

News from the FE Corporation meeting, 18 May 2021

COVID-19 Update

Governors noted the update in relation to college action in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Governors expressed appreciation to staff for their flexibility following the changes to announcements of GCSE results.

Strategic Update

Governors considered the impact of the recent government White Paper: Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth, particularly the high number of opportunities for colleges to bid for funding. This had been a key focus for the Executive Team. Governors were supportive of the college's approach and keen to ensure there was adequate capacity for the senior team to pursue appropriate opportunities. The Principal confirmed that all decisions to submit bids took account of the college's strategic priorities. Governors also considered potential opportunities arising from the 'Treasury North' development and provided suggestions for discussion topics at the Governor Strategy Event scheduled for June.

Student-Related and Quality Matters

Governors received an update from the Student Liaison Committee and noted that students were very pleased to be back in college, particularly those on very practical courses. Students had also commended the support provided by college staff over a very difficult year.

Governors received and noted the Quality Performance report and recognised the impact of self-isolation and other restrictions on student attendance. Progress was lower than previous years, reflecting a cautious approach in light of uncertainty around awarding organisation requirements and disruption during 2019-20 and 2020-21. Teaching teams were working hard to provide teacher assessed grades in line with deadlines. Areas of concern were highlighted and governors noted actions in place to ensure improvements. Governors commended the college's staff on their commitment and hard work to support students.

Governors also considered information relating to the Ofsted inspection framework, specifically expectations of governors.

Financial Matters

Governors formally approved the establishment of a Revolving Credit Facility with Barclays Bank following repayment of the college's principal loan and agreed a legal mortgage charge. Governors discussed the year end position, the college's approach to debtors and creditors, the college reserves policy and the mechanism for drawdown from the Revolving Credit Facility. It was agreed that the Finance and Employment Committee should explore these issues further and provide recommendations.

Governors considered the March 2021 management accounts and noted two possible areas of concern; apprenticeship income and Adult Education Budget funding. The financial position would continue to be carefully monitored.

Governance Matters

Governors received feedback from a meeting of the Search and Governance Committee and discussed a suggestion in relation to remuneration of student governors. This would be discussed further with student governors outside the meeting. Governors also agreed proposals for governor training,

collection of governor diversity data and committee appointments, and approved a calendar of meetings for 2021-22. Governors reaffirmed their commitment to the Governors' Code of Conduct and agreed minor amendments to the Instrument and Articles of Government and Standing Orders to allow appointment of multiple Vice Chairs, a longer term of office for the Chair and Vice Chair and inclusion of a complaints procedure.

Other items

Governors noted the decision of the Selection Panel to appoint Carolyn Kipling as Director of Finance and Corporate Resources from mid July, following the retirement of the current postholder, Andrew Hayday.

Best wishes from the Board

Emma Wright, Chair

Kate Roe, Principal

Sarah Thompson, Clerk