting with the College. The Chair also welcomed Alex Reynolds to observe the meeting prior to her term as Staff Governor commencing on 22/10/22. The Executive Directors who would be attending all future Corporation meetings were welcomed and introduced themselves to the Board.</p> <p>The meeting was quorate and new declarations of interests were Noted (Jenny Craig LEP Board Member, Kish Sidhu Interim CFO South Central Ambulance NHS, Ian Greggor Director of Estates Frimley Health NHS).</p> |
| 42.22 | <p>SAFEGUARDING UPDATE TRAINING FOR GOVERNORS (Claire Wood, Senior Safeguarding and Prevent Officer in attendance)</p> <p><i>Amir Khaki joined the meeting during this item.</i></p> <p>Governors received an informative presentation with thorough discussion, ultimately noting their reassurance at the new team in place, adequacy of reporting/tracking systems and training provided for staff.</p> <p><i>Members thanked Claire Wood for the training who then left the meeting.</i></p> <p>The Chair reminded the Corporation of the challenges previously experienced and noted his assurances of the new team and robust systems now in place.</p> <p>The Vice Chair, as Lead Governor for Safeguarding, confirmed his contentment regarding the Safeguarding Committee meetings.</p> <p>It was agreed the Safeguarding Committee should be receiving detailed reporting (based on the recently updated RAG risk based system) and reassurances with only headline reporting to the Corporation.</p> |
| 43.22 | <p>CLERK'S REPORT</p> <p><i>Ian Harper left the meeting while his reappointment was considered.</i></p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the reappointment of Ian Harper for a further term from 10/12/2022 to 9/12/2026. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratify the written resolution to approve the amendment to clause 3.2 of the Standing Orders. • Ratify the written resolution to delegate authority to the Remuneration Committee to approve changes to the terms and conditions of employment for the Clerk to Corporation. • Approve the Corporation Committee Memberships for 2022-23. • Endorse the Governor Skills Audit Review. • Approve the Link Governor Scheme. • Note the Freedom of Information Record 2021-22. <p>Query was raised over the attendance requirements stated in the Standing Orders and the Clerk confirmed she would review and circulate proposed amendments by email (Action: Clerk).</p> <p>Members were reminded to complete the Board Self-Assessment Review and Chair's Performance Review surveys which had been circulated for completion by 21/10/22 (Action: All).</p> |
| 44.22 | <p>MINUTES AND BOARD ASSURANCE REPORTS</p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the non-confidential minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 7/7/2022. • Note the updated rolling actions log. • Note the report and draft minutes of the Search & Development Committee meeting held on 16/9/22. • Note the report and draft minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 21/9/2022. |
| 45.22 | <p>STUDENT UNION REPORT</p> <p>The Corporation Noted the report which had been prepared by the Head of Student Services. The election process for Student Governors is still underway and it is anticipated two students will be in post for the next Corporation meeting.</p> |
| 46.22 | <p>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</p> <p>The Principal highlighted the key matters in her report which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National context: Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) developments for the College. The Office for National Statistics review of potential reclassification of FE colleges as part of the public sector and the opportunities and risks this could pose. • Start of Year: Successful student induction; staff recruitment challenges and review of HR recruitment processes. Discussion took place regarding recruitment and the competitive salaries offered by schools and industry which prove difficult for colleges to achieve. Alternative provision is being considered alongside the HR strategy. • Student Recruitment (16-18) 2022-23: Final figures to be confirmed at the December meeting but currently enrolments should be broadly in line with the ESFA allocation. T Level Health qualification issues and the Department for Education's (DfE) review. • Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): The KPIs had been revised to be more realistic given the current position and these were presented for discussion, review and Corporation approval. Once approved these will be available at each meeting to review as a summary against detailed reports. <p>Members queried what the Board can do to support the red rag rated KPIs relating to staffing and it was agreed this is a challenge for the sector nationally. The pay award has made a difference but the College remains over reliant on agency staff. It was confirmed this is included on the College risk register reviewed by the Audit Committee and that alternative methods such as online teaching were being considered. The VPCS noted a long term strategy</p> |

