

NCG Corporation

Part 1 - Minutes of Meeting held 4th September 2018

4392 Present

Peter Lauener	Chair of Corporation
Joe Docherty	Chief Executive
John Cuthbert	
Peter Michell	
Liam Reilly	
Chris Roberts	
Mark Squires	
Matthew Terry	
Alex Turner	
Jim Woodlingfield	

4393 In Attendance

David Balme	Director Governance, Assurance & Risk
Andy Dobson	Principal, Kidderminster College
Karen Heaney	Chief Operating Officer
Yolanda Hughes	Interim Clerk to the Corporation
Gerard Garvey	Principal, Newcastle Sixth Form College
Grant Glendenning	Principal, Carlisle College - VC
Tony Lewin	Principal, Newcastle College
Lisa Sproats	Interim CFO
Chris Payne	Executive Director, Partnerships & Assurance
Steven Wallis	Director of Quality & Standards
Ian Webber	Managing Director, Intraining & Rathbone
Mike Wilmot	Chief Finance Officer
Denise Williamson	Principal, West Lancashire College - VC
Louise Ball	Director of Emerging Markets

4394 Opening of Meeting

The Chair opened the meeting at 4.00pm and welcomed members present and formally welcomed Karen Heaney – Chief Operating Officer and Mike Wilmot – Chief Finance Officer who had recently taken up their posts at NCG.

The College Principals were also welcomed to the meeting and it was noted that the Principal's from Carlisle College and West Lancashire College were joining the meeting via video conference.

4395 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received and accepted from Caroline MacDonald.

4396 Conflict of Interest

There were no additional amendments or new declarations of interest made in respect of the agenda.

4397 Presentation – Virtual Delivery Models led by Louise Ball – Director of Emerging Markets

The Managing Director, Intraining and Rathbone formally introduced the Director of Emerging Markets from Intraining & Rathbone.

It was explained that the presentation was to give the Board a flavour of the Virtual Delivery Models that they used and how it worked. The Director gave a summary of her background / expertise and then went on to explain the apprenticeship frameworks as detailed in the handouts.

The Director spoke at length about the following key items:

Apprenticeship Frameworks

- Assessment of Existing Skills.
- Appointment of Lead Model.
- One to one.
- Observation of primary source of assessment.
- Increased Risk.
- Expensive.

Features of the Virtual Classroom

- Block release.
- Access – any learner could access the virtual classroom from anywhere as long as they had internet access.
- Instructor – all virtual lessons were conducted by an instructor and at no point were learners left on their own. Further the virtual classrooms were very interactive and it was explained that young learners were far more confident and keen to participate through the web based chat facilities.
- Quality.
- Value for money.
- Reinforcement.
- Support.

Delivery Model

- The Director went onto to provide the details of how the delivery model worked in practice by showing the Board examples and timelines for apprentices over a 12 month period. This covered 1 to 1 sessions, assessments, networking and ensuring that employers were challenging of their apprentices.

Learner Journey

- Included induction and training schedule.
- Attend technical training courses.
- Apprentices are tests and their knowledge validated.
- Applied to learning to the Work Place.

- Gathers work based evidence.
- Progress reviews.

Benefits

- The Director went through the benefits to the learner and employer which included the following key points:
 - No Travel and / or Accommodation Expenses.
 - Training Schedule which creates a Clear Commitment record.
 - Collaborative Learning.
 - Independent Learning.
 - Quality of Training.
 - Official Vendor Curriculum, Courseware and Labs.
 - Learner Community.
 - Additional Vendor Content.
 - Additional Optional Certifications.

Apprentice (typical schedule)

- 5 x 1 week technical training courses.
- 5 x tutor lead workshops.
- Workplace visits, formal progress reviews.
- Structured Task Based Portfolio.
- Ability to facilitate centrally.
- Assessed by the individual's Tutor.

