



MINUTES
MEETING OF THE FE CORPORATION
Held on Friday 22nd March 2024, at 9.30 am in the Skills Park

Present: Chris Muller (Chair), Nick Vaughan-Barratt (Vice-Chair), Julie Kapsalis (CEO/Principal), Sean Ahearne, Mark Brunt (MBr), Martin Butterfield (MB), Angela Cross-Durrant, Simon Enoch, Nadine Guy, Asa’ah Nkohkwo, Clive Palfreyman Giuliana Pieri, Lynn Reddick, Jeremy Williams.

In Attendance: Fiona Chalk (Governance4FE), Andy Cowan (Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality), Sarah Watson (Chief Operating Officer), Donna Patterson (Assistant Principal HR & OD), Susanne Wicks (Head of Governance).

1	Welcome and Apologies for Absence
	The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all present. He introduced Fiona Chalk, who was observing the meeting as part of the external governance review. Apologies for absence were received from Slavina Kalendzhieva, Amie Lovell, Katie King and Angela Green. Rory Boggett did not attend the meeting.
2	Declarations of Interest
	The CEO/Principal declared that she is an unremunerated Director of NESCOT Enterprises Ltd. (NEL).
3	Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising
	a Governors approved the minutes of the meeting held on 8 th December 2023.
	b There were no matters arising not otherwise covered on the agenda.
4	CEO/Principal’s Report and Updates
	The CEO/Principal and ELT colleagues delivered a presentation to the Corporation which is available on GovernorHub . They welcomed comments and questions, and matters discussed are set out below. <u>Attendance</u> The Deputy Principal acknowledged that student attendance continues to be monitored closely, but is a challenge, not only at Nescot, but nationally. However, retention has improved which is a key objective, particularly in the context of the evidence showing that retention positively impacts on achievement, and is currently at 93% compared with 85.6% this time last year. ACD asked if there is any difference in attendance rates between those students on a one-year course and those on a two-year course. The Deputy Principal advised that second-year students’ attendance is slightly lower, but it varies according to subject. He also pointed out that second-year students are given more autonomy and

independence. He undertook to provide a more detailed update at the next Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting in June.

Governors noted that there is a difference between attendance and engagement; the latter has improved, particularly in English and Maths. The Deputy Principal acknowledged that engagement is harder to measure than attendance but explained that if a student's attendance rate is 80%, but are up to date with all their work and achieving, they may be doing better than another student who has 100% attendance but is not completing work or making progress. Engagement goes beyond simply being on campus, and students must also participate in English and Maths as well as their main course.

Attainment

The Deputy Principal advised that the next virtual governor briefing would focus on the new arrangements for English and Maths delivery next year and summarised the changes to 16-19 English and Maths condition of funding rules for 2024/2025.

Governors welcomed the Risk Indicators Dashboard (RID) and were pleased to note that every single learner is being tracked. The Deputy Principal explained that, in meetings with curriculum teams, the data is drilled down to individual learners. The CEO/ Principal reminded the Corporation that the data was not available in this format last year, but the RIF process has been implemented across the College and all staff now own the data and are able to identify action being taken to address those at risk of not attaining as predicted.

The Vice-Chair advised that, when informed about the RID, he had concerns about the impact on staff workload, but was pleased to report that staff feedback has been very positive. The Deputy Principal confirmed that senior leaders ensure they monitor workload, and where a process is deemed necessary, the most efficient and effective way of doing it is found.

Safeguarding

ACD observed that the number of referrals regarding Animal Care and Care & Early Students appear to have been among the highest year on year, and sought an explanation. The Deputy Principal advised that both areas are a popular progression route for the 14-16 cohort and Foundation learners and for pre-Level 1 entry. He noted that the transition to Level 1 can be challenging for some learners and some of them may already be known to the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team when they embark on their course.

MBr asked about young men's mental health, which has been recognised as an issue nationally. The Deputy Principal reported that this is particularly relevant for students in the Trades, as suicide rates in the construction industry have increased. He confirmed that some employers are doing some very positive work in this area and students are supported via tutorials, but he acknowledged that this must also be built into curriculum delivery. The CEO/Principal reminded Governors of the College's partnership with [Olly's Future](#), a charity which works to prevent suicide among young people.

KPI and Finance Update

Governors noted the update on key projects and progress against the Strategic Plan KPI.

In terms of the Nescot 2034 discussion which took place at their Strategy Day, Governors agreed that this should be an agenda item at their July meeting.

The Chief Operating Officer advised that income is behind forecast, largely due to lower than planned numbers of HE enrolments, but reassured Governors that all expenditure, including non-staff related spend, continues to be robustly and closely monitored, and advised that plans to move towards a balanced budget within the framework of the Strategy Plan are ongoing.

