

## MINUTES OF FULL CORPORATION MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 28 MARCH 2023 – 14:00HRS VIA TEAMS & ELLESMERE PORT CAMPUS

## Governors in attendance in person or via Teams as stated:

Dame Pat Bacon	(PB)	Chair of Governors	Ellesmere Port
Mr Fintan Bradley	(FB)	Chair of Audit & Risk Committee	Ellesmere Port
Mr Mike Braun	(MB)		Ellesmere Port
Mrs Debbie Bryce	(DB)		Ellesmere Port
Mr Len Closs	(LC)	Chair of Curriculum & Quality Committee	Ellesmere Port
Mrs Lesley Davies	(LD)	Chair of Governors Designate	Ellesmere Port
Mr Jasbir Dhesi	(JSD)	Principal/CEO	Ellesmere Port
Ms Isla Douglas	(ID)		Ellesmere Port
Mr Jerry Green	(JG)		Ellesmere Port
Mrs Sue Harrison	(SHar)		Ellesmere Port
Mr Sean Herbert	(SHer)		Ellesmere Port
Mr John Kiely	(JK)	Chair of Finance & Resources Committee	Ellesmere Port
Mr Davinder Lotay	(DSL)		Ellesmere Port
Mr Kenny Murray	(KM)		Ellesmere Port
Mr Clive Roberts	(CR)		Ellesmere Port
Mrs Sharon Wallace	(SW)		Ellesmere Port
In attendance:			
Mrs Michelle Huntley	(Clerk)	Clerk to the Board	Ellesmere Port
Mr Gareth Jones	(GJ)	Chief Financial Officer	Ellesmere Port
Mrs Helen Nellist	(HN)	Deputy Principal/Deputy CEO	Ellesmere Port
Mrs Ruth Szolkowska	(RS)	Vice Principal Innovation, Curriculum & Quality	Ellesmere Port

#### **PART A MINUTES**

Minute Reference	
FC 12/23	Apologies for absence and declarations of interest
	The Chair welcomed Ms Louise Tompkins, DfE immersion programme guest.
	Attendance was as recorded above. Apologies had been received from Mrs Gillian Taylor, Mr Shane Guildford and Mrs Carleen Osborne.
	Mrs Helen Nellist will leave the meeting after the break.
	There were no declarations of interest made.
FC 13/23	Regional Skills Update
	The Chair welcomed Mr David Brennan, independent consultant, to speak to Board about Regional Skills. David has worked with the Local Employers Partnership (LEP) in the past. The information shared by David is relevant to the College in respect of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the College's Accountability Agreement.

David shared a presentation with governors to give context about employment policy & the local, regional and national labour market. He covered the wider context; FE and skills policy context; local and LSIP priorities; and key local labour market issues.

These elements will be included and referenced in the College's Accountability Agreement document. This will articulate how the College will respond to key local partners including requirements identified in the local skills improvement plan, plus regional and national priorities.

There is a plethora of changes within FE and skills policy including: LSIPs, Lifetime Learning Guarantee, IoTs, Higher Technical qualifications, T Levels, Skills bootcamps/returnerships' (getting people in their early 50s back into the workforce), and devolution.

Within the local area there is big shortfall in L3 skills currently and this shortage is likely to get worse. Health and Care are two areas where there are significant skills shortages. Within Cheshire, youngsters not on FSM (free school meals) do not do as well as they should do compared to the national average. Ellesmere Port and Crewe are both local areas of high social deprivation. The meeting noted that Adult FE and apprenticeships show large gender disparities at all levels. Males dominate Engineering, Construction, ICT. Females dominate Retail and Commercial Enterprise, and Health, Public Services and Care. There are also significant gender disparities in 16-18 apprenticeships and 16-18 FE, with males dominating starts in Engineering, Construction, and ICT; and females dominating starts in Retail and Commercial Enterprise, and in Health, Public Services and Care.

