

## **Minutes**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of the Corporation held in the Committee Room, Moulsham Street Campus, Chelmsford and via MS Teams on 24<sup>th</sup> March at 2.00pm

**PRESENT:** Amanda Montague (Chair)  
David Warnes (Principal)  
Jenny Beaumont  
Trevor Bolton (Vice Chair)  
Jaya Patten  
Paddy Reilly (online)  
Doug Zeeman  
Barbara Vohmann  
Alan Pitcher  
Richard Davidson  
Susan Hughes  
Sarah Noble

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Debs Hurst (Deputy Principal, Finance & Corporate Services)  
Debbie Garroway (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality)  
Fiona Chalk (Interim Clerk to the Corporation)  
Dave Leyton-Scott – DfE for Prevent (presentation only)

An external presentation on Prevent was delivered at 1pm.

The presentation detailed:

- the key threats: Islamist Terrorism and Right-Wing Extremism
- the Independent Review of Prevent
- Online promotion of terrorism and extremism
- That those under 21 years of age account of 25% of arrests – a growing demographic
- Referrals to the Prevent Service - 25 referrals in the last 3 months across Essex
- Concerning emerging issue is Far-Right attacks on migrants in hotels and hostels
- Many referrals don't fall into the above 2 key threats, but are from those who have a cause/grudge on which they have expressed an item for action
- There is a crossover with mental health issues

Governors asked if there are any patterns emerging on how to identify the young people being drawn into extreme causes. It was noted that the access to information via phones and the internet has made it easier. There is no profile for a terrorist, it cuts across all sectors of society.

Governors said the capacity for external support for mental health matters is really hard to access, which is a worry.

## **FORMAL MATTERS**

### **1616. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Paolo Chaffey (Student Governor) – 2 assignments to complete, Janet Church – due to staff shortages, Christian Norman – ill health, Jon Selvage - CPD.

### **1617. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TO NOTIFY ANT CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

Standing items of interests were noted.

### **1618. URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

### **1619. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETINGS HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022 & 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the 9<sup>th</sup> December and 2<sup>nd</sup> February meetings.

### **1620. MATTERS ARISING**

- Financial regulations – for approval (placed on portal)

**ACTION: Financial Regulations to be circulated via email for approval.**

- Peter McKercher has offered his resignation due to ONS reclassification and how responsibility and accountability of governors are affected.

### **TO DISCUSS AND APPROVE**

#### **1621. BUSINESS UNIT PRESENTATION**

(See confidential minutes).

#### **1622. PRINCIPALS REPORT**

Passing of a student

(See confidential minute)

Governors noted:

- External Awards – Jon Selvage (staff governor) is a JISC finalist, and a college student is entered in the World Skills programme.
- The ESFA Annual Conversations has taken place, discussing current challenges of funding, qualifications, etc. The ESFA representative has been invited to the PS&R meeting in May.
- T-Levels funding has been received for investment in order to deliver the T-Level recruitment and programmes from September 2023. The DfE has withdrawn approval for the Media T-Level nationwide and deferred it by a year. The college has 15 learners expecting to undertake this. In total, 95 students against a target of 112 have been recruited to T-Levels.
- Staff wellbeing and workflow is being considered through consultation and support groups to implement actions to positively impact staff workloads.
- Stakeholder Scrutiny committee (SSC) has had its first meeting to formally engage with stakeholders in order to understand what the local and regional needs and training requirements are.

**ACTION: The minutes of the SSC to be put on the governor portal.**

- The current strategic plan expires in July 2023 and will be refreshed within the parameters of Project Future. A governor strategy day will take place to undertake work on this in the summer term, alongside engagement with other stakeholders.

## **ACTION: To approach all governors with proposed dates for a June Strategy Day**

- A new Director of Governance is in the process of being recruited. (see confidential minute)
- Project Future -The FEC monitoring visit has taken place and the financial impact is discussed in the next item. Mitigating actions are being put in place. A National Leader of Education (NLE) from the FEC's team has been requested and appointed.
- The KPI report were noted. The Q&L committee work has been interrogating the details of the KPIs. It was noted that the LAC cohort has reduced. The outcome of High Needs students is less than target and is due to retention issues.

Governors asked how the college's position is in relation to other colleges? The whole sector is under the same pressure, and many colleges are restructuring for next year. The college is keen to ensure staff morale is protected and that the infrastructure to support students remains in place. Proposals will be brought to the Board, should the college need to take similar decisions.

