

FE Corporation Minutes

Meeting held on Thursday 10th March 2022 at 5.30pm, RCC H202

Governors: Fabienne Bailey, Rachel Beeken, Sam Beel, Stuart Blackett (Corporation Vice Chair and Chair of Capital Group and Selection Panel), Subhash Chaudhary (Chair of Audit Committee), Phil Cook (Chief Executive and Group Principal), Louise Davies (Chair of Finance and Employment Committee), Martin Gray, Katy Ludgate, Rob Mitchell (Chair of Search and Governance Committee and Equality and Diversity Link Governor), Dot Smith (Chair of Standards Improvement Committee), Anne Vickers, Mark White (Corporation Chair), Mark Wilson and Gary Wright (Careers and Safeguarding Link Governor).

Apologies: Paige Costello and Lilly Crisp

Officials: Phil Blewitt (Managing Director NETA), Jason Faulkner (College Principal, Redcar and Cleveland College), Lesley Graham (College Principal, Stockton Riverside College), Phil Hastie (Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure), Erika Marshall (Group Director of Marketing), Gary Potts (Group Vice Principal Business, Innovation and Partnerships), Ben Robinson (College Principal, Bede), Kay Taylor (Group Director of HR), Sarah Thompson (Clerk to the Corporation), Peter Wood (Interim Group Director of Quality) and Sam Young (Governance Support Officer).

In attendance: Dylan Rhodes (Apprentice, Student Services) and Lorraine Preston (Student Support and Wellbeing Manager – Personal Development & Bursary) for agenda item 1 only

Fabienne Bailey, Katy Ludgate, Gary Potts and Ben Robinson joined the meeting via Teams.

Under Agenda Item 12, Mark White declared an interest as Chair of the Thornaby Town Deal Board.

22/13 **Agenda Item 1 – Student Bursary (Presentation)**

Dylan Rhodes, an apprentice working in Student Services, made a presentation on the Student Bursary; this was circulated to governors after the meeting and covered the following key areas:

- *What is Student Bursary?* A government funded service aimed at breaking down financial barriers for students who suffer financial hardship, comprising of five funding pots (16-18, 19+, Advanced Learner Loan, Free College Meals and Vulnerable Bursary), just over £1m of funding per year
- *List of services:* Free college meals [REDACTED]; breakfast on request or if staff feel this would help; kit and uniform; financial support for educational visits at tutors' request and then reviewed for eligibility; bus passes or travel allowance; support for childcare costs
- *Assessing and distribution:* group policies set according to government policy and household income levels reviewed annually (currently up to £25k); students complete an annex form stating how they would benefit from financial support, countersigned by their tutor
- *Support from bursary team:* help for students to complete forms such as Annex and Statement of Needs; drop-in support sessions, including ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and Prince's Trust students

- *Safeguarding:* the bursary team works closely with safeguarding to identify students and implement steps to offer additional help
- *Case studies:*
 - 19+ female student had travel cost assistance but stopped attending; staff discovered that she was living on her own and not receiving enough benefits. The bursary team arranged free college meals and provided a bag for her to use for college which made a real difference to her.
 - 16-18 male student was identified through the safeguarding team as lacking in energy and they then found out that, as both parents had lost their jobs, he could not afford food; the bursary team supported him in completing an annex form and he was now in receipt of free college meals including breakfast and had been provided with a laptop and internet dongle. This had a direct impact on his energy levels and ability to study safely.

In response to a governor's question, Dylan outlined his own background and route to becoming an apprentice at Redcar & Cleveland College (RCC) and added that he had been Apprentice of the Year at RCC in 2021. He also explained that the bursary team met weekly and that recently they had discussed the payment levels for kit, uniform and meals for the following academic year.

A governor asked if students were affected by period poverty and added that, with female staff accounting for 80% of the workforce, this was a particular issue in his own organisation. Dylan explained that students could access free sanitary products through the safeguarding and welfare teams and also changes of clothes. The College Principal RCC also confirmed that there were free products available in female toilets; a governor agreed that she had noticed the clear signage and supply of products.

Governors thanked Dylan for his informative and confident presentation.

