

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on
Wednesday 4th December 2019 at 5.00pm**

Present: Christine Bampton
John Clarke - Principal
Juliette Cosgrove
John Fell
Veronica Fell (Chair)
Rob Firth
Vickie Hayes
Carla Kennaugh
Alex Kenny
Suzanne Knowles
Mo Kundi
Kathy Passant
Richard Jacklin (associate governor – observer)

In Attendance: Anne-Marie Francis – Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality
Caroline Jenkinson – Director of Governance
Jesamine Kelly – Assistant Principal

Action

The Assistant Principal gave a Safeguarding update presentation. Slides to be circulated to governors. **Dir of G**

The Chair welcomed Richard Jacklin to the meeting, his appointment as an independent governor having been recommended by the Governance Committee for a four year term of office to serve on the Audit Committee.

The Board resolved to appoint Richard Jacklin as an independent governor for a four year term of office to serve on the Audit Committee.

C.20.30 Item 1: Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Grutters, Vipin Trivedi, Lisa Owens and Carol Reid.

C.20.31 Item 2: Declarations of Interest

A standing declaration of interest was received from Veronica Fell (Chair) as she is married to John Fell.

C.20.32 Item 3: Minutes of 16th October 2019

Minutes and confidential minutes of 16th October 2019 agreed as a correct record.

C.20.33 Item 4: Matters Arising/Actions Summary

No matters arising or actions from the Actions Summary not covered on today's agenda.

C.20.34 Item 5: Confidential Items

The Board agreed that the Governor 1:1s and Chair Evaluations would form separate confidential minutes.

C.20.35 Item 6: Chair's Report – Update on the AoC Conference

The Chair provided feedback on the recent AoC Conference that was also attended by the Vice Chair and some of the College Executive Team.

The Vice Chair had attended a session by the Association of School and College Leaders in conjunction with the AoC regarding a Programme for FE leaders. The voluntary programme recognised the importance of FE leaders supporting each other in a confidential setting. With reference to this type of support discussions had already been held to set up a mentoring programme for the new principal by another principal in the North West.

The Chair confirmed she had attended sessions including with the FE Commissioner which highlighted the ability for colleges to request assistance for diagnostic assessments. Another session attended had been about colleges positioning themselves in preparation for the introduction of T-Levels. Whilst we are not currently taking part in the T-Levels pilot, governors discussed the need for the operational risk to be elevated to the High Risk Register in relation to readiness and employer engagement.

A session delivery by Ofsted on the new inspection framework had looked in particular at Apprenticeships and Adult provision along with the importance of governor awareness of the curriculum offer. The Chair confirmed the agenda for the Governor Strategy Day in February would include an item on what is expected from leaders and governors under the new inspection framework.

C.20.36 Item 7: Self-Assessment Report 2018/19 and QDP for 2019/20

The VP C&Q presented the draft Self-Assessment Report for 2018/19 and the Quality Development Plan for 2019/20. She explained it was slightly different to previous SARs and had been modelled on the new inspection framework. The overall grade was 2 Good with a sub-grade of 3 Requires Improvement for Apprenticeships.

To analyse the results for maths and English the VP Curriculum & Quality agreed that they could be split between first attempts and repeats and also show the number of students who have increased their grade in order to show value added. This information to be included in the QDP.

VP C&Q

Governors discussed the targets within the QDP with the Vice Principal C&Q confirming they were considered realistic and achievable. The Vice Chair advised that the Standards Committee had noted a number of targets had been set the previous year but not achieved and questioned if overall grading could be good for that reason. The meeting was informed that the Principal designate had attended the validation meeting and had agreed the overall grading as 2 but acknowledged it was on the cusp with a 3.

The Standards Committee are reviewing the progress of the Quality Development Plan and informing Board accordingly.

The Board resolved to approve the Self-Assessment Report for 2018/19 and the Quality Development Plan for 2019/20

C.20.37 Item 8: HE Self-Assessment Report 2018/19 and HE QDP for 2019/20

The Assistant Principal presented the HE Self-Assessment Report for 2018/19 and the QDP for 2019/20. Progress against the targets set in the HE Strategy and an overview of HE provision for 2018/19 and actions for the year ahead were included in the report.

The Assistant Principal confirmed the HE department were currently working closely with UCLan with regards to Teacher Education programmes and also looking into the development of higher apprenticeships with evening courses to be offered.

The Chair advised the report had been reviewed by the Standards Committee. The College had done extremely well on the QAA review with high confidence in the HE Centre noted. It was recognised that student numbers are below target and work to increase numbers was underway, including the recruitment of Level 3 students to HE.

The Board resolved to approve the HE Self-Assessment Report for 2018/19 and the Quality Development Plan for 2019/20

ITEM 9: STRATEGIC ISSUES

C.20.38 Item 9.1: Corporate Performance Report

The Principal presented the Corporate Performance Report for Term 1 which now included an annex with a summary of RAG rated targets.