MBr asked if there are any curriculum areas where potential growth in student numbers is inhibited by staff recruitment challenges. The Chief Operating Officer responded that Apprenticeships is a good example of this, in particular Plumbing and Electrical, where lecturers and assessors are hard to recruit as their earning potential is higher if they remain in the trades. The Deputy Principal reminded Governors that this issue is not particular to Nescot, nor to this area of the UK and advised that every option for delivery is explored. MBr asked about levels of lost income and the Chief Operating Officer advised that there were 57 planned starts for the Electrical Apprenticeship and there were around 200 applications, with 90 starting. The Deputy Principal estimated that approximately 120 students could be enrolled but not on current staffing levels, without diluting the quality of teaching. Governors noted that each Electrical Apprentice is on a four-year course, attracting funding of £22K.

ACD reported that this issue has been the subject of discussion at recent Curriculum & Quality Committee meetings and asked if it is still difficult to recruit assessors. The Deputy Principal replied that the main difficulty is finding those for Plumbing, Electrical and Gas Installation.

The Chief Operating Officer advised that, as part of the recruitment of learners for 2024-25, marketing and publicity will be focussed on curriculum areas of under-recruitment, and those which can be delivered.

HR

NG asked about the impact of National Minimum Wage increases on the budget and the Chief Operating Officer reported that the challenge is around managing the impact on the bandings of lower graded staff, to ensure that the pay differentials remain. The costs were built into this year's budget, and assumptions will be made for inclusion in the 2024-25 budget.

Whilst welcoming the work already underway to ensure that Nescot meets the duty to prevent workplace sexual harassment, GP asked if policies and procedures would be reviewed and refreshed in the light of some of the information available about young women's experience of harassment in the UK, or if any further positive work could be done in terms of messaging for the entire College community. The CEO/ Principal set out details of Nescot's recent collaboration with [Everyone's Invited](#), instigated at the suggestion of a staff member, and also confirmed that this matter would be considered further by the EDI Committee next term, to ensure that all possible avenues are being explored. The Assistant Principal, HR & OD, added that she is keen to ensure that all routes for reporting issues and incidents are available to staff, including the ability to do so anonymously. She welcomed any resources or advice that GP could share from her workplace.

Accountability Statement

	<p>The CEO/Principal advised the Corporation that this year’s Statement must be approved and submitted to DfE by 30th June, but that a draft version had been shared with the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>Governors noted that the CEO/Principal drafted the section on the Local Needs Duty on behalf of all Colleges in the Surrey FE group, an approach which was commended by DfE colleagues at the Annual Conversation meeting on 21st March.</p> <p>The CEO/Principal welcomed comments and feedback from Governors via email after this meeting, which would be taken into account along with the feedback gained from the peer reviews with three other colleges.</p> <p>The Chair advised that he, the Deputy Principal and the Head of Governance would attend a meeting on Monday 25th March at Brooklands College to discuss the local skills needs piece with senior colleagues and Governors from the Surrey FE Colleges. In addition, as part of the collaboration, a joint Teaching & Learning Conference would take place on 2nd July, at Nescot, to which Governors were welcome.</p> <p>The Corporation thanked the CEO/Principal and ELT colleagues for their comprehensive presentation.</p>
5	HE Tuition Fees Policy 2025-26
	<p>The Chief Operating Officer introduced the policy which had been presented to, and was recommended by, the Finance & General Purposes Committee.</p> <p>Referring to the previous discussion on HE recruitment, ACD asked about projected numbers for 2024-25, and the Deputy Principal undertook to provide a full update to the Curriculum & Quality Committee at their meeting on 5th June.</p> <p>The Corporation approved the HE Tuition Fees and Policy 2025-26.</p>
6	Reports from Committees
a	<p><u>Search & Governance Committee 31.01.2024</u></p> <p>The Chair gave a brief summary of matters discussed by the Search & Governance Committee at their meeting held on 31st January 2024.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the importance of considering succession planning for the Corporation, to ensure a seamless handover when his term as Chair comes to an end, and to ensure consistency and stability for the Corporation and College. He invited any Governor who would like to discuss this further to contact the Head of Governance.</p> <p>The Chair noted that attendance at meetings is generally good, and encouraged all Governors to maintain current levels, and to join meetings in person wherever possible.</p> <p>The Chair thanked CP for agreeing to be appointed Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and thanked MB for covering the role, and for volunteering to be Vice-Chair of the Committee.</p>
b	<p><u>Curriculum & Quality Committee 28.02.2024</u></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee, ACD, gave a brief summary of matters discussed at the meeting held on 28th February 2024.</p>