Dylan Rhodes and Lorraine Preston left the meeting

22/14 Agenda Item 2 – Governing Body Memberships

The Clerk explained that one application had been received in response to the student governor vacancy advertised to all students attending one of the Etc. sites within the Stockton Borough Council area; as no election was therefore needed, governors were asked to ratify the appointment of Lilly Crisp, a second year A Level student studying at Bede, and her application had been circulated with the meeting papers. She added that, unfortunately, Lilly had been unable to attend the meeting. A governor commented that he knew Lilly through her involvement in the Stockton-on-Tees Bright Minds, Big Futures scheme and that he felt she would be a valuable addition to the Board.

Governors **ratified** the appointment of Lilly Crisp as student governor for a term not exceeding four years and **supported** the recruitment of up to three additional governors, including one with financial, audit or accountancy experience.

22/15 Agenda Item 3 – Strategic Update

The Chief Executive and Group Principal presented key information from the previously circulated report. He outlined the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and highlighted that

the Group Vice Principal Business, Innovation and Partnerships was actively involved as group lead on the Tees Valley LSIP, one of the eight Trailblazer funded areas. The Tees Valley LSIP centred on the green agenda and any governor interested in attending the upcoming Association of Colleges' webinar on LSIPs had been offered a briefing by the Group Vice Principal Business, Innovation and Partnerships outlining the local context. A governor asked about the proposed accountability measure for colleges on compliance with LSIPs and the Chief Executive confirmed that this was under development but it remained hard to see how it would work in practice.

The letter from the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) Head of FE Directorate Territorial Team in the North summarising the recently held ESFA Strategic Conversation had been included as an appendix and the Chief Executive commented that the first of these discussions, which would now take place annually, had been positive. He added that, as one of six colleges, the group would be participating in a pilot on accountability measures; governors would be kept informed as more detail became available. He added that, with a strong focus of the education and skills agenda on meeting employer needs, many employers found it difficult to articulate these needs. A governor asked if the group could do more to support employers in identifying training needs and the Chief Executive highlighted that NETA already worked with over 960 employers and that the Business Development Unit (BDU) worked closely with many employers, including on developing apprenticeships; there was also evidence that employers already believed that colleges were meeting their needs. The Group Vice Principal Business Innovation and Partnerships outlined the difficulties involved in identifying the workforce skills and training facilities that would be needed in a new field such as clean energy.

The Corporation Chair confirmed that the strategic conversation with the ESFA had been positive and that the ESFA team was looking forward to meeting with the new Corporation Chair the following year; he added that the strength and experience of the Etc. board and the future expectation for colleges to have an external review of governance every three years had been referenced in the letter.

A governor asked about the possible implications of the changes to the ESFA's responsibilities with the shift to a focus purely on funding; the Chief Executive confirmed that, as yet, there was no detail to report and added the importance of the Department for Education (DfE) increasing their understanding of how colleges worked had been identified as a top challenge for the group in the conversation with the ESFA. It was hoped that this would be highlighted by other colleges.

A governor asked about the role of the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Chief Executive highlighted that the AoC were currently helped driving policy more than they had ever done but that their challenge was that they represented all English colleges and not necessarily the local context of individual colleges.

The College Principal RCC highlighted that, following many months of partnership work with bp, he and the Group Director of Marketing would be attending a meeting in London the following week to formally sign a memorandum of understanding with bp in the presence of the Secretary of State.

Governors **noted** the strategic update.

22/16 **Agenda Item 4 – Safeguarding Update**

The College Principal Bede, also strategic lead for Student Support, presented a previously circulated report on safeguarding. He highlighted that results from the recent learner survey held in January reflected a positive position in relation to students' experience of safeguarding and added that further assurance was taken from college principal learner forums, meet and greet activity and tutorial quality assurance procedures.

As outlined in the report, a piece of work had been completed to investigate support for learners with a social worker and data on the retention of vulnerable learners by category had also been included; [REDACTED] He added that, through cooperative work with local authority partners, those learners whose best interests may not be served staying on roll at the college were fully supported to not become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Since last reported to the FE Corporation in November 2021, the proportion of learners with needs meeting the criteria for level 2 to 4 services had increased at some sites and this could be accounted for by learners whose needs had escalated and an increase in unaccompanied asylum seekers. The reduction at NETA looked more dramatic [REDACTED] due to the smaller cohort size.

