

## NCG – Corporation Meeting

Main Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022 – 4pm to 7pm

Face to face meeting at Kidderminster Town Hall

Details			Attendance		
Full Name	Position	Initials	Attended	Apologies	No Attendance
Peter Lauener	Chair of Corporation	PL	X		
Chris Roberts	Vice Chair of Corporation	CR	X		
Mark Squires	Independent Governor	MS	X		
Caroline MacDonald	Independent Governor	CMacD	X		
Jeannette Strachan	Independent Governor	JS	X		
Andrew Cunningham	Independent Governor	AC		X	
Rob Holt	Independent Governor	RH	X		
Chris McCourt	Independent Governor	CMc	X <sup>^</sup>		
VACANCY	Independent Governor				
Shirley Atkinson	Independent Governor	SA	X		
John Widdowson	Independent Governor	JW		X	
Liz Bromley	CEO – Ex-Officio Governor	LB	X		
Jennifer Mitchelson	Staff Governor	JM	X		
Diana Wiedemann	Student Governor	DW	X <sup>*</sup>		
Conor Allen	Student Governor	CA	X <sup>*</sup>		
<b>Clerk</b>					
David Balme	CoCo & Secretary to the Board	DB	X		
<b>Visitors/ Presenters</b>					
Lisa Sproats	Chief Finance Officer	LSp	X <sup>*</sup>		
Steve Wallis	Executive Director of Quality	SW	X <sup>*</sup>		
Chris Payne	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	CP	X <sup>*</sup>		
Scott Mulholland	Chief Information, Data & Estates Officer	SM	X <sup>*</sup>		
Tony Lewin	Executive Principal South	TL	X		
Grant Glendinning	Executive Principal North	GG	X <sup>*</sup>		
Nicola Taylor	Assistant Director of Governance (minutes)	NT	X <sup>*</sup>		
Brett O'Reilly	Group Head of Curriculum Innovation for Construction Technology	BOR	X <sup>^</sup>		
Leigh Scott	Director of Estates	LSc	X <sup>^</sup>		
Mark Russell	Head of Financial Planning & Analysis	MR	X <sup>^</sup>		

**\*Attended via Microsoft Teams / ^Attended for part of the meeting**

*Earlier in the day, the Corporation Board had a tour of Kidderminster College and held an informal lunch meeting with the members of the Kidderminster College Board which allowed the opportunity to discuss any strengths, concerns, opportunities and weaknesses currently faced by the College. The Corporation Board also received a presentation from the Principal of Kidderminster College with regard to the current position and plans for the future.*

## **1. Chair Opening Remarks / Board Matters / Declaration of Interests / Apologies for Absence**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

Introductions took place with CA and DW, the newly appointed Student Governors.

The Chair noted the benefit and useful information gained during the earlier sessions focusing on Kidderminster College.

Apologies had been received from AC and JW, and it was noted CMc would be a little late joining the meeting.

**The Board agreed that the meeting was quorate.**

The Chair noted that the following would attend various parts of the meeting:

- BOR (Group Head of Curriculum Innovation for Construction Technology) for item 3.1.1.
- LSc (Director of Estates) and MR (Head of Financial Planning & Analysis) for item 3.4.

The Board were asked if they had any interests to declare in relation to the planned agenda items, however there were no additional interests to report.

**The Board noted the updates.**

*BOR joined the meeting.*

### **1.1. Update from the Chair of Relevant Matters – Verbal**

The Chair referred to the earlier sessions, which included an informal lunch with the Kidderminster College Board, a presentation from the Principal of Kidderminster College regarding the current position and plans for the future, and a tour of the college.

The Board noted the joined-up approach between the Principal and College Board Members with regard to the plans for the future.

The Board noted their thanks to the Principal, College Board Members, Students and Staff.

**Action: NT to draft letter of thanks from PL.**

## 1.2. Governor Training / External Activity

The Board were asked if they had any relevant activity to report.

It was **noted** that DW and CA had recently completed their induction training with NT.

**The Board noted the updates.**

## 2. Thematic Discussion and Feedback Session

### Apprenticeships Quality Improvement Plan

SW provided a presentation and highlighted the following:

- Headline figures, including data differentiation amongst age and gender, overall national learner starts in Q1 across the previous 3 years, and apprenticeships starts by market share / industry.

