

Approved Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FE CORPORATION

Held on Friday 9th December 2022, at 9.30am in the Skills Park Board Room

Present: Chris Muller (Interim Chair), Nick Vaughan-Barratt (Interim Vice-Chair), Julie Kapsalis (Acting CEO/Principal Angela Cross-Durrant, Simon Enoch, Felicity Fletcher (Academic Staff Governor), Nadine Guy, Charley Johnson (HE Staff Governor), James Knowles, Margaret Martin, Asa'ah Nkohkwo, Sylvia Ofei-Kwatia (Support Staff Governor), Lynn Reddick

In Attendance: George Jenkins (Chief Finance Officer), Andy Cowan (Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality), Donna Patterson (Assistant Principal HR & OD), Dario Stevens (Deputy Principal Planning & Information), David Walrond (Interim Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality), Susanne Wicks (Head of Governance).

22.19	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies for absence were received from Paul Ford and Martin Butterfield.
22.20	Declarations of Interest
	The following declarations of Interest were received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> James Knowles declared he is a Trustee for AQA. Julie Kapsalis declared that she is an unremunerated Director of NESCOT Enterprises Ltd. (NEL).
22.21	Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising
	The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 14 th October 2022, were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising not otherwise covered by agenda items.
22.22	Governance Matters
a	<p><u>Interim Chair's Report</u></p> <p>CM reflected on the progress made since September in achieving stability in the leadership and management of the College and thanked all present for their hard work and support. He wished to place on record his thanks to the Assistant Principal (HR & OD) for her support at the start of term and welcomed the new Deputy Principal (Curriculum & Quality) to his first meeting.</p> <p>CM acknowledged the challenges facing Nescot which are common across the sector, and in particular the impact of the financial crisis. However, he expressed confidence that ELT would make the right decisions for the benefit of learners.</p>

Approved Minutes

		<p>CM thanked all Governors who had been into College this term, either on Governor-related business or to attend College events and encouraged all to do so.</p>
	b	<p><u>To appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporation</u></p> <p>CM left the meeting and NVB took the Chair.</p> <p>Governors unanimously agreed to appoint CM as Chair of the Corporation until 31st July 2024.</p> <p>CM returned to the meeting and NVB left.</p> <p>Governors unanimously agreed to appoint NVB as Vice-Chair of the Corporation until 31st July 2024.</p>
	c	<p><u>To welcome the Student Governors</u></p> <p>CM welcomed CJ, the HE Student Governor. He emphasised that she is an equal part of the Corporation and welcomed her comments and questions. He also confirmed that two FE Student Governors have been appointed but were unable to attend this meeting.</p>
	D	<p><u>To approve the amended Articles and Standing Orders</u></p> <p>The Head of Governance presented the report and explained that the changes made were to update terminology and to ensure the number of Governors in each category was correct.</p> <p>The Head of Governance advised that when the document was reviewed last summer, the Corporation did not approve the amended version as they wanted to seek further guidance on the addition of a requirement for the Chair and Vice-Chair to undertake an annual appraisal. She confirmed that the paragraph had been removed from the version under consideration today and would be discussed further at the next Search & Governance Committee meeting.</p> <p>Governors approved the amended Articles and Standing Orders.</p>
	e	<p><u>To receive an update report from Staff Governors</u></p> <p>FF and SOK reported that they have met with the Head of Governance and the Acting CEO/Principal to discuss the relaunch of the Staff Consultative Group, which will be renamed Staff Voice. The first meeting will take place on 25th January, although this may be changed should there be an Ofsted inspection that week. The Chair and Vice-Chair confirmed they would be attending the meeting and MM and ACD volunteered to attend too.</p> <p>Action: SW to send a calendar invitation to the Staff Voice meeting.</p> <p>CM asked about staff morale and FF advised that staff have responded positively to the changes in leadership. SOK echoed her comments, adding that support staff feel more valued and relationships between support and academic staff have improved. She was pleased to report that there are plans for a staff sustainability group to be convened in the new year.</p>

