

**Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held at City Centre College on  
Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 17:00**

**Present**

Andy Salmon (AS)	Chair
Victoria Downing-Burn (VDB)	Vice Chair
Neil Wilson (NW)	Vice Chair
Jayne Davis (JD)	Principal & CEO
Lisa Ford (LF)	
Adam Gould (AG)	
Hrishi Kumar Ganesh(HG)	
Mike Oram (MO)	
Bob Rashley (RR)	
John Spindler (JS)	

**In attendance**

Paul Fletton (PF)	Director of Finance & MIS
Kate Hobbs (KH)	Deputy Principal
Emma Roberts (ER)	Head of Governance

Attendance: 80%

**ITEM**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Ian Stevenson, Ian Taverner and Jenny Williams.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

**3. Confidentiality of Items**

The Board RESOLVED that all papers marked confidential on the agenda or on their cover sheet were confidential.

**4. Minutes**

**4.1 Minutes of the last meeting and any matters arising**

The Board RESOLVED to approve the open and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2023 as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

**4.2 Actions**

The Board considered the action arising and **RESOLVED** to note that all were in progress or had been completed.

## **5. STRATEGIC PLANNING**

### **5.1 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The report of the Principal was received and noted. Governors discussed key highlights including:

- The introduction of apprenticeships for returners to work.
- Recent open day events
- Strategic achievements

The Board **RESOLVED** to note the report.

### **5.2 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Chair of the Finance & Estates Working Group and the Director of Finance & MIS presented the February Management accounts and a verbal update on the Income and Expenditure account and balance sheet position.

The Board noted that following the last re-forecast credit had been taken for some of the project income, which had improved the year to date position to a reduced deficit of £422k compared to £550k in January. The position had also been helped by the funding census date that restricted revenue in January not being in the R07 funding return on which these figures are based.

Cash had reduced to £3.3m from £4,1m. It is noted this is due to the payment profile from ESFA. However, the new smoothing process following the ONS re-classification of FE Colleges had helped mitigate this. In addition, a delay in the payment of claims made for certain projects – notably the Skills Development Fund and the Post 16 Capacity fund. Between them these amounted to over £600k.

Board noted that based on the current forecast, the College will breach one of its bank covenants, which had already been flagged to the bank. The impact of this, in the context of the restrictions on raising finance now placed on FE Colleges following their re-classification as being “public sector”, remains uncertain but would be monitored proactively.

The Board **RESOLVED** to note the improved position recognising that although the financial position had improved in February, the forecast out turn presents a number of risks, most of which have been factored into the strategic risk register.

### **5.3 FINANCIAL FORECAST AND FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Chair of the Finance & Estates Working Group and the Director of Finance & MIS presented the action plan to deliver the revised year end financial forecast noting that the purpose of this report was for the Corporation to review the progress in the implementation of the management action plan

that had been developed to ensure that there was no further deterioration in the financial position of the College.

After Board meetings in January, it was noted that this position had been considered by FEWG in February and it was requested that the management team urgently carry out a re-forecast of the year-end financial position and then develop an action plan that would minimise the impact of the revenue shortfall. Having received the plan at their subsequent meeting in March, it was further suggested by FEWG that the plan be RAG rated and updates reported monthly as an appendix to the management accounts to provide appropriate oversight and assurance.

The Board noted that the plan set out proposals to mitigate the headline shortfall in Apprentice revenue of £823k to result in a deficit of £384k. This amounted to a mitigation of the impact by over 50% which was acceptable.

Governors noted that the action plan in order to arrive at a £384k deficit, a number of key assumptions and actions have to be completed to ensure successful delivery. The most important of these had been reviewed by FEWG.

The Board discussed the challenges facing the College in relation to profiling, not least in relation to forecasting accompanying staffing costs with significant turnover rates in the sector.

Governors queried actions to put into place for the 2023/24 financial planning round to assure a clearer picture of staffing costs. In addition, Governors discussed invoicing against funding profile; and the most beneficial approach to maximising interest from cash and managing loans.

The Board noted the report and the update to the 2022-23 financial forecast action plan, confirming that early and proactive discussion with the ESFA around any changes to the financial health rating is preferred. **Action PF/JD**

The Board **RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **SCRUTINY**

### **5.1 QUALITY DASHBOARD (C)**

Governors received a Quality Dashboard for the period January to March 2023 presented by the Deputy Principal. The purpose of this report, and subsequent appendix, is to provide a platform for discussion and assurance on the current position of quality improvement for college provision and update the Board on the performance against targets. The Chair of CQWG confirmed that the Committee had reviewed the data in detail at its meeting in February and in a focused way in March.

In relation to progress against targets KH advised that overall retention is in a positive position (96%) and performing well against the strategic curriculum targets set in November 22 (93%). A focused review into the methodology for attendance reporting is underway, and the Attendance Policy was being re-developed to ensure it is fit for purpose.

In response to a question from Governors, it is noted that good progress is being made in Education Programmes for Young People and High Needs learners, and that this was the subject of a focused review at the CQWG at its meeting in March.

In Adult Learning Programmes the Board noted that the position is more variable, but retention is high, and a broad range of good strategies have been implemented for new enrolments which had improved aspects of induction, learning support, onboarding and timely withdrawal.

Governors noted that leaders implemented monitoring, intervention, and support for staff to ensure apprenticeship provision is of a good quality, and deep-dive activity will continue until the quality of provision is sound. A Governor asked for clarity about the types of intervention used; and it is confirmed that this might include parental involvement, financial support, welfare support – and is always bespoke to the learner. In relation to the areas where performance is less positive, Governors noted that Music, Health and English and Maths were the areas where attention is being most applied; and the English and Maths 'champions' were having good effect.

