

**CHELMSFORD COLLEGE
BOARD OF THE CORPORATION
26 March 2021**

Minutes

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of the Corporation held at the Committee Room, Moulsham Street Campus, Chelmsford on Friday 26 March 2021 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT: Elaine Oddie (Chair)
Andy Sparks (Principal)
Jenny Beaumont
Trevor Bolton
Natalie Devaney (till 3.10 pm)
Susan Hughes
Amanda Montague
Sarah Noble (Vice Chair)
Christian Norman
Jaya Patten
Barbara Vohmann
Julie Williams
Doug Zeeman

IN ATTENDANCE: Caroline Williams (Deputy Principal)
Debs Hurst (Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Resources)
Steve Hope (Head of Health & Safety) (item **1474** only)
Rob Millea (Clerk to the Corporation)
Joanne Harrington (Assistant Clerk)

The Principal, the Chair, the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk attended the Meeting in person. All other attendees accessed the Meeting through MS Teams, in the light of the restrictions of Lockdown3.

1468. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Nedas Laurinavicius.

1469. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND NOTIFY ANY CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Clerk to the Corporation renewed his declaration that he acts as Company Secretary of Essex Shared Services Limited.

Barbara Vohmann renewed her declaration as an employee of Anglia Ruskin University.

The Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Resources renewed her declaration as a Member Representative on the Essex LGPS Advisory Board.

The Chair and the Principal renewed their declarations as Directors of Essex Shared Services Limited.

Christian Norman declared an interest as an employee of Essex County Council – Adult Learning.

The following **confidential** item was notified: Agenda Item 15 – College Strategic Future – Minute **1485**.

1470. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

1471. MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2021

The Minutes of the Special Board Meeting held on 21 January 2021 were **APPROVED** and were **SIGNED** by the Chair, with one minor amendment.

1472. MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk informed the Board of the following:

1. The ESFA Financial Record had been submitted to the ESFA by the deadline of 31 January 2021
2. The Annual Report and Accounts for 2019/20 had been signed by the Principal and the Chair – the audit report was unqualified
3. Minutes of the Dovedale Directors' Meeting held on 21 January 2021 have been prepared and will be signed by the Chair (as a Director of the Company) shortly

1473. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal presented a written Report for the information of governors.

Overview

The phased return to face-to-face education is progressing well and staff have mostly returned to site to support increase in students attending for lessons.

4762 Lateral flow student tests have been carried out with 85% of learners participating – only 10 positive results for COVID. Testing is now being done at home by students.

Work is proceeding on the new Construction Centre at Princes Road and the separate Nursery access is finished.

Focus is on summer assessment methods with some concerns remaining, especially regarding assessment for Awarding Organisations.

The March Budget did not add much new for Colleges or skills beyond the announcements in the spending review last November.

As of today, there is 85% attendance of students on site (good). However, the attendance for online learning has declined (77%) which might well reflect 'home stress'.

It is likely that nearly 70% of staff have been offered at least one COVID vaccination.

College Strategic Future

This is covered in the confidential Minutes.

Enrolment

- Retention is very high at 95.5% (1.1 pp higher than last year)
- Enrolment proceeding well for 2021/22 – 128 further applications so far compared to last year at the same point
- Curriculum planning for 2021/22 is underway
- Showcase events online are being held with good response notwithstanding students could not just drop into College as would normally have been the case – further event planned for 26-28 April to which governors will be invited
- Governance Education Training Framework has been accessed by some governors

Finance

Finance matters highlighted by the Principal are covered in Minutes **1475.1** and **1475.4** – Management Accounts and Learner Numbers and Financial Implications.

Staffing

This is covered in Minute **1476**.

Curriculum Issues and Quality Improvement

- An Ofsted Inspection of the Nursery is expected after Easter
- Details of assessment mechanisms for this summer for the award of VTQs and other general qualifications have been announced by the DfE and the Board were given this information
- GCSEs will be assessed by teachers based on content delivered to teachers by students
- Given the complexity of awarding grades and qualifications this year, staff are attending webinars to learn more about how to complete assessments and manage examinations (where they take place)
- Instructions are still awaited from Awarding Organisations – expected next month
- College Improvement Plan progress against the six College priorities was reviewed by Quality & Learners Committee on 23 February 2021 – see also minute **1478**

The Board was assured that all assessment outcomes will be subject to rigorous internal and external quality assurance processes.

