

**FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION MEETINGS 2021/22**

**MINUTES OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION MEETING**

**Held at 4pm on Monday 21ST March 2022**

**Accrington and Rossendale College (Room AC114) and Zoom**

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| **Members present:** | Phil Wilkinson (Chair), Emma Schofield (Vice Chair), Amanda Melton CBE (Principal and CEO), Mike Phelan, Tom Gee, Zulfi Khan, Julie Turner, Simone Hartley-Gott, Gillian Sharples, Nadeem Rashid, David Whatley and Liz Sedgley |
| **In attendance:** | David Rothwell (Deputy Principal – Finance and Resources)  Tracey Baron (Deputy Principal – Curriculum and Quality)  Claire Jarvis (Assistant Principal – Finance and HR)  Morag Davis (Assistant Principal – Technical Curriculum)  Jayne Wynne (Director of Marketing)  Fionnuala Swann (Assistant Principal – Academic)  Sam Mercer (Assistant Principal – Planning and Performance)  Andrew Dewhurst (Chief Information Officer)  Debbie Corcoran (Director of Governance) |

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| **Item 1.** | **1.1 Welcome and apologies for absence**  Phil Wilkinson (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Chris Smith.   * 1. **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.   * 1. **Chairs Introduction**   *Submitted: Presentation (circulated in meeting papers)*  Phil Wilkinson (Chair) offered slides to introduce himself as the new Chair of the Board, given this was his first meeting in the position. The slides shared his background, career overview, plus his view on priorities for the College Group, the Board’s collective approach and relationship of support and challenge with the senior leadership team. The Chair was thanked by the Board for the presentation, and members expressed they looked forward to working together in a new capacity.  **1.4** **Minutes of the Previous Meeting (21st February 2022)**  *Verbal update*  The Director of Governance confirmed that, with the Chair’s agreement, unapproved minutes for the 21st February 2022 Corporation meeting would be available for Board approval at the next Board meeting on 16th May 2022. This reflected the exceptional circumstances given the Group’s Ofsted inspection last week, Principal recruitment etc – Assurance was received that Board oversight remained in place, given the record of resolutions and matters arising had been updated.  **1.5 Matters Arising**  *Submitted: Reports (circulated in meeting papers)*  The matters arising log was reviewed and the current position was noted. The Board noted that 2 actions had been removed from the log (20/21-14Dec-06 and 20/21-19Oct-05) relating to Board deep dives and observations of lessons, as a new programme would be considered and progressed on the Board’s behalf by Quality and Standards Committee (Q&S) at their next meeting, given the recent refresh of areas for improvement.  The Chair took the opportunity to update the Corporation in respect of the recruitment for a new Principal and CEO for the College Group. The Chair confirmed that 3 candidates have been shortlisted by the Principal Selection Panel on the Board’s behalf to go forward the 2 days assessment centre running on the 24th and 25th March this week, with headline details shared within the meeting.  **Resolved:** **to receive and note the updated Matters Arising log and update on Principal and CEO recruitment** |
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| **Item 2.** | **Ofsted Inspection** |
| Phil Wilkinson (Chair) introduced the item by sharing his and the Board of Corporation’s delight and thanks following the highly successful Ofsted inspection of the College Group last week, and the outstanding result. Amanda Melton CBE introduced the presentation for the item, sharing her thanks with all staff and recognition that a large part of success had been the embedded and shared values lived by staff, learners and everyone the Group partners with – and the clear and impactful curriculum intent. It was recognised that ‘leadership is a team sport’, and the inspection had been a whole College endeavour, with the Board thanked for their strategic leadership and support for the inspection itself.  Tracey Baron (Deputy Principal – Quality and Curriculum) was warmly thanked by the Board and Principal for her leadership and drive, which was directly reflected in the Ofsted judgement of outstanding. The Deputy Principal then shared her slides summarising the College journey to inspection, and confirmed Ofsted’s judgements, which had been communicated last week to Board, following the Ofsted feedback meeting. All key judgements were outstanding, and all provision also, with Apprenticeships achieving a good outcome, in line with the Group’s rigorous self-assessment approach. The Deputy Principal explained the timeline and process for finalisation of the outcome and publication of the inspection report by Ofsted, and when broader sharing of the news in public was expected to be possible.  The Board and leadership team considered the outcome, and shared reflections. The Board expressed their wish that staff be recognised and rewarded for this exceptional outcome and achievement. Areas of discussion included the broad approach to continuous improvement and learning from the inspection, and the need and importance of systematic plans for talent management and succession planning to support staff and maintain capacity and expertise moving forward. Claire Jarvis (Assistant Principal – Finance and Resources) shared the broad approach around talent management and retention, and it was agreed that the May Board meeting will receive an overview of the framework for Board assurance. Emma Schofield (Vice Chair) offered to share insight from best practice and other sectors to support thinking, and this was welcomed by the Assistant Principal.  The Board took the opportunity to again recognise and thank the Principal, Deputy Principal – Quality and Curriculum, leaders and colleagues across the College on the exceptional and phenomenal Ofsted inspection outcome, and welcomed the opportunity later in the agenda to consider reward and recognition for all staff. |
