

MINUTES

Corporation Meeting No 185

Date: *18/03/2025 (Tuesday)*

Time: *18:00–20:00*

Venue: *Rural Business Centre*

Committee: *Corporation*

Present: *Allison Jones, Andrew Massey, Barbara Godby, David Hall, Jane Booker (Chair), Karen Dewhurst, Kathryn Townsley, Megan Elliot, Richard Morris, Robert Wallace, Robin Newton-Syms, Simon Gerrard, Sue Collinge, Tyler Cockerill and Wes Johnson (Principal)*

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

Clerks: *Ron Matthews (Clerk)*

Public Minutes

Item number:
(and category)

Item description:

01.24

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.

02.24

Record

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Ms. Clayton. All other Governors were present.

03.24

Decision

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The public minutes of meeting number 184 held on Tuesday 10 December 2024 were agreed and signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

04.24

Record

Declarations of Interest

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

05.24

Decision

Opening Remarks of the Chair

The Chair confirmed that the event earlier in the day had been very useful and she would be producing a note from the morning session. She informed the Corporation that she had met, together with the Officers, representative of the Department for Education in relation to the annual strategic conversation. She also made reference to Arbor Day and the review by the Association of Colleges of the Board review learning points the presentations from which, together with the report, would be circulated to all Governors.

Resolved: That the report be received.

Report of the Audit and Governance Committee 15 February 2025
MATTERS FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE CORPORATION

i) Internal Audit Progress and Summary Report

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

In 2023/2024 a total of 13 recommendations had been made, 9 (69%) had been implemented, 2 (15%) were in progress, 2 were operational actions and none were outstanding.

In 2024/2025 there were currently 2 (100%) recommendations which had not yet been implemented.

The Committee received the report.

ii) ESFA Audit and Management Letter November 2024

The Committee considered a report of the Vice Principal together with the ESFA Audit Findings Report and Management Letter dated 28 November 2024.

The Findings Report was originally presented to Corporation on 10 December 2024. The report of the Vice Principal now covered the approach to implementing an action plan to resolve the outstanding issues raised in the report.

A Funding Audit Management Committee had been established, chaired by the Vice Principal, to ensure implementation of the recommended action plan, which contained 21 management proposals.

Governors were appreciative of the approach being adopted to implement the recommended actions.

The Committee received the report and the action being taken to address the recommendations was noted.

iii) Strategic Risk Register

Audit and Governance Committee considered the Strategic Risk Register for 2024/2025 as presented by the Vice Principal.

The Vice Principal reported that the current register demonstrated the top 5 risks, in order, with updated commentary. Some narrative has been updated and as usual any changes were shown in blue.

The top 5 risks reflected those items that were at the top of the College's risk concerns and were not necessarily those that scored the highest. The top five risks had changed this month. The risk relating to UCLan had been lowered due to the strengthening relationship between University of Lancashire and the College.

The Committee agreed that the Strategic Risk Register Report be received.

iv) Data Returns Reports

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance on the above which indicated that all returns for 2024/2025 had been submitted on time.

The Committee received the reports.

v) Governance Quality and Improvement Plan

The Committee considered progress on the Governance Improvement Plan for 2024/2025. The Clerk reported progress on the individual items in the plan.

Training on the new Governor Portal would be arranged in the next few months.

The Committee received the report.

vi) External Audit Recommendations

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance which listed all the recommendations from the Financial Statements Auditors, RSM, following the audit of the 2023/2024 accounts together with those from the ESFA audit conducted during the latter part of 2024.

The report not only listed the recommendations but the actions being taken to implement the same. This formed the action plan referred to by the Vice Principal when reporting on the ESFAS Audit earlier in the meeting.

The Committee received the report and noted the overall action plan.

Resolved: That the report be received.

MATTERS FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE CORPORATION.

i) Performance Data 2024/2025

The Committee had reviewed performance data as follows:

a) In Year Performance Data

2024/2025: - FE - HE - Adult Provision - ECPH
Provision - Subcontracting Provision - Apprenticeship and Skills.

FE retention was 95.9% compared with 92.1% at the end of the last academic year with 68 students withdrawn (97 in 2023/2024). Departmental information of the areas the withdrawn students would have studied was also included. Overall attendance was 88.38%. English and Maths attendance was 81.68%.

