

**FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION MEETINGS 2020/21**

**MINUTES OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION MEETING**

**Held at 4pm on Monday 21 September 2020**

**Via Zoom**

**Part 1 Meeting**

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| **Members present:** | Stephen Barnes (Chair), Phil Wilkinson (Vice Chair), Amanda Melton (Principal), Mike Phelan, Nadeem Rashid, Jane Cleaver, Stephanie Bridgeman, Emma Schofield, Tom Gee, David Whatley, Lee Burton, Julie Turner |
| **In attendance:** | David Rothwell (Deputy Principal – Finance and Resources)  Tracey Baron (Deputy Principal – Quality and Curriculum)  Andrew Dewhurst (Chief Information Officer – CIO)  Alison Rushton (Vice Principal – Adult Learning and Apprenticeships)  Sam Mercer (Assistant Principal – Planning and Performance)  Andy Parkin (Assistant Principal – Lancashire Adult Learning)  Debbie Corcoran (Director of Governance) |

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| **Item 1.** | **1.1 Welcome and apologies for absence**  Stephen Barnes (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introductions were made. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Will Cook, Tim Webber MBE, Neil Hart, Rob Pheasey and Zulfi Khan. Andy Parkin was warmly welcomed to the meeting as the newly appointed Assistant Principal for Lancashire Adult Learning (LAL).  It was noted that this is the first meeting using a new e-governance software, and feedback from members would be welcomed at the end of the meeting, and training and support can be offered to maximise use of the system.  Board members resolved that Board meetings can be recorded, to support with the production of minutes. The recording will only be viewed by the Director of Governance and be destroyed when minutes are approved by the Board.  **Resolved:** **that the Board gives consent for this and future Board meetings to be recorded by the Director of Governance to support with minute production, and that recordings will be deleted once minutes are approved**  **1.2** **Declarations of Interest**  Members and officers present declared they had no interests, personal, fiduciary, or otherwise in any item on the open agenda for the meeting – with the exception of item 1.5 relating to the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporation for the 2020/21 academic year, which would be managed by the Director of Governance.  **1.3** **Minutes of the Previous Meeting (2 July 2020)**  *Submitted: ‘Minutes of the Board of Corporation Meeting held on 2nd July 2020’ (circulated in Board papers)*  The Minutes of the Board of Corporation Meeting held on the 2nd July 2020 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record, for the signature of the Chair.  **1.4 Matters Arising**  *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers)*  The Director of Governance was thanked for the new matters arising log which had been introduced to make recording and tracking of matters arising quicker and easier. It was confirmed that matters arising from the previous meeting had been cleared with the exception of 3 actions which are in progress, and will be updated at the next Board meeting. Amanda Melton (Principal) took the opportunity to update the Board that the new Board agenda planner and ‘strategic discussion’ items within it will include consideration of emerging priorities relating to the sustainability agenda and Black Lives Matter.  **Resolved:** **to receive and approve the Matters Arising log**  **1.5 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**  The Director of Governance explained that in line with the Corporation’s Standing Orders, the Corporation should appoint from itself a Chair and Vice Chair for the 2020/21 academic year at its first meeting of the year. Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair were welcomed, with the current Chair Stephen Barnes and Vice Chair Phil Wilkinson agreeable to be re-elected, and seconded by Mike Phelan.  Stephen Barnes and Phil Wilkinson left the Zoom meeting for the Board to consider, and their appointments were approved by the Board. After re-joining the meeting, the outcome was confirmed to them both, and they thanked the Board for their support and confidence.  **Resolved: To appoint Stephen Barnes as the Corporation’s Chair, and Phil Wilkinson as Vice Chair, for the 2020/21 academic year**  **1.6 Principals Report – including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**  *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers)*  The Principal presented the report, welcoming questions and clarifications. Information and areas reviewed in the paper and meeting included:   * The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) matrix agreed by the Board at its previous meeting was shared. Board noted that in-year performance information for 2020/21 had not been included in the KPI matrix at this point, but will begin to be populated with performance data from the October meeting, with performance RAG rated against targets agreed with Board. It was recognised that papers and updates today included the latest performance information and position in key areas such as finance, curriculum performance and recruitment. Board considered that the KPI targets were ambitious, and recognised that they will be flexed in-year to maintain ambition as needed, in agreement with Board * An updated Risk Register was shared, with the Principal drawing attention to the highlighted key risks. It was welcomed that the agenda of today’s meeting and future meetings is planned to focus on key areas of risk to support Board scrutiny, assurance and contribution * A proposed list of ‘strategic discussion’ items was shared with Board, and their input welcomed to support a final agenda planner