#### The meeting noted the LSIP emerging priorities:

- **Manufacturing:** The sector employed 42k people in C&W in 2022 and it contributed 17.5% to Cheshire and Warrington's GVA.
- **Health and Care:** The sector employed 58k people in Cheshire and Warrington in 2022 and it contributed 6% to Cheshire and Warrington's GVA.
- **Life Sciences:** The Manufacture of Pharmaceutical Preparations and Manufacture of Basic Pharmaceutical Products subsectors employ 5k residents in C&W 7 times above the national average.
- Low Carbon: There are c4k people employed in the low carbon and renewable energy economy in C&W. This is forecast to grow at least fourfold by 2030.
- **Digital:** Almost every sector and occupational route has a growing (and changing) requirement for digital skills.

# Q: Given the way the College is set up and funded, is there tension between being fleet of foot and the need for the College to respond to L3 programmes? A one-year feed-in is too short-term for a College to switch to meet changing priorities.

**A:** The identified areas are what the economy needs, but these are not necessarily what learners want to do. Work needs to be done at primary level to influence learners. We can however adjust course content and delivery to include employability skills, and we are taking ownership to make learners more ready for employment.

**A:** There are multiple funding streams for adults and there is confusion for learners to know what they are eligible to claim to meet skills needs effectively.

**A:** The CE working population is 19+ and the funding methodology is mismatched between qualifications and skills. We need to work with the adult market in CE & CWaC.

# Q: The same areas are showing deprivation year after year. Schools receive massive investment, but we see no change. Are the LSIP priorities realistic for a single year? Are they sufficiently focussed to be achieved?

**A:** The LSIP priorities will become more focussed as further data is processed. Some businesses are not represented in the LSIP data collected so far. Careers education is critical at primary level to inform youngsters of employment opportunities.

**A:** On a positive note, we are seeing a significant increase in primary and secondary schools/college involvement. Youngsters can see learning facilities and meet people from different areas and this can provide inspiration to them. The Chester campus would like to host some involvement with primary/secondary learners in the same way that Ellesmere Port and Crewe offer this involvement to local youngsters.

The meeting moved to discuss the College's Skills and Employer Stakeholder Strategy.

#### FC 14/23

#### Skills & Employer Stakeholder Strategy

The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. Mrs Helen Nellist, Deputy Principal & Deputy CEO, asked the meeting to note that the document highlights the key elements for the College to focus on, all of which were reflected and underpinned by David Brennan's presentation. Governors are invited to share their thoughts at this stage and to provide feedback in the weeks/months to come. This document will link to the College's Annual Accountability Agreement Statement. A final Strategy document will be presented for approval at the 06 July 2023 Full Corporation meeting.

#### The meeting noted that:

- In developing the Strategy, the College has worked in collaboration with Lightcast (industry experts in labour market analytics), David Brennan (specialist consultant in skills and labour market data analyst) and employer representative bodies including local Chambers of Commerce, local authorities and the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- The Skills and Employer Stakeholder Strategy will form an integral part of the College's Annual Accountability Agreement Statement. The new Annual Accountability Agreement Statement forms part of the wider set of reforms underway to transform the skills system.
- The Strategy reflects the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Skills Report 2022 and the emerging themes coming out of the new employer-led Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). Once the LSIP is published, a review will be undertaken and any additional areas for consideration will be incorporated into the action plan.
- The Strategy underpins the College's Curriculum Planning process. It identifies key areas for consideration and reviews the College's response to local challenges and provides a road map for review, action, and monitoring. The College's approach to engagement with employers and stakeholders is also set out.
- Key issues identified that the College needs to respond to include:
  - o Level 3-4/5 Skills
  - o Low Carbon
  - o Sectors with high unemployment
  - o Life Sciences
  - o Gender disparities
  - Manufacturing
  - o Digital Skills
  - Health & Social Care
- The development of formal advisory boards will operate across sectors, geographical areas, large employers, small medium enterprises, and wider stakeholders. These will endorse, inform, and shape the curriculum and sequence delivery of training of skills, knowledge, and behaviours.
- Q: This is a great document, and it will be good to review it annually. It does read as if we haven't done anything. I 2.2 talks of advisory boards, however. these already exist in many curriculum areas. Perhaps the language needs tweaking to reflect that we have already done a lot in many areas and the strategy is building on this?
- **A:** That is a valid comment. We have been doing this for years and we will tweak the language to reflect this.
- Q: There is no reference to Visual and Performing Arts in the document and yet the cultural industries are very valuable for the nation. The cultural life in Chester has provided many opportunities for learners and is important.
- **A:** The omission of some curriculum areas is an unintended consequence of focussing on other areas where we need to do work. There are several curriculum areas that are not mentioned. The College has good links with many employers including in the cultural arts sector.
- **A:** The July version will be updated and will include reference to high volume jobs.
- **A:** We have only briefly mentioned freelance and self-employment opportunities, and these are important for the local/regional context.

