



### **Corporation Board Meeting 6**

### **PART 1 MINUTES – NON-CONFIDENTIAL PUBLIC RECORD**

### **Board Minutes of meeting held 23 February 2023 at 17.30hrs TEAMS Meeting**

#### **Present**

Mr K Norman	Chair of Corporation
Mr D Gleed	Chief Executive Officer/Executive Principal
Mr T Biring	External Governor
Mr J Gurney	External Governor
Mrs S Henwood	External Governor
Dr R Longman	External Governor
Miss K O'Brien	External Governor
Dr S Hubble	External Governor
Mr D Martin	External Governor
Miss M Sahota	External Governor
Miss E Codling	Student Governor
Miss N Langan	Student Governor
Mr N Smith	Staff Governor

#### **In Attendance**

Mr M Andrews	Deputy Executive Principal (Curriculum & Strategy)
Mr L Jenkins	Deputy Chief Executive
Ms R Hughes	Deputy Executive Principal -Teaching, Learning & Improvement
Mrs Y Hughes	Clerk & Governance Advisor to the Corporation

<b>Minute no</b>		<b>Action By</b>
<b>766</b>	<b>Opening of Meeting and Apologies for Absence</b>	
	The Chair of Corporation opened the meeting at 17.30hrs by welcoming all present.  <b>Apologies</b>  Apologies received from Mr Robert Nithsdale and Mr Louis Jones.	
<b>767</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	Mr Jonathan Gurney declared an interest in respect of the Treasury Management Policy presented to the Board for review and approval.	

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	<p>Mr Gurney had an existing declaration of interest registered in that he was employed at Handelsbanken but wished to formally notify the Board that it had already been decided by Handelsbanken that if the conversation between the College and Handelsbanken progressed beyond just providing indicative rates then colleagues at the Bromley Branch would manage any business transactions with the College and that Mr Gurney would have no involvement in the Bank relationship at all. The Board accepted the point raised by Mr Gurney and the declaration was recorded for the record.</p> <p>There were no further amendments or new declarations of interest declared other than those already registered.</p>	
768	<b>Corporation Board Minutes – Meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b>	
	<p>The Corporation Board received the pre-circulated minutes of the meeting held on the 26 January 2023.</p> <p><b><i>Formally approved.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>The Board formally approved the Part 1 Corporation Board minutes of the meeting held on the 26 January 2023.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>The Board formally approved the Part 2 Confidential Minutes of the meeting held 26 January 2023.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>The Board formally approved the Part 3 Strictly Confidential Minutes of the meeting held 26 January 2023 and circulated under separate cover as a true and accurate record.</i></b></p>	
769	<b>Chief Executive Report to the Board – February 2023</b>	
	<p>The Chief Executive presented his report for February 2023 stating that the report was largely for information and discussion and covered a number of topical issues affecting the Further Education sector.</p> <p>Key items covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement Rate League Tables</li> <li>• Accountability Agreements</li> <li>• Energy Cap Scheme</li> <li>• DFE Financial Handbook</li> <li>• Curriculum Reform</li> </ul> <p><b>Achievement Rate League Tables</b></p> <p>The Chief Executive explained in the report that the Board would recall that the annual publication of the ‘College League Tables’ (officially known as National Achievement Rate Tables (‘NART’) normally took place around March of each year.</p> <p>Due to the impact of Covid, publication of College League Tables were suspended in 2019-20 and so the most recent one to be published was for 2018-19. Now, post pandemic, the DFE are bringing back the NARTs and so the next one will relate to results from 2021-22.</p>	

