

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2021

Present:

Governors:

Dolly Agoro	Alan Rayment
Antony Ball	Mark Swales
Angela Briggs	Lee Tillman
Ruth Brook	Iwi Ugiagbe-Green
Tom Burton	Lee Walker
Greg Clarke	Andrea Ward
Emma Kirk	
Mick Lochran	

The quorum for the meeting was nine members.

In attendance:

Jane Taylor- Holmes	Interim Director of Governance / Clerk to the Corporation
Barrie Shipley	Director of Finance
Rachel Maguire	Chief People Officer
Sharon Smith	Principal / Deputy CEO
Peter Grant	Governor Elect
Hayley Barker	Student Governor Elect
Luke Cantrill	Student Governor Elect

The meeting took place at North Lindsey / on MS Teams and started at 5.30pm.

Item	Minutes	Action
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1 Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Richard Gravestock and Paul Scanlon

2 Declarations of Interest

Members should declare any personal or financial obligation, allegiance or loyalty which would in any way affect decisions in relation to the subjects under discussion.

There were no declarations of interest made.

3 Review of Instruments & Articles / Standing Orders

Members reviewed the amendments to the Instruments & Articles and Standing Orders.

It was noted that an additional amendment was required at section 2(2)(a) to state 'more than twenty-two'.

Resolution: The Corporation Board approved the revised Instrument and Articles of Government and corresponding Standing Orders (at Appendix 2 & 3) with effect from 20 October 2021.

4 Ratification of New Governors

Members received the paper on new Governor appointments and the application information. Members noted the strengths of the candidates and that the appointments were recommended by the Search and Governance Committee.

Resolution:

The Board;

- i) Approved the appointments of Peter Grant and Karen Jackson as External governors from 20 October 2021 to 31 July 2025.
- ii) Approved the appointments of Peter Grant and Karen Jackson to the Audit & Risk Committee and the Finance & Resources Committee respectively.
- iii) Approved the appointment of Preetha Kumar as co-opted member of the Audit & Risk Committee for a period of one year from 20 October 2021.
- iv) Approved the appointments of Hayley Barker and Harry Mallett as FE Student Governors from 20 October 2021 to 31 July 2023 (or sooner should the student leave the College Group)
- v) Approved the appointment of Luke Cantrill as HE Student Governor from 20 October 2021 to 31 July 2023 (or sooner should the student leave the College Group).

It was noted that elections would be held in relation to the final HE Student Governor position and an update provided to the next meeting.

The Chair formally welcomed the new Governors, including newly appointed Staff governors and welcomed new members of the Senior Leadership Team to the meeting.

5 Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the Corporation Board meetings held on 7 July 2021 and any matters arising

Resolution: The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 7 July 2021 (including the Confidential minutes) as a true and accurate record and would be signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising;

In relation to NCATI role referenced on page 61 of the Board pack, Mr Lochran explained that there had been one Board meeting to date, further updates would be provided when available.

In relation to the actions arising from the item 11 of the previous meeting, the Chair explained that there would be a session held at the Governor Development Day on 7 December. In relation to risk, there would be a session on risk management within the College and the approach to risk appetite to support Governor understanding and their role in risk. There would also be a session where the Committees would discuss the risks relating to their Committee. The session would be facilitated by RSM.

It was noted that Paul Grinell would continue as Director of DC Teach until closure of the company.

All further actions identified from the meetings on 7 July 2021 were complete.

6 DN Colleges Group Leadership Structure

Mr Lochran provided an update on the DN Colleges Group Leadership Structure and the approach taken to ensure that the structure supported the strategic priorities and enhanced responsibility and accountability.

Mr Lochran commented on the Principal appointment, explaining that Mrs Smith (a single appointment replacing the previous two appointments) managed all academic provision ensuring a consistent approach across two sites. Mr Lochran commented on the Director appointments made with responsibility for curriculum areas.

The Director of Finance role was now a Senior Postholder position and included responsibility for sustainability and estates.