Governors noted their concern with regards to the under-recruitment of 16-18, particularly at KGV. The Principal acknowledged this year was critical for the College and focus was on recruitment activities to increase enrolments.

The Vice Chair stated the target for 2019/20 was a revised target, significantly lower than the previous year and whilst the College were fortunate to have a financial cushion helped by the increase in the funding average for each student other colleges benefitted more from this which made competing with them even more difficult. The focus needed to be on improving quality. The Chair added the importance of the role of the enrichment programme at KGV and how this can be used to promote the College in a positive way.

Governors discussed the conservative recruitment target of 1768 as originally agreed with the Transaction Unit and which was subsequently revised to 1694. The Principal acknowledged MOT would find any departures from our target a cause for concern.

A governor questioned the rationale for the setting of the original achievement targets, particularly with reference to the table at 2.5 which showed a two year downward trend. Students use a range of information to help make their decisions on where to study. The Principal acknowledged the comment and felt that the targets were appropriate and also referenced the importance of marketing in attracting students and the use of “keeping warm” activities to help convert applications to enrolments.

The Board resolved to accept the report.

C.20.39 Item 9.2: Marketing Strategy 2019/20

The Vice Principal C&Q presented the Marketing Strategy for 2019/20 with a prime focus on 16-18 recruitment. She confirmed school liaison had been involved in a great deal of activity including “keeping warm” actions. Schools were individually tracked and re-visited where numbers were not meeting target.

In response to a governor request the Vice Principal C&Q agreed to add actual application numbers to the table of targets at Annex 1.

VP C&Q

If data is not as good as competitors the College needed to consider the strength of other areas such as enrichment. The Vice Chair suggested a competitor analysis subject by subject be undertaken for this to ascertain what we do and can do differently. The Vice Principal C&Q agreed to do this.

The Vice Chair advised that the Principal designate had suggested offering the opportunity to study 4 A-Levels with the aim of attracting more able students and this was currently being progressed.

The progress and monitoring of the Marketing Strategy is currently being reviewed by both the Resources and Standards Committees during this key period of recruitment.

The Committee resolved to accept the report.

C.20.40 Item 9.3: Business Development Strategy 2019/20

The Committee received the Business Development Strategy for 2019/20 which governors discussed and both commended and thanked the Head of Business Development for her work on apprenticeship recruitment. However, governors noted the delivery and outcome of the apprenticeships is a key area for improvement. Management responded that a key issue in this area had been the difficulty recruiting assessors which the Assistant Principal advised was currently being addressed. Once recruited timely achievement would see an improvement. The Vice Principal C&Q added a risk register of apprentices had also been introduced to identify those apprentices at risk of not completing.

The Board resolved to approve the Business Development Strategy for 2019/20.

C.20.41 Item 9.4: Accommodation Strategy 2019/20

The Committee received for information the Accommodation Strategy for 2019/20 which had been reviewed by the Resources Committee and recommended by them for approval.

The VP Services confirmed the strategy followed the usual format and would be sent to the MOT for review. He advised the works to the gas and plumbing workshops had been completed and the Quantity Surveyor confident the costs had remained on budget. He confirmed there were currently two applications for grant funding with the LCR. One being for the refurbishment of the Pennington Building which was being considered at a combined authority meeting on 6th December. The other a Low Carbon Fund application to increase the pace of energy efficiency improvements at the College for which a grant contract from the LCR was awaited having been agreed in principle.

The Board resolved to approve the Accommodation Strategy 2019/20

C.20.42 Item 9.5: Restructure Fund Annual Report

The VP Services presented the Restructure Fund Annual Report which is provided to the Market Oversight Team as part of the grant and loan conditions and relates directly to what they have asked for.

The Chair informed the Committee that there had been slight changes to the wording at 5.3 and that the report was for Board approval rather than information. Governor attention was drawn to the closure of A Level French and Geology due to low enrolment and how, under the new inspection framework, changes such as this would require a report to the Board. The Vice Chair suggested such changes be included in the first report of the year that went to Standards and then in the Principal's report to the Board.

**VP C&Q/
Principal**

The Board resolved to approve the report.

Item 10: Financial Statements 2018/19

C.20.43 Item 10.1: Audit Committee's Annual Report for 2018/19

The Chair of Audit presented the Annual Report and confirmed the Committee had been satisfied the existing systems in place were effective with added assurance from the internal and external auditors.

The Board resolved to accept the report

C.20.44 Item 10.2: Internal Audit Annual Report 2018/19

The VP Services presented the Internal Annual Report for 2018/19 and confirmed the Reasonable Assurance given at 2.1 in the report was the best result possible.

Following governor discussion with regards to 2.2, risks taken from the risk register, the VP Services confirmed nothing material on the internal control processes had been highlighted by the auditors.

The Board resolved to accept the report.

C.20.45 Item 10.3: Fraud & Irregularity Report 2018/19

The Chair confirmed this report had been scrutinised by the Audit Committee and subsequently recommended for approval by the Board.