Approved Minutes

	f	<p><u>Introduction of GovernorHub</u></p> <p>The Head of Governance reminded Governors of her email sent earlier in the week about the introduction of GovernorHub for storing and sharing all governance related information and meeting documents. She reassured Governors that she would provide any assistance needed as they get used to using the software.</p>
22.23	Principal's Report and Updates	
	<p>The Acting CEO/Principal and ELT colleagues delivered a presentation to the Corporation, which included the Ofsted presentation. The Acting CEO/Principal welcomed feedback on the latter and welcomed comments and questions. Matters discussed are set out below.</p> <p>Governors noted that the as many staff and students as possible have been involved in the Ofsted presentation and many have given feedback; it will continue to evolve and be updated right up to the time of the inspection.</p> <p>The Acting CEO/Principal advised that the College does not have agreed values in place, and set out her suggested values, which she has shared with staff and students and has received no objection to date.</p> <p>Governors noted the outcome of the recent World Skills Competition and congratulated the entrants. The Acting CEO/Principal advised that links have been forged with colleges that have won medals at World Skills in the past and a colleague from Chichester College Group will be offering a masterclass here at Nescot.</p> <p>The Acting CEO/Principal advised that staff had suggested that the Ofsted presentation touched on staff retention and particularly former students who are now employees. She also outlined her intention to add a word cloud to the slide about Business Support Staff, about whom she has received a great deal of emails, noting their importance in the functioning of the College.</p> <p>AN welcomed the presentation and asked if some information should be included about actions identified following the last inspection in 2016. ACD pointed out that it was six years ago, so the expectation would be that all actions have been addressed but encouraged colleagues to highlight particular achievements or improvements.</p> <p>Whilst welcoming the personal stories about specific students, NVB suggested that there could be more factual information included in the presentation. The Acting CEO/Principal pointed out that she had gone through the presentation very quickly at this meeting but confirmed that it did include relevant facts and data. She advised that parts of the presentation would be shared on the large screen in the Skills Park reception area and in the Boardroom, which Ofsted inspectors would be using as a base, and it would be updated once the deep dive areas had been identified.</p>	

Approved Minutes

CM commended the presentation, in particular the sense of ambition that emerges from it from staff and learners alike. The Acting CEO/Principal described the value of the input from staff and students alike.

The Acting CEO/Principal advised that the Strategic Plan was due for a review, with a shift in focus from growth to consolidation of what the College does well. The revised Plan would dovetail with the work on the mission and values already underway. Governors noted their support and undertook to engage with the review.

Financial Update

The CFO presented a summary of the College's financial position, highlighting the projected deficit of £2.6M. He reassured Governors that ELT are working on plans to address the deficit. He welcomed comments and questions.

ACD expressed concern about the projected numbers for HE recruitment, noting that enrolment has been lower than target. She advised that the HE Sub-Committee were reassured that the recruitment target would be reached but the CFO advised that it was unlikely at this stage. CM noted that the current financial situation was a good example of why it would be helpful for Chairs to meet on a termly basis, to consider matters which may impact on the work of more than one Committee.

Progress against Strategic Objectives

The Deputy Principal (Planning & Information) presented two slides setting out progress against 2021-22 objectives and the proposed objectives for 2022-23. He welcomed feedback from Governors.

The Chair asked if progress against internal targets would be scrutinised by Ofsted and the Deputy Principal (Planning & Information) advised that performance in some areas may be compared against national average, where data is available, and may look at any trends identified in the internal data. SE asked if there were any objectives where the College was significantly behind national average or other benchmarks and the Deputy Principal (Planning & Information) confirmed that there were not.

ACD pointed to the target around the percentage of staff attending CPD and asked how the quality and impact of CPD is evaluated. The Deputy Principal (Planning & Information) advised that individuals are asked to provide feedback on any CPD they undertake, and all Heads of Department have recently been asked to complete a survey about the effectiveness of CPD which will be discussed further at a forthcoming CMT meeting.

The Deputy Principal (Curriculum & Quality) added that an action plan is being drafted which will look at the impact of CPD on the learner experience. ACD welcomed the update, noting that she has tried to find some evidence to demonstrate that CPD undertaken has been worthwhile and has not been able to, and Ofsted may ask about it.

Reclassification of FE Colleges as a Public Body

Approved Minutes

	<p>The Acting CEO/Principal set out some of the key implications for the College's reclassification as a public body and reassured Governors that any resulting risks would be fed into the risk register and that they would be fully apprised of any changes.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair advised that he had attended a webinar facilitated by the AOC the previous week which included representatives from the DfE and had been surprised by how many implications there were for the College.</p> <p>Action: Colleagues to share relevant information with Governors as it emerges and to arrange a briefing if appropriate.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the good news stories and commended the introduction of a free breakfast for students, although noted with concern the evident impact of the cost-of-living crisis. The Acting CEO/Principal advised that she had been discussing hosting a food bank on-site.</p> <p>The Acting CEO/Principal reminded Governors that Nescot would be celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2023.</p> <p>Action: The Acting CEO/Principal to share further details of planned celebrations at a future meeting.</p> <p>At his final Corporation meeting, Governors thanked David Walrond, the Acting Deputy Principal (Curriculum & Quality) for his hard work and commitment to the College.</p>
<p>22.24</p>	<p>Compliance Matters</p>
<p>a</p>	<p><u>College Self-Assessment Report (SAR)</u></p> <p>David Walrond presented the draft SAR and set out the consultation with colleagues and Governors that had already taken place. He advised that the proposed judgements were mostly 'Good' with three areas judged to be 'Outstanding' although he warned that these would need to be robustly defended as it appears, through feedback given by those Colleges which have been inspected by Ofsted this term, that the bar has been set very high. David Walrond expressed confidence that the document was robust and credible, and suggested that for future years, it may be useful to obtain some external validation from a retired HMI.</p> <p>The Chair noted that Ofsted may speak to students in groups separated by gender, particularly when seeking feedback on safeguarding related matters, such as harassment and peer-on-peer abuse. The Acting CEO/ Principal advised that focus groups with male and female students have been facilitated by members of ELT, including one with girls earlier in the week and they had all confirmed they felt safe. She confirmed that these groups will continue to meet, and any issues raised are followed up promptly.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to share the report from the focus group held earlier in the week.</p> <p>Governors approved the SAR.</p>

