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## FE Corporation Minutes

Meeting held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 5.30pm  
at Skills Academy, Room 5 and 6

**Governors:** Sam Beel, Stuart Blackett, Subhash Chaudhary, Phil Cook (Chief Executive and Group Principal), Louise Davies, Ethan Harper, Rob Mitchell, Richard Poundford, James Ruddock (Staff Governor and Group Student Recruitment Manager), Kirk Siderman-Wolter (by phone), Dot Smith, Aman Toor, Mark White (Chair) and Gary Wright.

**Officials:** Liz Boynton (Group Director of Quality), Jason Faulkner (College Principal, RCC), Lesley Graham (College Principal, SRC), Phil Hastie (Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure), Erika Marshall (Group Director of Marketing), Mark Moore (Group Head of Student Services), Mandy Morris (Group Vice Principal Curriculum and Development), Gary Potts (Group Director of Business Engagement), Fiona Sharp (Group Executive Director Finance), Kay Taylor (Group Director of HR), Sarah Thompson (Clerk to the Corporation) and Sam Young (Governance Support Officer).

**Apologies:** Russ McCallion and Norma Wilburn

*The meeting started at 5.35pm. [Redacted] He and the Vice Chair had spent a day touring Princes' Trust provision in Darlington, Catterick and Middlesbrough; he asked the College Principal RCC to pass their thanks to the Head of Department Princes' Trust and commented on the amazing staff and students. He reported on engagement with the new MPs for Redcar and Stockton South, Jason Young and Matt Vickers. He also highlighted that the group had been named as finalists in three categories at the upcoming EducateNorth Awards, including FE College of the Year.*

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### **20/1 Agenda Item 1 – Equality and Diversity Annual Report**

The Group Vice Principal Curriculum and Development introduced the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Annual Report for 2018-19, previously circulated with an accompanying report. She thanked governors for the comments and suggestions received in advance of the meeting which would be incorporated into the final document. The Group Head of Student Services added that data for this year's report had been referenced against information from the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA).

A governor thanked them for the quality of information in the ED&I Annual Report and in particular the strong student focus and asked if staff information could also be included. The Group Director of HR confirmed that statutory information on the gender pay gap was included in the report but agreed that reporting on staff ethnicity and disability would be a useful addition. A governor was pleased to note the reduction of objectives for 2019-20

to four and the Group Vice Principal Curriculum and Development agreed that this had been a key area of discussion at the recent meeting attended by the link governor for ED&I. The Group Director of HR agreed to provide staff data for inclusion in the ED&I Report.

Governors **approved** the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2018-19, subject to final corrections.

## **20/2 Agenda Item 2 – Centre for Energy, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing**

The College Principal RCC outlined the key points in his previously circulated report and business plan for the Centre for Energy, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing (CEEAM). The proposed project had been developed in response to the needs of key businesses in the Redcar area and aimed to encourage young people to study at their local college. As significant investment would be needed, the development work would take place in two main phases and the emphasis would be on key partnerships with local industries and training to industry standards.

A governor asked whether different income and expenditure scenarios had been considered, particularly in terms of income. [Redacted] Attracting and developing training staff with relevant industry experience was another focus and work on staff development was planned in partnership with the Education Training Foundation (ETF). In response to a governor's question regarding possible provision overlap with the National Horizons Centre (NHC) in Darlington, the Group Director of Business Engagement explained that the NHC focused on high level research and development in Biosciences, mainly at postgraduate level.

[Redacted] in the project. In response to governors' comments on the centre's name, the College Principal RCC explained that the name allowed more flexibility for future growth and diversification than alternatives such as STEM Centre or Oil and Gas Academy. The Group Director of Marketing added that the acronym had been favourably received by industry contacts and agreed to share marketing materials with governors.

Governors **noted** the update and supported the development of the CEEAM in alignment with RCC strategic objectives.