The benefits to the Group were explained as follows:

- Centralised scheduling.
- Centralised Curriculum.
- Learner work completed in a supported environment.
- Clear and transparent learner progress reporting.
- Early identification and resolution of issues.
- Increased timely achievement rates:
 - 85% in 2015-16.
 - 20% higher than the NA for all apprenticeships.
 - 6% higher than the NA for IT.
- Increased learner and employer satisfaction rates 90%.
- Reduced requirement for travel.
- Flexibility to support employers operational needs.
- Removes geographical challenges.

The Principal (Carlisle College) welcomed the presentation stating that it was an innovative model of delivery and asked if it could be used in other areas of learning other than just apprentices and in addition, asked about the scalability of delivering this model. The Director of Emerging Markets confirmed that the model could be used across the group and that the approach was scalable.

Governors asked for further details on how the virtual delivery model worked in real terms and it was explained how the tutor interacted with the students.

Received

The Board thanked Louise Ball for her presentation which they had found informative and looked forward to receiving further details at a later stage.

4398 NCG Corporation Board Minutes

Approved

The NCG Corporation Board formally approved the following minutes:

- a. Part 1 Minutes of the last NCG Corporation Board meeting held 10th July 2018.

The Chair of Corporation signed the approved minutes.

4399 Schedule of Actions

The Clerk to the Corporation presented the schedule of actions and outcomes as at 4th September 2018.

The progress on the outstanding action points set out in the paper were noted.

The Corporation Board received the update with no additional comments.

4400 Student Member's Report – September 2018

Liam Reilly presented the Student Member's report highlighting some of the key points and in particular the FE Learner Engagement policy and procedure (Appendix A in the Student Members report). The documents had been recently developed and finalised and work was now being undertaken with the HE team to link with their learner voice activities. The new policy and procedure will ensure that there is a concise programme of learner voice activities for staff to follow which captures meaningful feedback from students. The policy and procedure will also ensure that feedback is communicated with students as to the actions undertaken by staff in response to the student opinion.

The Principal (Newcastle College) referred to the addendum within the Student Members report which provided the Board with the update that they had requested on student forums.

The Board received the report and thanked the Student Member for the update on the Learner Engagement Policy.

Received

The Corporation Board received the Student Member's Report for September 2018.

4401 Confidential - NCG Chief Executive Officer Report – September 2018

The CEO presented his report highlighting the following key points within the document:

- ESFA Early Intervention Guidance.
- College Insolvency Regime & Restructuring facility.
- Skills Devolution.
- Negotiation with UCU – The CEO explained that there was a high possibility of strikes going ahead at Lewisham Southwark and that HR were working with the unions.
- Lewisham Southwark – FE Associates had now been commissioned to commence the recruitment of two principals for Lewisham and Southwark College.
- Discovery School – The CEO advised the Board that he had a meeting scheduled with the ESFA on 17th September 2018 to consider their options and stated that they were hoping to negotiate the use of the building for a further three years. This would then leave a small proportion of the grant outstanding to the ESFA. Confirmation was given to the Board that they would kept up-to-date on any further developments.
- Institute of Technology (IoT) – The Board were advised that the NCG's IoT bid had been successfully completed at Stage 1 and as previously reported, was one of only 16 bids that had progressed to stage 2. Of these 16 only two are located in the North East. Initial guidance for stage 2 indicated that lead colleges would be reassessed against the criteria for stage 2 approval and that this would result in NCG (due to its Ofsted Grade 3) no longer being able to be the lead entity. The Board were informed that other options were being explored, however, the guidance did not allow NCG to change the lead to another partner within the bid. The options available therefore are:
 1. Join with another successful stage 1 bid as part of their original bid.
 2. Create a 'clustering' of the two regional bids to provide a stronger bid for stage 2.

NCG were presently in discussions with New College Durham, who were the lead for the other North East bid. NCG has support from their partner colleges and the North East LEP to produce a 'clustered' bid for stage 2. This would still be led by New College Durham but would be a hybrid of the two existing bids. Governors asked whose decision it would be to cluster bid with New College Durham and the Principal (Newcastle College) stated that it would be for New College Durham to decide. It was agreed that a further update would be brought to the Board on the bid criteria in the next week.

