

ACTIVATE LEARNING FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

Meeting date: **13 April 2022**

Venue: **B100, Reading Campus**

PRESENT:

Sue Sturgeon (5/5)
David Goosey (5/5)
Gary Headland (1/1)
Dermot Mathias (5/5)
Pauline Odulinski (5/5)
Andy Stone (5/5)
Kathy Slack (5/5)
Malcolm Wicks (5/5)
Emma Shipp (5/5)
James Voûte (5/5)
Dan Willis (3/3)
Elis Blundell (3/3)
Leshia Chetty (1/1)

Chair of the Corporation
Vice Chair of the Corporation
Chief Executive Officer
As indicated in the minutes

Staff Governor
Student Governor; *as indicated in the minutes*
Appointed under item 1

IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Ball
Cheri Ashby
Faith Hanks
Bernard Grenville-Jones
Fiona Stilwell
Gill Davidson
Jon Adams
Paul Newman

Chief Financial Officer
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Senior Governance Officer
Group Executive Director
Group Executive Director
Group Executive Director
Group Executive Director
Group Executive Director

CLERK:

Perry Perrott

Director of Governance and Clerk to the Corporation

MINUTES

The meeting started at 16:34.

<u>MINUTE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence and Governor Appointments</p> <p>1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to his first meeting as CEO.</p> <p>1.2 Apologies for absence were received from John Cope (2/5), Julia Von Klonowski (3/5) and Henry Chukwu (2/3), and it was noted that Andy Stone would be joining the meeting slightly late.</p> <p>1.3 The Chair informed the Board that Angela Adimora had resigned from the Board due to time commitments, and the Board thanked AA for her contributions.</p> <p>1.4 The Board welcomed Leshia Chetty to the Corporation and approved the Search & Governance Committee's recommendations to appoint LC as a</p>	

MINUTE
NO.

ACTION

Governor and Cathie Prest as a Co-opted Governor, with immediate effect. **All members were agreed.**

2. Declarations of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality

2.1 It was noted that one Student Governor had declared a paid role at Activate Learning as Student Crew. No other member declared any interest, gift, or hospitality.

3. Minutes of the Meetings of 07 February 2022 and 07 March 2022

3.1 The Board considered the minutes of the previous two meetings and the CEO requested that a slight adjustment was made to the February minutes to remove his comments as he was in attendance rather than a Board member at the time.

3.2 Subject to the adjustment to the February minutes, the Board approved the minutes of the meetings of 07 February 2022 and 07 March 2022 as accurate records of the meetings. **All members were agreed.**

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of 07 February 2022 and 07 March 2022

4.1 The Senior Governance Officer provided a verbal update on the matters arising from the February and March meetings, noting that there was one outstanding action.

5. Part II – confidential item

The minutes of this item are recorded under confidential cover.

6. Finance Update

6.1 The Board received the Finance Update report, and the CFO presented a summary of progress against the budget target. It was noted that the forecast indicated the deficit budget of £1.7m would be met and the CFO was confident the required savings would continue to be made for the remainder of the academic year. The Board considered the impact on current staff members of the savings made through recruitment freezes, and whether increased workloads were manageable or would negatively impact staff retention. The CFO advised that pay reviews for staff were being considered where workloads had increased.

6.2 The Board briefly considered the 2022/23 budget, noting that recruitment freezes and cost saving initiatives could not continue into the next academic year. The CFO reminded the Board of the opportunity for increased funding in 2022/23, noting the confidence around achieving this by increasing teaching hours. The Chair asked whether the situation around energy price increases had been considered and was provided with assurance that it had.

6.3 The Staff Governor raised a query within the Finance report in relation to the Waingels site, noting that staff did not seem to be aware of the closure of the site as courses were still being advertised. The CFO noted that the matter should have been communicated to staff and would be investigated.

ACTION: Investigate whether the closure of the Waingels site has been communicated to all staff

CFO

7. Deep Dive – Safeguarding

7.1 The Safeguarding Link Governor (MW) introduced the Deep Dive, noting that the purpose of the session was to demonstrate the progress made within the Safeguarding Team and to ensure the Board were aware of any key risks and mitigations.

The meeting was paused at 17:44 and DM left the meeting. The meeting was reconvened at 17:53 and the Student Governor (EB) joined the meeting.

7.2 The Group Executive Director (PN) delivered a presentation on the background of safeguarding at AL, the implications of the new Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) guidance, changes within the Safeguarding Team and leadership structure, current cases and trends, and an overview of the new online safeguarding system (CPOMS). It was noted that the detailed presentation slides would be shared with the Board after the meeting, via BoardEffect.

7.3 One Governor requested clarity on how safeguarding aligned with diversity and inclusion, and PN assured the Board that all protected characteristics were considered and ongoing initiatives such as LGBTQIA+ groups on every campus were available to support learners. It was also noted that protected characteristics and intersectionality were further analysed through the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee.