Q: The Board noted in its recent External Board Review the need for the Board and employers to communicate. Advisory boards are one tool to facilitate this communication/interaction. In section 12, can we make a clearer statement about governor participation in advisory boards?

A: Yes.

Action: Clerk to share dates of link area advisory board meetings for governors to attend. Action: HN to provide updated Skills & Employer Strategy document to Board in July.

Q: An executive summary of the Strategy would be useful. It would be even better if it included the great engagement which already happens. I am interested to note that neither this Strategy document nor David's presentation made mention of hybrid working and the impact this is having in recruits' expectations. The desire for hybrid working is also creating employment gaps.

**A:** We know from analysing workplace data about people's journeys to work that we are still 25% below pre-pandemic travelling times/data. Remote working is prevalent in some sectors and many staff are comfortable using Teams, and indeed expect to be able to do so. There is little or no data available since Oct 2022. Some sectors cannot accommodate hybrid working and this is impacting peoples' job choices.

Q: Another key area to be included in our Strategy is the need to get our youngsters conversant with IT packages. Are we giving all our learners the digital skills that employers want?

**A:** As a direct result of IT GCSE not being funded in schools many schools have stopped basic Word and PowerPoint skills training. There is a need to provide skills training for our learners.

**A:** We have identified that we want to provide all learners with digital skills awareness within our courses. By raising their awareness of digital skills, learners can take opportunities to develop their personal digital skillset. When learners are preparing/delivering their coursework they are using digital skills to produce their presentations or write a report. Employers want these skills, and we need to help learners identify which skills they have.

- Q: Should the College look at a digital entitlement for learners? Are there any free courses from Microsoft which learners can access?
- Q: How would digital learning be introduced for learners? Would A level students have to do skills learning in tutorials or in free periods?

**A:** I think there is a chance for us to raise the awareness of all learners to develop their personal digital skills and then signpost them to find out about Microsoft skills badges that are available.

**A:** It is difficult for staff to plan digital tuition as digital packages are constantly changing. We want to teach learners the skills to do things for themselves. Learners need to know what to do when they don't know what to do. They need problem solving skills.

Q: This is a useful paper; please can a word copy be shared with governors so that they can annotate it? Can the table at 9.1, the success matrix, be more quantified?

**A:** Yes. We didn't want to put in a number until the College has completed the root and branch analysis. In future years we will quantify the success matrix.

Action: Clerk to share a copy of the Skills & Employer Strategy document in Word format on GovernorHub for governors to annotate and return to HN by 30 April 2023.

The Board has already agreed to delegate authority to the Chairs' Committee to sign off the Accountability Agreement Statement for submission by 31 May 2023.

The Chair thanked David Brennan for his report and presentation. If anyone has further questions for DB they can be channelled via the Clerk.

As this agenda item over-ran the Chair moved the meeting straight to the CEO's presentation.

#### FC 15/23 Chief Executive's Update

There was no paper for this item as agreed previously with the Board. Following the External Board Review it was agreed by the Board that the Chief Executive would use this Board update

to inform all members of the Board of progress being made with one curriculum risk and one non-curriculum risk. This full minute was recorded in Part B as minute FC 15/23.