Since the last report to governors on national and local issues relating to domestic violence, there had been an increase in the number of Operation Encompass reports received from police; the safeguarding team was proactive in addressing need, offering support and working closely with the local authorities and in multi-agency working. Issues relating to domestic abuse and peer on peer abuse were also included in the mandatory tutorial programmes. [REDACTED]

Online and network monitoring data had been included in the report, with pornography searches and comments the most prevalent alerts referred for further investigation, with depression the next most frequent. Compliance with staff mandatory training was at a very high level and this was believed to be due to the improvements to training modules; the Interim Group Head of Student Support and Wellbeing was working with the Group Director and Group Head of HR on next year's training.

In response to a governor's question about Prevent referrals, the College Principal Bede explained that, through taking part in staff training and tutorials, staff and students were aware of the signs of radicalisation and were proactive in making referrals. [REDACTED] Online monitoring, through eSafe, would also pick up concerns.

The Safeguarding Link Governor commented on the many positives in the update, including the data shared, and added that behind every statistic was an individual student's story. He reported that he had attended a Safeguarding meeting the previous week, which had been well-attended and demonstrated the staff's dedication to safeguarding. He added that this triangulated with reports to Corporation meetings and was evident in the bursary presentation at the start of the meeting. He felt assured that the group's colleges provided a safe environment for learners. A governor added that an increase in numbers was not always a bad thing and demonstrated that students had opportunities to come forward and seek help, particularly with the effect of Covid on student health and wellbeing.

A governor asked if the war in Ukraine could potentially increase Prevent referrals, for example, with students expressing a desire to go and fight. The College Principal Bede explained that [REDACTED] Ukrainian and Russian students had been identified across the group and were

receiving individual support; more generally, new tutorial resources on fake news and political bias had been developed for learners at all levels.

A governor queried the fact that the College Principal Bede had referred to [REDACTED] LAC students when the table in the report referenced [REDACTED] retained and the College Principal Bede explained that one student could be listed as three starts, for example each individual A Level course, Prince's Trust course or studying on a range of alternative provision.

A governor commented on the increased pressures on family incomes and the potential impact on bursary support needs or even an increase in criminal activities and the College Principal Bede explained that this was already under consideration as part of the Business Planning (BP) process.

Governors **noted** the update and that the group continued to deploy effective and impactful safeguarding and welfare services to students through a dynamic and proactive strategy of student support and wellbeing.

22/17 Agenda Item 5 – Quality Update

The Interim Group Director of Quality highlighted from the circulated report that the recently released AoC's attendance data had provided an opportunity for benchmarking; the group's attendance data for the autumn term had been slightly higher than the AoC's reported sector average. Retention data across the group was also positive and best and worst case scenarios for apprenticeship achievement rates had been developed based on monitoring in departments; though expected to change, this was a useful management tool. He added that a teaching and learning update, as reported at the last Standards Improvement Committee meeting, had been included in the report and that the Group Improvement Plans (GIPs) would be updated following Performance Review 6 (PR6). A governor commented on the usefulness of such granular data and that the report gave governors a good level of scrutiny.

Governors **noted** the update and that the impact of the pandemic posed a risk to apprenticeships and education and training achievement rates but that this was recognised by leaders and was a key strategic focus.

22/18 Agenda Item 6 – Learner Voice

The Interim Group Director of Quality presented the circulated report which included the results of Learner Survey 1, held in November 2021, the Higher Education (HE) Student Survey 1 and other learner voice activities, such as Meet and Greet and learner forums. He highlighted that, given that student awareness of Prevent and radicalisation had been the only theme not considered to have made significant progress at the Ofsted monitoring visit in March 2019, it had been particularly pleasing to see improved awareness and knowledge evidenced in the Learner Survey 1 results.

Governors **noted** the update and the range of learner voice activities undertaken.