7.4 The Board considered whether there was external benchmarking data available to compare safeguarding case numbers to other institutions, however it was noted that this was often difficult due to the sensitivity of cases. It was noted that internal benchmarking across the different campuses would be possible once the CPOMS system was implemented.

7.5 The Board thanked PN for the presentation and commended the progress made around safeguarding, including initiatives such as the 'Speak up, Speak out' campaign.

8. Quality – Improvement Plan Progress

8.1 The Board received the FE and HE Quality Update reports and the Deputy CEO shared a presentation to illustrate progress against the improvement plans and predicted SAR grades. The Deputy CEO highlighted the faculties which were unlikely to achieve the targeted grades: Academic and Professional Studies (AaPS) was predicted a grade 2 (targeted grade 1), Technology was predicted a grade 3 (targeted grade 2), and Landbased was predicted a grade 2 (although a recent peer review had positive outcomes which might help to achieve the grade 1 target). One Governor noted that the success outcomes should be 'SMART' so that they could be better measured and allow Governors to focus on the 'ends'.

8.2 The Board requested assurance on the efforts within the Technology faculty to promote best practice and drive quality and considered whether the national recruitment issues were negatively impacting Technology in particular. It was noted that the HR Team were exploring initiatives to boost recruitment for critical roles, and within the Technology faculty there had been a move to a broader curriculum offer for construction to give a focus on behaviours and promote achievement.

8.3 The Board considered the role of large local employers and whether partnering with employers could increase apprenticeship opportunities. The Board also noted the importance of fulfilling the needs of the communities through learning opportunities, which could be accelerated through local partnerships.

8.4 The Deputy CEO provided an HE update, noting that three campuses had achieved university centre status. It was also noted that a partnership with Middlesex University had been approved to deliver counselling provision, and student satisfaction rates had increased from 23% to 91%.

9. Performance – Empowering Learning

9.1 The Board received the Empowering Learning Targets and Learner Voice Outcomes reports, and the Deputy CEO provided a summary of the headlines. The Learner Outcomes report demonstrated the positive feedback provided by learners at the student conference, however it was noted that attendance at the conference had been limited at some campuses. PN informed the Board of an initiative to rebrand the Student Representative role to promote engagement and

MINUTE
NO.

ACTION

attendance at the conference moving forwards. One Governor suggested the idea of creating 'human libraries', which referred to encouraging groups of different ages and backgrounds to come together and provide more comprehensive feedback.

10. CEO Update

10.1 The CEO provided a verbal update on his first 9 days in the role, noting the success of the induction process and the strength of the Group Executive Team. The CEO summarised his current focus areas, which included working with internal and external communities, preparing for an expected Ofsted visit, promoting consistency across the organisation, and unpacking safeguarding across the group. It was noted that a more comprehensive update would be provided at the Governors' Away Day in May.

11. Health & Safety Link Governor Update

11.1 The Health & Safety Link Governor (AS) provided a verbal update on Health & Safety across the group, noting that priorities included increasing first aiders and fire wardens across all sites, wellness initiatives such as mental health first aiders, and managing increased incidents across the group.

12. For approval:

Use of the Corporation Seal

12.1 The Board approved the two uses of the Corporation Seal, as follows:

- TP1 Deed (21 March 2022)
- Deed of Guarantee (21 March 2022)

All members were agreed.

Policies

12.2 The Board received and approved the Recruitment Policy. **All members were agreed.**

Strategic Risk Register

12.3 The Board received the Strategic Risk Register, which was taken as read, and the CFO noted that there were plans to streamline risk reporting and ensure additional risks such as international activity and cyber security were included. The Chair suggested a deep dive was conducted as part of the process to revise the risk register and improve reporting, and it was also suggested that risks should be included in all Board reports through the revised report template.

ACTION: Review and update the Risk Register before it is presented to the Board in July

CEO

12.4 The Board approved the Strategic Risk Register. **All members were agreed.**

Search & Governance Committee Recommendations

12.5 This item was not covered.

For noting:

12.6 The Board received and noted the following documents:

- Search & Governance Committee minutes – 08 February 2022
- Audit & Risk Committee minutes – 14 March 2022
- Search & Governance Committee minutes – 21 March 2022

13. Any Other Business and Dates of Upcoming Meetings

Employee Wellbeing Update

**MINUTE
NO.**

ACTION

13.1 The Board received and noted the Employee Wellbeing Update and the Director of Governance requested that Governors supported the initiatives for Mental Health Awareness Week at the beginning of May.

Dates of Upcoming Meetings

16-17 May 2022 13 July 2022

15 June 2022

13.2 The Board received the dates of upcoming meetings and the Chair asked Governors to prioritise attendance at the Away Day on 16-17 May.

The meeting closed at 19:26.

ChairDate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

	ACTION	Deadline	Responsible
1.	Minute no. 6.3 – Finance Update, Waingels site Investigate whether the closure of the Waingels site has been communicated to all staff	30/04/2022	CFO
2.	Minute no. 12.3 – Strategic Risk Register Review and update the Risk Register before it is presented to the Board in July	06/07/2022	CEO