Virtual Showcase events will be held on 26-28 April and links will be sent out to governors.

The Principal reminded governors that subscription for ETF training has been paid by the College and is available for governors to access – the subscription expires on 31 March 2022.

The Principal was **THANKED** for his Report.

1474. HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT AND PRESENTATION

The Board **RECEIVED** a Presentation, together with a written half-yearly Report, from Steve Hope (Head of Health & Safety) on Health & Safety matters.

Key points noted by Steve Hope:

- Refresher Training for staff (raised during recent Internal Audit) over a three-year cycle
- Risk Assessment Action (raised during recent Internal Audit with a focus on COVID19 assessments)
- Recent Internal Audit by Scrutton Bland resulted in an assurance opinion of reasonable
- Health & Safety inspections (internal only) – fire assessments at both campuses were satisfactory and legally compliant but no external visits by the fire authorities

- Insurance inspection external report findings included in the audit programme to ensure legislative compliance
- Accident and Incident Data – much lower this year due to lockdowns 2 and 3, when very few students and staff were on campus
- COVID 19 Risk Management – including lateral flow testing process being established for staff and students – over 4000 tests done in College: now has moved to home testing
- Safety of working environment for work experience including checks of external workplaces and appropriate staff training

The level of incidents so far this year is 69 compared to 79 last year. In addition, there were 129 incidents at the Nursery, but all of a minor nature as is typical in a Nursery environment. All these figures are below benchmark.

There have been **no** RIDDOR Reports this year.

There were two points made by Scrutton Bland in their assurance Report which are noted above and are being actioned.

Governor questions

Jenny Beaumont asked how Health & Safety information is communicated to new staff. Steve said key information is passed online to new inductees and then supplemented with job specific training in a particular area (e.g engineering, carpentry, etc). There is a three-year refresher cycle.

Trevor Bolton said that a comparison with previous years would be helpful and Steve said that he can provide this data over the last three years noting that this year is exceptional and will do in the next Report.

Steve Hope believed that the management of risks relating to COVID19 has been excellent by the College and has kept staff and students safe.

The Principal reported that the Health & Safety Committee meets three times per year (chaired by the Deputy Principal). The College has tried to encourage students to report accidents to establish fuller trends.

Susan Hughes asked about recording of training. Steve Hope acknowledged this issue and action has been taken to improve the recording of training, especially to collate it centrally. The Deputy Principal explained how this has been tackled with staff to meet the goal of ensuring all staff are fully trained and it is regularly refreshed.

Steve Hope was **THANKED** for his presentation and Report.

Governors were especially pleased with the very smooth and effective roll out of the lateral flow testing programme and the College was congratulated on this achievement.

1475. FINANCE REPORT

1475.1 Management Accounts for the seven months ended 28 February 2021

The Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services presented the Management Accounts for the seven-month period ended 28 February 2021 for discussion and comment by the Board. These accounts have been reviewed by the two designated Finance Governors (Elaine Oddie and Amanda Montague).

For the year to date, the College is showing an operating surplus of £138K against an original budgeted surplus for the period of £55K, a favourable variance of £83K.

Total income amounted to £9.096 million and total expenditure amounted to £8.958 million. Income is £167K below budget due to lower achievement in AEB, local authority funding and core 16-18 funding offset partly by higher Apprenticeship income to date this year. Meanwhile, expenditure is £249K better than budgeted.

The Accounts were accompanied by a Detailed Commentary explaining the variances from budget. These management accounts do not take into account any adjustments which will result from including FRS102 pension adjustments.

The Contribution Statement by Cost Centre was provided to members – this is on a direct cost basis only with no allocation of overheads.

The Financial Health table with detailed calculations of the scoring on the ESFA methodology was provided to members.

Governors **NOTED** the result to date and the risks to achieving the forecasted small surplus position for the year. This is discussed further in minute **1475.2** below.

At 28 February 2021, group net assets stood at £11.9 million, including cash of £1.1 million and revalued fixed assets of £29.4 million.

The College's Financial Health for 2020/21 to date, based on the SFA's new methodology, is Requires Improvement (170 points) and is expected to remain as Requires Improvement at 31 July 2021, as cash will be

further depleted. Debs Hurst estimated that the ESFA scoring should be around 160 points at year end.