Student attendance and retention was continually monitored via the structured meeting arrangements.

All learners now had a Starting Point Assessment, Checkpoint 2 and Checkpoint 3 predicted grades inputted. This resulted in:

- o A total of 1568 grades were submitted with 29 (2%) not completed.
- o The number of students working at or above their target grade is 1204 – 75%
- o The number of students working below their target grade is 251 – 16%
- o The number of students currently working at a ‘U’ grade is 113 – 7%

Retention for T Levels was at 100%.

HE numbers were down on budget predictions, and this was confirmed by a continued reduction in HE applications nationally. Current numbers were 570 compared to 661 for 2023/2024. However, following the RCVS Accreditation recently achieved would add to numbers in the future.

Retention was 99.7% with overall levels of attendance standing at 90.2%.

The Committee also considered a report on adult provision which was for any 19 Plus adults. Currently there were 239 ESFA ASF Funded learners and 366 Devolved ASF Funded Learners. There was consistence across the EFSA and LCR contract with growth in RHS delivery. Governors sought data on performance of the individual contracted.

With regard to students on EHCP Programmes there were 379 active study programme learners with an EHCP over 391 starts. Retention was 96.9%

Of the 379, 301 had been retained that were high needs funded with retention at 97.1%

In relation to Subcontracting a total of 135 students were contracted the main provider being Employability Solutions operating out of Liverpool and Huddersfield with quite challenging group although retention was at 100%. There were no concerns with the company delivery.

Groundwork greater Manchester who had a good track record of achievement and their 5 students had 100% retention. Siemens Mobility delivered to 35 apprentices as part of the National Training Academy for Rail (NTAR). The Scottish racing Academy had recently been appointed to deliver training to 5 apprentices but had not yet commenced their programme.

For Apprenticeship and Skills at period RO6 February 2025 current achievement was 63% with best case at 83% whilst predictions were 77.5% above the national benchmark of 54.3%. Finances remained strong against a target of £4.6m and ahead of the same period the previous year.

Enrolment remained positive at February 2025, up over 200% against the previous year with 345 enrolled apprentices against a target of 384. In addition, there were over 200 currently in the pipeline but the planned 611 target may not be reached.

The Committee, after comments and questions on the various reports, agreed to receive them.

ii) Quality Improvement Plan 2024/2025

The Committee considered the update on the Quality Improvement Plan for 2024/2025.

Following the appointment of Andy Gadsdon, Executive Director of Quality and Performance, the format of the report had been revised, which was welcomed by the Committee, although the addition of RAG rating would help

The Committee received the report.

iii) Quality Performance and Standards Report

The Committee considered the first Quality Performance and Standards Report from the Executive Director which included details of the key strengths and areas for improvement at the next steps moving forward.

Circulated with his report was a PowerPoint presentation listing his findings from a Walkaround amongst the teaching provision. This raised concerns amongst the Committee as the findings were quite stark in places. However, a further presentation proposed a Blueprint of ten non-negotiable issues for the teaching staff.

Whilst the information was of concern, with a number of questions on the findings and the approach moving forward, the Committee welcomed the report.

iv) Learner Voice Update

Myerscough has had a tradition of gathering significant amounts of feedback from learners. Locally conducted surveys and initiatives such as Meet the Principal continued. A Quality of Education survey earlier this year attracted feedback from 1200 learners.

It was important that once the feedback had been received it was then used to improve service provision.

The Committee received the report.

v) FREDIE Action Plan 2024/2025

The Committee considered the FREDIE, Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement, Action Plan for 2024/2024 which had been updated by the Interim Director of Student Support and Safeguarding.

The Committee noted the report.

vi) In Year Report - Safeguarding

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

The report included details of key strengths and also areas where improvements could be made.

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

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.

vii) 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 top five risks. The Committee received the report.

07.24

Decision

Report of the Finance and Resources Committee 12 March 2025

The Corporation considered the report of the Finance and Resources Committee of 12 March 2025.

a) MATTERS FOR DECISION OF THE CORPORATION

i) Financial Regulations Annual Review

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance 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.

