

Minutes of: CORPORATION  
 Date: 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
 Time: 5:00pm  
 Place: via Microsoft Teams (COVID 19)



Present: Mr S Brand  
 Ms K Carr-Fanning  
 Ms M Cook  
 Mr P Cook (Principal)  
 Mr S Crick  
 Mr R Jones  
 Ms J Lewis-Bell  
 Mr I Pursglove (Chair)  
 Mr D Skinner  
 Mr C Todd (Vice Chair)

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)

#### 20/26 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 20/27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Crick informed the Board of his change of employment with effect from 15.02.2021.

It was confirmed that this might present a conflict of interest on occasion but after discussions with the Chair it had been concluded that this would be a standing declaration at each meeting and that Mr Crick would remove himself from any matters for discussion that presented a conflict.

#### 20/28 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting (circulated, document Feb 21/1) held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 were considered.

It was **RESOLVED THAT**, the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 be approved.

#### 20/29 MATTERS ARISING

20/19 Search and Governance

The Chair highlighted the minute requesting that **all** governors respond to requests from the Clerk and encouraged governors to do so.

#### 20/30 STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

##### 30.1 Principal's Report

The Principal provided a report to members of the Corporation with an update on the impact of the Coronavirus on college provision (circulated, document Feb 21/2).

The report provided detail on:

- No additional COVID cases since November 2020
- Staff absence as a direct or indirect effect of COVID
- Use of agency staff
- Student attendance and engagement
- Delivery of the provision, including an example timetable
- Use of software for learner engagement and evidence, e.g. Tapestry
- COVID Testing Centre (Lateral Flow Tests)

Discussion points included:

Staffing of the Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) Centre was raised.

It was reported that operation of the LFT centre was delivered by college staff at this stage.

It was commented that the report indicated that an impressive plan for the delivery of online provision had been developed and that this was a credit to the College and staff.

With regard to the establishment and operation of the LFT Centre it was suggested that it would be good practice to issue a letter of thanks to the staff from the Governors.

It was confirmed that the Executive team and College manager did express thanks to the staff for their hard work and commitment.

Governors indicated that they would be in support of letter to staff from the Board.

**It was agreed that the Corporation should write to staff and that this should be done through the SLT.**

The use of agency staff and the potential impact on quality was questioned.

The following points were made:

- In the first term the use of agency staff had included a number of well-established agency members which had been supplemented by other where necessary.
- The College was monitoring the input from teaching staff, and two of the agency staff had now been engaged as permanent members of staff.
- The need for agency staff in support of ILS had diminished in response to the mixed model delivery.
- Where concerns were raised they were addressed quickly.
- At this stage it was difficult to determine what, if any, impact there had been on quality.

The issue of staff health and well-being and an increase in workload was raised.

It was confirmed that staff health and well-being was closely monitored and action was taken to mitigate issues where appropriate, e.g. additional administrative support.

It was **RESOLVED THAT**

- i. the Principal's update report and presentation be noted and received;
- ii. the SLT write to staff to extend the thanks of the Corporation for their hard work and commitment.

### 30.2 Student Numbers

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum presented a report on the Student Numbers (circulated, document Feb 21/3).

It was reported that the numbers for residential and day learners were comparable to that of this time last year, however, it was a decline on that of 2019 which was to be anticipated in the current circumstances.

This would continue to be closely monitored.

Discussion points included:

Surprise that the numbers appeared so positive, which it was assumed was attributable to hard work in maintaining links with organisations and individuals.

It was confirmed that the Admissions department had been creative in their approach to recruitment, and that there had been 18 interviews at the interview week held week beginning 01.02.21, which was a high number.

It was also of note that two mainstream providers had reported a significant decline in SEN numbers.

It was highlighted that this report linked into the finance briefing delivered to governors on 27.01.21 and the importance of the time it takes for learner numbers to feed into the funding received.

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

### 30.3 Data Dashboard 2020/21

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

It was highlighted that for the ILTA dashboard the majority of the monthly KPIs were RAG rated Green, the one notable exception which was currently RAG rated Red was linked the current position with the pandemic.

It had not been possible to populate the termly data relating to achievement and observations due to the changes or adaptations that had been imposed or were necessary.

The data for the WILCS data dashboard was RAG rated Green.

Two KPIs in the MMCR data dashboard were RAG rated Red.

