

MINUTES

Corporation No 178

Date: *19/03/2024 (Tuesday)*

Time: *18:00–20:00*

Venue: *Bowland Suite*

Committee: *Corporation*

Present: *Allison Jones, Andrew Massey, Barbara Godby, David Hall, Debbie Clayton, Jane Booker (Chair), Matthew Chesterman, Robert Wallace, Robin Newton-Syms, Simon Gerrard, Sue Collinge, Tyler Cockerill and Wes Johnson (Principal)*

Attending: *Damian Stewart, Helen Eaton, Joanne Sherrington (Vice Principal) and John Wherry (Deputy Principal)*

Clerks: *Ron Matthews (Clerk)*

Apologies: *Kathryn Townsley*

Public Minutes

Item number:
(and category)

Item description:

18.24
Information

Motorsport Presentation

At the commencement of the meeting the Motorsport Curriculum Area Manager, Barry Mason, gave a presentation on developments and proposals for Motorsport provision at Myerscough. Barry had only been in post for eight weeks but had managed introduce a number of improvements and had identified future areas of development. Following the presentation Barry responded to questions from Governors. The Chair thanked Barry for an informative presentation and that he had given Governors assurance that Motorsport provision at the College had already shown improvement and would continue to do so.

19.24
Decision

Attendance of College Management

Standing Order 13 states that: *As a matter of policy all meetings of the Corporation and its Committees will be held in private. The agendas and minutes and supporting papers of its public business will be made available to the general public. However: (a) The Principal shall be authorised to invite members of staff to attend in their employed capacity for both public and confidential business as appropriate and in accordance with Standing Order 25. (b) The Corporation may however, may exclude members of staff from attending any business that it deems necessary. (c) Attendance by other persons shall be at the discretion of the Corporation following advice from the Principal or Clerk.*

Resolved: That Management attend for the public and confidential agenda items.

20.24
Record

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Kath Townsley and Rob Wallace.

21.24
Decision

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The public minutes of meeting number 177 held on Tuesday 6 February 2024 and published on the extranet were agreed and signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

22.24
Record

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made in respect of items on the public agenda.

23.24

Opening Remarks of the Chair

Decision The Chair informed the Corporation that all items she had been dealing with recently were included on the agenda.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

24.24 Governor Vacancies

Decision The Chair reported that the previous week she, along with the Vice Chair, the Principal, Vice Principal and Clerk had interviewed two candidates for the vacancies of College Governors. The Panel had subsequently agreed to recommend that Karen Dewhurst be appointed as a Governor.

Resolved: That Karen Dewhurst be appointed as a College Governor with effect from 1 April 2024.

25.24 Remuneration Committee Membership

Decision The Clerk reported that with the retirement of the previous Chair on 31 December 2023 there was now a vacancy on the Remuneration Committee.

Resolved: That Governor Rob Wallace be appointed to the Remuneration Committee.

26.24 Governor Engagement Programme

Decision Governors were reminded that the Clerk had previously notified them of the Away Afternoon to be held on 16 April starting out with lunch and finishing around at approximately 5.00pm. Governors were also notified of the event on 24 April where Curriculum Area Managers were to report on how their area of responsibility met 'Skills Needs'. The Director of Quality, Sue Keenan, had, at the Quality and Standards Committee, invited Governors to accompany her on 'Deep Dive' observations of curriculum areas. This was included in an email sent to all Governors in early March and the programme of visits was again attached. The Clerk also circulated a note of those Governors who had already agreed to accompany Sue on some of her visits. Any other Governors wishing to attend any of the 'Deep Dives' should inform Sue directly on skeen@myerscough.ac.uk The Clerk also invited Governors to inform the Corporation of any events they had attended since the last meeting. Attached to the agenda were reports from Governors Barbara Godby, Kath Townsley and Rob Wallace relating to their roles as Link Governors for English and Maths, EPYP and Careers respectively.

Resolved: That the report be received.