being produced for the year * An updated senior leadership team structure was shared, and changes explained * Headlines and highlights from the Principal’s Bulletins to staff were set out, along with diary dates and a news brief   Board reviewed the content of the report. Discussions clarified that the target for the 2020/21 KPI 2.1 relating to staff survey satisfaction is an increase on the 2019/20 expected out-turn, assuring on ambition and stretch. Board received assurance that the Group’s approach to learners joining this academic year fully considers that teacher predictions have determined GCSE results this year, and that gaps in learning and moderation will differ from school to school. Tracey Baron (Deputy Principal) confirmed how support is differentiated for each young person beginning learning with the College Group, with a diagnostic on their beginning study, and both progress and attainment being systematically supported and measured in-year. The Spring review of learner progress is important, as it reconsiders and identifies those learners needing additional, specific and targeted support (whether academic or behavioural).  The Group’s offer and delivery to those learners who achieved below grade 4 at GCSE for English or maths this year was explained and reviewed. It was confirmed that the Group has received additional financial support from the Government to support new students, and this is being used to deliver additional activity such as study skills, appoint learning mentors to deliver small group activities and to also agree and deliver a range of division-specific Covid mitigations relating to new student’s learning, skills and knowledge gaps. It was agreed that the Group’s progress data for students will be shared at the next Quality and Standards (Q&S) meeting.  After reviewing the Risk Register, it was agreed that the rating for Risk 1.00 in relation to governance and succession planning will be reviewed and updated to reflect the success of recent recruitment and succession plans being delivered on Board membership. Also, it was agreed that the format and presentation of the Risk Register will be updated to show the changes in gross score and priority level of risks since the previous Board meeting.  **Resolved: To receive and note the Principal’s report** |
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| **Item 2.** | **STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS** |
| **2.1** | **Strategic Discussion: Annual Outcomes and Curriculum Performance** |
| *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers)*  Tracey Baron (Deputy Principal) summarised her report which shared the Group’s excellent GCSE and A level results for 2019/20, and had been communicated previously. Board welcomed the results and formally shared their thanks to the leadership team and all College Group staff. It was noted that a full set of qualification achievement results will be made available at the December Board, reflecting that all Colleges are still closing performance off, and the challenges of Covid which had led to delays to awarding bodies issuing results. Board recognised the significant improvement in GCSEs English at both campuses, particularly Accrington and Rossendale where achievement has risen from 22% in 2018/19 to 42% to 2019/20.  **Resolved: to receive and note the 2019/20 A level and GCSE English and maths achievements of the Group’s learners** |
| **2.2** | **Strategic Discussion: September Re-opening Plans and Challenges** |
| *Submitted: Presentation (circulated in meeting papers)*  David Rothwell (Deputy Principal) and Tracey Baron (Deputy Principal) delivered the presentation which updated on September re-opening plans and challenges. The presentation included photographs showing PPE, adapted teaching spaces, students observing social distancing and classroom delivery. The Deputy Principals acknowledged the significant and continued effort and hard work of all staff, cross-College , to ensure students continue to receive the best support and learning in spite of Covid-19. The Group’s approach had followed all guidance and regulation, and also recognised our local context, with a high BAME population and additional local restrictions being in place in our local communities.  Areas covered, explained and reviewed by the Board in this item included:   * *Preparing for re-opening:* government guidance, risk-assessments, the role and approach of the Leadership and Governance Group, consultation and communication, planning through trial and error and the system of controls in place * *Adapting the environment:* hygiene arrangements, signage and messaging, space occupancy usage and configuration, circulation routes/access/egress, ventilation. Board noted that estates strategy considerations going forward include a review of ventilation. Gross costs of adaptations are circa £100k exc. IT, and cost savings have been achieved due to changed ways of working * *Managing bubbles:* the approach to defining and setting out geographic bubbles by curriculum areas in the different sites/buildings; equipment and access/use of PPE, support for students, explanation of the logistics of classroom delivery was shared (including the extensive and essential cleaning of rooms in between students in rooms even when they are in the same bubbles) * *Adapting curriculum delivery:* alternate week classroom delivery is in place in most areas of study, English and mathematics, dialling into lessons, independent study, e-safety and safeguarding, adapting policies and processes and also Teacher’s ‘remote kits’ * *Adapting and measuring the impact:* testing learner experience, assessing the gaps through Covid mitigation plans, critical importance of assessment points every half-term covering knowledge, skills and