

**Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Corporation held on
Tuesday, 06 July 2021 at 6:00pm in the Conference Room, Washington Campus**

Present: John Barnett
Derek Cogle
Tom Crompton
Pamela Dawson (Teams)
Louise Farthing
Iesha Heads, SU President
Jeff Hope (Teams)
Sue Houston
Rob Lawson (Chair)
Lyndsey O'Leary
Susan Pollard (Teams)
Alison Shaw (Teams)
Ellen Thinnesen, Chief Executive (Teams)

In Attendance: David Howells, Chief Operating Officer
Nigel Harrett, Principal Northumberland College
Toni Rhodes, Principal Sunderland College
Judith Quinn, Vice Principal Curriculum and Achievement
Iain Nixon, Vice Principal Partnerships and Commercial
Lee Lister, Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum
Jo Cooper, Associate Principal Quality, Teaching and Learning
Ruth Magnus, Director of Student Services
Leah Finnigan, SU President-elect (Observer)
Christine Stretesky, Head of Corporate Governance and Policy

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting in particular Leah Finnigan the newly elected Students' Union President and Toni Rhodes, Sunderland College Principal who started in post yesterday.

Bd/20-21/116 Apologies and consent for absence and declarations of interest

Apologies were received and accepted from Paul McEldon, Jill Colbert, Jacqueline Steed, and Louise Doyle.

There were no declarations of interest.

Bd/20-21/117 Minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2021 and Matters Arising

The Chair noted that each set of minutes will be considered in turn.

With regard to the regular minutes, the minutes were accepted as an accurate reflection of the 27 April 2021 meeting. There were no matters arising.

The remaining portion of this item was determined to be confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/20-21/118 Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 10 June 2021 and Matters Arising

The Chair stated that each set of minutes will be considered in turn.

With regard to the regular minutes, the minutes were accepted as an accurate reflection of the 10 June 2021 Special meeting. There were no matters arising.

The remaining portion of this item was determined to be confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/20-21/119 CEO Report

The Chief Executive (CE) delivered the report announcing two successes of Northumberland College (NC) students: a Level 3 student winning the Lord Glenmara Award and an HE student being awarded for best undergraduate dissertation at the Alltech-Hartbury Conference noting that the conference included students from both FE and HE providers.

Continuing with news from NC, the CE described the NC Strategy roadmap including where it sits within the EPNE strategy, the research carried out with stakeholders and head teachers. All of this will culminate in detailed information for governors to help create the strategic roadmap for NC. She noted the Head of Corporate Governance and Policy will liaise with the Northumberland Local Governing Board on how to bring this information to that committee. (ACTION: HoCG&P)

The capital development at Ashington Campus was discussed noting that while the Head of Terms are well developed, they continue to be in draft form and with Northumberland County Council (NCC). Once received from NCC, the Head of Terms will be reviewed by the Group's solicitors and then to governors for review, approval and sign off. The Department for Education (DfE) has asked that this be done swiftly. The CE updated that she has been liaising with NELEP on the stem centre potential clawback, working toward a resolution that any clawback is waved.

The CE announced that Mark Hughes, Head of Hartlepool Sixth Form (HSF) has taken a role at another institution, thanking Mark for his contributions to the college. She continued announcing Jane Reed has been appointed as the new Campus Principal for HSF and will report into the Sunderland College Principal.

The CE described a meeting she and Governor Houston attended with the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) around the future of HSF, thanking Governor Houston for her support. Governor Houston stated she was glad to have been able to arrange the meeting noting it was a productive meeting showcasing the sixth form.

Turning to Sunderland College (SC) and the Housing Innovation and Construction Skills Academy (HICSA), the CE stated that Sunderland Council has put in their bid with herself and the Vice Principal Partnerships & Commercial (VP P&C) canvassing government agencies. She noted that the Group will be hosting a meeting and will be pitching the agenda for HICSA.

Moving to key appointments, the CE announced the appointment of Dan Fitzpatrick as the new Strategic Lead Digital Skills and Innovation and Gilly Gosling -Bell as the new Director of Marketing and Engagement. She continued that recruitment for a new Digital Lead for Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering was underway. This position, it was noted, will set up new provision in HSF and deepen and strengthen industry connectivity.

The VP P&C Iain Nixon spoke to the news about Nissan and the creation of a new battery plant in Sunderland reminding governors that the Group are a trading partner with Envision who will be recruiting 25 engineering apprenticeships. He continued that these are 3-5 year long apprenticeships with a lifetime value for the Group from this year's intake of £375K.

The Chair expressed that this was fantastic news to read and to see how the Group will benefit.

AGREED: to note the contents of the report

Bd/20-21/120 EPNE Forecast Achievement (E&T and Apps)

This item was determined to be confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/20-21/121 Subcontractor Report and Performance

This item was determined to be confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/20-21/122 HE Quality Improvement Plan Progress Update (and Self-Evaluation Document)

This item was determined to be confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/20-21/123 Residential Accommodation Quality Improvement Plan

This item was determined to be confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/20-21/124 Financial Report

This item was determined to be confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/20-21/125 Curriculum Offer for 2021/22 (with contributions)

This item was determined to be confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/20-21/126 Recommendations from Committees

The Head of Corporate Governance presented the recommendations for consideration taking the paper as read.

Governors questioned the Behaviour for Success Policy asking if there needs to be included a provision around data handling and retention in this policy particularly where investigations take place capturing potentially sensitive information or is this sufficiently covered by other policies. The Director of Student Services replied that any information collected during an investigation would be covered by our Data Protection Policy and its procedures.