Cash flow has been positive for the year and an overdraft credit facility will not be necessary. This is in line with previous forecast.

The current ratio stands at 0.64. Pay expenditure as a percentage of income is 70% against target of less than 65%. Borrowing as a percentage of income is 24.4%, well within ESFA tolerances.

All bank covenants are being met.

The Board **APPROVED** the Management Accounts for the seven-month period to 28 February 2021.

1475.2 Financial Forecast to 31 July 2021

Debs Hurst **PRESENTED** the Board with a draft forecast of the outturn for the College against Budget for 2020/21.

At present, it is showing a forecast surplus for the year of £22K against the original budget for the year of a surplus of break even, despite the additional costs for COVID19. The forecast excludes any LGPS pension adjustments.

The key risks which the College faces in achieving the reforecast are the Adult Education Budget, lower local authority income and higher salary costs. There will be variances favourably in transitional funding, T Levels funding and the 16-19 Tuition Fund. The forecast provided full details of variances.

The VPFCS also informed the Board of returns required shortly by the ESFA – cash flow statement by the end of April and a new College Finance Forecast Return by the end of July 2021 (which replaces the former Finance Plan and in a slightly reduced form). The Forecast Return will include 2021/22 budget, monthly cashflow forecast and other information.

The Board noted the financial performance indicators suggested by the FE Commissioner and our status relative to those indicators. The pressure remains on College cash flow given the need to invest in new and refurbished facilities.

The VPFCS said that, so far, there has been no money from Government to support the lateral flow testing programme, but some is expected. The College will now be informed in April.

The VPFCS reported that this week the DfE/EFSA have announced that Colleges are expected to deliver at least 90% of their AEB contract value or income clawback will apply. For the College, the forecast expectation is that 76% of the contract value will be achieved, but to reach 90% will be a considerable challenge.

The worst case scenario is that £140K of the AEB might be clawed back if the College does not achieve 90%. In answer to a question from Amanda Montague, the VPFCS said that this potential clawback is not included in the forecast, but it is in the cash flow projections.

If a cash repayment is required due to under achievement, the VPFCS said it may cause an impact on bank covenants with audit implications.

The Principal said that FEDEC have written to complain to the ESFA (the AoC is also critical of the decision and is lobbying the DfE). He said that it is not possible to put staff on furlough to offset the potential income clawback on delivery shortfall of AEB, so the effect of the decision is effectively increased because Colleges have been unable to make efficiencies to buffer against the clawback.

The sector feels that the tolerance has been set too high for Colleges given their difficulties of recruiting and disruption to delivery caused by COVID-19. It could well be crippling to some Colleges.

Trevor Bolton asked about the level of Nursery debts. The VPFCS said that there are credit balances on the ledger which need to be offset, some deposits are being held in respect of children who have not come to the Nursery and there are some old debts where parents are having difficulty in the current climate in paying them off. These are being chased.

The Board **NOTED** the indicative Financial Forecast for the year ended 31 July 2021.

1475.3 Property Update

The Report provided an update on progress as follows:

- New Construction Centre – Princes Road
- Boiler Replacement – Princes Road
- Capital Transformation Bid
- T Level Bid

The first claim against the NCC grant for enabling works can now be made. The award to the main contractor will be made (governors will be informed) on 15 April with work starting in May. The completion date is scheduled for October for construction with occupation in January 2021.

In respect to the Capital Transformation Bid (due 22 March) (total £1.4 million with affordable match funding of 12.5%) and the T Level Bid – CAD/Virtual Reality and refurb Childcare at Moulsham Street (total £900K with match funding of £100K), the Board **NOTED** that Stage 1 bids for these matters were required to be submitted by 22 March with Board Approval. Accordingly, all governors **APPROVED** in principle these two Bids at the Quality & Learners Committee on 23 February 2021 and the Audit Committee on 2 March 2021.

Details of the proposed work covered by the two Bids was provided to the Board.

A further bid for Princes Road (infill atrium to create IAG, LRC and some student breakout rooms) of £1million with possible 20% match funding has been made with the work scheduled for the 2022/23 year. If this bid is unsuccessful, then the work cannot proceed.

The T Level bid is due in by 28 March – the Capital Transformation Bid was lodged on 22 March, as noted above. Decisions will be known by September for T Levels and by mid-May for the CTF.

The Institute of Technology bid is still being considered and will be decided by the end of next week.

