

## **Minutes of Corporation Meeting No. 143**

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023

**Chair:** M Atherton

**Members Present:** A Beatty, S Codling, I Vipond (r), I MacNaughton (Principal), D Stebbings, J Owens, H Hallworth, D Morran, L Russell, G Callegari. M Sherer, K. Finnegan

**In Attendance:** Assistant Principals: J Cadman, S Townshend, I Fraser, A Frost, S Prince, G Rayner, S Williams (Senior HR & Administration Manager), N Goldsmith (Finance Manager)

**Clerk:** Sarah Williams

Members of the Corporation are both governors and trustees. For the purposes of these minutes and in the context that minutes are published on the website for public information, the generic term 'governor' has been used where it has been deemed appropriate to do so. Minute numbering follows the order of discussion

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present. The Chair informed those present that virtual conferencing facilities would be in use throughout the meeting and that the meeting would be recorded to facilitate minute taking

### **143.1 Apologies for absence**

One member joined the meeting remotely via Teams (denoted by ® in the attendance record). Apologies were received from Joanna Jonson, Joanne Tallentire, Q. Boakye-Ansah, (student) D. Rusecki (Student)

### **143.2 Any other business**

Thanks, were given to Andy Beatty and Hayley Hallworth for their service as governors. Andy was presented with a gift of appreciation from fellow governors.

### **143.3 Declaration of interest**

Senior staff in attendance and staff governors declared an interest in Part B – Confidential items

K Finnegan declared an interest in agenda item 143.10

### **143.4 Minutes of previous meeting**

143.6.1 The minutes of meeting 142 held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

143.6.2 There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

### **143.5 Report on written resolutions**

The report confirming the outcomes of the LSIF was received and noted.

### **143 .6 Principal's strategic matters**

The Principals July report, circulated in advance of the meeting was taken as read.

**Pay awards:** The Principal updated governors on the current pay negotiations and informed that the situation remained difficult.

**Budget 23/24.** The Principal informed governors that the budget for academic year 2023/24 remained difficult with less income expected but higher costs. The Government is also considering changing the financial year for Sixth form colleges to a fiscal cycle. If this is introduced it would have significant administrative and financial implications for the college and the college has actively voiced their concerns with this proposal.

**Cultural and Diversity festival.** There have been 6 days of activities for staff and students organised by colleagues within performing arts and arts department and the student council. It has been well attended and there have been some exciting events, including external visitors/ organisations.

#### **143.7 Strategic plans and priorities**

- (i) KPI tracker deferred
- (ii) 2023-2024 a summary of the proposed strategic objectives was given by AP – Pastoral and Quality including the addition of Governors objectives. **Strategic objectives were approved.**

#### **143.8 Operational and Statutory reports**

##### **(i) Cross College**

Quip update given by AP Pastoral and Quality. We are trying to make an early start and the quip and SAR process is now underway so that the full report will be available by January.

Some objectives will be carried over i.e. attendance will continue to be a focus. New ones, such as SEND and EDI will be added. Some are retained but with slight change in focus.

Governors questioned regarding some objectives i.e. attendance is on amber. AP Pastoral and Quality explained that whilst it does look unsatisfactory when compared to other local schools and looking at local issues keeping a steady level of attendance has been a good achievement and that 96% is a good compared to national statistics. Second years attendance has been impacted by covid related issues. First year attendance is significantly better. It is also difficult to strip out the impact of issues such as strike action, either by staff or trains and to see how it has impacted attendance. What is clear is that students who attend regularly do better on average. The college has made some small changes to encourage change in behaviour of students i.e. if anxious they are encouraged to see college as a place where their support is and to come in because of this.

##### **(ii) Finance**

The finance report was received in advance and the Finance manager updated on the current year's financial situation. The college budgeted for a deficit of £27,000 but now on target to make £321,000 surplus.

The college is now benefiting from energy discount scheme so are now paying less than before when a grant was given and electricity not capped. The cap is more beneficial to the college. There were no further surprises.

The budget for 2023-24 is cautious and pessimistic. EBITDA as % of income ratio is 1.41 The ESFA target is between 3-5% which we will not achieve but this not anticipated to be an issue as we score highly on other indicators and have large reserves. It is anticipated that in the next financial year we will adjust back to within 3-5%

3% uplift in funding and a 3% pay award have been assumed. Electricity costs are tied in until October 24 when the college is able to negotiate a lower tariff. The college anticipates a slightly lower financial allocation (due to lagged funding) to educate slightly more students. The Principal commented that this is probably our hardest financial year with a higher percentage (79/80%) of the college budget spent on staff costs.

Financial lead governor informed that a thorough investigation of the budget and college account had been taken by governors and were confident that it sat well and the accompanying narrative worked. Governors also stated they had little concern for the EBITDA as this is offset by other strengths and the ratio is what you would expect in order to show that delivering high quality education with reduced resources. A higher rate of inflation will also mean a potential overspend of this year's budget.

Governors requested confirmation that the required staffing levels have been achieved given the budgetary constraints. This was confirmed.

Clarification regarding the revaluation of reserves and costs related to the proposed development of the caretaker's hours was given on request by governors.

The College's financial return will be produced by the end of the week and submitted to ESFA by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.

### **The 2023/24 Budget was approved.**

#### **(iii) Pastoral**

AP- Pastoral informed that the college had scored 98% on the Safeguarding audit recently undertaken. This was disappointing but mainly because of the recent changes in Safeguarding guidance that mean that there is now a suite of Safeguarding policies which now need to go to governors, on an annual basis for approval. This will be brought to governors in September.

The lead governor is confident that the college's safeguarding and pastoral support is excellent and passed on thanks to the college for the work done.

Up to 40% of students at college arrive with a safeguarding file from their previous school. This is partly due to increase in issues but also due to the way schools are recording and therefore sending more information. 100% of files are now being passed on to the college.

There is an increase in mental health issues and 'anxiety' is the one thing that has seen a massive increase in numbers reporting concerns. Proportionally as many male as female students come forward for support which the college sees as a positive. The college also believes we are further forward than most similar institutions in our practices and support for students.

A governor asked if the college should calculate and report on how much we spend on pastoral care to show the impact on resources. It was further commented that they felt the

pastoral report was excellent and questioned whether it should be sent to a wider audience i.e. MP's Children's commissioner etc to illustrate the reality of pastoral issues and care in our sector.

**(iv) Audit**

The Lead governor informed that finance regulations need to be updated to bring in line with new financial requirements. It was decided to do this in two stages. The first stage is done and gives the broad outlines. This version is aligned to government requirements and is the first step, moving towards the final regulations with a whole scale review to be completed. The report tabled is fit and proper and needs to be in place for the next financial year.

The 2023-24 Financial Regulations were approved by a majority. One governor voted against.

There were no matters raised regarding the risk register/board assurance framework.

The meeting was convened for a 5- minute break.

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*These minutes were approved by the Corporation on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023*

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