| **Item 3.** | **Strategic Discussions** |
| **3.1 Perceptions Research**  *Submitted: Reports and presentation (circulated in meeting papers)*  Jayne Wynne (Marketing Director) presented this item, which shared and summarised the independent external Brand Perception Consultation commissioned by the Group in December 2021 to inform the strategic direction of marketing, branding and positioning. The Marketing Director shared key findings and implications from the research, and additional thinking since it had been received, covering aspects such as the scope and outcomes of the consultation, feedback and insight from students at the Group and other Colleges, perceptions of the College/s – and key findings and next steps for Board review and assurance.  The discussion in the Corporation meeting thoroughly reviewed the findings and recommendations, particularly focusing on the strategy to develop and position Accrington and Rossendale College and the ‘Amazing Accrington’ plan; policy drivers and enablers at national and local level such as the levelling up agenda, and opportunities such as the Accrington Town Deal – welcoming the marketing opportunity afforded by achieving Ofsted outstanding across the Group.  The Marketing Director was thanked for her input, and continued drive in this critical area.  **Resolved: That the Board receive and note the strategic discussion item on Perceptions Research**  **3.2 16-18 Allocations Framework**  *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers) and presentation in the meeting*  David Rothwell (Deputy Principal – Finance and Resources) presented summary slides, drawing out key points and areas of interest from his report, which focused on the Group’s 16-18 allocation 2022/3 and related funding arrangements. The report, slides and discussion in the meeting included considering the 2022/23 funding statement, and also:   * An overview of the principles in the way 16-18 funding operates – including student numbers as the driver and the lagged funding approach, national funding rates, the range of additional programme factors, high value course premium and high need students * The trend position for 16-18 learner numbers split by Group, Nelson and Accrington level * 16-18 funding in 2022/23 – including the £2mn/17% increase in funding nationally, additional teaching and learning requirements of 40 hours, the contribution and end of separate catch up funding activity up to the 2023/24 year-end, plus significant inflationary and cost of living pressures   The Board reflected on their earlier expression of seeking to recognise staff for the achievement of Ofsted outstanding. At this point, the interests of staff members and senior postholders were noted, and would be managed by their exclusion from decision-making. Following careful consideration of the current and planned financial position of the Group given the inspection outcome, Board member’s eligible to decide such matters, considered a proposal from the Principal and Deputy Principal and resolved as follows:  **Resolved: To approve an additional 1.5% pay award for all staff and senior postholders, with effect from 1 April 2022 onwards – with the Board noting the total cost, and that this is brought forward from any award yet to be negotiated or agreed for the 2022/23 year**  **Resolved: To approve a National Living Wage increase for all staff, with effect from 1 April 2022, of 1.5% to £9.64 per hour, with the Board noting the total cost** |
| **Item 4.** | **Principals Report** |
| *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers)*  Amanda Melton CBE (Principal and CEO) was thanked for her report and the supporting key performance indicators (KPIs). Key headlines within the report, and which were considered, included the Ofsted inspection, and a look forward to the Boards strategic planning event on the 27th and 28th April – plus upcoming events and press coverage.  **Resolved: To receive and note the Principal’s Report, including updated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** |
| **Item 5.** | **Items to receive/note/approve** |
| **5.1 Finance Report**  *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers)*  David Rothwell (Deputy Principal – Finance and Resources) presented the report, which offered an update on the financial performance and position of the College Group as at 31 January 2022 and revised Financial Regulations for Board consideration and recommended approval.  The summary position against the financial KPIs was noted to be as follows:    The Board noted that the projected deficit and variance from the original budget mainly related to the Adult Education Budget (AEB), with forecast performance circa £1.25mn below the allocation. Board also noted that the Group’s financial health is now forecast as ‘good’ - as expected. The Board reflected again that under-delivery of AEB against the allocation remains a significant risk, and every action should be considered to mitigate this while maintaining quality, with a focus on this matter at the April awayday.  Revised Financial Regulations were received by the Board, and considered for approval.  **Resolved:**   * **To receive and note the Finance Report** * **To receive and approve revised Financial Regulations for the College Group** |