27.24 Student Voice Report

Decision The Corporation considered a Student Voice Report which detailed the results of recent surveys and also information regarding the various student forums. Overall the results provided positive feedback and

Officers confirmed that issues raised in the various forums were being progressed. The Clerk and Curriculum Support Manager had recently met with the two Student Governors to explore opportunities to work with student representatives.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

28.24

Decision

Report of the Audit and Governance Committee of 31 January 2024

The Corporation considered the report of the Audit and Governance Committee of 31 January 2024.

MATTERS FOR THE INFORMATION OF CORPORATION

i) Internal Audit Report – Safeguarding

The Internal Auditor, Jane Butterfield, presented an Assurance Review report on Safeguarding which contained one routine recommendation that Terms of Reference for the Strategic Safeguarding Group and the Operational Safeguarding Group be documented.

The Internal Auditor said that this was a good report covering an important area of the College.

Management responded that the Terms of Reference would be produced by the end of March 2024.

The Committee welcomed the report.

ii) Internal Audit Progress Report and Summary Report Update

The Committee received and noted the above report which contained information detailing progress to date on all recommendations made.

In 2021/2022 a total of 8 recommendations had been made, of which 5 (61%) had been implemented, 1 (13%) was no longer applicable, 1 (13%) was not yet due and 1 (13%) was an operational action, with none outstanding.

In 2022/2023 a total of 9 recommendations had been made, 6 (67%) had been implemented, 3 (37%) were in progress and none were outstanding.

The Vice Principal reported that there was now increased progress on the two recommendations relating to subcontracting and this would be reflected in the report to the next meeting.

In 2023/2024 there was currently 1 (100%) recommendation which was not yet due.

The Committee received the report.

iii) External Audit Recommendations

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance which indicated that the External Audit for 2022/2023 undertaken by RSM contained several recommendations. An appendix to the report contained a summary of the recommendations, including progress on their implementation. Whilst implementation dates were not stipulated in the summary the actions would be reviewed by RSM during the audit for 2023/2024. The outstanding recommendations would be reviewed at each meeting of the Committee.

The Committee received the report.

iv) Strategic Risk Register

Audit and Governance Committee considered the Strategic Risk Register for 2023/2024 as presented by the Vice Principal.

The Committee received the report.

v) Data Returns Reports

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance on the above which indicated that all returns for 2022/2023 & 2023/2024 had been submitted on time.

The Committee received the reports.

vi) Governor Vacancies

The Clerk reported on arrangements being made with regard to filling current vacancies on the Corporation.

The Committee noted the report.

vii) Governance Quality and Improvement Plan

The Committee considered progress on the Governance Improvement Plan for 2023/2024.

The Clerk reported progress on the individual items in the plan. Governor vacancies had been considered earlier in the meeting and Governor training was also included on the current agenda. The new Governor Portal was due to be installed in the next few months.

The Committee received the report.

viii) Governor Training

The Committee were reminded of Governor Training arrangements which were subsequently held on 6 February 2024.

Resolved: That the report be received.

29.24

Decision

Report of the Quality and Standards Committee of 5 March 2023

The Corporation considered the report of the Quality and Standards Committee of 5 March 2024.

A) MATTERS FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE CORPORATION

i) Performance Data 2023/2024

The Committee had reviewed performance data as follows:

In Year Performance Data 2023/2024:

- **FE**
- **HE**
- **Apprenticeship and Skills**

The Committee were informed that 69 learners who sat GCSE resits in November achieved grade 4 plus which equalled 30.9% of those who sat the exams - 48.2% English and 13.4% Maths. New criteria for resits would be issued for 2024.

FE retention was 96.7% (target 95%) with 97 individuals having left the College after the 42-day period. Overall attendance was 89.5%, when English and Maths were included the percentage dropped to 83%. There were currently 108 learners 'at risk', mainly in Equine, Animal, Greenspace, Motorsport and Agriculture.

Several actions were being taken forward including the introduction of new progress measures, a T Level accelerated implementation plan, better curriculum planning and also to improve attendance. A breakdown of all the figures was included in the report.