- Newcastle Sixth Form College
The Board acknowledged the improved A level and GCSE outcomes for Newcastle Sixth Form College as detailed in the report.

Received

The Board received the CEO's report for September 2018.

4402 Confidential - Quality Improvement Action Plan – update

The Executive Director, Partnerships & Assurance explained that the Directory of Quality & Standards would provide the Board with a detailed update on progress which would include a presentation on the Quality Improvement Plan.

The Executive Director, Partnerships & Assurance provided the Board with a recap on the key NCG Ofsted judgements and the divisional references and outcomes including progress made against the post-inspection Improvement Action Plan, minimum standards actions and associated quality work streams. In addition, the routine report of performance information for the Group at period 12 (August) was provided.

Governors commented on the Improvement Action Plan and stated that it was clearly focused on Teaching and Learning, however there was nothing in relation to actual learners or information on how students could provide feedback on their learning experience; including the quality of teaching. The Director Quality & Standards explained that they had further enhanced the Teaching & Learning Policy which took into account this particular aspect through the Student Voice.

The Director Quality & Standards proceeded to give a detailed presentation and provided additional information on the Improvement Action Plan for NCG and Intraining inspection recommendations. Only Rathbone's apprenticeship provision, commercial training and European Social Fund training was out of scope for FE and Skills provision.

The Board were advised that a considerable amount of work and progress had been made over the summer months to ensure impactful activity can be established from the start of the new academic year. Following Board feedback and broad endorsement in July, the Improvement Action Plan and derivative Group Quality Improvement Plan (GQIP, Figure 1) were circulated to Divisions who had since adopted the various work strands, which included:

- Enhanced self-assessment template adopted across the Group.
- New Quality Improvement Plan template.
- Integration of new policy driving Divisional procedures – subsequent procedures will be approved at Group level.
- New policies devised for teaching, learning and assessment, apprenticeships, attainment, attendance management and data management, with English and maths set to follow once 17/18 performance were established.
- Updated policy for safeguarding, to include statutory and guidance updates from Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sep, 2018); the policy also strengthened Group reporting.

- Enhanced management information systems and the development of information dashboards and a continuous improvement portal for sharing best practice.
- Approaches to Quality Performance Review had been enhanced to provide additional rigour at qualification level. The second stage will include additional assurance and continuous improvement associated with teaching, learning, assessment and student feedback throughout 2018 / 19.
- Following extensive consultation, preparation was at an advanced stage to launch the Group approach to teaching and learning through a dedicated (Great Place to Teach) conference in September 2018.
- The Strategic College Improvement Fund application was submitted in July 2018 – which has now progressed to stage 2. This will be submitted by the 21st September, with a decision expected by 15th October 2018.

The Director Quality & Standards spoke in detail about the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy and CPD which was subject to some minor amendments which would then be put to the Executive Board for approval and then dissemination across all divisions.

Based on the report and presentation the Board were asked if they required any further information.

Governors stated that they would be very interested to clearly understand how the Board were now going to monitor the Improvement Action Plan and how progress would be reported and in addition how the reporting would cascade to the College Boards.

It was explained that a calendar of reporting would be developed that aligned with both the key quality information releases (e.g. destinations, achievements etc.) and also with the important milestones set in the Quality Improvement Action Plans. The calendar would include reporting to:

- NCG Board (which will receive more frequent updates than currently).
- Group Executive Board.
- College/Divisional Boards.
- Divisional SLT Meetings.

As part of this they would anticipate the NCG Board receiving updates on quality improvement to every meeting over the next 24 months. This would alternate between updates on the Improvement Action Plan and reports on the latest quality indicators to ensure that the workload is manageable. All local boards would formally agree the 'lines of enquiry' for the year and in doing so, agree the support and challenge for the year.

Governors also further questioned whether the work placement issue was covered in the Improvement Action Plan and the Director of Quality & Standards explained that it was and referenced the section in the plan.