*CMc joined the meeting.*

- The current number of Out of Funding (OoF) apprentices, noting that this had decreased from 430 to 268. SW noted that this would never be 0 as apprentices become OoF when they complete their training and await their End Point Assessment (EPA).
- The current number of apprentices who have a Break in Learning (Bil), noting that this had reduced from 37 to 10.
- The retention rate at 74%, noting that this was high compared to the 20/21 National Rate of 59%.
- The current achievement rate of 56% (2% increase on reported figure), noting that this was slightly down on the 20/21 National Rate of 58%, however a 4% increase on NCG's rate for the previous year. SW reiterated that this figure was the current banked achievement rate, and therefore this would increase before the year end.
- The NCG action plan, focussing on:
  - The right apprentice.
  - The right employer.
  - The right standard.
  - The right delivery model.

The Vice-Chair of Audit and Risk Committee noted that the Committee had recently received an excellent Internal Audit report following the Apprenticeships Task Force review, and **suggested** that this be circulated to the Corporation Board. The Board **queried** the specific recommendations included within the report, and SW noted that these recommendations would underpin the strategy and that an action plan would be developed with SMART targets.

**Action: NT to circulate Apprenticeships review report.**

**Action: NT to add Apprenticeships action plan to July 2022 Corporation Board Meeting.**

### **The Board queried the following:**

- Probationary process with employers – SW noted that employers were given 6-7 weeks to review the initial induction and onboard process. SW also noted that the initial progress reviews needed to focus on the employer as well as the apprentice, to ensure the aspects within the commitment statement are being provided and that there is an employer mentor in place.
- Areas outside of quality, such as, Business Development and Marketing – SW noted that the action plan would cover these elements.
- Engagement with stakeholders regarding their approach to apprenticeships – SW noted that staff are connected through clusters and work closely with employers.

#### **Action: SW to follow up with RH.**

- Targeting disadvantaged groups – SW noted that the apprenticeships demographics should replicate the study programme demographics within the localities, however this was not the case currently. SW noted that not many LDD learners moved onto apprenticeships, and this was being explored further to create an innovative way to overcome this.

**The Board noted the update specifically noting the impact of the strategy, and endorsed the direction of travel.**

## **3. Strategic Items**

### **3.1. CEG Report**

LB presented the report and highlighted the following:

- A video was shared with the Board where LB was able to meet with 2 Rail Engineering students to learn about their experience of EDI issues in the railway and engineering industry.

The Board **welcomed and endorsed** the video.

- NCG were expecting to have co-branded provision at the Rail Academy alongside Gateshead College going forward, with the potential to deliver some of their AEB provision to unemployed adults in Gateshead.
- The annual strategic conversation with the ESFA had taken place, with an interest in place-based strategies and preparations for LSIPs.
- NCG had been unsuccessful in its application to the FECTF bid at the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, however as there was match funding required for the project, this now meant that the money could be reprioritised. Revised plans were to spend £1.5m on IT infrastructure and software over the next two years to improve the student and staff experience.

*Section of this item covered under a confidential minute.*

**The Board queried the following:**

- Impact of MAS on Kidderminster learner numbers – LB noted that Kidderminster College would have achieved their budget but for the impact of closing the MAS provision. LSp noted that a small growth in learner numbers (excluding the MAS provision) was expected in the next year, however noted the difficulties of trying to run larger student groups in small spaces.

**The Board noted the report.**

**3.1.1. Construction Curriculum Update**

BOR presented the Construction Curriculum update, providing detail on:

- Local leadership and delivery at Kidderminster College.
- Collaborative work and achievements across NCG.
- Development of external relationships.
- Vision and challenges.

Furthermore, BOR specifically highlighted the following:

- Part of BOR's role is the operational responsibility of Construction at Kidderminster College, due to this being an area for improvement. BOR noted the step change improvements taking place, and confirmed that quality improvement was visible, with Construction now being consistently in the top quartile for all KPIs at Kidderminster College.
- Prioritising recruitment had been a major focus along with a reduction in the use of agency staffing.
- As part of Brilliant at the Basics (BATB), the provision was reviewed to ensure activities were adding value, building confidence and leading to progress of learners.
- The Construction and Automotive Skills Centre (CASC) was an important element to allow the College to expand further, and to ensure a positive student experience.
- BOR was leading on the development of the NCG Construction Pathway, aligned to the NCG Guarantee in collaboration with cross-Group construction leads.
- Work to develop external relationships continued, with the potential of Kidderminster College becoming a 'Construction Skills Certification Scheme' training / examination centre.
- There continued to be a focus on innovation, with new sectors emerging which brought exciting opportunities.