*Jason Faulkner left the meeting.*

## **20/3 Agenda Item 3 – Learner Voice Outcomes**

The Group Director of Quality spoke to her previously circulated report and highlighted the high levels of representation and maintenance of upper quartile position from 2018-19 in terms of learner satisfaction. The overall response rate for Learner Survey 1 across the group had been good and satisfaction levels at NETA had shown a particular improvement on the previous year. There had also been an overall increase in learners taking part in additional activities. However, food and service provision at some outlets

had shown a decline in satisfaction and these issues were being addressed. A future focus would be improving the completion rate for work based apprentices.

Governors **noted** the report.

#### **20/4 Agenda Item 4 –Safeguarding Update**

The Group Head of Student Services, also Designated Safeguarding Lead, referred governors to his previously circulated report and highlighted that staff compliance with safeguarding training across the group remained high. The number of incidents recorded on the Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS) in December and January had seen a slight increase on the previous year. Additional support needs and risk indicators continued to be identified through Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and were followed up effectively by the welfare and safeguarding team. A review of the Prevent risk assessment had taken place. Wi-Fi sign in equipment was currently being trialled at RCC and would be rolled out across the group once fully tested. He concluded that the group's safeguarding duty was being discharged in line with statutory and other guidance and that safeguarding policy and practice across the group was effective.

A governor asked if there were any greater welfare concerns at remote sites such as those used for Princes' Trust provision. The Group Head of Student Services explained that suitable safeguarding arrangements had been established over a period of time, tutors prioritised student welfare and felt able to contact him directly with any concerns. In response to a governor's question about the increased level of incidents and risk concerns recorded, the Group Head of Student Services explained that increased awareness and national campaigns around the benefits of talking about mental health, combined with a more proactive approach in the group, had contributed to the increase. He added that the safeguarding and welfare teams had the appropriate resources, capacity and access to counselling services to deal with the caseload. The Group Vice Principal Curriculum and Development added that consideration was being given to a Mental Health Hub model that had been adopted at other colleges.

A governor asked whether there had been an improved level of learners' awareness of local issues around Prevent. The Deputy Group Head of Student Services explained that this had been discussed at the Enrichment Performance Review (PR); Student Services had developed tutorial materials, further Safeguarding newsletters were planned and Heads of Department had responsibility for ensuring tutorial materials were used to best effect. The Group Vice Principal Curriculum and Development added that the county lines information from the last newsletter was currently displayed on learners' desktops when they logged into college accounts.

A governor commented favourably on the level of assurance given by the update in terms of safeguarding but queried the completion rates for mandatory staff training. The Group Head of Student Services highlighted that the rate fluctuated due to those on long term sick or associate staff not currently timetabled and explained that HR staff were proactive

in following up any staff who missed deadlines for completion. The Group Director of HR added that the large amount of staff required to complete their three-year online refresher each September did have a negative impact on completion rates and that this was closely monitored by HR staff. Migration to a more efficient monitoring system was in progress. The Group Head of Student Services agreed to provide rolling figures for this data in future reports. In response to a governor's request, the Group Director of HR agreed to follow up any non-compliant staff with their managers.

Governors **noted** the update.

## **20/5 Agenda Item 5 – Recruitment Update / Enrolment Plans**

The Group Director of Marketing highlighted actual recruitment data for 2019-20 against target and, with the additional in-year recruitment to Prince's Trust and Employability programmes, reported that across the group recruitment would achieve the required level. In response to a governor's request, data on withdrawals had been included but had proved complex to collate due to constant fluctuations; she outlined the various campaigns and events aimed at developing and maintaining learner loyalty to their chosen college and programme of study. In order to meet an ambitious target for Prince's Trust provision, a range of marketing activity was now in place including promotion of Etc. as an official Prince's Trust Partner. Higher education (HE) recruitment had been particularly positive at RCC and the marketing officer for this area was due to attend a training and networking event for HE marketing specialists. Looking ahead to 2020-21, plans were in place to strengthen schools liaison activity and to target key areas currently showing lower recruitment forecasts. The launch of the Academy of Performing and Technical Arts (APTA) would also be a driving factor for recruitment in that programme area. Progress towards targets would be monitored through the PR process.