22/19 Agenda Item 7 – Careers and Progression Update

The Group Director of Marketing commented on the importance of careers provision, including the continued focus on Right Learner, Right Course and preparing learners for the world of work, especially during National Careers Week. She highlighted that, as reported, known, sustained,

destinations and progression data for returning learners was positive. Feedback from learners reflected this positive picture, with students agreeing that they received good information, advice and guidance (IAG) at the start and throughout their courses. In addition, a centrally coordinated programme of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) activity included newsletters to students and parents and careers question and answer sessions. She reported that all sites were secure in 100% achievement of Gatsby Benchmarks and that the CEIAG team had piloted a primary school engagement activity in summer 2021, with financial support from Tees Valley Careers, which it was hoped would run again at RCC and also at Stockton Riverside College (SRC) this coming summer. As requested at a previous meeting, detailed internal progression data had been included in the report and highlighted [REDACTED] learners who had progressed to the same or lower level; detailed information on follow up activity with each of these learners had been provided.

A governor noted the increased focus on careers since they had started as a governor at RCC pre-merger. A governor also commented on the increased footfall at open events which evidenced the positive impact of the strategy and the personalised offer. In response to governors' requests, the Group Director of Marketing agreed to share a selection of careers case studies and information through the Governors' Digest as appropriate.

A governor commented on the progression information and the fact that it demonstrated that every decision taken had been in the best interests of each learner and that reading the stories behind the data had been impactful. The Careers Link Governor commented on the impressive range of careers activity and, in particular, the work with primary schools building aspirations.

Governors **noted** the careers and progression update.

22/20 Agenda Item 8 – Gender Pay Gap Reporting

The Group Director of HR explained that the Gender Pay Gap report would normally be considered for publication by the Finance and Employment Committee but that, with the timescale for publication, the Corporation Chair had agreed its presentation to the FE Corporation. She added that the group had a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 to report on the gender pay gap annually and publish a public facing statement on the Etc. website. It had been pleasing that the most recent data for 31 March 2021 showed a narrowing of the mean gender pay gap from the previous year; the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group would analyse the data in more detail and develop an action plan which could include recruitment activity, career development opportunities and labour turnover rates. She highlighted that the increase in the National Living Wage from April 2022 would impact next year's gender pay gap data.

The Chair of the Finance and Employment Committee commented that the actions taken by the group had had a positive impact and that movement was in the right direction and a governor also commented on the adverse media coverage of the gender pay gap at a nearby college on International Women's Day.

The EDI Link Governor suggested that, given that his own organisation had seen a shift in the gender pay gap in favour of women possibly due to the outsourcing of catering, the report could contain an explicit statement on whether the pay gap was in favour of men or women.

In response to a governor's question, the Group Director of HR confirmed that the data included both hourly paid and part-time staff. A governor asked if the largest pay gap was associated with any particular roles and the Group Director of HR explained that, at the lower end of the pay scale, women comprised 80% of the workforce whereas, at the upper quartile, 55% of staff were female. As this had an effect on the data, the focus tended to look at the middle quartiles.

A governor asked about strategies to reach equality and the Group Director of HR suggested that this was a question that every employer needed to consider and that it was not about paying people the same for the same job but about considering positive action such as front-ended shortlists, unconscious bias training and EDI training to tackle assumptions at the interview stage. The Chief Executive commented on the level of gender balance in more senior roles and that the strong female voice on the Senior Management Team (SMT) should give governors assurance.

A governor asked about the impact of maternity leave and career breaks on career paths and delayed promotion; the Group Director of HR felt that more work would be needed on the data but that strategies such as allowing staff to return part-time after maternity leave could help.

Governors **approved** the Gender Pay Gap data for upload to the Government portal and publication of a 'public facing' statement on the Education Training Collective website.

Other business and procedural items

22/21 Agenda Item 9 – Corporation minutes and actions

9.1 – Corporation meetings

Minutes of Corporation meetings held on 9 December 2021, 13 January 2022 and 10 February 2022 were formally **approved** as accurate records of the meetings. Governors **agreed** to consider the confidential minutes and appendices at the end of the meeting.

9.2 – Governor Workshop

Notes of a Governor Workshop held on 13 January 2022 were **received**.

