

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 21st March 2024 in Room FO27 and by Microsoft Teams.

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Elaine Clinton; Claire Dunn; Peter Ellwood
Nigel Holliday; Phil Jardine; Emily-Rose Lane; Robert Milburn; Chris
Nattress; Val Pallister; Lee Todd; Kirsten Williamson

By teams: Sophie Kelly; Denise Rollo; Professor Jill Stewart

Apologies: Alison Hampson

Also present: Karen Wilson (Deputy Principal); Iain Glendinning (Vice Principal);
Jane Murray (Clerk)

12/24 Minutes

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held in open session on 8th February 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

13/24 Declaration of Interests

None received.

14/24 Key Performance Indicators

It was noted that the 16-18 numbers were steady and unlikely to change now (although there may be a few late starts through the Prince's Trust). This would lead to an increase in allocation for next year.

AEB numbers continued to be below contract, with some proposals to address later in the agenda. Apprenticeship starts were strong but unlikely to meet target, although apprentices in-learning was very strong.

It was thought that HE learners would stay at 411, below target but nevertheless a strong performance. It was asked whether it was felt that HE Learners were going elsewhere, but felt that it was sooner the case that the target was based on previous year performance.

Study programme industrial placements were looking strong as was retention. Stakeholder satisfaction was looking strong.

Study programmes progress measures were good. HE learners' progress measures were a little bit under target, as were apprenticeship progress measures, but significantly up from earlier reviews. In respect of maths and English, the data did not include the mock results and it was acknowledged that the picture was not as rosy from the mocks and that intervention to cope

with exam conditions was required. It was confirmed on questioning that those who had not attended the mocks would have to sit the mock in class.

Looking forward, applications remained strong for time of year with at least half being really strong contenders. Work continued to bring down the number of days required to achieve the sign up of an apprentice and to reduce those who were currently unfunded. Staff sickness had improved over the previous year, however attention was drawn to the turnover of apprenticeship staff, a large number of which was due to recruitment opening up at Sellafield Ltd. Innovative ways of filling the gaps were being discussed.

Asked about the workflow of the apprenticeship sign up process, this was being analysed by the Vice Principal and the Director of Apprenticeships, together with the responsibilities of individual members of staff in order to streamline and speed up the process.

The KPIs update was noted.

15/24 Curriculum Update

The Ofsted report had been circulated to the Board and the Vice Principal noted that it read well. Assurance was offered that work was underway to consider the adult offer, reviewing the strategy and looking at additional projects, which included more projects under 'Multiply' and projects with those furthest from work. Some partnership work with Flannerys on construction and bootcamps was also in scope. This work would feed into curriculum planning.

More specifically on the mocks results, it was felt that English was good, but maths required significant improvement. Asked about action being taken, analysis was taking place with a focus on specific topics. Consideration of a change of exam board was also underway. Function skills had been relatively successful for some learners on the pilot and was felt to be more appropriate for some learners.

The (national) withdrawal of some vocational qualifications was presenting challenges, particularly at Level 2. This was being considered as part of curriculum planning in addition to how staff models can make efficiencies. Other work was being carried out to measure the impact of CPD on learner outcomes.

Asked about the Employability Passport, an initiative which the Board was keen to see progressed, it was noted that a visit had recently taken place from Sellafield Ltd who were adopting a skills' builder approach and it was considered sensible to adopt a similar approach. The Board looked forward to further updates.

16/24 Confidential Session

Resolved – that the Board moves into confidential session.

17/24 Strategic Update – confidential session

The Board received an update from the Principal in respect of national and local policy initiatives and partnership working.

18/24 Finance Update – confidential

The Deputy Principal provided an update on financial matters.

Emily-Rose Lane returned to the meeting

19/24 NCfN Update

The Board received an update of the financial affairs of the joint venture company.

20/24 Audit and Risk

The Risk register was considered in confidential session.

It was requested that the Board approve a minor change to the internal audit plan; SEND provision had been considered good by Ofsted so it was felt that an audit around financial controls would be more efficient at the moment.

It was also requested that in order to separate out the dates of re-appointment for external and internal audit, that the Board agree an extension of the internal auditors for a further year.

Resolved –

- 1) That the risk register be approved;
- 2) That the internal audit plan be amended to include a financial controls audit.
- 3) That the internal auditors be re-appointed for a further year from 1st August 2024-31st July 2025.

21/24 Open Session

Resolved – that the meeting be re-opened.

22/24 Governance

It was with regret that the resignation of Paul Hardon was received and noted by the Board effective from 13th February 2024. It was felt that Paul had made a valuable contribution with his apprenticeships knowledge and experience and there was genuine regret that his personal circumstances had been such that he could not continue beyond the six-month leave of absence which he had requested. The Chair noted that he had acknowledged the contribution he had made.

The Board agreed that the new code to be adopted should be the AoC Code and that this code be adopted for 2024-25 Financial Statements.

Resolved – that the new AoC code be adopted, effective for reporting against the 2024-25 financial statements.

The meeting closed at 1930h.