Mr Lochran referred to the new Chief People Officer post with responsibility for HR and transformation, Mrs Maguire would also have responsibility for Safeguarding.

Some further consideration was required in relation to audit and risk and how this might be best supported by the leadership structure. Mr Shipley was currently supporting this area.

It was noted that the Chief Information and Strategic Planning Officer, was not currently a senior post holder. Mr Lochran explained that this was a new role and the appointment was made when the previous Chief Operating Officer was in post. This would be reviewed in due course.

Mr Lochran referred to the new restructure in HE and the three Director positions which were in place below the Assistant Principle in HE.

The Board welcomed the new Senior Leadership Team and commented on the significant change in relation to the Senior Leadership Team and the Board composition. It was noted that there were only a small number of Governors which were in post prior to the merger. It was agreed that the new experience brought by recent appointments strengthened governance. It was also agreed that the posts working across sites was a positive development.

Governors commented on the significant interest in the recent open evening with students and their families queuing to look at the College Group facilities.

The Board received the update.

7 CEO Report

Mr Lochran presented the CEO Report. Mr Lochran commented on the positive start to the year. Students and Staff were pleased to be back on site. Students and Staff who were anxious to come back into the College were pleased to be on site.

Mr Lochran commented on the success of the recent open evening. It was noted that it had been two years since the last open evening event and feedback had been incredibly positive.

Mr Lochran explained that COVID Group continued to meet once a week. The number of cases across the Group had been between 35 and 45 and in a small number of areas. This week, there had been a slight increase and there were more staff cases reported. There had been nine positive cases of staff in Engineering at Doncaster. There had been a decision taken to encourage staff to take annual leave during the half term break and to work remotely where possible. During the half term break, HE provision would be delivered remotely. Deep cleaning would take place where needed.

Mr Lochran explained that there had been a significant focus on staff and student welfare. The Group was working with Boots to offer staff a voucher for a free flu vaccine. Personal alarms had been offered to staff, and there had been a positive response to this with many female staff members taking up the offer. Consideration was being given to extend the offer of personal alarms to students. There was a partnership in place with Remploy to support Staff mental health issues, to support them to stay in work.

There had also been a focus on supporting those staff and students who were anxious about coming back to the College site. There had been new staff room facilities and the Senior Leadership Team had increased their visibility around College sites. Feedback from staff in relation to the new staff room had been positive, it was noted that there had been investment in more flexible, agile rooms.

There had also been investment in new student spaces in T-Level areas. Mr Lochran explained that Governors would have the opportunity to visit some of the areas of investment at Doncaster College as part of the Governor Development Day. Mr Lochran also commented on the investment in the new HE health suite.

The Board noted the work being undertaken to develop Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPS) with the Chamber of Commerce in Doncaster. This was one of eight projects in the country and the Chamber was working with a number of regions including Sheffield and Barnsley.

Mr Lochran commented on the improvements to Wi-Fi made on site at Doncaster, this had been achieved through a creative approach which had been taken to move and re-purpose existing equipment as the required chips had not been available to purchase due to supply chain issues.

Mr Lochran explained that, despite some challenges, the migration to Office 365 was now complete and operational. This migration had not been undertaken for classroom facilities however, any items which could not be accessed could be downloaded by IT. The migration had occurred during Mr Wilkinson's first week and he had added incredible value to the process.

It was agreed that the delay in the start of term to allow the completion of the migration and building works had been appropriate as this had impacted positively on students.

Mr Lochran provided further information on the impact of COVID in relation to the adult education budget (AEB) funding. It was noted that during 2019/20, due to the profile of delivery, despite COVID and lockdowns, the Group had delivered 103% of allocation.

During 2020/21 the Group had been significantly impacted by the timing of the lockdown and had delivered 68% of allocation. The threshold had been set at 90%

however, the Group had submitted a business case. Mr Lochran explained that the Group business case was allowable on the basis of two grounds; one around causing the College financial hardship or the second that local circumstances prevented the completion. The business case had been submitted on the basis of local circumstances for £1.1million. The decision was expected in November. In the absence of success in the business case, clawback repayment was within the budget for December 2021 over four months. The business case had included reference to the types of courses on offer and had provided reasons why these had been impacted.

