

Minutes of: CORPORATION

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Time: 5:00pm

Place: via Microsoft Teams (COVID 19)

Present: Mr S Brand  
Ms M Cook  
Mr P Cook (Principal)  
Mr S Crick  
Mr M Crook  
Mr R Jones  
Ms J Lewis-Bell  
Mr I Pursglove (Chair)  
Mr D Skinner



In attendance: Ms S Dent (Vice Principal, Finance and Resources)  
Ms J Ferguson (Vice Principal, Safeguarding and Pastoral Care)  
Mrs R Herbert (Vice Principal, Quality and Curriculum)  
Mrs Y Doherty (Clerk to the Corporation)

#### **20/37 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Carr-Fanning, Ms Cook and Mr Todd.

#### **20/38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

As previously minuted Mr Crick's employment was noted.

On the basis of the business to be considered there were no declarations of interest.

#### **20/39 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting (circulated, document March 21/1) held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 were considered.

It was **RESOLVED THAT**, the minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 be approved.

#### **20/40 MATTERS ARISING**

20/30.1 Letter to staff extending the thanks of the Board

The Chair requested an update.

The Principal confirmed that a draft had been produced, with clarification required on one point.

It was agreed that the Principal and Chair would discuss this on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

#### **20/41 STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**

##### **41.1 Chairs Update**

The Chair confirmed that report had been issued to ensure that members were provided with a briefing on the FE White Paper.

Attention was drawn to the impact on governance and the potential increase on compliance and regulation. In particular the introduction of annual strategic conversations with the ESFA was noted.

It was commented that the update was useful and queried if there were any aspects of the good practice referenced in the White Paper that could be adopted in advance.

This was agreed to be a good point and it was confirmed that there would be funding available for relevant professional development of Governors. However it should be noted that professional

development could take a variety of forms, with such an example being buddying with a high performing Board of an FE College.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Chair's Update report be noted and received.

#### **41.2 Principal's Report**

The Principal provided a report to members of the Corporation with a general update, including the impact of the Coronavirus on college provision (circulated, document March 21/3).

The report provided detail on:

- Lateral Flow Testing
- Learner transition back to onsite provision
- Interns and external work experience
- Exams
- Risk of Cyber Attack

It was agreed that it was a good report, concise and informative.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Principal's update report be noted and received.

#### **41.3 Student Numbers**

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum presented a report on the Student Numbers (circulated, document March 21/4).

It was reported that the data reported was as at the end of February 2021.

There was over 100 applications in the system.

Members were asked to note the 'consults'. This was the process of receiving an EHCP for review to determine if need could be met. If this was confirmed it could lead to the College being named in the EHCP. This was the case in the vast majority of cases and applications then followed.

Discussion points included:

Did the data exclude learners that were on multi-year programmes

It was confirmed that the data was almost entirely new applications. The reports that would be presented to the upcoming meetings would include those learners on existing programmes and those anticipated to progress.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Student Numbers update report be noted and received.

#### **41.4 Data Dashboard 2020/21**

The Data Dashboard was considered (circulated, document Feb 21/4).

It was highlighted that COVID related absence was reasonably stable at between 4% and 5%.

It was highlighted that the % of staff with current classroom based safeguarding training had declined from 96% to 50%. This was attributable to lockdown. It was confirmed that although it had not been possible to deliver face to face training, due to the pandemic, all staff had completed in year refresher training as required.

AEB performance against allocation was noted.

Discussion points included:

Some of the targets had been developed prior to lockdown, could a key be provided to identify those targets and outcomes affected by COVID.

The AEB would be discussed as part of finance paper later in the meeting, but the ESFA had made a recent announcement on tolerances.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** Data Dashboard 2020/21 update report be noted and received.

## 20/42 **QUALITY AND STANDARDS**

### 42.1 **Quality and Standards Committee Meeting – 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

The Corporation noted the report from the Quality and Standards Committee (circulated, document March 21/6).

It was **RESOLVED THAT** report on the Quality and Standards Committee meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 be noted and received.

### 42.2 **Learner Leadership**

The Vice Principal Safeguarding and Pastoral Care presented a report on the Learner Leadership activities during the Autumn term of 2021 (circulated, document March 21/7).

This report had been considered in detail by the Quality and Standards Committee with the Chair of the Committee commending the continued delivery of activities where possible (in light of the impact of the pandemic).

#### *LOOP Report Improvement Plan*

Detail was provided on recent developments and the potential to review the process/questions for 2020/21.

It was confirmed that the report had received further update following feedback from the Quality and Standards Committee.

