

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD AT 5 PM ON THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER 2024 AT NEWCASTLE COLLEGE

Present: Craig Hodgson, Steve Jones, Francis Tunney, Alan Aston, Jim Rowley, Bernard Lovatt, Sarah Burns, Freddie Crisp, Mark Ormerod, Rebecca Bagguley, Nathan Roberts, Helen Blaikie, Gareth Jones, Kevin Simpson, Jeremy Pert (via Teams)

In attendance: Shelley Brown (Director of Curriculum and Performance), Ian Hookway (Director of HR and Communications), Georgina Barnard (Director of IoT), Carl Riding (Director of Employer Engagement and Estates), Len Tildsley (Stafford Campus Director), Debbie Torjussen (Director of Finance and Corporate Services), Andy Bailey (Head of Compliance and Governance)

In the absence of Simon Leech, Gareth Jones took the chair.

PART 1

24.3.1 Membership

Andy referred to his paper which provided an overview of the latest changes to the membership of the Corporation including the new appointments and the planned movements going forward.

Members considered and approved the appointment of the new members of the Corporation: Rebecca Bagguley, Helen Blaikie and Kevin Simpson for a four year term of office. David Styche was considered and approved as co-opted member of the Audit Committee pending a vacancy on the Corporation. Freddie Crisp and Diana Zaoui were approved as the new student members for a one year term of office and Nathan Roberts was approved as the new academic staff member for a two year term of office.

Members noted and confirmed the 12 month extension to the current terms of office of Simon Leech, Gareth Jones and Alan Aston in line with the steps agreed as part of the Governance Succession Strategy.

New members were welcomed to the meeting and everyone present introduced themselves.

24.3.2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Martin Earnshaw, Diana Zaoui and Simon Leech.

24.3.3 Declarations of Interest

Gareth Jones, Craig Hodgson and Debbie Torjussen declared an interest as non-remunerated Directors of Gradbach Ltd and Axia Solutions Ltd.

24.3.4 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 July 2024 - Part 1**

Approved as a true record of the meeting.

24.3.5 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

24.3.6 **Principal's Report - Part 1**

1.1 – Ofsted

Craig took members through the process which had led to the College's Ofsted Inspection from 1 – 4 October, with the addition of the new Skills element which focussed on how well the College meets the skills needs of the area.

Craig confirmed that we were delighted to achieve the best possible grading of Outstanding in all areas, mirroring our performance in 2019, and “Strong” contribution to skills. There are currently five colleges with Outstanding across all areas, however, we are the only one to have achieved this twice.

Members asked for their congratulations to be recorded on this fantastic achievement which is a testament to the brilliant work undertaken by everyone at the College.

Craig added his thanks to the governor squad who met with the Inspection team – Francis, Alan, Sarah and Mark, with Jeremy and Mark also meeting with the Skills Inspector. The report is very positive about how governors operate and their impact on the organisation.

All staff involved had done a wonderful job and the lead inspector commented to Craig that NSCG is the best college he has ever been in which was a marvellous endorsement.

Craig noted that the outcome remains embargoed pending publication of the report which we expect to be within the next few days, and he asked members to respect the confidential aspect of this in the meantime.

1.2- 2024-25 Enrolments

Craig reminded members of the discussions earlier in the year where the unprecedented step had been taken to switch off applications just after Easter. This came with a high risk but the senior team had felt that the risk was greater had we not done so.

Craig was happy to confirm that numbers are currently where we had anticipated, enabling us to continue to provide learners with the quality of provision associated with NSCG.

Mark Ormerod joined the meeting at this point.

Craig advised that attendance at the 2 open events held so far this year has been overwhelming and we do expect to have to once again carefully monitor the applications position going forward.

24.3.7 NSCG Safeguarding Procedure: September 2024

Ian drew attention to the latest Safeguarding Procedure which has been updated to reflect the most recent legislation and guidance and is based on the information received from Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board, customised to a college context and including reference to key roles within the organisation.

Alan as safeguarding lead for the Corporation has considered the document which was also used during the Ofsted process. We were delighted with Ofsted's very complimentary comments about the College's safeguarding arrangements. Alan added that the document is very comprehensive, including good practice and statutory requirements, all of which the College does well. He confirmed the process for reporting back through meetings of the Education and Standards Committee to ensure that the Corporation receives the assurance they require.

Members asked about maintenance contractors and how these are captured in terms of safeguarding and Ian confirmed the process used to book everyone in individually and ensure staff supervision. He referred to the recent work at the rear of the campus on the new Technical Excellence Centre and advised that during the building work the whole of the site was fenced off from the rest of the campus. Carl added that all contractors receive appropriate safeguarding information.

24.3.8 Governor Training

Andy asked members about any progress with the courses available on the ETF platform. He confirmed that he has provided the link to new members and hoped that by the next meeting we will be in a position to chart the courses undertaken by governors and update our records. It was agreed that support can be provided in navigating the site if required.

Members queried if, following completion, governors need to share their certificates or whether the ETF platform retains a record. Andy agreed to check this out.

AB

Jeremy referred to the AoC sessions which he felt were really useful when he joined the Corporation. It was noted that there is now a lot more resource available with, amongst others, the ETF, AoC and Sixth Form Colleges Association all providing training webinars.