Mr Lochran referred to the Group success in receiving the Blended Learning Consortium Impact award recognising the positive impact on learning outcomes. The Board also commended the success of Phil Whitehead, Digital Teaching and Learning Manager for his recognition as a Microsoft Learning Champion. The Board asked that congratulations be passed to Mr Whitehead and commented on the tremendous recognition for the Group.

Mr Lochran commented on the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) event for Governors scheduled in early November and explained that the Ofsted merger criteria had changed increasing the visit timing from 3 years to 4 years.

In relation to the Skills for Jobs White Paper, it was noted that there was a period of consultation around accountability, which would have an impact for Colleges and Governors. Consultation around the removal of BTECs also continued with questions for employers and their understanding of the skills required for the future.

There was also consultation around the devolved adult budget. Mr Lochran confirmed that in Doncaster, the College had secured additional funding for adult level 3 courses. There was consideration being given to how to simplify the process and make this fair and equitable. There was some discussion around lagged funding which may provide some consistency to support curriculum planning.

Consideration was also being given to the role of Ofsted and the FE Commissioner and the point of intervention, again to provide some simplification and make the process outcome focused, and effective.

Governors asked about the timeframe for implementation of the White Paper. Mr Lochran explained that consultation would take place during 2021/22 with the changes being implemented from 2023/24.

Mr Lochran referred the Board to the approach being taken to assessment to address grade inflation, with the Government setting out a plan to restore grades in 2022/23 to pre-COVID levels. It was noted that this year would be a transition year. Assessment information was provided at Appendix 4 of the Report.

Mr Lochran commented on the appointment of the new Secretary of State for Education and Minister of Higher and Further Education and it was noted that the new FE Commissioner was in post.

Governors commented on the progress of the SAR process, commenting that it was pleasing to see some outstanding assessments.

Governors asked about the approach being taken to communicate with the Senior Leadership Team and College Leadership Team and the monthly webinars. Mr Lochran commented that this had worked really well during COVID and had been taken forward. For those staff unable to attend, the sessions were recorded. Feedback comments were received and answers provided to all staff via email, the approach had been positively received by staff. A COVID update would be provided in the webinar tomorrow to update staff on the approach being taken over half term.

It was asked whether it would be possible to share the sessions with Governors. It was agreed that this would be done.

CEO

It was further noted that a Staff Board had been developed and this was a source of staff questions. The increase in Senior Leadership Team visibility was also positive with staff confident to approach and discuss issues directly.

Governors asked about the winter period and the possible increase in positive cases, and whether there was an option of choice around blended learning. Mr Lochran explained that the Group was trying to be in a position to have all learning delivered in a classroom and available online, however, there was work to do to achieve this in all areas.

Mrs Smith explained that there were a significant number of adult courses which were being delivered online. With most students, a blended approach was being taken. A different approach was being taken for students who were clinically vulnerable, Ms Smith explained that the Group had robots for those students who were unable to attend College, students can access learning and have social interactions through the robot and feel part of the student group. Mr Lochran explained that the discussion with staff would include preparations to move courses online if needed.

The Board received the update.

8 Performance End of Year Report / Student Recruitment Update

Mrs Smith provided the update explaining that this was a combined report of what was historically two reports.

In relation to achievement, the figures provided were close to being actual. The ILR was due for submission on Friday 22 October. There was unlikely to be much change, however, there may be some movement in apprenticeships.

16-18 was in line with the previous year. English and Maths high achievement was higher, Mrs Smith explained that this had been monitored and there was confidence that the teacher assessed grades were accurate. Additional support had been provided for students.

Adult achievement was lower than in the previous year, this was mainly due to functional skills and ESOL, where those students were required to take examinations and there was no teacher assessed grade provision.