The Board resolved to approve the report.

C.20.46 Item 10.4: Regularity Assurance and Self-Assessment Checklist 2018/19

The VP Services presented the report which was a requirement of the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice. He confirmed the report had been through the audit process and the auditors had been happy with everything provided. The Audit Committee had reviewed the self-assessment at its meeting and recommended approval by the Corporation.

The Board resolved to approve the report.

C.20.47 Item 10.5: Annual Report and Financial Statements 2018/19

The Corporation were provided with the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2018/19 for approval. The VP Services advised the report had been scrutinised by both the Audit and Resources Committees, neither of which had raised any issues for consideration by the Corporation. The Governance Committee had considered the Corporate Governance Statement and the Members' Report to the Financial Statements at their meeting and made some amendments which had been reported to and accepted by the Resources Committee. Annexes were a key component of the report for governors consideration and the VP Services drew attention to the pension liability having increased significantly this year as compared to last year and also that the fund was now in surplus.

The Board resolved to approve the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2018/19.

C.20.48 Item 11: Compliance with OfS Regulatory Deadlines

The Vice Principal Services presented a report in response to a letter received from the Director of Competition and Registration at the OfS which had drawn attention to their requirements for the timely submission of data and for the payment of registration and other fees.

It transpired that the College was one of 250 providers that failed to pay the annual fee to the QAA by the required deadline. The timeline of events and reasons for the late payment were outlined in the report.

The Vice Principal Services advised that a significant factor in the delay had been with regards to the FTE HE student numbers which had been calculated by the OfS and found to be twice as high as expected. The Assistant Principal had written to the OfS querying these figures and was subsequently informed the fee was based on all Level 4 and higher students, even though these do not fall within the remit of QAA (funded and overseen by the ESFA). This meant that due to universities having a lower proportion of these students, FE colleges were likely paying a significantly higher cost per student.

The Principal added the AoC were aware of the situation.

Due to the reasons discussed at the meeting and outlined in the report the delay in the payment was considered to be a 'one-off' and should not reoccur.

Governors noted the OfS requirement that a record of the discussions on the matter by the Board be sent to them.

The Board resolved to accept the report and accepted the reasons for the late payment and the steps taken to resolve the matter.

C.20.49 Item 12: Audit Committee

In addition to the audit reports under Item 10 of today's agenda the Chair of Audit confirmed the Committee had also reviewed and accepted the Implementation of Audit Recommendations, High Risk Action Plan and Co-ordination of the College's Auditors at their meeting on 13th December 2019.

Item 13: Standards Committee

C.20.50 Item 13.1: Minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2019 and a verbal report from the meeting on 27th November 2019

The Chair of Standards confirmed the Committee had looked at the SAR for FE and HE, Curriculum Reports and expressed their concerns with regards to apprenticeships at their meeting on 27th November 2019 which is reflected in the Quality Development Plan.

C.20.51 Item 13.2: Policies

The following policies, formerly brought to Board were approved:

- Admissions Policy
- HE Admissions Policy
- Freedom of Speech Policy

C.20.52 Item 14: Resources Committee

The Chair of Resources confirmed the Committee had looked at HE Tuition Fees and Proposed Changes to the Financial Regulations at its meeting on 9th October 2019 and Accounts, MOT report and Accommodation Strategy on 25th November 2019.

Item 15: Governance Committee

C.20.53 Item 15.1: Minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2019

The Chair presented the Governance Committee minutes from 13th November 2019. During the meeting the Committee had considered and asked the Chair of Corporation if she was willing to extend her term of office to 31st January 2021 to help with the smooth transition in the change of principal.

The Committee therefore recommended that the Chair's terms of office be extended to 31st January 2021.

The Safeguarding governor informed the Board she had been involved in interviews for the FE student governor earlier that day. From 12 candidates two excellent potential student governors had been identified and requested that both students be appointed as student governors.

The Board resolved to approve a 12 month extension to the Chair of Corporation's term of office to 31st January 2021.

Item 15.2: Independent Governor Approval

Covered at the start of the meeting - see above.

C.20.54 Item 15.3: Reconstitution of the Governance and Remuneration Committees

The Board approved the reconstitution of the Governance and Remuneration Committees as set out in the report.

C.20.55 Item 15.4: Governors 1:1s and Chair Evaluations (Confidential)

A separate confidential minute was recorded.

C.20.56 Item 16: Governor Activity Report

The Chair requested governors to send details of their activities to the Director of Governance.

The Principal addressed the Board that he would be on a period of sick leave from the end of January for an operation with an anticipated return to work by the end of February.

It had been proposed to the Chair and Vice Chair of Corporation that during the period of absence the two Vice Principals would be acting as Principal on alternate basis and a rota will be circulated in due course. The Board were asked to consider the proposal which was approved.

C.20.57 Item 17: Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 25th February 2020