|  | **5.2 Subcontracting Recommendations**  *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers)*  Sam Mercer (Assistant Principal – Planning and Performance) presented the report which offered an updated Subcontracting Plan 2021/22 for Board consideration. The recommendation within the report was for the College Group to enter 2 new subcontracts, with the following new subcontractors - Learning Curve and The White Rose School of Beauty and Complementary Therapies. The subcontracts would be to deliver an offer funded by the AEB. The Assistant Principal confirmed that due diligence exercises are being carried out which meet the ESFA requirements to provide assurance of the quality of delivery offered by the 2 new subcontractors. If approved by the Board, the addition of these two new subcontractors would increase the overall value of subcontracted delivery for 2021/22 to £1,786,167 – and the value of each sub-contract proposed was confirmed. Of this overall value, it was noted that £1,436,387 would be payable to subcontractors and £349,780 retained by the College Group for its quality assurance, co-ordination and leadership and management of the subcontractors.  The Board asked for and received assurance that the approach meets with and supports the strategic aims of the Group, and that due diligence will be completed ahead of entering into service level agreements with the 2 new subcontractors. The Board tested and was assured on the added value of the approach to learners, and the Group’s offer. During the discussion, the Assistant Principal also took the opportunity to update that a planned sub-contract previously approved by the Board had not been progressed in 2021/22 with one partner, and Board was assured on the rationale for this change  Following due consideration, the following was resolved:  **Resolved: To progress a new sub-contracting approach with two new organisations (Learning Curve and The White Rose School of Beauty and Complementary Therapies Limited), at the value specified, and subject to due diligence work currently underway being satisfactorily completed ahead of entering into Service Level Agreements**  The Assistant Principal was thanked for the report, and assurance within. |
| **5.3 Gender Pay Gap Report 2021**  *Submitted: Report (circulated in meeting papers)*  Claire Jarvis (Assistant Principal – Finance and HR) presented the report which also included the Gender Pay Gap Report which if approved by Board would then be published on the College Group website, and submitted to the Government website, in line with the legal requirement on employers with more than 250 staff. Data included in the 2021 report was at 31 March 2021. The position for 2021 was confirmed as:   * Mean gender pay gap is 2.65% (2020 – 0.37%) * Median gender pay gap is 0% (2020 – 4.21%)   The Assistant Principal confirmed that these are well below the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported 2021 UK gender pay gap of 15.4%. The Board also noted that compared to the College Group’s 2020 position, there has been a positive change on the median gender pay gap (-4.21 percentage points), but a negative movement on the man gender pay gap (+2.28 percentage points). The Assistant Principal explained in relation to this that this is no reflection of any difference in pay rates for males and females in the same roles, but reflects the shift in profile of males and females in roles at different pay grades within the organisation. The overall gender balance for the college had not changed between years.  The Board welcomed the report and the positive position. Members were interested in comparative Gender Pay Gap Reports and position of other Colleges and sector norms, and it was agreed that the Assistant Principal will consider and confirm any information publicly available.  **Resolved: To receive and approve the Gender Pay Gap Report 2021** |
| **5.4 Policies for approval**  Following due consideration, the Board resolved as follows:  **Resolved:**   * **To approve the Equality and Diversity Policy** * **To approve the HE Complaints Policy and Procedure** |
| **Item 6.** | **Any Other Business** |
| Amanda Melton CBE (Principal and CEO) updated the Board on the exciting draft programme for the Board strategic planning awayday event on the 27th and 28th April, which is a fantastic opportunity for the Board to come together and look forward and develop a revised Strategic Plan for the College Group. |
| **Item 7.** | **Review and reflections on the meeting against Group values** |
| Emma Schofield (Vice Chair) invited reflections from Board Members and leadership team on today’s meeting, decisions and ways of working against the Group’s values.  Member’s welcomed the opportunity to reflect on Ofsted inspection, and future approach to ensure continued quality and capacity. The perceptions report was recognised as a key piece of work and insight to inform future approach. Member’s welcomed the range of quality inputs, pacing of the meeting, development focus of the funding input for newer members, and distilled information within reports and summaries.  Staff Governors shared they had enjoyed and valued the strategic overview of the Ofsted inspection, which was an interesting addition to their experience of participating in the week.  With this, the Chair thanked the Board and leadership team for their inputs and support, and the meeting was closed. |

**Debbie Corcoran**

**Director of Governance**

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

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