Mr Jasbir Dhesi, Principal and CEO, presented to the meeting and the following points were noted:

- The latest budget brought no changes to overall tax and spending plans for the College.
   There have been minor changes to College funding. The new 'returnerships' element was noted.
- Devolution is more likely to happen in Cheshire & Warrington now there is no need for an elected Mayor.
- T-Levels: The government has withdrawn some T Level funding. This will affect 16-18 funding for CCSW.
- The AEB allocation is yet to be confirmed.
- HE in FE has continued to decline. CCSW is moving more to higher technical qualifications: L4 and L5 plus T Levels and skills.
- Capital transformation funding was confirmed today. It must be used for refreshing estate. Following the ONS reclassification of Colleges, they no longer need to compete for funding for estates improvements. Allocation is based on learner numbers.
- CCSW will receive £810,764 in 2023-24 and £1,642,936 in 2024-25.
- In March, the College paid back pay to current staff employed on 01 August 2023.
- 2023-24 pay demands from the unions have been shared by AoC. A non-binding recommendation will be made by the AoC after 11 May 2023.

The meeting adjourned for a 5minute comfort break, after which all governors returned to the meeting. LW and HN left the meeting.

#### FC 16/23 Report of Chair of the Board

The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. In the interests of time-keeping Dame Pat Bacon, Chair of Governors asked if there were any questions relating to the paper. As there weren't any questions the meeting moved to the next agenda item.

# FC 17/23 Minutes of meeting 15 December 2022 and 27 January 2023 and matters arising from previous minutes

The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. The minutes were reviewed for accuracy and approved.

It was RESOLVED to accept the Part A minutes from 15 December 2022 and 27 January 2023 and the Chair signed the minutes. Part B minutes will be approved in Item 15.

The action log from the 15 December 2022 and 27 January 2023 was reviewed and the following was noted:

- 118 Safeguarding Annual Report inclusion of additional information. On target for timely completion.
- 15 (Accountability Agreement), 16 (EBR action plan) and 23 (board training) **ALL on target for timely completion.**
- 21 The Clerk has started compiling the spreadsheet for individual completion, but on reflection it will be easier for the current system to continue until the end of this academic year and then it is proposed that the new training recording system will start from September 2023. **This was AGREED at the meeting.**

#### FC 18/23 | Management Accounts Update

The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. Mr Gareth Jones, Chief Financial Officer reported to the meeting and points from the executive summary were noted. This full minute was recorded as Part B FC 18/23.

#### FC 19/23 Report from Committee Chairs

Copies of all committee minutes are shared with all governors via the governance portal, GovernorHub. The meeting noted the paper included in the Board pack and noted each Committee Chair's verbal report of approvals, decisions, and key points from their respective meetings. Whilst all governors were present for all reports, some points and recommendations have been recorded in Part B minute FC 19/23.

#### **Audit & Risk Committee Report (07 Mar)**

Mr Fintan Bradley asked the meeting to note the following points:

- The Committee has seen the implementation of the new 4Risk management system and recognises the considerable positive progress with risk management made by the College.
- APPROVED Committee's Terms of Reference
- NOTED Internal Audit of subcontracting (16-19 funding assurance) at PPVC
- The Committee has been assured of the good relationship with RSM and noted the positive views of their work and how it has helped CCSW.
- Noted that the ESFA audit was completely clean in terms of no clawback. This gives assurance that the College's application/admission/funding processes are very good and governors offer their thanks to staff involved in those processes.
- NOTED H&S Report I RIDDOR incident.
- NOTED Annual Board Effectiveness work to date including production and circulation of Educational Character and Definition of Governor and Executives Responsibilities documents.

#### **Curriculum & Quality Committee Report (14 Mar)**

Mr Len Closs asked the meeting to note the points covered in Paper 09a from the Curriculum & Quality Committee. Points to note are:

- The Committee APPROVED the Curriculum Planning Policy which references governor involvement in curriculum planning.
- The College re-evaluates its SAR vI in March using available benchmarked national data. This work has been done and after comparing the data it has been decided to retain the SAR vI this year.