	<p>ACD reported with dismay that this would be NG's last Governors' meeting. She had expressed willingness to become Vice-Chair of the Committee, so ACD asked other members of the Committee to let her know if they would like to volunteer for the role.</p> <p>ACD commended the comprehensive and thorough reports presented by the Assistant Principal, Learner Experience and Learning Support, on both Safeguarding and Student Voice and asked the Deputy Principal to pass on the thanks of the Committee (the Safeguarding reports were provided as background papers for this meeting and are available here).</p> <p>Governors noted that the Committee's remit will include Nestots, with a report to be provided to the next meeting.</p> <p>ACD reported that the Committee agreed it would be beneficial to have a Lead Governor for EDI. The Chair agreed and asked willing volunteers to contact the Head of Governance after this meeting.</p>
c	<p><u>Audit Committee 08.03.2024</u></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee, SE, gave a brief summary of matters discussed at the meeting held on 8th March 2024.</p> <p>SE highlighted the presentation delivered to the Committee by the Director of IT and MIS on the College's position with regard to cyber-security. Given the risks presented to the organisation, the Committee agreed this should be a standing agenda item for future meetings.</p> <p>ACD asked about tendering for an internal and external audit provider and SE confirmed that plans are in place to start the tender process but the pool of companies willing and available to apply is shrinking. The Chief Operating Officer confirmed the need to test the market, but set out her intention to bring an options paper to the Audit Committee, setting out a range of ways in which Internal Audit scrutiny could be delivered.</p>
d	<p><u>Finance & General Purposes Committee 15.03.2024</u></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee, CP, gave a brief summary of matters discussed at the meeting held on 15th March 2024. He echoed the Chair's thanks to MB for having chaired the Committee for more than a year.</p> <p>With regard to the Gender Pay Gap report, CP advised that the Committee had suggested that some thought be given on how this may apply to employees with other protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act, and that the CEO/Principal had undertaken to ask the EDI Committee to investigate further.</p>
7	Governance Matters
a	<p><u>Chair's Report</u></p> <p>The Chair delivered a short verbal report and made the following points:</p> <p>The Chair reminded Governors to undertake all mandatory online training and advised that HR colleagues would contact those who had not yet had the chance to complete all modules.</p>

		<p>The Chair encouraged all Governors to attend events organised by and including students, and highlighted the recent Fashion Show he attended, which was a fantastic event.</p> <p>The Chair thanked NG for her hard work and commitment whilst a Governor at Nescot and noted how much she would be missed. In response, NG thanked all Governors for their support, and described the positive impact of the CEO/Principal on the College since her appointment.</p>
	b	<p><u>Staff Governors' Report</u></p> <p>The Head of Governance advised that the Staff Governors could not attend today's meeting and offered to relay any comments or questions to them.</p> <p>ACD advised that she attended the Staff Voice meeting on 24th January and commended both Staff Governors' approach to chairing the meeting.</p> <p>The CEO/Principal confirmed that an All-Staff Briefing would take place on 16th April, which would include an update on finance and strategy, in response to requests from staff.</p>
	c	<p><u>Corporation Membership Update</u></p> <p>The Vice-Chair took the chair for this item, as the Chair, LR and SE left the room.</p> <p>The Corporation approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The re-appointment of Chris Muller for a two-year term commencing 01.08.2024. • The re-appointment of Lynn Reddick for a two-year term commencing 01.08.2024 • The re-appointment of Simon Enoch for a two-year term commencing 01.12.2024. • The appointment of Angela Green to the Audit Committee with immediate effect. • The appointment of Katie King and Amie Lovell to the Curriculum & Quality Committee with immediate effect.
	d	<p><u>Revised AoC Code of Good Governance</u></p> <p>Noting the recommendation of the Search & Governance Committee, the Corporation agreed to adopt the new AoC FE Code of Good Governance with immediate effect.</p>
	e	<p><u>Corporation Calendar of Meetings 2024-25</u></p> <p>The Corporation approved the calendar of meetings for next year.</p> <p>The Head of Governance undertook to send calendar invitations and update GovernorHub appropriately.</p>
	f	<p>Governors noted a decision to appoint external governors, made by written resolution on 19th February 2024, full details of which are available on GovernorHub.</p>

8	Any Other Business
	The Chair thanked all Governors and staff for their hard work and wished everyone a Happy Easter.
9	Date of Next Meeting
	Friday 24 th May 2024 at 9.30 am.
10	Confidential Items
	The discussion of confidential matters is contained within a separate minute.

The meeting closed at 11.35 am.

Decisions:

The Corporation:

- Approved the minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2023.
- Approved the HE Tuition Fees and Policy 2025-26.
- The Corporation approved:
 - The re-appointment of Chris Muller for a two-year term commencing 01.08.2024.
 - The re-appointment of Lynn Reddick for a two-year term commencing 01.08.2024
 - The re-appointment of Simon Enoch for a two-year term commencing 01.12.2024.
 - The appointment of Angela Green to the Audit Committee.
 - The appointment of Katie King and Amie Lovell to the Curriculum & Quality Committee.
- Agreed to adopt the new AoC FE Code of Good Governance with immediate effect.
- Approved the Corporation Calendar of Meetings for the academic year 2024-25.

Actions:

- The Curriculum & Quality Committee to receive an update on attendance and HE enrolment (24-25) at their meeting on 5th June 2024.
- Corporation to discuss Nescot 2034 at their meeting on 5th July 2024.
- Any Governor who would like to discuss becoming Chair, Vice-Chair, Committee Chair or Committee Vice-Chair to contact the Head of Governance.
- Anyone interested in becoming the EDI Lead Governor to contact the Head of Governance.
- The Head of Governance undertook to send Corporation calendar invitations for 24-25 to all Governors, and update GovernorHub appropriately.