Discussion points included:

Data for performance against the AEB allocation was queried.

It was confirmed that the data reported was the forecast and not the YTD position, however this remained an area of risk.

It was noted that online safeguarding training for staff was 100%. The position for Governors completing training was discussed (see minute 20/32).

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

## 20/31 FINANCE AND RESOURCES

### 31.1 Monthly Management Accounts

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the Monthly Management Accounts for Month 5 (circulated, document Feb 21/5).

The report detailed the financial position at Month 5.

Detail of key issues included:

- Revised annual forecast against the revised budget
- The Financial health assessment
- The cash balance at the end of the period
- Updates against previous reporting:
  - Delays to funding decisions
  - Consequences of implementation of recommended practice in response to the pandemic
  - Risk to the residential provision presented by COVID
  - Delayed starts/funding due to health issues
  - DWP funding (Supported Internships)
  - Risk to external generated income
  - Emerging issues and observations from the autumn term
- YTD position with detail on identified key issues including:
  - Income, expenditure, underspends, capital programme, inclusion of prior year figures for comparison and in-year phasing
- Full Year data with detail on identified key issues including:
  - Revised forecast and reduced operating surplus, potential for risk of breach of bank covenants, revised fee forecast, AEB and savings.

Detail was provided on potential issues around funding decisions, evidence of hours offered and learner engagement, blended learning provision, loss of income or clawback, use of agency staffing, the Supported Internship provision, and the impact of timing differences relating to income against budget. It was confirmed that there was regular communication with the bank and it continued to be supportive of the College.

Discussion points included:

It was commented that the report was very helpful especially the additional development to include updates against previous reporting, timings, phasing and risks.

It was queried what were expected to be the key events over the next few months in terms of forecasting.

It was confirmed that this was considered to be learner engagement, remote learning, the potential for learners to be back on site, the need for robust recording and evidence, achieving other income (which was lockdown dependant) and the requirements for DWP funding.

It was suggested that there was the potential to mitigate any losses with savings.

It was questioned if normal delivery was anticipated after lockdown was lifted.

It was confirmed that the risk of learners not wishing to return to on-site learning would need to be considered.

AEB – it was noted that the ESFA had yet to make an announcement re any guaranteed payment which was unlikely in the shorter term and that colleges could not rely on this. It was suggested that the College give consideration to sector based work partnerships,

Costs for the LFT Centre were raised and charging to the DfE.

It was reported that cost calculations were based on learner numbers and a lump sum payment would be made.

The detail of the report was again commended but it was advocated that a scenario planning (worse and medium cases) would be helpful for the next meeting. It was recognised that this could mean significant additional work.

It was **RESOLVED THAT**

- i. the Monthly Management Accounts, Month 5, be noted and received.
- ii. a scenario planning report be provided to the next meeting.

### 31.2 HR Report – Autumn Term 2020/21

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the HR Autumn Term Report (circulated, document Feb 21/6).

Detail was provided on:

- Staff Turnover, which was below the percentage rate agreed as acceptable;
- Number of Employee Relations Issues, which was below the percentage rate agreed as acceptable;
- Vacancy Rate, had increased but remained below the percentage rate agreed as acceptable;
- Core Training, which had declined but remained above the percentage rate agreed as acceptable;
- Sickness absence rate, had declined and remained below the percentage rate agreed as acceptable
- Appraisal completion rate;
- Policies and procedures;
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- Buddying scheme;

Discussion points included:

Absence data. The rate of absence due to stress was noted and it was suggested that consideration be given to the accelerating the proposed timeframe for the offer of Mental Health First Aid training to managers. It was also suggested that consideration could be given to available webinars, the expansion of the offer available from Educare and any AEP offer.

It was acknowledged that the level of stress related absence was disappointingly high, and that work continued via the Health and Well-being Strategy to support staff and that a counselling service was also available. In terms of the training offer staff availability would always be a factor but work would continue to assess options and offer whatever was possible and appropriate.

It was advocate that as a result of the very open culture that the College encouraged the SLT were aware of potential issues and impact. These included things such as isolation, childcare issues, and anxiety relating to a return to college after prolonged absence (lockdown). Actions included maintaining contact with staff, opportunities to engage in 'fun', non-work related activities, attendance at college on a rota basis. It was recognised that this was a complex situation but the College collated as much data as possible and responded as appropriate.