HE numbers were down on budget predictions and this was confirmed by a continued reduction in HE applications nationally. In addition, the suspension, for twelve months, of application for a Foundation Degree in Vet Nursing would impact severely on final numbers.

However, retention was 99.4% against a target of 97%, with overall levels of attendance standing at 88.6%. There was considerable work being undertaken around recruitment including progression from FE to HE. The report confirmed that UCLan were continuing to undertake a

review of all courses run by Myerscough. An additional element of the report provided an update on the details from the Office for Students which included details of two reportable events.

For Apprenticeship and Skills enrolment remained positive although actual enrolments were down nearly 100 on the previous year. At the end of February 2024 there were 345 enrolled apprentices against a target of 384. The Assistant Principal, Apprenticeship and Skills, reported that the enrolment process was complex and it was taking too long to register new students which impacted on the above enrolment numbers.

Retention was at 86.2% with attendance at 97%. This figure was impacted by the sustainability of employers. Growth areas existed in Engineering, Arboriculture and Sportsturf. Risk factors included a change in standards for land-based Engineering and Construction. Latest achievement rates were all above both College and Department for Education targets. Overall achievements were at 77.7%, an increase of 12.2% on the same period last year.

The end of year financial target was likely to be met. The report listed strengths and areas for improvement with employer voice remaining strong.

The Committee received the reports.

ii) Quality Performance and Standards Report

The Committee considered the Quality Performance and Standards Report which provided an overview of academic data and received responses to their questions.

The Ofsted findings had now been built into the Quality Improvement Plan. English and Maths remained key priorities.

The report also referred to the Landex Inspection which took place in January 2024.

Deep Dive/Quality of Education lesson observations were planned over the coming months and all Governors would be invited to accompany the Director of Quality on these occasions.

The Committee received the report.

iii) Quality Improvement Plan 2023/2024

The Committee considered the update on the Quality Improvement Plan for 2023/2024. Following the Ofsted Inspection a more robust approach had been taken for the current year.

The Committee received the report.

iv) Curriculum Risk Register

The Committee considered the Curriculum Risk Register noting the key 'inherent risks' and the actions taken to reduce them. Assurance statements were provided against the resulting 'residual risks', reputational damage and failure of the Myerscough/UCLan partnership, failure to provide quality improvements following the Ofsted report. Financial stability and cyber security remained the major factors throughout the risk register.

The Committee received the report.

v) Landex Peer review Report

The Committee considered the report of the Landex Peer Review which took place on 9 and 10 January 2024. The report reviewed the action plan from the previous visit and listed six actions for the coming year.

The issues raised had been addressed in both the FE report and the Quality Performance and Standards report and had also been added to the Quality Improvement Plan.

The Committee received the report.

vi) FREDIE Action Plan 2023/2024

The Committee considered the FREDIE, (Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement) Action Plan for 2023/2024. The Plan detailed all activities and improvements for 2023/2024.

The Committee noted the report.

vii) In Year Report - Safeguarding

The Committee considered an update report on Child Protection and Safeguarding and the Action Plan. Safeguarding incidents remained at the high level of previous years. The reasons and concerns were widespread, with the majority concerning mental health issues but they also covered all aspects of safeguarding.

Both the Internal Audit Assurance Review of Safeguarding and the Ofsted Inspection reported that students felt safe and commended the effective safeguarding arrangements of the College.

Governors echoed the comments made at previous meetings, where concerns were expressed at the large number of safeguarding alerts, the ability of staff to respond and the well-being of the staff concerned.

Governors also requested that future reports include a snapshot of issues with trend data and listing any identified areas of concern.

The Committee received the report.

Resolved: That the report be received.

30.24

Decision

Report of the Finance & Resources Committee of 13 March 2024

a) MATTER REQUIRING CONFIRMATION BY CORPORATION

i) Financial Regulations Annual Review

The Committee considered the report of the Vice Principal on a review of the Financial Regulations which was required on an annual basis; the changes to the previous version of the document had been highlighted.