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	<p>However, for reasons that are not entirely clear, the DFE have changed their approach to publication this time around.</p> <p>In the middle of March, the DFE will publish Sector Averages and so each College will be able to compare themselves to these.</p> <p>The College will then need to wait until mid-July when the results for each College are published, which by then will obviously be a year out of date.</p> <p>Mr Martin stated that he very much shared the frustration of the Chief Executive and the changes in the publication of the achievement rates and even more so the changes in respect of the T Levels and Level 3 Reforms and that this frustration was also echoed within the Ofsted inspectorate. The Chief Executive welcomed Mr Martin's comments and agreed that there was certainly a feeling of frustration in the sector.</p> <p><b>Energy Cap Scheme</b></p> <p>Mrs Henwood asked for examples of what the College was doing in saving on energy costs. The Deputy Chief Executive provided examples of work that would need to be undertaken of which one of these was the replacement of a boiler at the Gravesend campus. It was explained that the existing boiler in situ heated the swimming pool but that the boiler was also linked to the college heating system and the plan was to change this to save on heating costs. He further added that a review was being undertaken in low occupancy rooms to establish where further savings could be made, replacement of light bulbs to LED energy saving bulbs but emphasised that these were projects that could not happen immediately and provided the reasons as to why not. There were also additional boilers at Hadlow College and the Tonbridge campus that would be replaced.</p> <p>Mrs Henwood stated that she was pleased that there was planned projects of work to achieve the cost savings needed.</p> <p><b>Final Position on T Level &amp; Level 3 Reform</b></p> <p>The Chief Executive presented the update on T Levels and the Level 3 Reforms stating that DFE had now published their position on the future of current Level 3 qualifications in England.</p> <p>All of the current Level 3 qualifications would be defunded from 2024 – 2026 (different curriculum areas disappear at different points over this three-year period).</p> <p>The report set out 3 potential scenarios that could play out and how this would affect stakeholders and the sector and what the College could do in relation to the proposed withdrawals. The Chief Executive explained that colleges nationally were challenging these reforms and writing to the Secretary of State for Education.</p> <p>Miss Sahota referred to the outlined challenges in the report and asked how the staff at the College felt about the Level 3 reforms. The Chief Executive stated that these reforms would be very challenging for all staff and would have an impact on everyone</p>	

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	<p>and it appeared that none of these factors had been taken into consideration by government.</p> <p>The Chair referred to the point about the 3 Kent Colleges who had joined forces to collectively challenge these changes and asked if further information could be shared confidentially with the Board to ensure that they were fully aware of the work that was being undertaken. The Chief Executive agreed he could do so confidentially.</p> <p>The Board discussed that matter at length and expressed their serious concerns that the withdrawals would have on all stakeholders at the college and in particular staff. Governors referred to some of the courses that would be removed and highlighted the Legal Secretarial programme and asked about employers views and how the College would or had engaged with employers. The Deputy Executive Principal/Strategy &amp; Curriculum provided a detailed explanation on the College approach and the Chief Executive explained that the College had very good links with the Chamber of Commerce and that through LSIP. The Chair of the Kent Chamber of Commerce was also the Vice Chair of Corporation at MidKent College so they were certainly aware of the challenges the reforms would present the colleges and certainly local employers. The Chief Executive further added that other colleges in the sector were also lobbying in their respective counties.</p> <p>Mr Martin stated that it was interesting that the Department for Education were so focused on local skills and employability and yet they were pushing reforms that would seriously impact the choices of students and the demand for skills.</p> <p>The Board accepted the report presented by the Chief Executive and welcomed the discussions held.</p>	
770	<b>Student Governor Report – Eve Codling &amp; Niamh Langan</b>	
	<p>Miss Codling and Miss Langan presented their first Student Governor Report to the Board.</p> <p>Dartford/Gravesend Campus – Eve Codling</p> <p>Miss Codling commented on the impact that the Level 3 reforms and T Levels would have on students and staff and stated that although it was disappointing to learn that there were drastic changes afoot particularly regarding the Legal Secretarial qualifications, she accepted that the world evolved.</p> <p>Miss Codling presented her section of the Student Governors report and stated that her experiences at the College had been extremely positive and commented on the new canteen and excellent IT facilities at the Dartford campus. She further added that the work experience offered to the Legal Secretarial students provided them with a lot of interview experience and exposure to law firms which they all found positive. She did ask whether other programme areas were afforded the same high level work experience opportunities accepting however that this was probably not as easy in some areas of the curriculum.</p> <p>Miss Codling referred to the item within her report on Attendance and asked whether a reward scheme would encourage student attendance particularly where there were known attendance issues.</p>	