#### Chairs' Committee Report (12 Jan, 07 Feb)

Dame Pat Bacon asked the meeting to note the points listed in Paper 09a and the following:

- The Committee discussed concerns about staffing.
- The governor link activities are being undertaken conscientiously.
- The Board need to minute that Written Resolution 04 was sent to eligible governors who voted unanimously to pay 4.5% pay award to staff still in employment on Monday 13 February 2023, backdated to 01 August 2022.
- The Committee discussed the need to progress the recruitment of Chair of C&Q and the recruitment of an Associate Governor with current HE expertise.
- The Annual Strategic Conversation meeting with DfE will be held on 11 May at EP campus and will involve the Chairs' Committee.
- The Committee reviewed and APPROVED the Meetings Schedule for 2023-24. Several
  changes have been proposed so governors are asked to please check and advise the
  Clerk of any issues.

- As a Board we use a committee structure, so governors are reminded of the need to trust that Board colleagues scrutinise and challenge data at Committee level before making recommendations for Board approval.
- Board membership recommendations are contained in the Corporation Membership agenda item.

# Finance & Resources Committee Report (21 Mar)

Mr John Kiely's report and recommendations were recorded as Part B minute FC 19/23.

#### FC 20/23

# **Barclays Loan Covenant Letter of Waiver & Variation**

The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. Mr John Kiely, referenced Paper 09 in the Board Pack which included a link to the relevant paper 09 scrutinised by the Finance & Resources Committee on 21 March 2023 (230321FR). This full minute was recorded as Part B. minute FC 20/23.

# FC 21/23 | Corporation Membership

The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. The Chair advised the meeting that the Chairs' Committee discuss the re-appointment of governors and consider their individual attendance records; commitment to the College over and above attendance at formal meetings; quality of contribution to discussion at meetings and the value of the member's expertise, experience and/or interests to the work of the governing body. The Chairs' Committee have discussed and considered the re-appointment of Mr Clive Roberts, Mr John Kiely and Mr Kenny Murray. A copy of the summary information considered was included in the Board paper.

#### Mr Clive Roberts left the meeting.

The meeting noted the following from Paper 10:

• Mr Clive Roberts (CR) is a qualified accountant and has a keen eye for detail. He provided a forensic review of the Financial Statements prior to their submission to Board in December 2022. CR undertook additional training on the LGPS provided by the CFO. CR has taken time to meet with all the executive team to develop his understanding of the FE sector. As a new Associate Governor CR has endeavoured to get to grip with the extensive technical jargon associated with the FE sector. CR has read his papers in advance of meetings and has asked many questions. 100% attendance overall.

The Board APPROVED the re-appointment of Mr Clive Roberts as an Associate Member with effect from 01 May 2023 for a 1 year term of office up to 30 April 2024.

**CR** returned to the meeting and the Chair informed him of his re-appointment.

#### Mr John Kiely left the meeting.

• Mr John Kiely (JK) was recruited in March 2022 to take on the role of Chair of Finance & Resources Committee. JK has settled well as a Board member, embracing the buddy/mentor support of GT during his first year. JK has joined regular telephone conversations/ meetings with the CFO and has offered both support and challenge. JK adds value by contributing to discussions in meetings and providing challenge, relevant advice, and guidance about financial matters. JK undertook additional training on the LGPS provided by the CFO. JK has taken time to meet with all the executive team to develop his understanding of the FE sector. JK has attended several celebratory events during the year and gave the Vote of Thanks at the Freemen & Guilds event in EP. JK has started shadowing PB in the role of Link Governor to the Engineering and Construction curriculum areas. JK is a qualified accountant and shares his extensive financial knowledge in Committee meetings – giving guidance and sharing examples of

- good practice. JK prepares thoroughly for meetings and has started to add value with his observations of how CCSW can continue to improve our financial systems and processes. His overall attendance rate to date is 86.66%.
- The Chairs' Committee have noted the benefits of mentoring/buddying particularly for a new Committee Chair and this approach will be adopted for the new Curriculum & Quality Committee Chair once appointed.