The VPFCS reported that the remodelling of the Nursery entrance has been completed.

All these bids link with the College estates strategy and they are very exciting but must be regarded as optimistic.

1475.4 Learner Numbers and Financial Implications for 2021/22

The College projects a lower number of full-time **16-18 students** this year compared to last year (2107 against 2141). Although full time learners have increased by 40, there are less part time learners.

The College allocation for 16-18 students for 2021/22 has been notified and is approximately £250K lower compared to this year, due to lower part time learners. For 2022/23, it is expected that the College allocation should return to the same level as for this current year.

Amanda Montague asked if there would need to be a reduction of staff due to lower numbers. The Principal said this was unlikely as the lower student numbers (about 40) will be scattered across several curriculum areas and so it is difficult to extract any direct costs.

The CEG will carefully review Extended Learning, where some volume and revenue has been lost, plus declining curriculum areas (e.g Hospitality & Catering) in framing next year's Budget. There is a recognition that a pay rise needs to be considered for next year.

Governors were reminded that the Budget Working Party meets on Tuesday 22 June at 2.30pm to discuss the 2021/22 Budget – all governors are invited to attend.

Recruitment of **19+ students** is behind target (AEB) due to Lockdown3 and efforts are underway by Senior Management to ensure this funding line is maximised. However, the current expectation is that the College will not fulfil the allocation and prudently the College estimates a shortfall of £250K for the year. It is acknowledged that this is a risk and is so shown in the Risk Register.

Apprenticeships recruitment is better than predicted and is only just below the 2019/20 figure.

The Report was **NOTED**.

1475.6 LGPS Pension Update

The VPFCS provided an update. The College will continue to pay deficit repair payments of £85K per annum until the next actuarial review. If deficits rise at that point, it is possible the LGPS will again seek security over College assets.

The Board **NOTED** the position and the possible future effect.

1475.7 LIBOR Transition

The Board was **PROVIDED** with a Paper (from Lloyds Bank) explaining options available to the College regarding transition of its Lloyds Loan (currently £2.1 million) from LIBOR which ceases at the end of 2021. This proposal had been reviewed by Jaya Patten and is a practical solution to change from LIBOR to Base Rate.

There will be no change to the College's total repayments to Lloyds of £103K per quarter. The Barclays loan is already linked to Base Rate.

The Board discussed the proposal in detail and having considered the documentation provided in this regard, the Board **APPROVED** the Transition Proposal outlined in the documentation which involves replacing LIBOR with the Bank of England Bank Rate (Base Rate) as the reference rate for the loan facility no later than 31 December 2021.

The Board further **AUTHORISED** the Principal (Andrew Sparks) and the Vice Principal Finance & Corporate Services (Debs Hurst) to sign the necessary documentation including the Transition Agreement on behalf of the College to execute the change.

1476. HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

The Board **RECEIVED** a Report from the Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services on Human Resources matters.

The key points were:

- **Turnover** to date for this academic year annualised is 13.64% against 15.82% to this date last year and a target for the year of 18%. The AoC benchmark remains 18.2% (2018/19)
- Staff recruitment activity continues to be high and staff have been recruited to 21 posts since the last Report
- The virtual recruitment process due to COVID restrictions has worked successfully with good calibre candidates coming forward
- Partnership with Morgan Hunt working well enabling staff to be appointed to 6 hard to recruit positions
- Sickness **absence** in the 12 months to end February 2021 is averaging 6.64 days per person per annum, compared to 5.64 days per person in the same period last year. The target for the year is 5.2 days per person per annum. The current AoC benchmark is 5.4 days in the Eastern Region

Staff turnover is lower than last year and clearly reflects the fact that job security is a key priority for staff in this pandemic period.

Several staff are on flexi-furlough – e.g. Nursery, Refectory.

The College recognises its responsibility to ensure the environment promotes student and staff well-being. The College absence rates have spiked during the lockdowns this year due to the impact on staff mental health.

A number of Mental Health and Wellbeing initiatives are in place and, to illustrate the College's good practice, a table comparing the College's progress against the eleven commitments under the AoC Mental Health Charter was provided to the Board.

In addition, the VPFCS explained the Staff Wellbeing intranet resource which covers information and initiatives including national campaigns (not exclusively COVID related).

Debs Hurst provided an update on **staff employment disputes** – no claims have been made to the Employment Tribunal and no grievances have been raised (either informal or formal).