Apprenticeship achievement was lower in the previous year, some of this was due to COVID, where apprentices had been furloughed or lost their jobs, however there were some quality issues. There were some areas where the Group was

experiencing difficulty with recruitment which impacted on capacity, this was acknowledged as a national challenge in the sector.

The HE position was not yet known, due to the number of re-sits and had been exacerbated by changes in reporting. The position would be reported formally and accurately to the HE Quality & Performance Committee on the 24 November 2021.

Impact on students – some of the delays in assessment information had been due to validation panels. The delays could potentially impact on the future destination of students. The situation was being managed for students on an individual basis.

In relation to the quality issues identified in apprenticeships there were capacity issues in engineering and construction which may impact on progression and claims for those apprentices on the programmes.

Approximately 60% achievement was likely over 2020/21 this was a situation that was being seen across the sector.

It was noted that apprenticeships were in scope for a potential Ofsted inspection. The challenges in employing assessors were noted. A rigorous self-assessment process was being undertaken to try and support improvement.

Mrs Smith explained that new enrolment had been paused in areas where there were capacity issues which should enable the backlog to be resolved before new students were enrolled. It was further noted that there were also recruitment difficulties in End Point Assessment.

The Group had recently appointed a specialist to support recruitment in challenging areas and a task and finish group established on each site.

The Board was referred to the risks contained within the paper.

The Board discussed achievement rates and attendance and it was noted that in some areas the blended learning approach had resulted in an increase in resources which was beneficial for students.

The measures to assess achievement were being developed to consider skills measures and progression made. It was recommended that future reporting to the Board reflected the changed. It was also noted that T levels achievement would be included in future reporting.

Mrs Smith provided an update in relation to enrolment. The impact of increasing wages locally in traditionally low skilled jobs such as warehouse work was impacting on recruitment in some areas.

Adult enrolment numbers were improving and there had been a steady increase in Job Centre Plus referrals. The information would be updated following the ILR submission.

Apprenticeship enrolment was looking positive and whilst there had been a reduction in HE enrolment this was improving and a January start option was being offered.

A level capacity locally in both Doncaster and North Lindsey was discussed and the impact of potentially inflated teacher accessed GCSE grades on enrolment on both sites.

Further information was provided on the approach taken to curriculum mapping to ensure that the needs of the local economy were satisfied. The focus of the White Paper on Governing Bodies understanding local need was noted and that this would form part of the next Governor Development Day.

The financial impact of enrolment would be considered in future meetings. It was noted that the final outturn for 2020/21 would be based on the ILR submission.

The Board received the update.

9 3G Pitch

Mr Shipley provided a summary of the 3G pitch proposal.

The Board noted the main benefits of the investment and the potential financial implications of the proposal.

The initial investment would be up to £100,000 with annual maintenance costs estimated at £6,000 per year along with an annual retainer of £25,000 to replace the pitch at the end of its 10-year expected life.

The Board were referred to the revised location on page 114.

Mr Shipley explained that in order to proceed with the proposal, feasibility costs of up to £5,000 and legal fees in the region of £2,000 were required. These would only be payable by the College should the College not proceed beyond the feasibility stage.

It was reported that locally there was interest in a 3G pitch and that the use of the pitch would be shared.

The Board discussed potential opportunities arising from the investment and how this may link to curriculum development. Mrs Smith explained that there had been some growth in Sports courses and the pitch may support the future pipeline of sport learners. The benefit of the pitch for students on sports teams outside of the sport curriculum area was also noted.

Resolution: The Board approved in principle the acceptance of a legal charge over the land and for the completion of a feasibility study.

10 Memorandum of Understanding North Lindsey Campus Development

Mr Shipley provided an update on the progress of the project to redevelop the North Lindsey College Campus. The College had been 1 of 12 Colleges approached for redevelopment to the estimated value of £25m.

As part of the feasibility and project initiation the College was required to agree to the Memorandum of Understanding drafted by the DfE.