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| | <p>is needed but there will be an unavoidable off-budget drift this year due to agency expenditure.</p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to Approve the KPIs for 2022-23.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan Development: The Corporation had received a presentation of the proposed approach for the development of the new ‘future focussed’ vision and strategic plan. Underpinning strategies are being developed to achieve the plan’s goals set by the Corporation. Interest is to be sought from Members who wish to join a Governors Strategic Steering Group to develop the strategic plan (Action: All Governors to consider). The strategic event in December will involve the full Corporation designing and agreeing the plan ensuring Board ownership. <p>Concern was noted at the amount of work (and resourcing) required in a relatively short amount of time to develop the various underpinning strategies and overall strategic plan but it was agreed while this may be challenging it is necessary to ensure the best position in time for the new campus opening and achieving the estates strategy. Financial implications for the strategies will be worked through alongside developments and Governors will be fully involved throughout the process. A minimal reading set was requested for the strategic event. The Corporation Resolved to Approve the proposed development process for the revised strategic plan.</p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to Approve an extension to the review of the Higher Education Strategy for one year to enable more in-depth redevelopment as part of the overall strategic planning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints Summary 2021-22: The relatively high number of complaints relating to information and communication was queried and it was confirmed the majority were due to staff shortages directly relating to lack of communication/information with students on minor matters. • Health and Safety Annual Report 2021-22 and Policy 2022-23: The Report was Noted with strong reassurance of the new Health and Safety Manager in position. Comparative data will be available in the next report to show tracking. The Corporation Resolved to Approve the Health and Safety Policy 2022-23. <p>Destination data was requested and it was confirmed this is included in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) which will be considered by Governors at the Quality and Curriculum Committee, SAR moderation meeting and presented for approval at the December Corporation meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Principal for her report.</p> <p><i>A short break took place between 7.30 – 7.40pm.</i></p> |
| 47.22 | <p>LEARNING AND QUALITY REPORT</p> <p>The VPL&Q’s report included an update on overall achievement data for 2021-22, the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2021-22 and Quality Improvement for 2022-23, attendance and engagement, the student induction survey, teaching learning and assessment and English and maths.</p> <p>The main points of discussion related to the disappointing GCSE English results and student experience of exam situations since the pandemic. The mock exams had provided some experience but were perhaps not realistic enough.</p> <p>The Principal explained the condition of funding rules and the impact of teacher assessed grades awarded to students in school with a national concern over transition. In comparison with previous years there is a large discrepancy between mock results and the final exam results which is potentially a consequence of the students’ unfamiliarity with formal exam situations. In terms of grading, the provider group average data is still 2018-19 data (pre-pandemic) and so it is not possible to compare across the sector, national data for 2021-22 is expected in March 2023.</p> |

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| | <p>It was agreed focus needs to be on better preparing students and ensuring mock exams are more realistically aligned to real exam conditions.</p> <p>Query was raised as to whether the situation would be similar next year but the VPL&Q confirmed the root causes need to be understood initially and any issues adjusted in quality improvement plans. The Board would receive the strategic quality improvement plan alongside the SAR in December.</p> <p>The Board were pleased to note the significant improvement in apprenticeships data since last year. Query was raised as to whether any good practice in the functional skills element could be transferable to other provision given the improved results. Discussion took place and it was confirmed there is increased rigour and review of the entrance requirements for apprenticeships and far less are required to take functional skills than in previous years.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the VPL&Q for her report.</p> |
| 48.22 | <p>FINANCE AND RESOURCES REPORT</p> <p>The VPCS' report included an update on the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial performance, subcontracting and high needs partners for 2022-23 and the estates strategy.</p> <p>2021-22 financial performance was close to the predicted outturn and 2022-23 appears fairly well balanced. Further work is needed on staff costs (agency versus permanent) and risk to energy costs is difficult to predict due to government review. Focus is also needed on the strategy to improve tuition fee income.</p> <p>The subcontracting and high needs partner contract values had been scrutinised by the Finance Committee and recommended for Corporation approval and the report included sufficient rationale for each expenditure. The provision of subcontractor Macintyre was explained (high needs life skills).</p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to Approve the Subcontracting and High Needs Partners subcontract values for 2022-23.</p> <p><i>The estates strategy update is recorded in the confidential minutes.</i></p> <p>The Chair thanked the VPCS for his report.</p> |
| 49.22 | <p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>None</p> |
| 50.22 | <p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>12th December 2022 (including strategic event)</p> |

Ian Greggor, Adam Poland and Alex Reynolds left the meeting at 8.30pm.

The meeting moved into confidential business and closed at 8.40pm.

Approved as an accurate record of discussions: 12th December 2022