Governors supported the offer of Mental Health First Aid training and that the training should be rolled out as soon as possible.

It was also noted that there were additional aspects to this issue which included the provision of a healthy environment and it appeared that the College was also working on the delivery of this.

Counselling Service – it was queried if this was face to face or remote

It was confirmed that the College had an established counsellor service, which was usually delivered face to face, however, due to the restrictions this was now being delivered remotely. The offer was usually for six sessions, but more could be purchased if needed. Staff feedback was very positive.

It was commented that it was good to know that such support mechanisms were in place for staff, but that it was equally important that the SLT and Clerk ensure their own well-being, not only for themselves but also so that they are able to support other staff and demonstrate to all staff that that everyone's mental health and well-being is important.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the HR Report - Autumn Term 2020/21 be noted and received.

### 31.3 GDPR – Autumn Term 2020/21

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented a Data Protection update report (circulated, document Feb 21/7).

An update on progress included:

- The work of the Data Protection Group;
- No reported breaches;
- 7 Data Subject Access Requests, with detail
- Issues dealt with by the DPO
- Training data
- Progress against the Action Plan for 2020/21, including the impact of COVID 19

Discussion points included

Assessment of staff time in responding to DSAR etc.

It was reported that this would be a complex process as the response to a DSAR could often involve a number of staff, to varying degrees, and the recording of this would take development.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the GDPR/Data Protection update report be noted and received.

### 31.4 Business Continuity Plan

The Principal presented the Business Continuity Plan (circulated, document Feb 21/8).

It was reported that the Business Continuity Plan was used in March of 2020 in response to the first national lockdown. Since then the management of the pandemic had been somewhat normalised into regular college business and response to current government advice. The College continues to manage its way through the current situation and a full review and learning from the handling of the prolonged crisis will take place when more stability returns to the management of education provision. This will then feed into a further update of the Business Continuity Plan. However, the Business Continuity Plan covers a wider area than just infectious disease and it was last approved in 2018 therefore the updated plan was presented for approval.

The Business Continuity Plan and associated procedures sets out a series of responsive measures to be taken in the event of the following:

- A major incident at or near to the College
- A business critical building becoming unusable
- A business critical function becoming unavailable

The plan sets out the contingencies available and how the senior leadership team will organise and communicate. The main objectives of the plan are:

- To prevent injury or the loss of life
- Safeguarding all students, staff and others on the College site
- To minimise damage to buildings and assets
- To restore operational activities as quickly as possible

Discussion points included:

The document provided a good update, being comprehensive, helpful and reflecting what had happened.

It was noted that it was proposed for approval for a two year period (until 2023).

It was suggested that it would be helpful to conduct a further review of the document once the current situation had passed.

This was agreed.

A minor point on page 8 was raised as to whether the impact could be 'controlled' or 'mitigated'.

It was also advocated that the detail of the flowchart indicated that there was a significant number of actions allocated to the Technical Estates and Facilities Manager.

This was acknowledged, however, there was a deputy and team in place that could assist with the completion of these actions.

However this would be reflected on and included in future testing scenarios that would inform further review of the plan.

It was **RESOLVED THAT**

- i. the Business Continuity Plan be approved;
- ii. a further review be completed and an update presented to the Corporation no later than October 2021 and, if possible, prior to the end of the current academic year (subject to pandemic conditions).

## **20/32 Safeguarding and Prevent Update**

The Vice Principal Safeguarding and Pastoral Care presented a Safeguarding Update Report 2020/21 (circulated, document Feb 21/9).

The report provided detail on a number of aspects:

- Safeguarding Overview
- Operational MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team)
- Clinical MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team)
- Prevent Steering Group
- Staff Safeguarding Newsletter
- Early Help Co-ordinator
- Duty Managers Guide
- Safeguarding through Lockdown
- Digital Safety
- External Referrals
- Staff and Governor Training

Discussion points included:

Governor training. The Clerk had reminded Governors of the need to complete the training. The completion rate had increased to 75% since the distribution of the report, with one Governor having reported difficulties in accessing the online course which was being investigated by the College.

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

## **20/33 QUALITY AND STANDARDS**

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

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum reported on the Quality Improvement Plan (circulated, document Feb 21/10).