behaviour, plus use of a skills matrix checking progress every 4 weeks   The latest position on confirmed cases of Covid-19 amongst staff and learners was shared, and liaison with Public Health England (PHE) explained, to ensure and assure on an effective response. Board were assured that consideration of learners with hearing impairments had been considered in the approach to wearing face coverings - with the use of purple badges by learners to communicate challenges or health conditions so that masks do not have to be work – and teachers wearing visors and not masks. It was explained that the presentation photo showing a teacher wearing both a visor and mask was because this image was from a health and social care lesson covering impaired communications. The Group’s approach to supporting social distancing in learners with learning difficulties was explained and assurance given of its effectiveness.  The rationale and effectiveness of the Group’s delivery model of a ‘week in/week on-line’ learning was reviewed, and it was confirmed that the majority of other Colleges have adopted this approach also. Assurance was given that the full programme of learning is still being delivered, even when delivery is partially on-line. It was confirmed that significant support has been given to teachers to support delivery moving online, as well as an online approach to progress scores and the usual mechanisms such as induction surveys, to capture learner voice and agree any improvements suggested. Enrichment and study programme enhancements are being delivered (apart from a physical sports offer) with a creative and exciting extra-curricular offer in place online. Board supported leadership team’s proposed blended approach to open days for new students, and it was agreed that Board will be invited to the virtual element of these when launched.    Board considered how Teacher’s leadership and presentation skills need to adapt given online learning, and heard how the Group’s Be Phenomenal continuing professional development (CPD) programme has flexed to support this. It was confirmed that consideration had been given to whether or how KPIs should change given online learning. The Principal valued the Board welcoming that the Group’s values and expectations of staff behaviour should consider the move to a more digital environment and delivery.  It was agreed that Board member’s insight into curriculum delivery post-Covid will be  supported by their receiving information on the online extra-curricular offer for students  and being invited to join a selection of lessons that are delivered online.  In summary, the Board thanked and commended staff for their relentless commitment to ensure students were safe and able to learn.  **Resolved: to note the strategic discussion on September re-opening plans and challenges, and progress related actions** |
| **3.1** | **Strategic Discussion: Recruitment and Growth** |
| *Submitted: Report and presentation (circulated in meeting papers)*  Alison Rushton (Vice Principal – Adult Learning and Apprenticeships) presented the report and additional presentation, covering headline recruitment for 16-18 year old students, adults, HE and Apprenticeships. For each area of delivery, the recruitment target was set out, current and past performance shared, and associated budget outlined. It was recognised that the recruitment position fluctuates in-year for certain funding streams/learners, such as adult learners with recruitment throughout the year.  Key headlines covered in the Board’s discuss included:   * Headline recruitment for 16-18s – with growth at Nelson and continued decline at Accrington, position against ESFA and Board targets, further intake expected November and at end of the year, and impact of modelling expected withdrawals * Headline recruitment for Adults - split into adult skills and Adult Community Learning (ACL), trends and changes in the balance of full and part-time learners, and the impact of Covid-19 on recruitment to the ACL budget by key partner organisations such as DWP, schools and the third sector. Development of a new virtual and-online offer for adults was shared, and the curriculum being shaped to meet employer’s needs around key areas of demand and economic and social needs in areas such as social prescribing * Headline recruitment for HE – recognising that this is very early in the Group’s recruitment cycle for this provision * Headline recruitment for Apprenticeships – setting out both targets and position against starts and in-learning   Key risks were set out and reviewed, and mainly related to the financial risk of under-achieving against planned recruitment targets. The performance position and related risk of clawback against the Adult Education Budget (AEB) was reviewed. Likely policy changes given the expected FE Skills White Paper and the growing importance of adult learning in the current economic climate were also considered. The Group’s existing strategy for Accrington and Rossendale College was discussed, along with its impact to-date, competitive environment and relative positioning of Nelson and Colne College. Given the continued decline in recruitment at Accrington, the Board welcomed a mid-year review of the strategy in place for this campus. Board recognised that external independent support could add value and help SLT to test the current strategy and inform Board’s review with the leadership team. Board considered that the risks had been clearly set out, and leadership team and Board were in agreement of the need for fuller consideration in relation to Accrington and the adult offer.  After a robust review, it was agreed that SLT will:   1. Complete a further and full analysis of recruitment by funding type 2. Test the strategy for Accrington and Rossendale College campus 3. Make recommendations to Board at the 18th January 2021 meeting on any need to further invest/reshape the offer at Accrington, and in relation to the adult offer Group-wide, in line with emerging needs 4. Address in-year savings as necessary in relation to adult and Apprenticeship delivery, with a mid-year review at the January 2021 Board meeting   **Resolved: to note the strategic discussion on recruitment and growth, and progress related actions** |