9.3 – Governors' Strategic Conference held on 4 and 5 February 2022

Notes of and feedback from the Governors' Strategic Conference were **received** and actions arising considered.

9.4 – Matters Arising / Outstanding Actions

The Clerk highlighted that the Teesworks tour, requested by governors, had been arranged for Thursday 12 May and that the Governance Support Officer would circulate a reminder of details to governors. Rob Mitchell, who had been instrumental in setting up the tour, stressed how valuable it would be for governors to visit the site, which would provide opportunities for many employers and the Group Director of Marketing agreed, having recently taken part in a Teesworks tour. The Clerk confirmed that all actions had been completed, were not yet due or would be covered on the agenda for this meeting.

Progress against actions was **noted** and governors **agreed** to remove the action to consider the inclusion of the pensions risk from the NETA transfer on the Strategic Risk Register following advice from the Teesside Pensions Fund, which had been reported at the Special FE Corporation meeting held on 10th February.

Agenda Item 10 – Committee / subsidiary board minutes and recommendations

22/22 10.1 – NETA Special Board held on 8 February 2022 and NETA Board held on 18 February 2022

The Managing Director NETA outlined the key themes from the meetings and explained that, following agreement from both the NETA Board and the FE Corporation, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) process had commenced on 7th March; more than half of the one to ones had been held with the 24 staff members involved and, so far, these had all been positive.

10.2 – Tees Valley Catering Board held on 18 February 2022

The Chief Executive and Group Principal confirmed that Tees Valley Catering continued to perform well and that staff recruitment initiatives were improving the staffing position.

10.3 – Search and Governance Committee held on 20 January 2022

The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee reported on a positive meeting; committee members had considered equality and diversity, including protected characteristics and wider board composition data, and assessed this against available benchmarks. He and the Clerk would be working with the College Principal Bede and the staff EDI group on plans for a future Governors' Workshop on equality and diversity issues.

10.4 – Standards Improvement Committee held on 17 February 2022

The Chair of the Standards Improvement Committee highlighted that the meeting had had a packed agenda; there had been positive progress updates on the Group Improvement Plan (GIP), the Higher Education and Skills improvement plan, and work experience and industrial placements. The meeting had started with a presentation on apprenticeships, given by the Group Head of Apprentices and the newly appointed Head of Department: Construction, Professional and Service Industries (CPSI), which had provided assurance on the focus on apprenticeships given Ofsted. There had also been an update on the Innovation Panel and funded projects including their impact and excellent outcomes.

10.5 – Audit Committee meeting held on 3 March 2022

The Chair of the Audit Committee commented on his first meeting as committee chair. Members had discussed the internal audit on the wireless network with a particular focus on cyber security and potential increased risks due to the war in Ukraine. [REDACTED] the Group Head of IT and Learning Resource Centre Services had attended to answer questions. AuditOne also reported on the internal audit of the Single Central Record, and specifically pre-employment checks [REDACTED] The Group Emergency Plan was also discussed, with members' comments on possible scenarios to be added and ways in which to simplify the plan noted; internal audits on business continuity and IT disaster recovery would provide assurance on its effectiveness later in the year.

10.6 – Capital Group meetings held on 15 December 2021, 26 January and 2 March 2022

At the request of the Chair of the Capital Group, governors **agreed** to consider key themes from these meetings under agenda item 12, Group Property Strategy and Capital Projects.

10.7 – Selection Panel meetings held on 20 January, 17 February and 3 March 2022

Due to confidentiality, governors **agreed** to consider this item at the end of the meeting.

Governors **noted** feedback from subsidiary board and committee meetings.

22/23 10.8 – To consider recommendations

Recommendations from the Search and Governance Committee had been circulated with the meeting papers and governors:

- i) **agreed** to suspend the Corporation Chair appraisal process for the current year;
- ii) **agreed** an informal review of Vice Chair performance for 2021-22 as part of support in transitioning between roles. Governors were invited to provide feedback on the Vice Chair's performance via the Governance Team and **agreed** that the Corporation Chair would discuss this feedback with Vice Chair.