These included amendments needed as a result of the decision of the Office for National Statistics for Colleges to revert to the public sector. Amongst the amendments proposed were:

Signing requirements – commitment to expenditure (7.2):

- Director of Finance to sign up to £5k (previously Vice Principal & Deputy CEO)
- Vice Principal & Deputy CEO and Director of Finance to sign over £5k and under £25k
(previously Principal and Vice Principal & Deputy CEO)
- Principal and Vice Principal & Deputy CEO to sign over £25k and under £50k
(previously Chair of Finance & Resources)
- Orders overs £50k – Finance & Resources Committee

Bank signatories (9.1):

- amounts up to £50k, any signatory including Director of Finance
(previously excluded)
- amounts over £50k, Principal and Vice Principal & Deputy CEO, or delegated to
another member of Principalship

Changes were also proposed to the investment criteria.

A copy of the amended Financial Regulation was attached to the report.

Due to the level of amendments to the document the Committee recommended:

Resolved - That the Corporation be recommended to adopt the revised Financial regulations with effect from 1 April 2024.

b) OTHER MATTERS FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE CORPORATION

i) Strategic Plan Progress Report

The Committee considered the report of the Principal on the progress of the Strategic Plan.

Whilst FE and HE numbers were on or close to target, Apprenticeships remained strong against a national trend. Provision of 14–16-year-olds was buoyant although current HE application for 2024/2025 were less promising. Sickness levels were below target and slightly above the AoC benchmark. Commercial activity was looking stronger following the decline experienced during the pandemic. Surplus/loss was well below target.

The majority of the KPIs were referred to in the Financial Position Statement later in the agenda.

The Committee noted the report.

ii) Financial Position Statement for the Period Ended 31 January 2024

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance on financial performance up to 31 January 2024.

The current position was a loss of £349k with significant work still to be undertaken to ensure the forecast of £28k was met. This loss had been reduced by £104k during the month but the variance behind forecast remained consistent at £421k. Apprenticeship income was behind profile but the team were confident of reaching forecast. Delivery of AEB contracts and other devolved funding was continuing to plan. Commercial income was strong although the margin had been impacted by the pay increase.

The Deputy Principal, Resources, reported that the loss on the farm was due to issues with the dairy herd and were proving difficult to resolve.

A recruitment freeze had been implemented for all new posts as a response to the requirement to reduce staff costs and all subsequent

replacement posts would continue to be scrutinised. Work on non-pay savings continue.

Negotiations continued with the College Union (UCU) regarding the pay increase which had not been awarded to the staff in the bargaining unit. However, these costs had been accrued into the pay costs as if they had been paid, as they are owing to staff. The balance sheet remained strong with a cash balance of £13.956m and cash days of 144. ESFA financial health remained 'Good'.

Circulated with the report was a copy of one of the regular newsletters from the Chief Executive of the AoC, David Hughes, in which he reported on the additional funding available to colleges for English and Maths resits; these came with conditions. The newsletter also made reference to the loss of Level 3 tuition funding.

Governors asked a number of questions for clarification to which management responded.

The Vice Principal also reported that comparisons with local colleges indicated that Myerscough needs to become more efficient in delivering the curriculum.

The Committee received the reports.

iii) HE Policy and Procedure, Bursary Policy and Tuition Fees 2024/2025

The Committee gave consideration to the proposed Higher Education Policy and Procedure, Bursary Policy and Tuition Fees for 2024/2025. To ensure compliance Myerscough was required to work with UCLan to agree the fee structure for new entrants in 2024/2025 as part of the Access Agreement and also in line with the requirements of the Office for Students.

The review of the Bursary Policy and student support package remained similar to last year. The College current recommendations were based on the existing fee cap of £9,250 for full time students. The report included a summary of the fees including part time and international students.

The Committee agreed the HE Policy and Procedure, Bursary Policy and Tuition Fees for 2024/2025.

iv) Strategic Risk Register

The Committee considered the Strategic Risk Report for 2023/2024 as presented by the Vice Principal. Members noted that the risks identified were initially classed as 'Inherent Risks'. Actions taken to mitigate these risks resulted in 'Residual Risks'. The report also included a review of the College Risk Appetite and a definition of scoring matrix. Reputational

damage, partnership arrangements, inability to secure financial stability, cyber security and failure to deliver quality improvements and achieve successful outcomes at Ofsted remained high risks.