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	<p>Hadlow College – Niamh Langan</p> <p>Miss Langan presented her section of the report stating that she had used this opportunity to communicate further with students at Hadlow, mostly in Equine however she had also discussed this across courses such as Agriculture and Animal Management, with students from both FE and HE, to get a better understanding of issues and improvements faced by all students rather than what she had personally experienced.</p> <p>It was noted within the report that students at Hadlow were very happy about the recent opening of the gym, this was particularly beneficial to the equine students and the agriculture students, where fitness was a large part of their degrees and diplomas. Miss Langan explained that she believed that in the interest of the students at Hadlow, it would be great for the gym to remain open for longer periods of time, to avoid overcrowding as there was a limit on the amount of equipment in the gym. The only issue she could find with this was staffing and supervision.</p> <p>Miss Langan had also stated that the wardens and residential staff this year had improved, they were available all hours and done a great job at resolving block problems and complaints, as well as comforting students when required.</p> <p>The Deputy Executive Principal/Teaching and Learning responded to the points within the Student Governors report by firstly thanking the Student Governors for producing the report and commented on a recent visit she had made to another FE college to learn about their student voice and the good practice they followed which had been very interesting.</p> <p>The Deputy Executive Principal/Teaching, Learning &amp; Improvement commented on the point raised on work experience offered within the Legal Secretarial department stating that it was second to none and that SLT were very much aware that there were areas within the curriculum where work was being done to improve all students had similar levels of work experience opportunities available to them.</p> <p>She further commented on the attendance reward scheme and explained that there were already areas in the College where reward schemes were in place.</p> <p>Gym opening hours – It was agreed by SLT that this was a valid point but would need further investigation to see if it was achievable.</p> <p>The Chair formally thanked the Student Governors for their report and welcomed the positive feedback in respect of the Wardens and Residential Team at Hadlow and asked that this positive feedback be communicated to the relevant members of staff.</p> <p>Mr Martin was very pleased to hear the very positive feedback provided in the reports in particular on Hadlow College.</p> <p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p><b><i>Student Governor Report for February 2023 received.</i></b></p>	
771	<b>Monthly Management Accounts – Period 5 – Confidential Part 2 Business – Commercially Sensitive</b>	
772	<b>HR Report including Gender Pay Gap Report</b>	

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	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the HR Report which covered the following key items for Board review and approval.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HR metrics</li> <li>2. Gender Pay Reporting</li> <li>3. Equal Pay Review</li> </ol> <p><b>HR Metrics</b></p> <p>The report presented included the 2021-22 end of year equality reports which were included within Appendix A.</p> <p>Dr Longman referred to the HR Metric table and the response rate for the category of 'prefer not to say' which although the responses had improved slightly there was still a high volume of staff declining to answer and asked whether some work was needed to encourage staff to provide these details. The Deputy Chief Executive accepted the point made and explained that work was ongoing and there had been challenges in getting staff to declare their data.</p> <p>Mrs O'Brien commented on the point raised and acknowledge that this was certainly a challenge and provided examples of practices followed within her own organisation. The Chief Executive welcomed the information provided and relay the details to the HR Department but further advised that the HR Department were facing staffing challenges.</p> <p>Mrs O'Brien asked if there were any benchmarking data available to compare the information against and it was stated that currently there was now tangible data available but that through the new ESFA Workforce Data returns that this information would become available in the future.</p> <p><b>Gender Pay Gap Report</b></p> <p>The College's Gender Pay Gap Report for 2022, had been produced in line legislative requirements, as detailed in Appendix B. The report subject to Board approval would be published on the College's website as required by the regulations, by 31 March 2023.</p> <p>Regulations required the College to report on all employed roles by gender only. There was no consideration for the range of roles included in the data or for direct comparison of roles undertaken. However, the report showed an improvement of 1.2% in the GPG, to 13.32% being the gap between male and female pay in 2022 (previously 14.49% in 2021).</p> <p>Whilst there was room for improvement, and despite the College operating commercial functions and having a significant proportion of the workforce in the lower pay quartiles being employed in roles linked to the national minimum wage (57%), NKC's GPG is still lower than sector averages.</p> <p>The Board considered the report in detail and Mrs Henwood asked if all College Staff had access to the report. The Chief Executive explained that it was legal requirement to publish the report on the College website which therefore ensured it was accessible to all.</p>	