The SU President had two comments one complimenting the format of the Programme of Business and the other expressing excitement that the Sustainable Travel & Subsistence Policy includes thought around sustainability.

The Board AGREED to approve the following committee recommendations:

Governance Committee

- Appointment of Chair of Finance, Resources and Projects Committee
- Appointment of Member of Finance, Resources and Projects Committee
- Calendar of Meetings 2021-22
- Programme of Business 2021-22

Finance Resources and Projects Committee

- Gender Pay Gap Report
- Financial Regulations
- Sustainable Travel & Subsistence Policy

Audit Committee

- Financial Regulations
- Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy
- Risk Register

Local Boards

- Behaviour for Success Policy

Bd/20-21/127 Students' Union Constitution and Budget

The SU President described the changes to the constitution including the addition of VP for Further Education and VP for Higher Education and roles for Health and Wellbeing and Marketing, Societies and Events. She stated that the changes were made in consultation with students. Other significant changes mentioned included the ability for the president to run for a second term.

She continued discussing the budget spend this year, noting that the budget for trips and events was not spent due to COVID but that should change in the coming year. She requested £5000 for next year's budget.

Governors asked whether the welcome pack for residential accommodation students was to welcome them to the college or the Students' Union. The SU President stated it was a welcome to the Union and includes SU branded hoodies as well as other items such as sanitary products.

Governors asked if the SU hoodies will be available for purchase. The SU President indicated that if they are well received by the residential students then they will be.

AGREED to:

- Approve the amended SU Constitution
- Approve the proposed budget for 2021-22

Bd/20-21/128 Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Students Lead Governor Report

Governor Dawson started the updated stating that along with the Chair, she attended a meeting with Ofsted inspectors with regard to the Sunderland local authority inspection. This was her first Ofsted inspection and it was reported to be very different to what she has experienced before.

She reminded the Board of its responsibilities under section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014. With regard to the Group, the following specific statutory duties apply

- to co-operate with the local authority on arrangements for children and young people with SEN, and for them to co-operate in return;
- to admit a young person, if the institution is named in an EHC plan;
- to have regard to the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice;
- to use 'best endeavours' for all young people (up to the age of 25) with SEND, regardless of whether or not they have an EHC plan;

and the guidance states that governing bodies should ensure that

- all staff interact appropriately and inclusively with students who have SEN or a disability;
- the college has appropriate expertise within its workforce;
- curriculum staff are able to develop their skills, are aware of effective practice and keep their knowledge up to date;
- the college has access to specialist skills and expertise to support the learning of students with SEN;
- there is a named person in the college with oversight of SEN provision who contributes to the strategic and operational management of the college;
- staff are made aware of who to go to if they need help in identifying a student's SEN, are concerned about their progress or need further advice.

She stated that she has felt at all times that she has had access to policies and procedures noting the SEND framework was particularly helpful. She further stated that as a Board all have had access to all the data and evidence and opining that the Board does discharge its duties.

Governor Dawson continued providing special thanks to the Vice Principal Registry and Student Services and her team who have done an amazing job during the pandemic reminding governors that 100% students with high needs were contacted weekly and offered a space at campus.

The Chair thanked the VP Registry and Students Services and CE for their support during the inspection.

Governor Cogle noted his involvement for his school and that it was a challenging inspection team but clear that the provision of the college was good.

AGREED: to note the content of the update

Bd/20-21/129 Farewell and Thank You: Iesha Heads and Tom Crompton

Noting he was not looking forward to this item, the Chair announced the retirements of Governor Tom Crompton and Iesha Heads.

Providing his thanks for his years of service, the Chair noted that Tom joined the Board of Corporation in October 2013 coming to the college with a significant background in education. Tom has overseen and played instrumental roles with the mergers with Hartlepool Sixth Form and Northumberland College. Tom has always sorted himself to where every we need to. Over the years Tom has served as Vice-Chair of the Corporation from 2015 -2019, has served on the Curriculum & Quality Committee from 2013-2017, Resources & Capital Projects Committee from 2017- 2019, Governance Committee from 2016-2020 and finally Chair of Northumberland Local Governing Board from 2019-2021. He has been hugely helpful to the Board during merger reminding us that we

needed to keep thinking of whether it was a benefit to the students. The Chair concluded that he will be massively missed by the Board and himself.

Governor Crompton thanked the Board for the gift. He mentioned the journey the Group has been on since he joined thanking the Chair, Governors past and present, the CE for her vision and leadership, the Leadership Team, and the Head of Corporate Governance and Policy. In particular, he thanked the NC governors noting the journey NC has made as part of EPNE.

The Chair noted that Iesha has served as SU President during this unprecedented year making sure she connected with students both virtually and in person. Among her biggest accomplishments was her support to students during COVID, funding and distribution of care packs to vulnerable students during lockdown, supported the National FE Festive Foodbank Friday campaign where the college group collected over 1500 items for food banks across the region, remote activities and catch up sessions during lockdown, supported with training of student COVID champions as part of a current project, supported with COVID Student Charter and developing and hosting the first Students' Union Environmental Green Conference which included external speakers.

The SU President thanked the Chair and Governors stating that being a member of the Board was something she really enjoyed about her role.

Bd/20-21/130 Any Other Business

There was one item of AOB: the COO asked members to consider retrospectively the approval of the insurance contract with Zurich.

AGREED:

- To approve the contract retrospectively

Bd/20-21/131 Date, time and venue of next meeting

19 October 2021 at 6:00 pm, Venue TBC

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at: 20:03.