In general, the proposed amendments related to changes in titles or departmental headings plus any updates in legislation. It also covered alterations following the retirement of the Deputy Principal, Resources, and sections Demonstrating Value, Contract Arrangements, Disposal of Assets and Audit Arrangements.

Copies of the relevant reports were attached for consideration.

Following consideration of the highlighted amendments to the document it was:

ii) Human Resources Report

The Committee considered the above report which contained analysis of staff turnover, breakdown analysis of leavers, staff stability index and staff sickness statistics for the year up to 31 January 2025. The team had supported 112 vacancies this quarter and whilst each new vacancy undergoes a thorough review the recruitment market continues to be challenging. An example being that of the 112 vacancies the College had failed to fill 69 (60%) at the first attempt. A review of advertising and job board options was currently being reviewed.

The service was currently supporting 47 new employee relations cases of which 33 remained open.

Overall, staff sickness stood at 2.74% and was being closely monitored. This was below the 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 report also included details of training, service availability, staff wellness provisions and recent legislative changes.

Mentioned in the report was the Gender Pay Gap Report. The College was required to publish a report for the period 1.4.2023 – 31.03.2024 by the end of March 2025. 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 also highlighted areas of focus for the year ahead which, over the long term, it was hoped would serve to reduce the pay gap.

A copy of the Human Resources report and the Pay Gap Report are attached for consideration.

a) MATTERS FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE CORPORATION

i) Financial Position Statement for the Period Ended 31 January 2025

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance on the financial performance of the College up to 31 January 2025. The current position showed a loss of £419k, which was £154k behind budget, with significant work still to be undertaken to ensure the forecast met.

Apprenticeship income was in line with budget although the team was confident of reaching forecast. The Farm loss was larger than budget forecast with an expected loss of 3186k due to increased costs.

Staff costs as a percentage of income were 60% against a control budget of 58.5%. Work was underway to reduce these costs with the introduction of a recruitment freeze for all new posts and the continuing of any subsequent replacement posts would continue to be scrutinised. Work on non-pay savings continued.

The balance sheet remained strong with a cash balance of £12.039m and cash days of 147. ESFA financial health remained 'Good'.

Governors asked several 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 report.

ii) HE Policy & Procedure, Bursary & Hardship Policy and Tuition Fees 2025/2026

The Committee considered the proposed Higher Education Policy and Procedure, Bursary & Hardship Policy and Tuition Fees for 2025/2026.

To ensure compliance Myerscough was required to work with University of Lancashire to agree the fee structure for new entrants in 2025/2026 as part of the Collaboration 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's current recommendations were based on the existing fee cap of £9,535 for full time students. The report included a summary of the fees including part time and international students

The Committee agreed the HE Policy & Procedure, Bursary & Hardship Policy and Tuition Fees 2025/2026 be agreed.

iii) Statutory Risk Register

Members considered the elements of the Risk Register applicable to Finance & Resources Committee.

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

Partnership arrangements with the University of Lancashire now had a declining risk factor and had been removed from the top five risks.

The Committee received the report.

iv) Health and Safety Report

Members considered the Health and Safety Report for the period ended 31 January 2025 which provided an analysis of accident statistics over the

period, together with other Health and Safety activities, including policy updates, staff training.

Overall, the number of accidents, 148, was slightly more (140) than during the same period last year.

Analysis showed that:

16 (18 %) were taken to hospital - 24 last year

93 (56%) received first aid treatment - 83 last year

39 (26%) needed no treatment - 33 last year

There were 24 near misses compared to 8 last year.

There were no identifiable trends and no areas for significant concern. However, concern was expressed that low incidents were not being reported.

Attached to the report was an appendix showing a Study of Staff- to-Student ratios in High-Risk Practical Areas.

The Committee received the report.

Resolved:

- 1. That the amendments to the Financial regulation be agreed.**
- 2. That the Gender Pay Gap Report be agreed and published as required.**
- 3. That the remainder of the report be noted.**

08.24

Decision

Statutory Risk Register

The Corporation considered the overall Risk Register for the College.

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

Partnership arrangements with the University of Lancashire now had a declining risk factor and had been removed from the top five risks.

Resolved: That the report be received.

