

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 16th May 2024 at 1730h in the Boardroom of the College or by Teams

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Elaine Clinton; Claire Dunn; Peter Ellwood; Nigel Holliday; Phil Jardine; Emily-rose Lane; Robert Milburn; Chris Nattress; Val Pallister; Denise Rollo; Professor Jill Stewart; Kirsten Williamson.

By teams: Alison Hampson; Lee Todd

Apologies: Sophie Kelly

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

23/24 Minutes

Resolved – to approve the minutes of the meeting held in open session on 21st March 2024.

The Chair noted a change to the order of the agenda in order to accommodate earlier review of financial matters.

24/24 Declarations of Interest

None received.

25/24 KPIs

The Deputy Principal noted that the 16-18 numbers were largely unchanged from earlier reporting and significantly increased from the previous year. 19+ remained below budget, but continuing to rise. Strong performance on apprenticeships, albeit below budget, but unlikely to rise. Numbers for April were slightly under for apprenticeships, but thought this was a slight fluctuation caused by some starts and drop offs. Higher Education numbers were stable at 488 and unlikely to change.

Study programme retention at 95% had dropped slightly for April and was not what was wanted at this time of the year and therefore being closely monitored. Study programme progress was still felt to be reasonably high. It was noted that if a learner stayed, it was highly likely that they would receive at least a pass.

Asked about attendance at that morning's maths exam, the Board was delighted to hear that attendance had been 93.9%, a significant improvement over previous years.

Turning to the lead indicators, it was noted that there had been a downward trend in days to sign up apprentices (42), a positive move but more still to be done. It was asked whether more oversight had contributed to this and felt that there was a structure review which was expected to contribute, which would be followed up by an advisory audit in respect of compliance and controls, which was welcomed by the Board (this was the replacement of the SEN item on the audit plan which had been previously advised to the Board in March).

Of the unfunded apprentices, the Deputy Principal noted that many were waiting for their EPAs and that closer monitoring was taking place bearing in mind the impact on financial forecasts.

It was asked whether the appropriate managers were taking a keen interest and noted that the Apprenticeship Director was himself taking a keen interest. The Board was again given assurance that EPAs were largely booked.

Staff turnover was at 14% overall, however, turnover on apprenticeships was 26%, which was causing concern. The issue was largely about the terms and conditions being offered by Sellafield Ltd and the supply chain.

It was asked and confirmed that the issue still featured high on the risk register. On the positive side, it was felt that some turnover was good as it allowed for reflection of the best delivery model.

The drop in sickness absence was welcomed by the Board and had found favour by a member of the FE Commissioner team.

26/24 Confidential Session

Resolved –

that the Board move into confidential session (in line with the revised agenda order).

27/24 Financial Recovery – Confidential

The Board was updated in respect of financial matters and discussions with the DfE.

28/24 Management Accounts - confidential

The Deputy Principal discussed the management accounts and other operational matters impacting on the financial situation.

29/24 Strategic Update - confidential

The Principal updated the Board in respect of local and national policy and other developments.

30/24 Confidential Minutes

Resolved –

- 1) That the minutes of the meeting held in confidential session of 21st March 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.
- 2) That the minutes of the meeting held in confidential session of 8th May 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

31/24 Open Session

Resolved - That the Board continue in open session.

32/24 Curriculum Update

The Vice Principal noted the improved retention over the previous year and improved anticipated performance in apprenticeship delivery with risk ratings showing 85% green, 9% amber and 6% red. Of the unfunded apprenticeships, there was a legacy issue in joinery.

While attendance overall was at 86% for EPYP, there was some concern over Level 1 attendance, particularly in Hair and Beauty; Health & Early Years; construction and civil engineering, which were being addressed.

It was noted that several interns had started a placement with Asda supermarket.

The Safeguarding update was noted and the work that was going on to engage with learners coming to College in September.

It was noted that the validation event with the Open University for a digital degree had taken place and that it was anticipated that there would be 10 starts from January.

It was asked about the award of Professorship status to the Dean of Higher Education by the University of Cumbria. Governor, Professor Jill Stewart, confirmed that it had been in recognition of his work on degree apprenticeships. It was also noted that Dr Ahmed Abuhatira had achieved CEng Status with the IMechE.

Agreed – that the Board congratulate both members of staff on their achievements.

33/24 Approach to Self-assessment

A shift in approach to Self-assessment was put forward to the Board, which was intended to get teams to think more deeply about their performance, actions, decisions, behaviours, which led to outcomes rather than purely the outcomes. The self-assessment process would be a bottom-up process at

team level. There would be a move away from mirroring an ofsted process in favour of a self-assessment based on the College's strategic plan, values and the fundamentals of the learner journey, which would ensure longevity of the process.

The change in approach was welcomed by the Board, particularly if this brought greater ownership by teams. It was verified that the CoLs were on board with the change.

Resolved – that the change in approach be adopted.

34/24 Facilities Report

Following many years of no Riddor Reportable H&S incidents, there had been three in-year with the College working with an employer on one of the incidents. Regular safety inspections were taking place and it was confirmed by the Board that actions arising from these incidents had been put in place.

There was some discussion by the Board of the potential merits of other services being put into Lakes College Enterprises, but recognised that this would be a longer-term consideration for evaluation. It was asked whether there were any issues that might arise which would impact on the financial position and noted that the principal concern was that of lifts, which were past their life span.

Agreed – that the update be noted.

35/24 Appointment of External Auditors

Following a tender process and having received assurance of value for money (there now being additional hours required to comply with ESFA requirements and changed financial circumstances), the Board was happy to reappoint Armstrong Watson as External Auditors.

Resolved – that Armstrong Watson be re-appointed from 1st August 2024-31st July 2029 (subject to an annual break clause).

36/24 Governance

The Clerk thanked the Chair and Vice Chair who had agreed to stay on to the end of the academic year, having originally intended to step down after Ofsted, which had facilitated a smooth transition. The next Board meeting would be their last Board meeting. Nigel Holliday and Elaine Clinton had agreed to step into the role.

Resolved –

- 1) That Michael Priestley as Chair and Phil Jardine as Vice Chair be confirmed in post until the 31st July 2024, the end of the academic year.

- 2) That Nigel Holliday be appointed as Chair from 1st August 2024-31st July 2026
- 3) That Elaine Clinton be appointed as Vice Chair from 1st August 2024-31st July 2026.

Although stepping down at the end of the year, student governor Emily-Rose Lane would not make the next meeting. The Chair thanked her for high quality input and wished her every future success on behalf of the Board.

Staff, student and staff governors withdrew

37/24 Confidential Session

Resolved – to move into confidential session

38/24 Performance Reviews – confidential

The Board received and noted the performance reviews of the Principal and the Clerk (from January).

The meeting closed at 1940h.