The Report also covered, in some detail, issues for the College relating to **COVID-19**, including:

- Positive tests and self-isolation
- Effects of Lockdown3
- Re-opening of College earlier this month
- Operation of the COVID online reporting system
- Lateral flow testing – in College and at home
- Stay Alert Policy
- National vaccination programme
- SEND staff as a priority group
- Individual staff risk assessments

The VPFCS also provided details of the Government's various support schemes and their effect on the College – Job Retention Scheme, Job Support Scheme, Kickstart Scheme and Job Retention Bonus.

The VPFCS reported that Internal Audit had recently completed an examination of Recruitment online and the Report gives **strong** assurance with no recommendations. The Audit Committee will examine the Report at their 22 June Meeting.

Governors were very appreciative of the Report and asked that Bev Mahoney be thanked.

Governor questions

The VPFCS commented that staff are very pleased with the contact from Human Resources and support that they are given during this difficult time. Sarah Noble wanted to know how this knowledge is captured and the VPFCS said that many forums with staff have taken place together with group and individual sessions with staff members.

Amanda Montague sought assurance that there are no underlying concerns amongst staff. The Principal said there were none and relationships are good. The College engages with the Union six weekly and they do push back on certain things. Their main concern seems to be that, with the start of the academic year being delayed by two weeks, the UCU do not know how staff will fit in their holidays.

Barbara Vohmann was very struck by the content relating to staff welfare and mental health but concerned as to whether staff can perform to their best in these difficult times. The Principal said that Lockdown3 has been

more difficult and staff are struggling, not helped by changing Government announcements and directives, many of which are imposed at very short notice (e.g. lateral flow testing).

Nevertheless, most staff are very pleased to see students back in person on campus.

Doug Zeeman mentioned that he had attended an online mental health awareness course run by Mental Health England which was excellent.

The Deputy Principal said middle managers are under the most pressure in order to look after their staff and students and they are occasionally struggling. In addition, the mental health of some students is a considerable challenge and Sarah Noble asked if any curriculum areas more affected than others. Engineering has been difficult but there are uncertainties in other areas especially around assessment by Awarding Organisations this summer, which is still not clear.

Achievement potential of students is being regularly reviewed through the Pupil Progress Reviews (per Deputy Principal).

The VPFCS said the College will be awarding Recognition Awards for some staff shortly and the video of these awards will be made available to governors.

Gender Pay Gap Report

The Board **RECEIVED** this Report, noting it is normally required to be published by 30 March 2021 (extended this year to 30 October 2021) and is based on data as at 31 March 2020.

The Report noted the key elements of the Gender Pay Gap. The mean gap for the College is 19% (last year 17.9%) and the median gap is 32% (last year 31.1%).

The percentages have not moved significantly from last year – the gender pay gap for the whole economy is median 15.5% and mean 14.6% with the figures for the College being broadly in line with the rest of the education sector.

The reasons for the change from last year were documented in the Report.

The Report reiterated the fact that the College gender pay gap does not arise from unequal pay between men and women for the same work but is a result of the roles which men and women work within the organisation and the salaries attached to those roles. It is clear nationally

that men are more likely than women to be in the 2 top quartiles whilst women are more likely than men to be in the lower end of the organisation. This is particularly true in the education sector.

The Board noted that not having equality of pay is unlawful whereas a gender pay gap is not.

Amanda Montague commented that this was an excellent Report and observed that the gap is reflective of there being more female staff in lower paid job roles – perhaps, that could be looked at for the future.

The Principal said that will be reviewed and felt that the pandemic may change working patterns. He said that because the Refectory, the Nursery and cleaning services are all in-house and include lower paid staff, who are predominantly female, means that the pay gap is wider than it might otherwise be.

The Board **RECEIVED** the Report and **AUTHORISED** its submission to the Government.

1477. SUB-CONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS 2020-21

The Principal **PRESENTED** this Report and reported that the College continues its agreement with Qube Learning to provide provision for the unemployed in conjunction with JobCentre Plus (initial contract value £100K) for 2020-21. The bulk of the courses are construction or warehousing (Level 1 or 2). Delivery has been hampered by Lockdown3.

Further details are included in the Minutes of the Quality & Learners Committee of 23 February 2021, where the matter was discussed, including the quality of the provision, which have been most satisfactory. Detail of achievement rates last year were provided to the Board and these were good.