The Committee received the report.

v) Human Resources Report for the Period Ending 31 January 2024

The Committee considered the above report which contained an analysis of staff turnover, a breakdown analysis of leavers, staff stability index and staff sickness statistics for the year up to 31 January 2024.

The Committee noted that staff turnover, the percentage of workers who leave, currently stood at 18.97%, including 21.43% for management staff, 22.58% for teaching staff and 16.32% for support staff. During the same 12 month period, 2022/2023, data showed the turnover was 18.55%, including 17.5% for management staff, 18.46% for teaching staff and 20% for support staff. Overall, staff sickness stood at 2.74% and was being closely monitored. This was below a target of less than 3%. Long term sickness of 10 employees, compared to 8 for the similar period last year, was above the target of 6. The average number of working days lost due to sickness per employee was 7.13 days.

The team had supported 168 vacancies this quarter with 101 current vacancies. The service was currently supporting 50 new employee relations cases. Discussions continued with the College Union for teaching staff (UCU) regarding the pay offer and their subsequent strike action. Both parties had agreed to refer the matter to ACAS and this process was currently underway. The report also included details of staff restructure, training, service availability, staff wellness provisions and changes to the Occupational Health provider.

Mentioned in the report was the Gender Pay Gap report - March 2022. The College was required to publish a report for the period 1.4.2022 – 31.03.2023 by the end of March 2024. The College median pay gap (middle) had decreased by 7.02% (19.45% median pay gap). The mean pay gap (average) had decreased by 2.68% (10.98% mean pay gap). The decrease was due, in the main, to an increase in female employees in the upper quartiles of the workforce.

The report highlighted areas of focus for the year ahead which, it was hoped, over the long term, would serve to reduce the pay gap. The new ITRENT computer system for Payroll and People sections would be going live in the near future which would improve services.

The new Director of People, Alice Roberts, took up her post at the beginning of February 2024.

The Committee received the report.

vi) Health and Safety Report for the Period Ending 31 January 2024

Members considered the Health and Safety Report for the period ended 31 October 2023 which provided an analysis of accident statistics over the period together with other Health and Safety activities, including policy updates and staff training.

Overall, the number of accidents, 106, mirrored the same period last year and was close to pre-pandemic levels. There were 29 near misses and 1 RIDDOR reportable accident during this period which was well below the target of less than 3%. However, the number of reported near misses had increased.

Accidents were as follows:

Staff 14 (13%) an increase of 7 from last year

Students 90 (85%) a decrease of 7 from last year

Visitors 2 (2%)

Analysis showed:

19 (18 %) were taken to hospital – 6 Students, 1 Apprentice, 1 Visitor and 1 Contractor

59 (56%) received first aid treatment

28 (26%) needed no treatment

There were no identifiable trends and no areas for concern. However concern was expressed that low incidents were not being reported with the Out Centre showing low numbers.

The report also made reference to the Internal Audit Assurance Review of Estates which also included a review of the Health and Safety provision at the College. There were a number of recommendations made concerning Health and Safety compliance and the Deputy Principal, Resources, outlined the findings. The full report would be going to the Audit and Governance Committee in April.

The Committee received the report.

Resolved:

1. That the amended Financial Regulations be agreed.
2. That the remaining report be received.

31.24

Decision

Strategic Risk Register

The Corporation considered the overall Risk Register developed by the Vice Principal. The report outlined the approach to the risk appetite statement, the risk assessment framework and the use of the risk heat map.

The report also identified the top five risks which had recently changed due to issues concerning Governor recruitment and strictly confidential matters. These top five risks were now reputational damage, partnership arrangements, failure to secure financial stability, cybersecurity and failure to deliver quality improvements and achieve successful outcomes at Ofsted.

Resolved:

That the report be received.