#### *Learner Leadership Autumn Term*

Detail was provided on the activities that had taken place.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** Learner Leadership update report be noted and received.

### 42.3 **Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) 2020/21**

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum reported on the Quality Improvement Plan (circulated, document March 21/8).

It was reported that the Quality and Standards Committee has received a 'deep dive' presentation from the Employability Skills Manager and Business Development Manager on QuIP actions relating to employability.

The following points were highlighted:

- Response to the White Paper: Curriculum Managers researching L2/L3 qualifications and specific vocational T levels (page 4).
- VP Q&C and VP S&P met with Assistant Principal at similar college for a mutually beneficial professional dialogue (page 5).
- Educational Psychologist input to the support ILS in the 14 – 16 provision (page 9)
- Use of Tapestry software (page 12)
- College had completed 93% of criteria to gain the Workplace Wellbeing Charter (page 18)

It was commented that it was a comprehensive report.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** update against the Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) be noted and received.

#### 42.4 Interim Internal Quality Review

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum reported on the Interim Internal Quality Review Report (circulated, document Mar 21/9).

It was reported that it had not been possible to follow the usual observation process due to the pandemic, with Curriculum Managers scrutinising their own Pathways against the Education Inspection Framework. Findings were considered and challenged by colleagues at a moderation meeting.

Points highlighted included

- Online learning was not always the best option, with difficulties encountered including mixed ability learners and delivery via Teams to home settings
- The report identified Key Strengths and Areas for Improvement

It was queried what support was provided to ensure that the internal review was robust, and to ensure consistency.

It was reported that the VP Q&C provided the ultimate challenge/oversight.

In usual circumstances a number of measures were applied to ensure accuracy and objectivity, including scrutiny by an Ofsted inspector and peer support from other colleges. However due to the exceptional circumstances as a result of the pandemic, the process of Curriculum Managers scrutinising their own departments had been considered the most appropriate action.

It was emphasised that it was a very well established team which had previously engaged in activities to evidence integrity and validity. This process had also allowed further development of self-assessment skills.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Interim Internal Quality Review be noted and received.

#### 42.5 Projected Achievement and Pass Rates

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum presented a report on the Projected Achievement and Pass Rates (circulated, document March 21/10).

It was confirmed that the VP Q&C had discussed the validity of producing this report in light of the impact of the pandemic.

It was confirmed that historically this report had been produced by the Curriculum Managers. As a result of the pandemic this report was based on the information that was available, and that there continued to be uncertainty regarding the way in which assessments would be undertaken

The report included the following points:

- Retention: detail of withdrawals with an expected end date of 2021.
- Actual retention by Pathway, it was highlighted that current retention by Pathway was anticipated to change.
- Qualification and assessment methodology.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** report on the Projected Achievement and Pass Rates be noted and received.

#### 42.6 Curriculum Review

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum presented on the Curriculum Review (circulated, document March 21/11).

Points highlighted included:

- The review had been completed in the context of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, including 'curriculum intent'
- Due to the pandemic some of the previous intentions had not been possible so it was hoped that these would be achieved this year
- Detail by Pathway was provided

It was commented that the level of retention during the pandemic was impressive and that the Curriculum Review identified new opportunities. What were the next steps?

The example of the T levels was referenced with the process being that Curriculum Managers would research the applicability and present to report on the finding to the Principal and VP Q&C. It was confirmed that a number of other aspects detail in the report were already being progressed.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** Curriculum Review be noted and approved.

#### 20/43 Safeguarding and Prevent Update

The Vice Principal Safeguarding and Pastoral Care presented a Safeguarding Update Report 2020/21 (circulated, document March 21/12).

It was stated that the report was succinct as the College was only just coming out of the most recent lockdown and the focus had been on preparing the learners for return to campus.

Points highlighted included:

- Prevent training: as part of the rolling training programme refresher training for 178 student facing staff was delivered by the Prevent Education Officer for Coventry There are 66 staff yet to complete the Prevent update training and these staff are planned in to complete this in May. By the end of this academic year all existing staff will have been updated in Prevent.
- There had been 3 external referrals made the first week back on campus (w/c 8<sup>th</sup> March).
- Staff Training: as per the Data Dashboard, classroom-based safeguarding training has dropped because a large proportion of staff were due their refresher training in February 2021. Delivery of this training had been impacted by the Covid restrictions. A rolling training programme has been arranged for the rest of the academic year that will ensure that all staff that require an update for safeguarding will have completed it by June 21.
- Governor Training: Four governors were yet to complete the online Prevent training and three governors to complete the online Safeguarding training. The Chair and Clark to the Governors is monitoring this. Further detail was provided.