The Principal confirmed that it is not intended to use sub-contracting further than the agreed values this year, but this is being kept under review.

The Board **NOTED** this Report.

1478. COLLEGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020-21

The Board **RECEIVED** a copy of CIP Monitoring document, last reviewed by management on 4 March 2021 (Version 4) and by Quality & Learners Committee on 23 February 2021 (Version 3).

The Deputy Principal said that good progress is being made against four of the six College priorities. Priority 3 has been identified as an AMBER risk because of the delay in completing formal observations of remote teaching and learning. Priority 4 had also been identified because of uncertainties associated with the outcome of the DfE and Ofqual consultation on alternative arrangements for the award of VTQs and other general qualifications this year and on how GCSEs should be awarded. These consultations have concluded, and announcements made. The Awarding organisations are still to publish their required processes and procedure, expected in April.

It remains a challenge for all Colleges and therefore a key RISK.

The Deputy Principal stressed how much progress is being made by staff against the Priorities so quickly, even in this challenging time.

She also mentioned that the Stage 2 IoT bid has been deferred to next week but the College is cautiously optimistic.

The Deputy Principal further reported that all learners (1383 learners to date) are completing a vocational qualification (Ascentis) at Level 1 in Awareness of Social Media and Online Safety. This has been done to address concerns about the safety of students spending increasing time online with remote learning and using social media during the changed environment caused by the pandemic.

The current achievement rate is 98%.

The Board was also provided with a **short paper** explaining the position regarding formal lesson observations for both face-to-face teaching and remote learning during this academic year. So far, to 15 March 2021, 40 face to face observations have been carried out (70% achieving 5KE) and 28 observations of remote learning have occurred (89% achieving 5KE).

The Deputy Principal reported that a total of 44 remote learning observations have now been done. The target for observations in total for this year is 120.

Governors can 'observe' online learning via material placed on the Governors' Portal – see minute **1482**.

Governor comments and questions

Barbara Vohmann was impressed with the development of digital skills of staff and asked if there is a means of sharing good practice between staff regarding online observations. The Deputy Principal said the observation

process requires good practice to be identified and shared and this is done through online forums and workshops in College.

Barbara Vohmann also asked how well students are engaging online. The Deputy Principal said they were generally very enthusiastic during Lockdown 1 last year but Lockdown 3 has been less well received. There are a lot of different strategies to ensure students are attending and engaging in lessons.

Jaya Patten asked if there are any improved technologies for teaching and learning available and whether the College has had any approaches from digital companies. The Deputy Principal said this is being monitored and will be followed up with the Director of Information Services.

Susan Hughes posed the question that, even if the teaching is deemed to be effective, is the learning effective. The Deputy Principal recognised how important development of digital skills is for the future life of the students and that it needs constant monitoring to ensure good outcomes.

The Principal said that the College can track staff who sign in to training and learning and how long they are present.

Christian Norman offered assistance on remote learning from his practitioners in Adult Learning and this was appreciated.

The Report was **DISCUSSED** and **NOTED**. The Board acknowledged the sterling efforts made by the College for its students, especially in the digital area and asked that their approval be circulated.

1479. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Board **RECEIVED** a detailed paper itemising KPIs for the College and current progress and performance, with commentary.

The items RAG rated as RED (behind target) are funding value against the Adult Skills Budget, total head count of students being 70 below target, overall attendance slightly below target caused by Maths & English attendance, students making progress on or above their TAG Grade and the forecast performance for Level E & 1 and Adult Learning.

Staff are expected to achieve their performance targets for the year including achieving 5KEs in lesson observations.

The Finance Report comments on the negative current ratio and the likely Nursery surplus this year currently being below target, but this is expected to recover as children return.

As the Board have noted in the past, attendance at English & Maths remains a challenge and continues to be a RED risk. Attendance to date this year for English is 76% (target 85%) and Maths 78% (target 83%). It was recognised that the targets are stretching.

Governor comments

Jenny Beaumont felt that the percentage of new staff (four in total, but one currently on sick leave) with agreed targets at 43% was low. The Deputy Principal said this is in hand and will be agreed shortly.

Jenny Beaumont further commented that the performance targets are something to aim for and measure and the Principal commented that the staff have the targets but they are not recorded on the system, which needs to be rectified.