Part of the early engagement workshop included a tour of the site and the potential for disposing of an element of the site had been discussed. The plan remained

that the project would be complete by September 2024. It was noted that the Memorandum of Understanding was not legally binding but provided principles of engagement.

PPH consultancy were being engaged to consider surplus land on site. The Board discussed potential options for those elements of the site.

Resolution: The Board approved the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding with the DfE.

11 Management Accounts Year End 31 July 2021

Mr Shipley presented the management account to 31st July 2021. The draft outturn provision was a surplus position of £1.27m which was a positive variance of £1.26m against the original budget position.

It was noted that the draft figures were subject to external audit and that the position may be impacted by AEB clawback.

The Board noted the pension adjustment and the delays in capital expenditure which had resulted in an increase in cash.

Mr Shipley explained further that the capital project delays were due to the heat source pumps due to national supply issues and there was some risk that there could be a clawback of some funding. The College had submitted a return to the DfE explaining the reasons for the delay. There also remained an element of risk regarding the planned roofing work at Doncaster.

The Board noted section five of the report and the LGPS pension liability.

The Board congratulated the Director of Finance and the Senior Leadership Team on the positive financial position.

The Board received the update.

12 Written Resolutions and Chair's Actions

The Board noted Chairs action taken since the previous meeting of the Board.

The Written Resolutions which had been approved since the last Board meeting were also noted.

The Chair provided additional information on the paper provided on the engagement of Vision2Learn to support delivery of the adult education budget.

It was noted that the use of the provider should result in cost savings in the region of £30,000. It was further noted that the contract was based on outcomes and therefore payment was linked to delivery.

Resolution: The Board approved a one-year contract to be agreed with Vision2Learn.

13 Feedback from Committee Meetings:

- a. Audit & Risk – 11 October 2021

Mr Walker provided an update on the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on the 11th October 2021

Mr Walker explained that Senior Leadership Team members would be invited to attend the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting to provide an update on progress against actions arising from the Apprenticeship Compliance Internal Audit.

Senior Leadership Team members had also been invited to provide an update on progress against audit recommendations where recommendations had not been implemented.

Mr Walker referred to changes in the ESFA rules around reliance on the year-end funding statement. The external audit provider would provide an update to Committee members on the approach to be taken in advance of the next Committee meeting.

It was noted that information on Risk Management was included within Governor induction and additional information on the management of risk would be provided at the Governor Development Day.

b. Finance & Resources – 13 October 2021

In the absence of Mr Scanlon, Mrs Taylor-Holmes provided a summary of an email provided by Mr Scanlon.

The first meeting of the academic year had been held on the 13th October with Mr Scanlon as Chair and Mr Gravestock as Vice Chair.

The meeting had focused on the Management Accounts and the Performance Report both of which were on the Board agenda.

Discussions at the Committee had focused on managing the risk of not being able to resource some courses where applications had exceeded expectations. The Committee had commented on the healthy draft financial position at year end. The Committee had received a number of papers for information on estates, digital, procurement and insurance. Both digital and estates had seen a number of staff structure changes.

Committee members had noted the lack of cyber cover in the insurance policy and that Mr Shipley was considering options to address this gap. It was accepted that cover was expensive particularly given the recent cyber-attack.

The Committee had noted that a large amount of procurement work (425 days) had been undertaken, managed by Tenet. A list of work and savings had been provided to the Committee.

Finally, the Committee had approved an amended Financial Regulations Policy but changes were minor (related to name) and some amendments to the Financial Delegations.

The Board received the update.

14 Any Other Business

There being no other business the meeting closed.

15 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Corporation Board is scheduled for Monday 13 December 2021, 5.30 pm at Doncaster College

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Jane Taylor-Holmes
Interim Director of Governance / Clerk to the Corporation

Signed: (Chair) **Date:**

TABLE OF ACTIONS			
Date	Minute	Action	Responsibility
20/10/21	7	It was asked whether it would be possible to share the [webinar] sessions with Governors. It was agreed that this would be done.	CEO