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	<p><b>Approved</b></p> <p><b><i>The Corporation Board formally approved the Gender Pay Gap Report for 2021/22.</i></b></p> <p><b>Equal Pay Review</b></p> <p>The Chief Executive presented the section on Equal Pay Review and the Board were advised that as expected, the report concluded that there were no significant pay differences within the College staff structure when work of equal value was compared.</p> <p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p><b><i>The Board accepted the HR Report presented and formally approved the Gender Pay Gap Report for 2021/22</i></b></p>	
773	<b>Treasury Management Policy</b>	
	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the updated and revised Treasury Management Policy for Board approval.</p> <p>The policy had been reviewed and updated to provide a framework upon which surplus cash could be managed outside of the current banking with Lloyds.</p> <p>Due to the recent increases in the Bank of England base rate, banking institutions were offering more favourable deposit rates. The College's existing bank Lloyds has admitted that they were not prepared to match other similar banks' interest rates working in the sector, and so the policy had been updated to allow the college to find seek out other opportunities.</p> <p>The credit ratings have been updated to reflect that of Lloyds, which acts as the baseline for potential other organisations.</p> <p>The Chair commented on the proposed amendments and agreed that it was sensible to approve the proposed amendments as presented.</p> <p><b>Formally approved.</b></p> <p><b><i>The Board formally approve the updated Treasury Management Policy.</i></b></p>	
774	<b>Termly Safeguarding Report</b>	
	<p>The Deputy Executive Principal/Teaching, Learning &amp; Improvement explained to the Board that new system MyConcern had presented the College staff with some challenges in as far as its functionality and that the College was currently working with the service provider to improve the way in which data was drawn down. Governors commented on the functionality of the safeguarding system and it was confirmed that the system worked well in logging data but work was taking place to improve the data that could be extracted.</p> <p>It was noted that 431 concerns had been raised during the academic period of which the majority of these were at Dartford.</p> <p>Miss Sahota asked if the reported concerns were excessively high and whether they were within the normal reporting ranges. It was explained that the College was particularly sensitive to the needs of individuals and would therefore be higher than</p>	

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	<p>when looking at benchmarking data which in real terms could not be compared like for like as there were no national benchmarking comparators available.</p> <p>Miss Codling commented that safeguarding was clearly a very high priority for the College and that the level of counsellors at the College was very good and that students felt safe and well supported in her opinion.</p> <p>It was noted for the record that Mr Martin – Lead Safeguarding Governor had met with Rebecca Skinner, Koya Bakarey and Deputy Executive Principal on 23rd January 2023.</p> <p><b><i>Received</i></b></p> <p><b><i>The Board received the Termly Safeguarding Report.</i></b></p>	
775	<b>Final Estates Strategy &amp; Capital Projects Committee Report to the Board – Confidential Part 2 Business – Commercially Sensitive</b>	
776	<b>Any other Business</b>	
777	<b>Confidential Part 3 Business – Staff Governors/Students excused for the Part 3 Business item</b>	
778	<b>Date and time of the next meeting</b>	
	<p>The next meeting of the Corporation Board Thursday 23 March 2023 at 5.30pm via Teams.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 19.44hrs.</p> <p><b>MINUTES AGREED AS BEING A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD</b></p>	