The Report was **RECEIVED**.

1480. RISK REPORT

The Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services **TABLED** the Risk Report, incorporating the updated College Risk Register and Dartboard as at March 2021.

The VPFCS pointed out that the current risk status on the Register is that there are 26 key risks noted, made up of 4 RED risks, 1 AMBER risk and 9 GREEN risks.

The RED risks relate to

- Virus protection measures
- Learner capacity on campus
- IT infrastructure
- Functional Skills

Functional Skills is a **new RED** risk due to the risk of learners and apprentices not achieving their FS qualifications because of the requirements regarding exams and assessments having to be completed face to face. This will impact negatively on learner and apprenticeship achievement (and overall College performance data).

Two RED risks have reduced to GREEN – EAL examination dispute and the Lloyds bank covenant.

The Audit Committee discussed the Register and Dartboard at their recent Meeting (see minute **1481**).

Trevor Bolton was concerned with the pressure on middle managers and suggested this be a separate RED risk. It was acknowledged that there is an AMBER risk for staff mental health but he felt this needs more focus.

This change was **AGREED** and will appear in the next iteration of the Dartboard.

ACTION: VPFCS

The Board **NOTED** the Report.

1481. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Board **RECEIVED** a copy of the unapproved Minutes of the Quality & Learners Committee held on 23 February 2021 and the Audit Committee held on 2 March 2021, which have taken place since the Special Board Meeting on 21 January 2021.

1482. GOVERNANCE MATTERS

The Clerk **REPORTED** on current Governance Matters for consideration by the Board.

Clerking Arrangements 2021/22

The Clerk has agreed to continue as Clerk to the College and as Company Secretary of Essex Shared Services Limited for at least one further academic year till 31 July 2022. A contract between ESS and the Clerk will be signed in the summer, to apply from 1 August 2021.

The Clerk informed the Board that, if desired, he would be prepared to continue as Clerk to the College for a further year to 31 July 2023.

Meeting Schedule 2021/22

The Clerk **TABLED** a proposed Meeting Schedule for 2021/22 and this was **AGREED**.

Governor Visits

The Clerk attended an AoC Governance Conference online on 22 March 2021 and the Vice-Chair attended one on 2 March 2021.

Details of visits are maintained by the Assistant Clerk and documented in the Minutes of Committee Meetings.

It was noted that Susan Hughes had attended (as Safeguarding Governor) a Meeting of the Safeguarding Committee on 24 February 2021 and the Chair attended Virtual Industry Week (from 1 March 2021).

Governor Recruitment

The Clerk provided a verbal update. There are currently six individuals who have been identified as possible new governors. In his opinion, it would be a good result if two new governors could eventually be appointed from this six.

He reminded the Board that there are currently two vacancies for external governors. This will increase to three on the Chair's retirement from the Board on 31 July 2021.

The Clerk will provide an update to the Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee at its Meeting on 11 May 2021.

ACTION: CLERK

Governors' Training

The following training modules have been uploaded to the Governors' Portal:

- Equality & Diversity
- GDPR
- Safeguarding & Prevent

Each session lasts about one hour, and all governors were asked to complete the modules if they have not already done so. The Assistant Clerk will provide help to access the material if any governors are having difficulty.

It was noted that four governors have not accessed the Portal at all and they were encouraged to do so.

In addition, and in response to a request from the Quality & Learners Committee, there is now a Lessons Observation tab on the Portal, which, when accessed, will enable governors to see a recorded online lesson for their information.

Appointment of Internal Auditors 2021/22 and External Auditors 2020/21

This matter was discussed by the Audit Committee on 2 March 2021 and noted in the minutes of that Meeting.

The Audit Committee **APPROVED** the appointment of Scrutton Bland as internal auditors of the College for 2021/22 and this was **ENDORSED** by the Board.

The Committee **AGREED** to undertake a tendering exercise for external auditors for the year 2020/21 and this process is in hand through Essex Shared Services procurement. This was **NOTED**. The VPFCS indicated that tenders are about to be issued and it is likely that interviews will be held in May for the contract. A Governor will be required to sit on the interview panel.

ACTION: VPFCS

1483. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of AOB.

1484. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 22 June 2021 at 2.30 pm (Budget Working Party)

Thursday 8 July 2021 at 2.00 pm (Board Meeting)

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 5.10 pm.

Signed.....Dated.....