A governor asked about envisaged recruitment levels at RCC for the coming years. The Group Director of Marketing highlighted that the number of applications for 2020-21 at RCC was not easily compared to 2019-20 data due to differences in the applications process. However, offers were substantially higher than the previous year and increased marketing support had had a positive effect on the profile of the college. The Group Student Recruitment Manager agreed that, though there was still work to do on schools liaison with Redcar schools, marketing campaigns focusing on selling opportunities rather than simply individual courses had been effective. A governor commented on the Prince's Trust Facebook activity targeted at parents and their presence at the Richmond Job Centre.

In response to a governor's question, the Group Director of Marketing confirmed that there was no programme area with a disproportionate number of withdrawals and that the spread of and reasons for learners' withdrawing were varied, including having to care for parents or simply losing interest in their chosen course. The Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure added that course withdrawals were a focus during departmental PRs, with no predominant reasons or programme areas generally identified.

In response to a governor's question regarding 'interviews to hold', the Group Director of Marketing explained the data relating to the application process; those with offers had had interviews and been accepted on their chosen course, those with interviews to hold had not yet had an interview. Generally, half of those interviewed would expect to be accepted, with some rejected for a place and others deciding against applying post-interview.

Governors **noted** the update.

#### **20/6 Agenda Item 6 – Transaction Unit Key Performance Indicators**

The Group Executive Director Finance explained changes to the reporting framework to the ESFA's Provider Market Oversight (PMO) Team as part of the Restructuring Facility (RF) grant agreement brought in as a result of the introduction of the Integrated Financial Model for Colleges (IFMC). Submissions would coincide with IFMC returns three times per year, rather than quarterly. As confirmation of the information required under the new reporting framework had not been received until mid-February, she had agreed an extension with the ESFA for a further week. The majority of information had already been collated and there were no areas of concern.

Governors **noted** the update and **agreed** that the final submission should be reported at the next Corporation meeting.

#### **20/7 Agenda Item 7 – Integrated Financial Model for Colleges**

The Group Executive Director Finance outlined that the IFMC had been a challenge for the whole sector and commented on the hard work put in by the Finance Team and the Turnaround Director to complete the model. A draft commentary and financial planning checklist had been included with her previously circulated report to provide assurance to governors; the IFMC submission and assumptions included in the forecasts had also been considered at Finance and Employment Committee and by the Senior Management Team (SMT). [Redacted]

The Group Executive Director Finance confirmed that, following Corporation approval, the IFMC would be uploaded the next day to meet the 28 February deadline and, given the feedback from the Association of Colleges' Finance Directors' Network, she would anticipate some reflection and review of the model by the ESFA.

In response to a discussion about the difference between the technical details included in the IFMC and the need to present a financial plan to governors, the Group Executive Director Finance agreed to consider deadlines for the presentation of the group's financial plan through Finance and Employment Committee, with high level reporting to Corporation.

Governors **approved** the submission of the IFMC to the ESFA on 28 February 2020.

## 20/8 **Agenda Item 8 – Strategic Statements and Goals**

The Chief Executive outlined the Strategic Goals and individual college, NETA and Business Development Unit (BDU) strategic objectives for 2020-21 as agreed at the recent Governors' Strategic Conference and detailed in his previously circulated report. He added that SMT would be following up actions identified from the conference and confirmed that the goals and objectives agreed would be from September 2020.

Governors **agreed**:

1. to keep the group's current Vision, Mission, Values, Public Value Statement and Tone of Voice;
2. in terms of Strategic Goals:
  - focus on a specific Strategic Goal on delivering an outstanding student experience;
  - include a Strategic Goal focused on 'Demand-led Curriculum, to meet the needs of local communities' (e.g. students, apprentices, schools, businesses and stakeholders);
  - delete Capital Investment as a Strategic Goal;
3. individual college, NETA and BDU strategic objectives.

*Mark White left the meeting and Richard Poundford took the Chair.*

## 20/9 **Agenda Item 9 – Corporation minutes and Actions**

### **9.1 To agree the minutes of a meeting held on 12 December 2019**

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2019 were formally **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting.

### **9.2 To receive notes of a Governor Workshop held on 16 January 2020**

### **9.3 To receive notes of the Governors' Strategic Conference held 31 January to 1 February 2020**

Governors **received** notes of the Governor Workshop held on 16 January and the Governors' Strategic Conference held 31 January to 1 February 2020.

