

News from the FE Corporation meeting, 2 July 2019

Curriculum Department Presentation

Governors received a presentation from Lisa Bowerbank, Curriculum Manager, Construction and Science and were pleased to note significant improvements in retention, with 100% retention for higher education. Governors were pleased to note high achievement, good teaching and learning, and the wide range of employers working with the department.

Governors expressed their appreciation for the hard work of all staff in the department.

Strategic Plan

Governors reviewed progress against the plan, and were pleased to note good progress against many areas including English and maths targets, apprenticeships and in house delivery of adult education budget provision. A refresh would be undertaken in the autumn term.

Governors had considered impact of the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework at a Strategy Event in May 2019 and considered further action required in respect of curriculum intent and the focus on staff. Further consideration would be given to these themes and to the college vision and values at the next Governor Strategy Event in November.

Governors also noted progress with establishing the in house Employability Team and work to date, as well as targets for 2019-20.

Quality Matters

Governors were pleased to note a strong year end position with good achievement across all areas and good improvement in areas previously performing below expectations. There had been good attendance at examinations and the college was hopeful of further improvements to English and maths outcomes. Numbers of students completing work experience placements were also high.

Updated quality policies were also approved.

Financial Matters

Governors received feedback from a meeting of the Finance, Employment and Estates Committee in June and approved the submission of an application to the European Regional Development Fund for funding to support development of an Energy Centre. The college expected to be notified of the success of this bid in November and would begin planning for alternative arrangements to replace boilers in the event this was not successful.

Governors also approved changes to subcontracting allocations as a result of Working Links being placed in administration.

The Corporation received the May management accounts and were pleased to note that, although a deficit was forecast at year end, this was expected to be an improved position compared to initial budget. Some pressures remained but the college would remain compliant with bank covenants and achieve a 'good' Education and Skills Funding Agency financial health rating.

Governors considered the 2019-20 college budget and the 2020-21 financial plan. The 2019-20 budget included one-off funding for increases in Teachers' Pension Scheme contributions and T level industrial placements. However, these funding streams were not expected to continue for 2020-21. The 2020/21 financial plan included growth in core funding (specifically 16-19 and higher education) but, due to the cessation of one-off funding, the 2020/21 financial plan showed an overall reduction in funding and a worsening budget deficit position. Governors approved the proposed 2019-20 budget, capital programme and subcontracting allocations and agreed the 2020-21 financial plan at this stage, but recognised that further work was needed to achieve a sustainable financial position.

A number of financial policies were also approved.

Audit Matters

Governors received feedback from an Audit Committee meeting in June and noted the attendance of a new co-opted member, Tom Lee-Gough. The committee had reviewed the performance of Audit One and the Corporation agreed to their reappointment as internal auditors for 2019-20 and approved the internal audit plan.

The Corporation also approved the Risk Management Strategy for 2019-20.

Governance Matters

Governors received feedback from the Search and Member Development Committee and noted the attendance of a new co-opted member, Pete Moody. The committee had considered the skills review and the committee's recommendation to identify a further governor with further education experience and expertise was approved by the Corporation. The committee had also considered available governor training and succession planning.

Governors also reviewed their attendance at meetings and development activities and received information on a range of national activities. Governors considered an update against the Governing Body action plan and approved an updated Governors' Code of Conduct, and also agreed arrangements for delegating approval of appropriate policies to committees or the Executive Team.

Governors reappointed Gary Hope and Nicky Grace as governors and appointed Victoria Bell to the Finance, Employment and Estates Committee. There remains one vacancy for a student governor. Recruitment activity will commence in September.

Governors also reviewed the performance of the Corporation Chair, Pat Howarth, and thanked him for his time and dedication to the Board. Pat Howarth was reappointed as Chair and Calvin Kipling as Vice Chair for the 2019-20 academic year.

Other items

The Principal thanked Gary Hope and Frances Hoy for their attendance and participation at a staff lunchtime event on 28 June 2019.

Staff Pay and Conditions

Governors wished to recognise the positive work of staff in achieving a financial position better than budget and maintaining very high quality performance. Due to continuing financial pressures in the current and future years, it was not possible to make a consolidated pay award but following discussion around risks and benefits, governors approved a non consolidated pay award of £250 to all eligible staff (pro rata).

Governors recognised the ongoing dedication and commitment of all staff in achieving such a positive year end position.

Best wishes from the Board

Pat Howarth, Chair
Kate Roe, Principal