The following points were highlighted:

- Six employers are ready to proceed with internship placements as soon as it is safe to do so (page 2).
- A new residential offers pathways into employment (page 2).
- Significant increase in the use of Microsoft Teams (page 5)
- Continued support from the Clinical Multi-Disciplinary Team (page 7)
- Continued support from the Educational Psychologist encouraging and supporting learner engagement (page 7)
- Focus of forthcoming training day on 12<sup>th</sup> Feb would be online safety (page 9)

- Monitoring of learner engagement (page 11)
- Use of software (Tapestry) to evidence engagement and progress (page 13), with the potential to expand use to other Pathway.

The support for staff was also further highlighted and in particular the work of the HR Manager. The College is a 'Mindful' Employer and had met 80% of the criteria of the Workplace Well-being Charter.

Discussion points included:

Contact good and outstanding specialist providers to share good practice models (page 7). It was acknowledged that the milestone date had not yet passed, but that there was a potential opportunity to share and showcase what had been currently achieved in the developing the provision for learners.

It was reported that the College had established good reciprocal relationships with other providers pre-pandemic which would be built on.

It was also confirmed that the College had been approached by competitor providers to work together relating to Ofsted inspections and the sharing of good practice.

It was commented that there was a need to ensure that balance was maintained between commercial sensitivities and collaboration.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Quality Improvement Plan 2020/21 update be noted and received.

### **33.2 Complaints Report – Autumn Term 2020/21**

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum reported on the Complaints Report – Autumn Term 2020/21 (circulated, document Feb 21/11).

The report summarised the key headline data from complaints received by the College during the Autumn term 2020/21

The number of complaints received had declined and had reduced by one in comparison with the Autumn Term 2019/20.

Comparative data was provided.

At the time of the report being distributed the outcome of the complaint was pending. The process had subsequently been concluded. The complaint had not been upheld and work to support the complainant had been identified.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Complaints Report Autumn Term 2020/21 be noted and received.

## **20/34 GOVERNANCE**

### **34.1 Governor Link Scheme – Autumn Term 2020/21**

The Corporation considered a report on the Link Scheme Autumn Term 2020/21 (circulated, document Feb 21/12).

Detail included:

- Ten Governors from a possible twelve (83%) completed autumn term link meetings.
- Six of the ten Governors (60%) have provided feedback;
- All Managers (100%) provided feedback on the link meetings completed for the autumn term;
- Feedback is positive, including confirmation of better understanding of the work of the departments/areas.

It was highlighted that the scheme offered an opportunity for Governor development, which would support them in their role and should be considered when responding to the annual skills audit.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the report on the Governor Link Scheme Autumn Term 2020/21 be noted and received.

### **34.2 Senior Post-holder Policies**

The Corporation considered the following Senior Post-holder Policies (circulated, document Feb 21/12).

#### **Senior Post-Holder Disciplinary Policy and Procedures**

The policy was last considered and approved by the Board in February 2019. A review against the latest AoC model policy (October 2018) and the College policy had provided for a small number of revisions as indicated.

#### **Senior Post-Holder Grievance Policy and Procedures**

The policy was last considered and approved by the Board in February 2019. A review against the latest AoC model policy (October 2018) the other SPH policies and the College policy applicable to other staff had provided for a number of revisions as indicated.

#### **Senior Post-Holder Capability Policy and Procedures**

The policy was last considered and approved by the Board in February 2019. It had been reviewed against the other SPH and the College policy applicable to other staff. There were no proposed revisions to the policy other than the applicable dates.

The policies had been shared with the SLT for feedback.

Discussion points included:

Disciplinary Policy an Procedure: Section 2.2

It was queried if 'coaching' should be included as part of the identified alternatives to disciplinary action, or whether this was implicit with the use of 'training'.

It was agreed that this would be reviewed further and included if appropriate.

Grievance Policy an Procedure:

It was queried if this should include the facility to suspend.

It was agreed that this would be reviewed further and included if appropriate.

Section 1.3: it was noted that the policy would be 'reviewed regularly' and it was queried if this should be more specific.

It was confirmed that the policies were subject to an agreed biennial review and that this could be included.

It was **RESOLVED THAT**, subject to notification of any amendments as detailed, that the revised Senior Post-holder Polices be approved.

### **20/35 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair thanked the SLT for their work in delivering the papers.

### **20/36 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021.