### **9.4 to consider any matters arising and outstanding actions**

Under outstanding actions, the Clerk asked governors to note that succession planning would be considered at the next Governors' Workshop to be held on 23 April 2020 and that the Chief Executive had identified potential governors and co-optees with educational experience; any appointments would be considered by the Search and Governance Committee before Corporation approval was sought. Governors **agreed** to remove the action regarding the re-establishment of an autonomous Students' Union as no further action was planned at present; the formation of students' associations had

been reported to Corporation in December 2019. Governors **noted** progress against actions.

**20/10 Agenda Item 10 –Committee meetings**

The following committee meetings had taken place since the last Corporation meeting and key themes were outlined and **noted** by governors. Presentations from meetings had been circulated with the meeting papers and draft minutes for all meetings would be made available on BoardPacks following approval by the Board / Committee Chair:

**10.1 Search and Governance Committee held on 23 January 2020**

**10.2 Finance and Employment Committee held on 13 February 2020**

**10.3 Standards Improvement Committee held on 13 February 2020**

Governors **noted** that all recommendations from these committees were covered in other agenda items.

**20/11 Agenda Item 11 – Calendar of meetings 2020/21**

Governors **agreed** the schedule of Corporation and committee meetings for 2020-21.

**20/12 Agenda Item 12 – Corporation Chair’s Appraisal**

Governors **agreed** the appraisal process for the Corporation Chair (in line with recommendations from the Search and Governance Committee) and to complete and return the questionnaire by the deadline of 6 May 2020. The Clerk agreed to send the questionnaire to all governors by email.

**20/13 Agenda Item 13 – Governance Update**

Governors:

- i) **agreed** to appoint James Ruddock to the Standards Improvement Committee and the Search and Governance Committee and Rob Mitchell to the Search and Governance Committee;
- ii) **agreed** to amend the Standards Improvement Committee responsibilities to incorporate monitoring and review of Group Improvement Plans and the Careers Link Governor role description to remove references to Employer Engagement and focus on Careers and Information, Advice and Guidance;
- iii) **noted** governor attendance at meetings of the Corporation and its committees, training and development opportunities and other governance events;
- iv) **agreed** to notify the Clerk of any specific training needs;
- v) **noted** the update in respect of national governance matters, and, in particular the updated insolvency guidance from the Department for Education.

**20/14 Agenda Item 14 – Any Other Business**

The Clerk notified governors of a request from the Deputy Group Head of Student Services to complete a poster, with accompanying photo, to share on social media for National Careers Week and agreed to circulate the information by email. Governors agreed to send a letter of congratulation to the Deputy Group Head of Student Services on her runners up position in the Most Inspiring Careers Lead Award at The Lord Glenamara Memorial Awards.

**20/15 Agenda Item 15 - Approval of Documents for Public Inspection**

It was **agreed** that the agenda and supporting documents of the current meeting be made available for public inspection with the exception of the reports for Agenda Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 which were considered commercial in confidence. Minutes would be made available following approval and consideration at the next meeting.

**20/16 Agenda Item 16 – Date and time of next meeting**

Governor Workshop: Thursday 23 April 2020. 5.30 pm at Stockton Riverside College

FE Corporation meeting: Thursday 7 May 2020, 5.30 pm at Redcar and Cleveland College

**20/17 Agenda Item 17 - Key Themes**

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2018-19 approved, subject to final corrections
- Approved submission of the Integrated Financial Model for Colleges to the Education and Skills Funding Agency
- Governors agreed to retain existing Etc. Vision, Mission, Values, Public Value Statement and Tone of Voice and agreed to proposed changes to Etc. Strategic Goals and individual college, NETA and BDU strategic objectives for 2020-21
- Corporation Chair's appraisal process 2019-20 agreed
- James Ruddock appointed to the Standards Improvement Committee and the Search and Governance Committee and Rob Mitchell to the Search and Governance Committee

*(The meeting ended at 6.45 pm)*

Approved at a meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020