There was discussion of the position with regard to staff receiving vaccines.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Safeguarding Update Report be noted and received.

#### 20/44 FINANCE AND RESOURCES

##### 44.1 Audit Committee Meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented the report from the Audit Committee meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 (circulated, document March 21/13).

Particular attention was drawn to the issue of Risk Management.

There had been detailed discussion of those risks that were historically assessed as RAG rated RED with no change despite mitigation. The Committee suggested that this position be reviewed to

determine that if a RAG rating of RED was the norm, and this is where the Corporation was comfortable, was this RAG rating appropriate. Points included the recognition of an annual cycle that could impact on the assessed RAG rating, such as learner numbers or funding, and the identification of short term KPIs and longer term strategic risks.

Discussion raised:

- If a risk remained RAG rated red after mitigation was this an issue or was it that despite active management the mitigation was insufficient to decrease the assessed risk?
- The Principal confirmed that this was an area that would be subject to further investigation and analysis
- Further discussion was required as there was a need to distinguish between operational and strategic issues
- If the RAG rating is considered the norm was that reflective of the true position
- Consider the risk and what is being contributed in terms of mitigation and does it effect change
- Consider the provision of more benchmarking and contextual detail
- Consider what is assessed as good performance and the agreed targets.
- Consider the White Paper
- Consider comparative performance and expectations

It was confirmed that there would be further detailed consideration of risk management at the next meeting of the Audit Committee in June 2021.

Attention was also drawn to the discussion and use of 'Deep Dives'.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the report from the Audit Committee meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 be noted and received.

#### **44.2 Monthly Management Accounts**

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the Monthly Management Accounts for Month 7 (circulated, document March 21/14).

The report detailed the financial position at Month 7.

Detail of key issues included

- Updated forecast remained as reported in February 2021
- The Financial health assessment
- The cash balance at the end of the period
- Updates against previous reporting
- Emerging issues
- YTD position with detail on identified key issues including:
  - Income, expenditure, underspends, capital programme, inclusion of prior year figures for comparison
- Full Year data with detail on identified key issues including:
  - Revised forecast and operating surplus, potential for risk of breach of bank covenants, revised fee forecast, AEB and savings.

The position with AEB allocation was raised. It was reported that at the time of writing the report the AEB forecast had been reduced. Subsequent to this the ESFA had confirmed the threshold for clawback was 90%. This had resulted in some disquiet in the sector as it had been 68% in 2019/20. The threshold of 90% had increased the risk of clawback and work was progressing to improve uptake.

It was noted that the AEB forecast had been reduced further as a consequence. Detail was provided. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

### Scenario Planning

At the last meeting it was highlighted that the ongoing uncertainty due to the lockdown meant that there were several areas of risk within the forecast. Scenario planning had been requested including the potential impact on the forecast.

A small number of key risks were identified with indicative figures of the range of the potential impact to the forecast. If performance was in line with the forecast there would be zero impact. If performance was better than expected this would produce a positive favourable variance and if performance was worse there would be a negative impact.

It was emphasised that the figures provided should be taken as indicative only.

It was confirmed that the forecast had been produced taking a balanced view of all of the risks, and the forecast surplus was considered the most likely outcome at this point.

It was advocated that the report hopefully provided Governors with reassurance that the College was in a reasonably good position despite the uncertainties.

Discussion points included:

The report provided a thorough summary. It was stated that the report appeared to confirm that there was confidence that the level of forecast surplus could be achieved despite the identified risks.

It was commented that it was a comprehensive report. It was questioned why the RAG rated data indicated that the forecast surplus/deficit was red.

It was confirmed that this was as a result of the forecast having been revised by more than £50k (as per the key to the indicators).

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Monthly Management Accounts, Month 7, be noted and received.

#### **44.3 FE Commissioner's Letter and Revised Benchmark Definitions**

The Chair reported that the FE Commissioner's Letter and Revised Benchmark Definitions were presented for information (circulated, document March 21/15).

It was noted that the benchmarks and measures for pay cost as a % of income remained unchanged.

It was highlighted that the benchmarks would form part of the strategic discussions with the ESFA.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the FE Commissioner's Letter and Revised Benchmark Definitions be noted and received.

#### **44.4 Disciplinary Policy**

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the Disciplinary Policy (circulated, document March 21/16).

It was confirmed that the policy had been reviewed and that no amendments had been made.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Disciplinary Policy be approved.

**20/45 Confidential Item – see separate minutes.**

#### **20/46 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business for consideration.

**20/47 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021.