22/24 Agenda Item 11 – Strategic Goals and Priorities 2022-23

The Chief Executive confirmed that, as suggested and agreed by governors at the Governors' Strategic Conference, his report proposed that the current Strategic Goals would be kept for 2022-23, but with slight amendments proposed to Strategic Goal 6.

Governors **agreed** to retain the current Strategic Goals and amend Strategic Goal 6 to read 'A curriculum fit for purpose - Deliver a demand-led curriculum, to meet the needs of **our** local communities **and businesses**'.

22/25 Agenda Item 12 – Group Property Strategy and Capital Projects

The Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure highlighted from his circulated report the priorities of the Group Property Strategy remained as outlined at the Governors' Strategic Conference; [REDACTED]

In terms of the RCC projects, the Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure confirmed that work was progressing in line with the agreed timeline. Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council had now received notification from HM Treasury that the Town Deal funding allocated for the project had been approved and Etc. now had a grant agreement for £60k towards initial development work. The projects had been put out to tender and, with four contractors having completed site visits, it was anticipated that there would be a good response when the tender process concluded later in March. He added that he had recently taken Capital Group members, Martin Gray, Louise Davies and Mark Wilson, on a tour of the RCC site and offered this opportunity to any other governor who was interested

The Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure then referred to the later addendum to his report; on 8th March, the DfE had approved the 16-18 Capacity Funding for the Bede extension, having identified some additional funding. This had been offered on the basis that the group agree that the project, and related expenditure, would be completed by 31 March 2023; he explained that deadlines would be tight but deliverable, helped by the fact that the designs had progressed since the original bid was submitted to RIBA Stage 2. [REDACTED]

A governor asked if the project could be delivered in 54 weeks and the Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure confirmed that, although this would not allow much flexibility, it was deliverable; building works would need to be completed by the end of March 2023, with fit out complete by the start of the 2023-24 academic year. The College Principal Bede added that he had been surprised by the change of decision but that it was a good result for Bede, with classrooms and study spaces to create a better, more sustainable, learning environment capable of delivering high quality education and training. The Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure

highlighted that discussions with the DfE had continued since the bid's initial rejection and that, within hours of this announcement, Richard Shaw had already developed several options for the implementation plan. He confirmed that the group had until 23 March 2022 to accept the funding offer.

The Chair of the Capital Group outlined key themes from meetings, including members' firm commitment to the priorities of the Group's Property Strategy, with a long-term solution for NETA the key focus. He added that the initial rejection of funding for the Bede project had been disappointing and, that although this week's decision had been positive, the tight timescale would add an element of risk; the Capital Group would continue to provide detailed oversight. He particularly highlighted discussions at an early Capital Group meeting about making sure that NETA would have the facilities to attract and encourage women into engineering.

The Chief Executive added that the Capital Group meeting on 29th March would be an extended session with presentations from each college principal and the Managing Director NETA on curriculum intent; he also highlighted the role of the Finance and Employment Committee in considering the financial implications of the capital projects, bringing all the information together to understand the group's financial sustainability over the next three to five years. The Chair of the Finance and Employment Committee agreed that projects evolved rapidly but that governors should be confident of the Group Executive Director Finance's oversight; she added that she and the Vice Chair of the Corporation were planning to meet with the Group Executive Director Finance to discuss the financial implications and modelling in more detail.

Governors **noted** the update and **agreed** the acceptance of the offered grant funding for Bede which would be subject to further oversight by the Governors' Capital Group.

Agenda Item 13 – Governance Issues

22/26 13.1 – Corporation Vice Chair appointment

The Clerk explained that, at their last meeting, the Search and Governance Committee had recommended the job description, process and timescale for the appointment of a Corporation Vice Chair from 1 August 2022, as outlined in the circulated report. She added that the deadline for applications would be 5th May and that the Corporation Vice Chair would be happy to discuss the post with any governors interested. Applications would then be considered by the Search and Governance Committee who were hoping for a good field of candidates.

Governors:

- i) **agreed** the Corporation Vice Chair role description;
- ii) **agreed** the process, including timescales, for Corporation Vice Chair appointment;
- iii) **noted** that the invitation to apply for Corporation Vice Chairship by the deadline of 5th May 200 and that any candidates would have the opportunity to discuss the role with the current Corporation Vice Chair as part of the application process.