The Executive were questioned on the CPD programmes and the work that they would be doing particularly in relation to teaching identified to not to be at the required level moving forwards. The CEO added that the conference planned in September would be an opportunity to campaign the 'Great Place to Teach' and that there was a defined CPD budget.

Governors asked how they would be tracking and monitoring student progress and the Director Quality & Standards explained that they were currently working on the policies that would cover the monitoring of learner progress.

Governors requested more detailed feedback on the consistency of teaching and monitoring of progress in future reports and that the policy needed to be enhanced to take into account the points raised.

The Director Quality & Standards went onto provide the Board with a detailed update on the actions that they had already taken and the impact for each the following response areas:

1. Attendance – the Board welcomed the data but asked how quickly it would be available to College's in order to effectively monitor and review attendance. It was also explained that it would be immediately available and fully backed up from 2017/18 to the current position in order to get real time feedback.
2. Apprenticeships
3. Divisional Quality Improvement Plans
4. Changes to ways of working – The CEO emphasised that this was very significant change in the way the central team would work.
5. Group SAR – Quality & Performance review
6. Strategic College Improvement Fund

The Board stated that they would welcome the first progress report in order to establish to whether the information provided was sufficient to allow them to monitor and challenge progress and in addition, how this would be reported to the College Boards.

Quality Performance Report – Quarter 12

The Executive Director, Partnerships & Assurance presented the 16-18 retention rates across the divisions as per Page 12 and 13 of the documentation.

It was noted that the attendance figures by Division were less than pleasing and significant work was required to improve attendance particularly at Newcastle College and Lewisham Southwark College.

The Board welcomed the report and stated that the scatter graphs enabled them to see at a glance how the Colleges were performing.

Minimum Standards – Intraining

The Board received the update and it was acknowledged that this remained a high risk for the Group and that there may be a further breach.

The Chair of Corporation added that he had not appreciated the level of learners which they were still trying to get through and stated that they amounted to 1500 learners but that he was assured by the Managing Director during the Subsidiary Board meeting they were doing everything that they could and would therefore await the outcome in two months' time.

Received

The Board accepted the report and formally thanked the Executive Team and staff on the comprehensive report and presentation and looked forward to receiving further updates.

17.58hrs – The Principals were excused from the meeting.

4403 Confidential - Performance Reporting for College Groups

The Executive Director, Partnerships & Assurance presented the report which was taken as read.

The Chair stated his view was that the ESFA statement of 'minded to agree' was probably not strong enough and the CEO had subsequently followed this up and it would appear that they were moving in favour of the group but this was as yet unconfirmed.

Received

The Board received the report on Performance Reporting for College Groups noting the information provided.

4404 FE Consolidation Report

Received

The Board received the FE Consolidation report and noted the number of active mergers and approaches.

4405 Annual Safeguarding Report and Policy Review

The Director Quality & Standards presented the Annual Safeguarding Report and the annual policy review which was taken as read.

Safeguarding Policy

Governors discussed the proposal to appoint an NCG Safeguarding Lead Governor and it was agreed that this needed to be covered at divisional College Board level. It was therefore agreed that each College Board should appoint a Safeguarding Lead.

Agreed/Action

- 1. NCG Corporation Board formally agreed that each College Board should identify and appoint a Safeguarding Lead Governor as defined in the report.**
- 2. Governors also requested that the link between the Safeguarding Policy and the Disclosure Policy be reviewed and strengthened.**
- 3. The Board formally approved the revised Safeguarding Policy subject to the requested amendments as stated in Item 2 above being incorporated.**

Director of Governance Assurance & Risk / Director Quality & Standards to action.

Annual Safeguarding Report

The Board received the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2017/2018.

Governors asked whether the reported caseloads presented by the divisions were 'high' or 'low' and proposed that some contextual information be provided in order to enable the Board to assess it against comparative data. The Director Quality & Standards explained that he had tested the processes and challenged the number of cases reported to ensure that these were correct particularly in respect of Kidderminster.