| **3.2** | **Strategic Discussion: Strategic Finance** |
| *Submitted: Presentation (circulated in meeting papers)*  David Rothwell (Deputy Principal) facilitated a strategic discussion on Finance, using a presentation covering the following key areas:   * *Summer funding developments* including the availability and use of £300k of 16-18 catch-up funding discussed earlier in the meeting, sector discussions on potential 16-18 growth cases, availability and approach to the furlough retention bonus * *Capital – £*350k for capital equipment included in the 2020/21 budget is now allocated and has a curriculum focus on sport, T levels, construction, motor engineering and engineering. On IT capital, the purchase of an additional 750 laptops circa £380k was proposed for staff/students/lifecycle replacement, and supported by Board, for progress and consideration with the Chair following the Group’s established procurement approach   The Deputy Principal also updated that the national FE Capital allocation (FECA) of £200mn has resulted in an allocation of £1.3mn to the Nelson and Colne College Group. Risks related to use of this fund were set out and were in the areas of purposing and eligibility, matched funding, existing condition assessment and also timescales, given that funding must be spent by end of March 2021. Capita have completed a condition assessment to support consideration of the fund’s use. It was agreed that the Board will receive a headline proposal for use of the Group’s allocation of funding from the FECA at the October Board meeting. It was noted that 25% match funding from the College is assumed, so a spend of £1.7mn is needed to access the £1.3mn available, and that unusually this funding has already been paid to Colleges, with claw back of any under spend next year.  Board took the opportunity at this point to reflect on the report provided later in the agenda at item 5.1 which offered a Finance update, and to triangulate data. Draft out-turn results for 2019/20 were confirmed, and had formed the basis of a financial return to ESFA in July after Board’s meeting. Board noted that the draft out-turn assumes there is no clawback of funding by ESFA. The reported headline position ahead of FRS102 pension costs is a £460k surplus and EBITDA is £1,170k (3.9%). Board noted that the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) position has nearly doubled, increasing form £18mn to £31mn following actuarial valuation for financial reporting purposes – an increase entirely in line with the wider FE sector.  Summary financial performance as at 31 July 2020 against KPIs was noted to be as follows:    **Resolved: to note the strategic discussion on finance, and progress related actions** |
| **Item 4.** | **For Board approval** |
| **4.1 Governance Report**  *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers*  Following consideration of the report, **the Board resolved to:**   * **Note the 2019/20 update on Board and Committee attendance** * **Approve that the temporary change to Board quoracy as agreed in the written resolution dated 20 March 2020 ends, and quoracy returns to being 40% of appointed members** * **Approve Steph Bridgeman’s appointment as a Trustee of the Pilkington scholarship fund** |
| **4.2 Annual Complaints Report**  *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers)*  Samantha Mercer (Assistant Principal – Planning and Performance) presented the annual report which updated on complaints received in the 2019/20 academic year, including trend analysis.  **Resolved: to receive and approve the Annual Complaints Report for 2019/20** |
| **4.3 Policies requiring Board approval**  *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers*  Following review, the **Board resolved to approve**:   * **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures** * **Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures** |
| **Item 5.** | **Reports to receive and note:** |
| **5.1 Finance Report**  *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers*  Discussed under item 3.2 above.  **Resolved: to receive and approve the Finance Report** |
| **5.2 Update from the Covid Re-opening Governance and Leadership Group**  *Verbal*  The Board noted that they had received a thorough update on Covid-19 and the recent meeting of the Covid-19 Re-opening Governance and Leadership Group as part of item 2.2 earlier |
| **Item 6.** | **Any Other Business (AOB)** |
| There were no items of any other business. |
| **Item 7.** | **Review of meeting and reflections against the Group values**  Members considered today’s meeting, decisions and ways of working against the Group’s values. The consensus was that the meeting had been useful and productive. Board members were positive about moving to a 4pm-7pm meeting as it gave extra time to explore issues and supports better engagement and input to strategic issues. The new agenda format and introduction of strategic discussion items is helpful, the matters arising log is effective and the introduction of the new e-governance software adds value.  With this, the Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and the meeting was brought to a close. |

**Debbie Corcoran**

**Director of Governance**

**Signed as an accurate record:…………………………………………(Chair of Corporation)**

**Name:…………………………………………………………………………..Date:…………………**