22/27 13.2 – Governance Documents

The Clerk presented the circulated report which presented learning walkthrough guidance, including a proposed feedback form, and a revised version of the Governors' Code of Conduct as produced by Eversheds. She added that all governors were encouraged to arrange one or more

learning walkthroughs each year and that, for any governor who had difficulties with daytime availability, these could be arranged for evenings.

Governors:

- i) **agreed** the proposed learning walk guidance and, where possible, **committed** to arranging one or more learning walks;
- ii) **reaffirmed** their acceptance of the Code of Conduct for governors.

22/28 13.3 – Governance Update

The Clerk thanked governors for the time commitment in attending Corporation and committee meetings and involvement in training and development opportunities and college events as detailed in the circulated report. She highlighted the new requirement to report on development opportunities undertaken by governors in the Annual Report from this year, 2021-22, and asked governors to notify her or the Governance Support Officer of any activities undertaken. The presentation on governance, prepared as part of the Ofsted contingency plans for the Strategic Conference, had been circulated as an appendix.

The Group Director of Marketing reminded governors that they were invited to attend and present awards at the postponed Christmas Staff Seminar to be held at Stockton Globe on Friday 1st April and the Governance Support Officer agreed to send out a reminder by email the following day.

Governors:

- i) **noted** governor attendance at meetings of the Corporation and its committees in 2021-22 to date;
- ii) **noted** governors' involvement in a range of training and development opportunities, and college group events, and to notify the Clerk of any specific training needs;
- iii) **noted** the update in respect of national governance matters.

22/29 Agenda Item 14 – Strategies and Policies – Business Engagement Strategy

The Group Vice Principal Business, Innovation and Partnerships explained that the strategy had also been included with the Strategic Conference papers and highlighted that it had been reviewed and fully updated for 2021-24 in the light of developments in the FE policy landscape and reflected the group's Tone of Voice. It also aimed to position Etc. strongly with local stakeholders and businesses in the Tees Valley.

Governors **approved** the Business Engagement Strategy 2021-24.

All meeting officials, with the exception of the Group Director of HR, the Clerk to the Corporation and the Governance Support Officer, left the meeting.

22/30 Agenda Item 10.7 – Selection Panel meetings held on 20 January, 17 February and 3 March 2022

This item was deemed confidential to governors (excluding student governors) and is included in the Confidential Appendix.

22/31 Agenda Item 15 – Any Other Business

There were no items of additional business.

22/32 Agenda Item 16 – 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 3, 5, 7, 10.1.1, 10.7 and 12 which were considered commercial in confidence, and the Appendix to Item 2 which included personal information. Minutes would be made available following approval and consideration at the next meeting.

22/33 Agenda Item 17 – Date, time and venue of next meeting

Governor Workshop: Thursday 28 April 2022, 5.30 pm, on Teams

FE Corporation meeting: Thursday 12 May 2022, 5.30 pm, Redcar and Cleveland College (H202)

22/34 Agenda Item 18 - Key Themes

- Presentation on the Student Bursary scheme and variety of ways in which the group offered positive support to students suffering financial hardship
- Ratified the appointment of Lilly Crisp as a student governor for a term not exceeding four years
- Update on the Local Skills Improvement Plan and the recent strategic conversation with the Education and Skills Funding Agency
- Considered a careers update, including detailed internal progression data and follow up activity with learners progressing to the same or a lower level
- Approved the Gender Pay Gap data for upload to the Government portal and publication of a 'public facing' statement for the Etc. website
- Agreed to suspend the Corporation Chair appraisal process for the current year and an informal review of Vice Chair performance for 2021-22; agreed the process for appointing a Corporation Vice Chair from 1st August 2022
- Agreed the Strategic Goals and Priorities for 2022-23
- Agreed acceptance of the offered grant funding for Bede Sixth Form College and noted that oversight would be through the Governors' Capital Group, with further financial scrutiny by the Finance and Employment Committee
- Reaffirmed acceptance of the Code of Conduct for governors
- Approved the Business Engagement Strategy for 2021-24

(The meeting ended at 7.30 pm)

Approved at a meeting held on 12th May 2022