The Board APPROVED the re-appointment of Mr John Kiely as an External Member with effect from 01 April 2023 for a 4year term of office up to 31 March 2027.

**JK returned to the meeting** and the Chair informed him of his re-appointment.

#### Mr Kenny Murray left the room.

• Mr Kenny Murray (KM) is the link governor with the Marketing function, and he was involved in the production of the College's recent Marketing Strategy. He meets termly with his area link. KM was asked to move from the Audit & Risk Committee to the Finance & Resources Committee at the end of 20/21 to use his commercial experience to provide challenge and support during meetings. KM brings a shrewd commercial angle to his meeting contributions in both F&R and RemCo meetings. KM is a committed member of the Finance & Resources (F&R) Committee and offers both financial and commercial challenge during the meetings. KM prepares thoroughly for meetings and whether his attendance is remote or in person, his engagement and contributions to meetings is exemplary. His overall attendance rate for the last 18months was 68.76%.

The Board APPROVED the re-appointment of Mr Kenny Murray as an External Member with effect from 01 September 2023 for a 4year term of office up to 31 August 2027.

Board members noted the recruitment process being used to find a Chair of Curriculum & Quality Committee and that the AoC's costs associated with this recruitment will be £3495 + VAT. The Chairs' Committee have started the recruitment process for an Associate Governor with HE expertise.

#### FC 22/23 Governance Meetings Schedule 2023-24

The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. The Chairs' Committee reviewed and approved the Meetings Schedule for 2023-24 and recommend it to the board.

Governors were asked to note several changes have been proposed so governors are asked to please check and advise the Clerk of any issues.

The Board APPROVED the governance meeting schedule for 2023-34

Action: Governors to review the Meetings Schedule for 2023-24 and advise the Clerk of any meeting dates they are not able to attend.

Action: Clerk to send out meeting invitations (including Teams link) for meetings in 2023-24 by 30 June 2023.

#### FC 23/23 Meeting: review and feedback

FB summarised the impact the meeting will have on the College with due regard to the discussions and the decisions taken, namely:

**Intent:** Governors received a comprehensive presentation setting the context regarding the challenges relating to the national and regional economic environment. The presentation highlighted the impact on the skills and labour market.

Governors received a draft strategy (Skills and Employer Stakeholder Strategy) document that sets out how the College intends to respond to the Regional Skills agenda. Implementation: Governors received updates from the executive about staffing, financial and curriculum issues, and the proposals to address the issues discussed. Impact: The Board received feedback on the impact of activities from the Finance & Resource, Audit & Risk, Curriculum and Quality committees. The feedback received continues to demonstrate that the activities of governors continue to have a positive impact on outcomes. FC 24/23 Confidential business to be noted It was noted that whilst all governors have been present for all items discussed at today's meeting several the items covered are of a commercially sensitive nature. The meeting agreed that the Clerk and Principal will identify the items from this meeting to be recorded as commercially sensitive information. Action: JSD and Clerk to identify items from this meeting to be recorded as commercially sensitive information. FC 25/23 Date of future meetings and any other business Thursday 06 July 2023, 14:00hrs, Crewe (NB Barbecue for Governors 17:00hrs) The above meeting will be held in person, with governors having the option to join via Teams by prior agreement with the Clerk. The Chair noted that this is Isla Douglas's last meeting as she is unable to attend the next two meetings due to exams and holiday commitments. The Chair thanked ID for her contribution as a student governor including her input at C&Q and wished her good luck with her exams. Mr Sean Herbert and Ms Isla Douglas left the meeting. FC 26/23 Approval of Part B minutes from 15 December 2022 & 27 January 2023 The minutes were reviewed for accuracy and approved. It was RESOLVED to accept the Part B minutes from 15 December 2022 & 27 January 2023 and the Chair signed the minutes. The Chair thanked all governors for their contributions and wished them all a good Easter break.

Chair's signature: ..... Minutes produced: 30 March 2023

Meeting closed at 16:44hrs

Chair's approval: 05 April 2023 Report made to Corporation, for approval: 06 July 2023