



Minutes of: HLNSC Board of Governors

Date: Tues 12th Dec 2023 2.30pm **Location:** Principal's Office

Present: Alan Layng (Chair), Julia Evans, Ben Greenwood (Staff Governor), David Williams (Principal/CEO), Gillian Herbert, Jeremy Nicholls, Laura Johnston, Toby Kinnaird, Tony Bramley

Attending: Debra Baldwin (Director of Personnel), Jo Ricketts (Deputy Principal), Ed Gwillim (Director of Finance), Rebecca Semple (Clerk to Governors)

Quoracy: Meeting was quorate

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Wioletta Sevry (Student Governor), Krista Price (Staff Governor)
The Chair updated the Board that two governors have recently resigned for personal reasons, and S&G Committee are actively seeking applicants.
2. **Declarations of Interest** - none
3. **Minutes of last meeting**
 - a. **Minutes of meeting held 17th October 2023** – minutes approved as a true and accurate record
 - b. **Matters arising**
 - Chair proposed action log to be used for Board meetings going forward
Action: Clerk
 - Safeguarding policy to be sent out via Smartlog following filtering and monitoring being incorporated – action outstanding
Action: Director of Personnel
 - Conflict of interest forms - Clerk to follow up
Action: Clerk
 - RAAC: EG updated that ESFA consultant has advised no RAAC on site
4. **New Appointments (recommended by Search & Governance Committee)**
 - a. Ben Greenwood (Staff Governor) – application noted
Decision: Board agreed to approve this appointment
 - b. Student Governor (Wioletta Sevry) – application noted
Decision: Board agreed to approve this appointment
 - c. Student Governors – the Board noted that a vacancy continues to exist for a second Student Governor.
Action: Clerk to progress recruitment for second student governor
5. **Report from the Principal**

The Principal provided information to the Board on a number of key strategic and operational matters.

 - a. **Key Meetings and Events**

The Principal outlined a number of key events that had arisen since the previous meeting. particular note were the following:

The WCF's (Worshipful Company of Farriers) loss of EPA (End Point Assessor) status and subsequent delay in the appointment of a replacement. Members discussed the impact this will have on timely achievement for those apprentices due to complete this year. The increased EPA costs imposed by the new provider were also noted.

The review of Walford College's provision carried out by Landex as part of their annual quality monitoring cycle. Members were pleased to note the successful outcome and thanked those involved in the process.

The Marches LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) Board has confirmed that the organisation will wind down April 2024. The Principal has been assured that this will not impact on the drawdown of grant funding allocated to the current LEP funded project at Holme Lacy College. Confirmation of which organisation will take responsibility for the monitoring of the project's outputs will be sought by the Principal.

Members discussed current curriculum reforms including the newly announced ABS (Advanced British Standard) and its impact on T Level recruitment. Governors expressed concern about the number and frequency of reforms, including the potential for further change that could follow the upcoming general election.

b. Risk Appetite

The Principal requested that Governors consider the College's appetite and management of risk. Members agreed that historically the College had successfully managed a number of significant risks; not least those associated with the mergers of Holme Lacy, Ludlow College, Country Training and North Shropshire College. It was noted that each resulted in growth, improved efficiency and financial security.

Governors discussed how the College's appetite for risk applies to its present, post-merger, position. It was accepted that there is a level of risk required in structuring the College to support more incremental growth. Members suggested that this could be discussed in more detail at a future meeting.

6. Report from the Curriculum and Quality meeting

The Chair of the C&Q Committee reported on discussions from the most recent meeting. Key points for the Board to note included:

Members thanked the Deputy Principal on the work undertaken to review the content of the committee meetings which now include a greater focus on curriculum development. Additionally, it was noted that the presentation of full data sets supported by a headline document that highlights areas of interest was particularly useful.

Committee members discussed student behaviour with particular reference to the actions taken by managers. This included an increased number of disciplinary sanctions issued during the first term.

Members noted that the Annual Safeguarding Plan will now be integrated into the SAR (Self Assessment Report)

The Chair of the Q&C Committee presented the following for discussion and approval:

- QIR (Quality Improvement Report) 2023

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Annual Report 2023
- Annual HE (Higher Education) report 2023
- College Self Assessment Report 2023
- Safeguarding Report and Child Protect Policy (Updated)

Decision – Members agreed to approve each of the reports and policies presented.

The Chair of the C&Q Committee invited members to comment on all other reports received by the committee.

7. Report from the Finance and Employment Committee

The Chair of the F&E Committee highlighted key discussions from the most recent meeting. These included an update from the Director of Personnel on the recruitment and retention of staff. It was noted that the new Student Support pay structure had been successful resulting in improved staffing levels.

Members Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31st of July 2023: The Chair of the F&E Committee reported that the College's Members Report and Financial Statements had been reviewed by the committee and requested that the Board approve the final draft and confirm agreement that the College remains a going concern.

Decision – Members agreed to approve the Members Report and Financial Statements

Decision – Members agreed and approved that the College remains a going concern

The Chair of the F&E Committee invited members to comment on all other reports received by the committee.

8. Report from the Audit Committee

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported on discussions with the external auditors, Mazars. It was pleasing to note that their work resulted in a clean audit with no issues.

The College's internal auditors, TIAA, reported a judgement of 'limited assurance' for Cyber Security. Members questioned the Colleges approach to this. The Director of Finance confirmed that the level of resource required to undertake this work is currently under review.

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented the following for discussion and approval:

- Management Represent Letters
- External Auditors Report
- Internal Auditors Report
- ACOP Regularity Self-Assessment
- Internal Auditors Annual Plan

Decision – Governors agreed to receive and approve each of the reports

The Chair of the Audit Committee invited members to comment on all other reports received by the committee.

9. Report from the S&G (Search and Governance) Committee

The Chair of the S&G Committee reported that the Governor self-assessments are complete. The results will be used to support future development activities, including induction, and inform Governor recruitment.

Committee membership was discussed. It was agreed that particular attention should be paid to the membership of the Audit Committee.

The upcoming governance review was discussed. Members were informed that the work will be undertaken by Rob Lawson, a National Leader for Governance.

The implications of the ONS' (Office for National Statistics) decision to designate FE (Further Education) colleges as public sector was discussed. The Chair of the S&G Committee requested that each committee reviews its terms of reference to take account of the changes, including additional responsibilities outlined in the Government's Managing Public Money guidance.

Action – All committees to review their Terms of Reference

10. Any Other Business

a. **Governor Induction Pack:** A new governor enquired about the availability of a Governor Induction Pack. The Chair confirmed that the Clerk is in the process of developing a central repository of information.

11. Date and Time of the Next Meeting – 23/4/24 at 4pm (following Governors' Workshop - 2.30pm)

12. Confidential Items (Separate Agenda)

Minutes approved by: Date: