

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD AT 5 PM ON TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2022 IN THE BOARDROOM AT NEWCASTLE COLLEGE

Present: Tracy Bullock, Jeff Dutton, Martin Earnshaw, Craig Hodgson, Gareth Jones, Mary Jones, Steve Jones, Simon Leech, Bernard Lovatt, Jeremy Pert, Lesley Rollason, Jim Rowley, Francis Tunney

In attendance: Andy Bailey (Head of Compliance and Governance), Shelley Brown (Director of Curriculum and Performance), Ian Hookway (Director of HR and Communications), Jason Lancaster (Director of IoT and Employer Partnerships), Lesley Morrey (Director of Student Engagement and Partnerships), Carl Riding (Director of Estates and Sustainability), Lisa Saville (Group Accountant), Joy Smith (Deputy Clerk)

PART 1

In accordance with the requirements of the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice, the College's Financial Statements Auditor should present his Audit Findings Report to the Corporation. Therefore, Dale Thorpe from RSM joined the meeting via Zoom for the first item and the agenda was adjusted accordingly.

22.8.1 Letter of Engagement RSM Financial Statements (Draft Audit Findings Report)

Dale advised that he had presented an earlier version of this report to the Audit Committee and it had now been updated ready for Corporation approval. He confirmed that the audit process had gone smoothly and thanked Craig, Lisa and the College's finance team for their support. He drew attention to the one unadjusted item of the sports pitches, which members recalled featured every year, and the other technical audit adjustment relating to the LGPS.

Governors were invited to ask any questions in relation to the report.

Jim raised the issue of the meeting with the auditor arranged for tomorrow morning with the Principal and Chair even though the Corporation is being asked to approve the report and financial statements at this meeting. Dale advised that this process forms part of the regularity opinion and is not part of the financial statements. Therefore, the financial statements can be approved prior to those conversations.

Jim thanked Dale for his presentation to the Audit Committee and for confirming tonight that all outstanding issues have been resolved allowing RSM to present their clean audit opinion and members to be asked to agree that the financial statements, letters of representation and the support letter for Gradbach be signed.

After consideration, members approved the Audit Findings Report and authorised the required signatures by the Principal and Chair.

Dale was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting at this stage.

22.8.2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Alan Aston, Beckie Jones and Alishah Malik.

22.8.3 Declarations of Interest

Simon Leech, Gareth Jones and Craig Hodgson all declared an interest as non-remunerated Directors of Axia Solutions Ltd and Gradbach Ltd. Gareth Jones and Jeremy Pert declared an interest as members of Stafford Borough Council.

22.8.4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 October 2022 Part 1

Approved as a true record of the meeting.

22.8.5 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

22.8.6 Minutes of the Committee Meetings

Education & Standards – 5 December 2022:

Lesley drew attention to the minutes and explained that the Committee had received a presentation on curriculum updates. She expanded on some of the points as follows:

- T Levels – we have 101 enrolled on 4 pathways which are Digital, Health, Education and Childcare and Engineering. Next year's target is ambitious at 367. Members had discussed employer engagement with employers being heavily involved with T Levels in devising the curriculum and providing appropriate placements but this level of involvement is new for many employers.
- Course monitoring continues with the majority of focus being on achievement rates, low value added etc. There have only been a few areas of under-performance identified and these are receiving the required support and monitoring in order to improve.
- QoERs have been streamlined and now take a similar approach to Ofsted.
- The volume of activity in the College, the logistics associated with the examinations with the levels of additional support required had been discussed. Members had noted the difference in the numbers requiring support/special consideration between the sites and Shelley had confirmed that every room in College is used for exams, including SMT offices etc.

The Committee had then gone on to consider the new streamlined data report which they had found very helpful. Gareth queried the low pass rate for the GCSE maths paper and Shelley advised that this is a key issue nationally and it is expected that maths will become a more prominent requirement as Government policy changes.

Jeremy asked about levels of parental interest in the new T Levels and Shelley confirmed that this is increasing as awareness in schools has increased. The specific T Level talks at the latest open events have been very well attended.

22.8.7 **Principal's Report - Part 1**

1.1 Student of the Month Awards

The introduction of guest presenters is going really well and guests have been really impressed with the calibre of the young people they have met.

1.2 Creative Media Learner of the Year

Members congratulated Jamie Coupland who has been awarded the BTEC Creative Media Learner of the Year bronze award for his great performance on the L3 Extended Diploma in Creative Media Production, after what was a difficult start in education.

1.3– BTEC Tutor of the Year

Craig advised that Mark Cruyton, who had been named BTEC Tutor of the Year, had finally received his award at an event at Pearson's office in London earlier in the month. Mark had been accompanied to the event and had celebrated his achievement with his wife and a couple of close colleagues.

1.4– BTEC College of the Year

Craig confirmed that we had been delighted, and a little surprised to receive the BTEC College of the Year Silver, despite not having received any notification from Pearson about this award.

1.5 – Remembrance Events

Members noted the College's events at each site on 11 November which had been very well attended by very respectful students. Craig commended this event which is always a very emotional and fitting memorial for those members of our armed forces who have died in the line of duty.

1.6– Athos Christaki

Members were very sorry to read the sad news about Athos Christaki, one of our BTEC IT students, who had died in November following a very brave and spirited battle against cancer.

Simon Leech joined the meeting at this stage.

1.7– Open Events and Taster Events

Craig was delighted to report that the recent open events have been very busy and we will provide updates on subsequent applications as the year progresses. In addition, members noted that we are offering new taster events to support our work to boost adult provision.

1.8 – T Level Insight Day

Members noted that we will be hosting a T level insight day on 7 February 2023 where we will showcase our experiences to colleagues from across the sector.

1.9– Carol Services

Members were invited to come along to either or both of this year's Carol Concerts which will be held at Stafford on Thursday and at Newcastle on Friday this week. Anyone intending to come along to the Stafford event will need to be in their seats by 1.55 pm so that the Lord Lieutenant, Ian Dudson, is the last to take his seat in accordance with the required protocols.