Received

The Board formally accepted the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2017/18.

4406 Corporation Matters

The Board received the report on Corporation matters and formally approved the appointment of College Board members as detailed below:

Newcastle College Board

1 x Staff Member – Mr David Lowes appointed with effect from 4th September, 2018 for a 3-year term of office.

1 x Student Member – Mr Liam Reilly appointed with effect from the 4th September, 2018 for a one-year term of office.

Lewisham Southwark College

Resignation

The Board noted the resignation of Mr Johnson Situ as of July 2018.

Governor Away Day – 16th October 2018

The Chair of Corporation advised the Board that the Governor Away day would take place on Tuesday 16th October 2018 as scheduled with further details to follow in due course.

NCG Conference

The Chair of Corporation informed the Board that he wanted to proceed with an NCG Conference later in the autumn term which would include NCG Corporation Board members, local College Board members and the Executive and intimated that the conference would probably take place over a two day period. The Board would be contacted shortly with the proposed date and programme for the event.

Search Committee Membership & Terms of Reference

The Chair advised the Board that in order to proceed with the recruitment of additional NCG Board members at the earliest opportunity that they needed to review the current Search Committee membership and Terms of Reference.

The proposed updated Search Committee Terms of Reference were tabled at the meeting for consideration.

The current membership of the Search Committee consisted of Peter Lauener, Chris Roberts and Joe Docherty and it was proposed that the Chair of Corporation approach Caroline MacDonald to ask her to consider becoming a member of the Committee.

Formally approved The Board formally approved

- a. The proposal of appointing Caroline MacDonald to the Search Committee subject to her agreement and;**
- b. Formally approved the revised Search Committee Terms of Reference.**

4407 Confidential - Finance Report

The Chief Finance Officer presented the Finance report taking the document as read.

The Chief Finance Officer provided an overview on the current financial position, explaining that the latest forecast position for 2017/18 was consolidated in May and reflected a significant deterioration from the original budget surplus of £0.1m. The updated projection for the year was an outturn deficit of £9.5m, this was driven by large reductions in income, partially offset by cost reductions. The key issues were summarised as follows:

The issues impacting the group performance were primarily:

- Apprenticeship recruitment.
- Lack of new business wins particularly in the training providers had impacted performance, as the opportunity to bid for any significant contracts had been much more limited than planned in the budget. Governors discussed the issue around bids that had not materialised for Rathbone & Intraining and it was explained that this was due to NCG being more selective and a shift in the market.
- Delivery on the Welsh contract has been impacted by a number of events within the Wales division.
- In order to deliver the income planned in the forecast there had been a requirement to change the mix of delivery, as a result subcontractor costs are £7m higher than the budget which was reducing the cost savings made to support the lower income delivery.

Received

The Board received the Finance report.

4408 Subsidiary Board Minutes

The Board received the Subsidiary Board Minutes as follows:

- Intraining Group Limited Minutes of meeting held 10th July 2018
- Rathbone Training Limited Minutes of meeting held 10th July 2018

4409 College Board Minutes

The Board received the following College Board minutes:

- Lewisham Southwark College Board Minutes 26th June 2018
- Newcastle Sixth Form College Board Minutes 5th July 2018
- Carlisle College Board Minutes 19th June 2018
- Newcastle College Board Minutes 5th July 2018

4410 Any other Business – Confidential report by CEO

4411 Confidentiality of Business – Not for public record

4401 Confidential - NCG Chief Executive Officer – Report September 2018

4402 Confidential - Quality Improvement Action Plan – update

4407 Finance Report

18.41hrs – Executive members excused from the meeting.

4412 Confidential Items – Not for public record – Recorded as Part 2 Confidential Minutes

The Confidential Part 2 Minutes were formally approved and signed by the Chair of Corporation.

4413 Date of Next Meeting

9th October 2018 at 4.00pm

Minutes agreed as being a true and accurate record and signed off by the Chair of Corporation