The Board **RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **6.2 Learner Voice**

The Board received a presentation by the Student Governor relating to the views of a section of canvassed learners around student matters. In relation to outputs, it was recognised that continuity of teaching staff was considered very important by the students spoken to; and that this should not be underestimated.

A request for 'interview skills' support and guidance for all students and especially 'interpersonal interview skills' for our international learners was highlighted. In addition, it was suggested that a shorter waiting time for appointments for interview skills training would be helpful. **Action JD**

The presentation was noted, and HG is thanked for the huge amount of effort taken with his presentation. The Board **RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **6.3 Safeguarding and Prevent**

The Board received a report of the Deputy Principal providing an overview and assurance on the current position of safeguarding and Prevent for the College. It was noted that the report and the issues arising had been thoroughly scrutinised at the Curriculum and Quality Working Group at its meetings in February and March. The Chair of the Committee advised that the meeting in March had considered the role of the College in providing support to learners when mental health and social support was difficult to engage due to lengthy waiting lists or high thresholds for access. Governors discussed whether it would be possible to build mental health resilience skills into the curriculum for all subjects – noting that this was already being included in the provision, which is a positive. The integration of mental health support via tutorials and embedding through the whole curriculum was considered as an area of potential growth.

It was agreed that this would be reviewed and potential options taken forward. **Action KH**

The Board **RESOLVED** to note the report.

#### **6.4 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**

The Board noted the report of the Director of Finance and MIS which summarised the changes to the strategic risk register in the revised format following reviews at Audit Committee and the other sub-committees of their more detailed tactical registers. The reviews carried out by the FEWG and CQWG alongside the oversight of the Audit Committee were noted with the subsequent changes. Following discussion, the Risk Register was adopted as reflective of an accurate risk profile for the organisation.

The Board **RESOLVED** to adopt the risk register.

#### **6.5 STRATEGIC DASHBOARD**

Governors received the Strategic Dashboard which updated the Corporation on the College's key performance indicators.

Board noted that, as was reported earlier in the meeting, finance measures are variable at this time of year with several large capital projects impacting on cash and therefore other measures. For HR KPIs were settling with staff turnover remaining red though measures like sickness and job vacancies evening out as the year progresses. Learner targets (retention-based) remain strong, as expected early in the Spring Term. CQWG had scrutinised retention and other quality performance data. Health & Safety data had been included for information although a termly report on health and safety was received by the Board.

The Board **RESOLVED** to note the report.

### **7. GOVERNANCE**

#### **7.1 GOVERNANCE REPORT**

Governors received a report of the Head of Governance which set out the highlights from the January 2023 Strategy Day with Governors, and a renewed approach for Governance and Assurance to be developed during the next Academic Year alongside the strategic planning cycle. The Board discussed the need to ensure that progress was made, and that the business transformation approach was key to that. It was noted that it was hoped that the adopted of Associate Governors would help provide additional support.

Governors noted the key elements of the work programme, which included clarity of governance mechanisms and frameworks alongside business planning. Actions being progressed as part of the business transformation programme:

- Estates actions – ISTART/Funding/Sustainability

- Novel staffing options to improve retention rates
- Growing Student Numbers in L3
- One large International Partner
- Stakeholder Engagement – through accountability agreements

The Board approved the moving ahead of an External Board and Governance Review to be carried out by Stone King in the Autumn – to consolidate and gain assurance. **Action ER**

The Board **RESOLVED** to note the report and actions proposed.

## **7.2 Appointment of Governor**

Governors received a report of the Head of Governance which sought approval of the appointment of a new Governor, new Associate Board Advisors and proposals to recruit additional Associate members as appropriate. The Board noted changes in the current Governor composition.

The Board **RESOLVED** to approve: -

The appointment of Julie Evans as External Governor wef 1 May 2023.

The appointment of Erica Draisey as Associate Member of the Board with effect 1st March 2023 – 31st July 2023

The appointment of Jenny Williams as Associate Member of the Board with effect 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023 for a one-year term in the first instance.

The recruitment of further Associate Members as the Governance and Search Committee shall determine to provide such specialist areas of knowledge as may be required.

## **8. APPROVAL**

### **8.1 College Financial Regulations**

The Board received a report of the Director of Finance and MIS which had been reviewed by the Audit Committee. The Chair of Audit Committee recommended the College Financial Regulations to the Board for approval, having been reviewed in detail by the Committee.

The Board **RESOLVED** to approve the College Financial Regulations subject to a small amendment to the retention period from 6 to 7 years.

### **8.2 Gender Pay Gap Report 2022**

The Board received the Annual Report setting out the College's position in relation to pay by Gender. It was noted that there had been some change since the previous year, and the People Plan Group would review this at its next meeting.

The Board **RESOLVED** to approve the report.

## **9. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **9.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Estates Working Group 8 February 2023**

The minutes of the meeting of the FEWG held on 8 February were noted.

### **9.2 Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee 20 November 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 20 November were noted.

### **9.3 Governance and Search Committee**

The Governance and Search Committee had met virtually, and the output was set out in the Governance Paper at 7 above.

### **9.4 Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Working Group**

The minutes of the meeting of the CQWG held on 10 February were noted.

## **10. Any Other Business**

There being no other business, the Chair **RESOLVED** to adjourn the meeting to allow all but the External Governors to leave in order to conduct the following business.

## **11. Date of Next meeting**

22 May 2023 Somer Valley Campus