### **1623. FINANCIAL REPORT**

Governors noted:

- Dovedale Nursery have advised that their provision may be reduced from September.
- Pay claim of 15.4% has been put forward by UCU
- A new regulatory return is required, following the ONS reclassification, and the CFFR is being updated
- New financial accounting handbook is expected in July 2024, following ONS reclassification
- Grants totalling £1.84m have been received, with varying deadlines for spend
- £206k under budget currently, primarily due to AEB, but it is expected this will be met by year end
- Staff costs are over budget due to a variety of factors such as higher minimum wage and agency costs due to staff recruitment difficulties.
- Income figure is likely to be met subject to high needs/supported internships meeting their targets
- Forecast of surplus at year-end of £300k against a projected budget of £700k
- Bank target covenants will all be met

**The Board resolved to approve the management accounts.**

### **1624. SUBCONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS 2022/23**

The college is now in contract with both sub-contractors and expect all starts to be completed by Easter.

The Sub-contracting Standard has come into force and the college is required to have an external audit. This will take place in the summer term. The achievement rates, including carried over learners, were noted. An exception was sought for the 25% cap on learner numbers to be set aside, due to the carry over. This has now been approved by the ESFA.

### **1625. SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY**

This was discussed at the governors' strategy day and has been agreed by the internal climate and sustainability working group. The key milestones are linked to the FE Climate Action Roadmap and carry through to 2040. It is expected that

the college will gain the Emerging College position by the end of this academic year. The Action Plan will be overseen by the climate and sustainability working group. This is a standing item on the PS&R committee agenda.

**The Board resolved to approve the Sustainability Strategy.**

## **TO RECEIVE**

### **1626. ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT (DRAFT STATEMENT)**

The final Accountability Agreement will go to the PS&R committee and be circulated to the Board prior to 31<sup>st</sup> May deadline, for approval. The draft Local Skills Improvement Plan is awaited from the Chamber of Commerce, but an interim report has been received to help shape this accountability statement.

Governors noted section 4, which detailed contribution to local, regional, and national priorities. The Green Skills and Digital Skills plans will also fit into the skills priorities in this document.

Governors asked if there are any specifics around what the Green and Digital skills are? The Chamber has struggled to get this level of detail from employers, and the employers are a self-selecting group of people. There is still a tension between what employers want now and what the skills are that we might need in 5 years' time. There will be a transition period to manage this move to Green and Digital skills.

### **1627. COLLEGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE (INCLUDE LESSON OBSERVATIONS)**

The 5 priorities and 31 steps within the operational plan were noted. Progress against these were discussed and the good achievements to date are noted.

Governors stated that they found classroom visits to be useful. They asked what the learning is from the internal staff classroom visits. Learning takes place through observations of teaching and learning and questioning of students. The feedback becomes a sharing of best practice across the college and the advanced practitioner team bring support to those who need it. Managers are accountable for the staff in their area. Staff do feedback that they benefit from the exercise.

Governors asked if external validation is taking place? It has been planned but due to staff sickness, it has been postponed.

### **1628. RISK REPORT**

**The college Risk register and dartboard were noted and approved, having been scrutinised by the Audit committee.**

A meeting with the 6 regional colleges and LEP is taking place to discuss further joint working.

The risk management policy will be reviewed by the Audit Committee in June.

### **1629. SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT REPORT**

The report was noted, considering the presentation given at the start of the meeting. Behaviours in classroom continue to be a challenge and staff continue to be supported on this topic. The lost learning, particularly cognitive, from the Covid period continues to impact. External training has been provided to staff on behaviour and inclusion.

Governors asked if the college could connect with schools who are also addressing this issue and share good practice. The resource to support students is a very limited one, and work is being provided as far as possible.

### **1630. GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

- Minutes of committee meetings (unapproved) & recommendations

Q&L 21/2/23

- No recommendations came forward from committee.

Audit 28/2/23

- **The Board resolved to approve re-appointment of internal auditors (2023/24) and external auditors (2022/23), following a performance review and recommendation by the committee.**

PS&R 7/2/23

- **The Board resolved to approve the HR and Gender Pay Gap reports.**

Development day training 2/3/23

- The notes have been circulated to all governors.
- Meeting Schedule 2023/24

Dates and times were considered.

**ACTION: The Clerk to send through a survey to governors to confirm suitable meeting times for 23/24**

### **1631. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

6<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 2pm

Signed:

Date: