

CHAIR APPROVED

The Corporation of New College Durham

**Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation
held on 28 September 2023**

Present:

Christine Warren (Chair)
Andy Broadbent
Joy Brindle
Chris Patterson
Emily Baxter
Stephen King
Suzanne Slater
Allen Eccles
Mark Gomersall
Davey Benson
Alice Tomlinson

Apologies:

Ian Green
Joyce Drummond-Hill
Ben Fisher

In attendance:

Karl Fairley (Deputy Chief Executive)
Alison Maynard (Deputy Principal)
Paul Bradley (Chief Finance Officer)
Adele Dowson (Vice Principal)
Andy Stephenson (Vice Principal)
Peter Morrison (Vice Principal)
Colleen Peters (Vice Principal)
Caroline Winter (Head of Governance and Corporation Secretary)

Action

23/97 Chair's introduction and starred items

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that this was the first meeting for new Corporation members Alice Tomlinson and Suzanne Slater. The Chair also welcomed student Moss White who was observing the early part of the meeting having expressed interest in the vacant role of FE student governor.

The Chair reminded members to declare their interests in any item of business to be discussed at the meeting. No interests were declared.

Members **confirmed** that they did not require any further discussion about the starred agenda items C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, J1 and J2.

23/98 Apologies for absence were received from Ian Green, Joyce Drummond-Hill and Ben Fisher.

23/99 Minutes of previous meeting (Paper A)

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2023 were **agreed** as accurate and signed by the Chair.

23/100 Matters arising

23/79 - a summary of the KPIs to be reviewed following the members' briefing discussion had been prepared to inform the Autumn Committee discussions and would be circulated to members.

23/90 – the Chair reminded members to consider their networks for potential routes to explore in support of future recruitment to the Corporation. It was also noted that expressions of interest would be sought in the current term for the role of SEND governor.

23/96 – guidance notes had been circulated to all members to support the move to College email accounts and paperless meetings. The Chair thanked the staff responsible for producing the notes.

Emily Baxter joined the meeting at 4.13pm.

23/101 Principal's Report (Paper B)

This item is recorded confidentially under minute 23/101a.

Moss White left the meeting at 4.30pm.

23/102 Receipt of Committee minutes and verbal reports from chairs:

Higher Education Quality Curriculum & Students Committee – (Papers C1* and C2*) – the minutes of the meeting of 26 June 2023 were received.

Audit Committee (Papers C3*, C4*, C5* and C6*) - the minutes and of the meetings of 19 June 2023 and 11 September 2023 were received. Committee members advised that the 11 September meeting had considered the final internal audit reports of the 2022/23 work programme before discussing the approach to appointing a new internal audit service provider.

23/104 Partnerships Update and Options (Paper D)

This item is recorded confidentially under minute 23/104a.

23/105 Update on academic performance 2022/23 and enrolments (Paper E)

This item is recorded confidentially under minute 23/105a.

23/106 Students' Union Report (Paper F)

Alice Tomlinson presented Paper F, the Students' Union report. Members were updated on the FE welcome week 'festival style' activities with a range of stalls, external visitors and group talks to support induction activities and promote the enrichment programme. HE welcome week included a range of talks outlining the services and support available from the College as well as expectations of the College and of students. Free hoodies were provided to HE students for the first time this year and members noted that the change to the HE Student Study Support Scheme and the HE quiet study room had been well received. Members were updated on the loss of income from Totum cards due to a change in the scheme this year but received assurance that managers were looking at how to address the relatively small shortfall and subsidise and support enrichment activities so that students would not miss out.

Alice highlighted the Macmillan coffee morning scheduled for the mall the following day and invited members to attend.

Members thanked Alice for the report and welcomed the wide range of activity in which the Students' Union was involved.

23/107 Annual Review of Sustainability Commitments (Paper G)

Karl Fairley presented Paper G, which outlined the proposed content of an annual report on sustainability efforts across the College.

Members noted the aim of an annual report was to bring together the key themes and activities together in a single high-level report, and demonstrate how sustainability was embedded across the College and within the curriculum. Members sought assurance that the work to produce the report would be a useful exercise for the College and Karl confirmed that the value would be in coordinating corporate and curriculum activity at a strategic level for the first time to provide governors with an overview of key sustainability efforts and enable them to monitor progress. Members discussed whether an annual or termly update would be preferable, and it was agreed to develop an approach that aligned with existing workload and the Schedule of Business.

Members welcomed the proposal to provide governors with a strategic overview and commented that it was very topical in the context of new reporting standards, demonstrated much wider thinking beyond estates and facilities considerations and was likely to evolve into something very useful for a range of internal and external stakeholders.

Members **approved** the creation of a high-level report to Corporation to provide a strategic overview of key areas as set out in the report.

23/108 Update from Careers Education and Guidance Governor (Paper H)

Stephen King presented Paper H, which followed his termly meeting to discuss the College's careers provision. Members noted the progress in relation to personal guidance provided to learners (Gatsby Benchmark 8) and the positive feedback from students on their individual sessions. Members also noted updates on events in Term 1 including the Higher Education Progression Event planned for October and Experience Days for year 11 students to highlight the College's facilities and provide taster sessions in chosen subject areas.

Stephen commented that he was impressed at each meeting at the amount of work on careers provision and was assured that the College had both met and exceeded the requirements and expectations in relation to careers education and guidance provision.

Members **agreed to re-order the remaining agenda items** to consider key items for approval before some members would need to leave the meeting.

23/109 Promotion House (tender returns) (Paper I4)

This item is recorded confidentially under minute 23/109a.

23/110 Capital Projects Update (Paper I5)

Members reviewed Paper I5, which updated on the College's major capital projects. Members were impressed at the quality of the completed Hub building and suggested arranging visits by local schools to consider the College's facilities as a route into HE. In response to a member's question, it was confirmed that students had reacted very positively to the new facility.

Members noted progress on The Hub, the Artificial Grass (4G) Pitch Project and Promotion House.

23/111 Financial Monitoring to 31 July 2023 (Paper I1)

This item is recorded confidentially under minute 23/111a.

23/112 Financial Monitoring – Westfirst Limited to 31 July 2023 (Paper I2)

Paul Bradley presented Paper I2, which detailed the financial position of Westfirst Limited to July 2023. The report identified a profit of £958 for the period and a net liability position of £3,819.

Members noted that the financial position remained subject to the auditor's fee for completion of the Corporation tax calculation, and it was therefore anticipated to see a loss for the year as expected.

In response to a member's question, Paul confirmed that the annual audit was progressing positively.

Members noted the Westfirst Limited financial reports to 31 July 2023.

23/113 Financial Benchmarking Data (Paper I3)

Paul Bradley presented Paper I3, which provided financial benchmarking information and assessed the College's financial performance against colleges with similar demographics and catchments in the North East.

Members noted the comparative position in relation to: turnover, profit/deficit before other gains/losses, investment in assets, solvency, EBITDA, borrowing, regional financial health outcomes and the national picture of college financial health. The College continued to perform well against all financial indicators and remained financially 'Outstanding' as the highest scoring college in the region.

Emily Baxter left the meeting at 6.01pm.

Paul confirmed that overall the College's comparative position was as expected and members noted that the 'outstanding' rating had assisted in the successful North East Battery Training and Skills Academy bid.

Members welcomed the strong financial position and noted the College's Financial Benchmarking data for 2021/22.

23/114 Written Resolutions passed since the last Corporation meeting (Papers J1 & J2)

Members noted that the following Written Resolutions had been passed since the last Corporation meeting:

- Approval of Appointment of Corporation Member (passed 12 July 2023)
- Policy and Procedure on Safeguarding Young People and Adults at Risk (passed 17 August 2023)

23/115 Any other urgent business – none.

23/116 Date of next meeting: 9 November 2023

Signed.....Date.....