**The Board queried the following:**

- Potential opportunities with the Chartered Institute of Building – PL and RH suggested they may be able to provide relevant contacts.

**Action: BOR to contact PL and RH.**

- Construction industry facing skills crisis – Construction Industry Training Board hoping to help colleges improve college from full time courses to Apps.

**The Board thanked BOR for attending and noted the report.**

*BOR left the meeting.*

### **3.1.2. Colleague Engagement Survey**

CP presented the report and highlighted the following:

- NCG had contracted an organisation called Hive for 3 years to run the staff engagement surveys. This would allow more consistency in relation to the year-on-year data.
- The report set out the headline results and CP informed the Board that the full report would be brought to the June meeting alongside the engagement strategy.

**Action: NT to add to agenda.**

- There was an improved participation response from the previous year (+5%) at 65%. CP noted that the aim of the next round would be to achieve a 70% participation rate, and to do this there was a focus on demonstrating that the feedback had turned into improvement actions.
- Key areas of focus were: IT, workload, mental health & wellbeing, pay & reward, communications and EDIB.

The Staff Governor noted that she had been in some of the feedback sessions and work was underway to ensure greater access and reach for hourly paid staff members.

**The Board noted the report.**

### **3.2. DfE Accountability Agreements Pilot**

CP presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The pilot, being run by the FE Commissioner's team, aimed to test a new approach to how funding agreements are constructed for grant-funded providers. Specifically how they will incorporate a specific plan to demonstrate that they are working to meet National, Regional and Local skills needs (the Accountability Plan).
- The accountability agreement would replace the funding agreement, and this should lead to the simplification of funding requirements.
- NCG were brought into the pilot late, and were alongside 7 other providers (including colleges, local authorities and universities). CP noted that the working group had already highlighted a number of inconsistencies, for example, colleges needed to include all HE provision however universities weren't required to do so.

- The accountability plans were being created for each of the colleges within NCG and they were due to be taken to the May College Boards. CP was collating feedback from each Board. CP noted that not all of the plans had been completed ahead of this meeting, and only the NCG plan and Newcastle College plan had been included at this time for information.

CP noted that the annual cycle would be for the DfE to publish the template in January, College Boards to sign off their plans in March, and then for the Corporation Board to sign off in May ahead of submission to the DfE. The plans would then be published on the College and NCG websites. CP noted that the plans did not need publishing whilst in the pilot stage.

**The Board discussed the plan, questioned the following and agreed that PL, CMac and SA would meet with CP to provide further feedback:**

- The potential of the disadvantage of geography when looking at the progression of industry sectors.
- Similarity with the outcomes agreement (Scotland) – CP noted that he would look into the outcome agreements.

**Action: CP to look into outcome agreements.**

- The plan was to be forward facing.
- How employer experience would be measured.

**Action: CP to discuss pilot further with PL, CMac and SA.**

**The Board noted the report.**

### **3.3. NCG Operational Plan / Accountability Agreement**

*Covered under item 3.2.*

### **3.4. Item covered under a confidential minute.**

*LSc and MR joined the Board virtually for this item only.*

### **3.5. Finance Report**

LSp presented the Finance Report.

**The Board noted the report and requested continuous updates on the pay: income ratio.**

### **3.6. Quality and Performance Report**

SW presented the report and highlighted the progress of the spend of the tuition fund; noting that approximately 50% of the funding had been spent to date. SW noted that plans were in place for further spend with revision sessions, however confirmed that NCG were unlikely to spend the full allocation. SW noted that this was due to staffing constraints across the academic year.

The Board **noted** the improvement since the previous report and the remaining risk of the underspend.

**The Board noted the report.**

### **3.7. Review of Learner Recruitment 21-22**

SM presented the report and highlighted that lessons learned would support future approaches.

**The Board noted the report.**

## **4. Items for Approval / Noting**

### **4.1. Corporation Matters**

DB presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The Corporation Board and Committee meeting dates for 22/23 had been included for information.
- A Corporation Board Strategy Day had been planned for Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July, and was due to be followed by a Governor Dinner. It was suggested for the Corporation Board meeting planned for 3pm on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July to be brought forward to 9am to allow governors to travel home afterwards.

**The Board noted the report and approved the following appointments:**

- **Appointment of Julie Mennell to the Carlisle College Board, as an Independent Governor, for a term of 4 years.**
- **Appointment of Austen Atkinson to the Southwark College Board, as an Independent Governor, for a term of 4 years.**
- **Appointment of Jo Young to the Southwark College Board, as an Independent Governor, for a term of 4 years.**
- **Appointment of Martha Mackenzie to the Southwark College Board, as an Independent Governor, for a term of 4 years.**
- **Extension of appointment of Caroline MacDonald of the Corporation Board from June 2022 to the end of July 2022.**

**Action: Governance Team to process appointment approvals.**

#### **4.1.1. Appointment of the Principal of Southwark College**

LB confirmed that following on from the resignation of Annette Cast, interviews had taken place during the week commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> May to recruit to the position of Principal of Southwark College. The interview panels included Southwark College Board Governors, Appraisal & Remuneration Committee members (CMa), Executive Team members, students, staff and stakeholders.



Following the interview process, a recommendation was submitted to Appraisal & Remuneration to appoint Jane Button (Vice Principal Learner Experience & Resources at Lewisham College). This was approved by electronic means in advance of being brought to the Corporation Board for final approval.

**The Board approved the appointment of Jane Button as the Principal of Southwark College with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.**

#### **4.2. Approval of Information Governance Policy (New Policy)**

DB presented the document for approval, noting that this was a newly created policy.

**The Board approved the Information Governance policy.**

**Action: Governance Team to process policy approval.**

### **5. Minutes of Previous Meetings / Information Flows / Matters Arising / Register of Actions**

#### **5.1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

The Board **reviewed** the minutes of the previous meeting and **agreed** that they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

**The Board approved the minutes.**

##### **5.1.1. Confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022.**

The Board **reviewed** the confidential minutes of the previous meeting and **agreed** that they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

**The Board approved the confidential minutes.**

#### **5.2. Register of Actions**

DB presented the Register of Actions.

**The Board reviewed the register of actions and noted that relevant actions had been covered within the meeting or closed as per the document.**

The Board **queried** the current position with regard to a specific issue of governor non-compliance with safeguarding training. DB noted that the governor had been offered face to face training as an alternative, however this had not taken place. DB confirmed that he and PL would follow this up and report back to Corporation.

**Action: DB and PL to follow up regarding governor non-compliance.**

DB noted that another governor had not yet completed their DBS clearance, although had been chased frequently. DB had written to the governor directly

to ask for this to be completed as soon as possible due to reverting to face to face meetings. DB confirmed that a risk assessment was in place and that the governor would be supervised when visiting the college, however confirmed that further action would be taken if not satisfactorily resolved.

**The Board noted the update.**

### **5.3. Matters Arising**

N/A

### **5.4. Corporation Committee Minutes**

The following Corporation Committee meeting minutes had been shared for information within the files section of the Corporation Board Teams Channel:

- Estates Committee - 8 February 2022 - Chair Approved
- Audit Committee - 15 February 2022 - Chair Approved
- HE Governance Committee - 18 February 2022 - Chair Approved
- Chairs Forum - 4 April 2022 - Chair Approved

**The Board noted the Committee minutes.**

### **5.5. College Board Minutes**

The following College Board meeting minutes had been shared for information within the files section of the Corporation Board Teams Channel:

- Carlisle College Board - 25 January 2022 (Main and Confidential)
- West Lancashire College Board - 26 January 2022 (Main and Confidential)
- Kidderminster College Board - 27 January 2022 (Main and Confidential)
- Newcastle College Board - 31 January 2022 (Main and Confidential)
- Lewisham College Board - 1 February 2022 (Main and Confidential)
- Southwark College Board - 2 February 2022 (Main and Confidential)
- Newcastle Sixth Form College Board - 3 February 2022 (Main and Confidential)

**The Board noted the College Board minutes.**

## **5.6. Information Flow**

DB presented the Information Flow from Newcastle College Board and the suggested response.

**The Board noted the Information Flow and approved the suggested response.**

## **6. Evaluation of Meeting and Information Sharing**

The Board **discussed** the outline of the day and agreed that it had been of great benefit to visit Kidderminster College and meet with the Kidderminster College Board.

The Chair sought feedback from the Student Governors following their first meeting. Both Student Governors agreed that the meeting had been enjoyable and it was interesting to hear the different discussions.

**The Board noted the updates.**

## **7. Any Other Business**

### Strategic Development Fund (SDF)

DB presented a report listing a summary of the current proposals in development in relation to the SDF.

**The Board endorsed the proposals.**

## **8. Time and Date of Next Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> June at 3pm (Virtual)**

The Chair noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June at 3pm, and would be held virtually.

**The Board noted the update.**

**Approved: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022**