Approved Minutes

	b	<p><u>Safeguarding Policy 2022-23</u></p> <p>Noting that the policy had already been scrutinised by the Curriculum & Quality Committee, Governors approved the Safeguarding Policy.</p> <p>ACD suggested that the Whistleblowing Policy be reviewed alongside the code of practice which is available on the gov.uk website.</p> <p>Action: Assistant Principal (HR & OD) and Head of Governance to check the Whistleblowing Policy is compliant with the code of practice available on gov.uk.</p>
	c	<p><u>Annual Report & Financial Statements of NESCOL Group 2021-22</u></p> <p>The CFO presented the annual accounts which have been scrutinised by the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Governors approved the Annual Accounts 2021-22.</p>
	d	<p><u>The Management Letter of the External Auditors and Letter of Representation</u></p> <p>Governors approved the Management Letter and Letter of Representation.</p>
	e	<p><u>Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-22</u></p> <p>Governors approved the Annual Report of the Audit Committee.</p>
	f	<p><u>Internal Audit Annual Report 2021-22</u></p> <p>Governors received the Internal Audit Annual Report.</p>
22.25	Key Performance Indicators	
	a	<p><u>Corporation KPIs October 2022</u></p> <p>The Deputy Principal (Planning & Information) introduced the October KPIs, noting that there will be more movement shown in the November KPIs which would be shared in due course..</p>
	b	<p><u>Corporation Key Performance Indicators and proposed targets for 2022-23</u></p> <p>The Deputy Principal (Planning & Information) advised that the proposed KPI and targets had been drafted by ELT and scrutinised by the Curriculum & Quality Committee and the Finance & General Purposes Committee.</p> <p>ACD suggested that some of the proposed targets could be very challenging and undertook to discuss these further with the Deputy Principal (Planning & Information) outside of the meeting.</p> <p>Governors approved the Corporation Key Performance Indicators and proposed targets for 2022-23.</p>
22.26	Reports from Committees	
	<p>Governors received a verbal update from the Chairs of the following Committees. Matters discussed are set out below.</p>	

Approved Minutes

	a	<p><u>HE Sub-Committee</u></p> <p>The Chair of the Sub-Committee gave a brief outline of matters considered at the meeting held on 19th October 2022 and noted that she has asked the Chair of the Corporation to review the timing of Committee meetings to ensure that they dovetail with the cycle of business and will receive up to date information at the appropriate time.</p>
	b	<p><u>Curriculum & Quality Committee</u></p> <p>The Chair of the Curriculum & Quality Committee gave some feedback on matters discussed at the meeting held on 2nd November 2022. She set out her intention for the Committee to continue to closely scrutinise the data in future, and in particular any emerging trends.</p>
	c	<p><u>Finance & General Purposes Committee</u></p> <p>In the absence of the Chair of this Committee, the Chief Finance Officer gave a brief account of the meeting held on 25th November 2022.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the need to appoint a new Governor with financial expertise and the clerk confirmed that the search is underway.</p>
	d	<p><u>Audit Committee</u></p> <p>The Audit Committee Chair summarised the proceedings of the meeting held on 2nd December 2022 and gave credit to the Chief Finance Officer and Finance Team for their hard work.</p>
22.27	Any Other Business	
	The Chair thanked fellow Governors and all staff for their hard work and wished everyone a happy Christmas.	
22.28	Date and Time of Next Meeting	
	Friday 31 st March at 9.30 am	
22.29	Confidential Items	
	The Corporation moved into private session to discuss confidential matters.	

Meeting closed at 11.35 am.

Decisions:

- Approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14th October 2022.
- Appointed CM as Chair of the Corporation until 31st July 2024.
- Appointed NVB as Vice-Chair of the Corporation until 31st July 2024.
- Approved the amended Standing Orders and Articles.
- Approved the SAR 2022-23.
- Approved the Safeguarding Policy 2022-23.

Draft Minutes

- Approved the Annual Accounts 2021-22.
- Approved the Management Letter and Letter of Representation.
- Approved the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-22.
- Approved the Corporation Key Performance Indicators and proposed targets for 2022-23.

Actions:

- Head of Governance to invite MM and ACD to the Staff Voice meeting on 25th January.
- Colleagues to share relevant information with Governors about the reclassification of FE Colleges as public sector bodies as it emerges, and to arrange a briefing if appropriate.
- The Acting CEO/Principal to share further details of planned 70th anniversary celebrations at a future meeting.
- Clerk to share the report from the female student focus group with the Chair.
- Assistant Principal (HR & OD) and Head of Governance to check the Whistleblowing Policy is compliant with the code of practice available on gov.uk.