



AGENDA
REFERENCE

A3

CORPORATION/COMMITTEE PAPER

Meeting of the Corporation

14 July 2021

<i>TITLE</i>	Minutes of the special meeting held on 11 May 2021
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<i>PURPOSE</i>	To receive, agree and approve the minutes of the special meeting held on 11 May 2021
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<i>RECOMMENDATION</i>	Governors are recommended to note the minutes and agree their accuracy
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<i>No. of pages in main paper</i>	4
<i>Appendices/Annexes</i>	None
<i>Financial Implications</i>	None
<i>Risk Implications</i>	Failure to follow agreed and proper practices
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MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LEICESTER COLLEGE CORPORATION

HELD ON 11 MAY 2021 VIA TEAMS



Present: Jonathan Kerry (Chair) Zubair Limbada
Zoe Allman Ed Marsh
Lisa Armitage Simon Meakin
Kathy Foster Louisa Poole
Anne Frost Jai Sharda
Danielle Gillett Caroline Tote
Verity Hancock Tom Wilson
Chan Kataria

In Attendance: Louise Hazel Director of Governance and Policy
Shabir Ismail Deputy Principal
Della Sewell Director of HR
Debi Donnarumma Vice Principal
Kully Sandhu Vice Principal

Debi Donnarumma was welcomed to her first meeting.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from John Allen, Shaun Curtis, Tim Gray and Abigail Proctor.

3 AEB UPDATE

3.1 The Principal gave an update on the AEB tolerance position. The following points were highlighted:

- 3.1.1 Since the meeting on 15 April, the College had continued to lobby for a change in the decision.
- 3.1.2 The Chair had written a further letter to Eileen Milner. Receipt of that letter had been acknowledged but it had not otherwise been responded to.
- 3.1.3 The ESFA has been informed of the Corporation's decision to scale down the planned T level capital works and to return the funding.
- 3.1.4 A detailed Freedom of Information (FOI) request has been submitted to the Department for Education by the College's solicitors.
- 3.1.5 Legal advice was also being sought on the College's options including

Judicial Review (JR). The considerations associated with this were outlined.

3.2 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**

- 3.2.1 **The CBI had indicated it would make representations on behalf of colleges; had this happened?** Yes.
- 3.2.2 **Whether it would be worth waiting a bit longer before making a decision on JR to see if there was any movement on the AEB decision.** Agreed; other colleges were being affected and there might still be discussions going on.
- 3.2.3 **Very few JRs were successful; the government would go to court where it felt it could win. Often the conversations that the process provoked were more helpful. Was there any possibility of working with other colleges; this might have greater impact?** There was not a great enthusiasm from other colleges to pursue this; some were reluctant to put information in the public domain because of the potential to prejudice redundancy situations. The College was also pursuing a specific argument about the particular situation in Leicester.
- 3.2.4 **Other institutions were also affected by the AEB decision and would suffer clawback.** Acknowledged.

3.3 **Governors noted the update.**

4 REVOLVING CREDIT FACILITY – confidential minute

5 THE FE WHITE PAPER

- 5.1 The Principal gave a presentation outlining the main elements and implications of the recent FE White Paper. The following points were highlighted:
 - 5.1.1 The paper highlighted the importance of the role of employers.
 - 5.1.2 There was a particular focus on and investment in higher level technical qualifications.
 - 5.1.3 New features included the introduction of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), the Strategic Development Fund, new powers of intervention for the Secretary of State, a reformed accountability system and implications for governance.
 - 5.1.4 The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill had been included in the Queen's Speech that day. Ultimately this was welcome although there was considerable detail still to be worked through. The construction, digital, clean energy and manufacturing sectors were particularly mentioned; there was concern nationally about the reduction in funding for arts subjects.
 - 5.1.5 It was possible there might be a move back to a more directed environment in which colleges were told what to deliver. There might be a duty on colleges to conform to LSIPs and review their provision in light of these plans. There was also a risk that new obligations would be imposed on colleges but not on other providers.

- 5.2 Governors discussed the following questions:
- 5.2.1 What elements of the White Paper might influence the direction of the strategic plan?
 - 5.2.2 What are the implications for collaboration/competition?
 - 5.2.3 What might affect the College's approach to governance?
- 5.3 The following comments were made.
- 5.3.1 **How would the LSIPs impact; what would the College need to do differently from what it did now in terms of identifying and aligning to local skills needs?** The LLEP had been working on a skills plan for two years and so skills needs were known. It was likely that the Chamber would base any LSIP on that plan.
 - 5.3.2 **How could the College also make sure that its offer was aligned to what students wanted and would recruit sufficiently? It could align its offer to a local plan but might not attract students.** The White Paper included references to the Careers Service which would be important. The College could only influence demand to an extent; key influencers remained schools and parents so there was work to do.
 - 5.3.3 **The College would need to unpick the detail of the LSIP and what that meant for what was being delivered.** Agreed; the LLEP skills plan was based on work by the public and private sector. It covered those sectors important to the local area but also those which it was felt needed to be grown locally including clean energy. The IoT was also focussed on some smaller, niche sectors which the locality would want to be known for including digital, space and manufacturing.
 - 5.3.4 **The focus on higher technical was understood but it was important not to undervalue the lower level provision which was necessary to get people up to these higher technical levels.** Agreed; notably, the only provision locally that had so far been funded by the Midlands Engine was ESOL provision which employers had specifically asked for. There was still a view in Government that low level provision could be provided by volunteers.
 - 5.3.5 **Employers complained about the mismatch of skills; it would be useful to see more data.**
 - 5.3.6 **The Government had targets for house building and net zero carbon which it was missing. More work around that would be helpful.**
 - 5.3.7 **What was the view of collaboration vs competition with other local colleges?** The Government wanted colleges to collaborate and this was being tested out with the trailblazers. There were good local relationships and there had been collaboration in the past particularly around ESF. If the trailblazer were successful, it might be that the College would need to do more and would need to look at its capacity to lead and bid for work. It was already the largest player locally in most of the areas the Government was identifying as priorities but it also offered much more which was not mentioned in the White Paper, including supported learning.
 - 5.3.8 **It would be helpful to have more information on the offer.**
 - 5.3.9 **The question around governance was more of an administrative rather than a strategic issue.**

- 5.3.10 There was generally a view that when things went wrong it was the fault of governors. Governance was strong; the board had good skills and evaluation took place but there might be ways in which it could be marginally strengthened further.
- 5.3.11 Taking account of the voice of stakeholders might be an area where it could do more; governor recruitment was on the basis of skills but was there active recruitment on the basis of stakeholder voice?
- 5.3.12 Governance was good in terms of compliance. The issue would be to keep strategic focus at all times and not be distracted by other details or pressures.
- 5.3.13 Once the competency framework was available it would be important to be able argue that it was doing everything required.
- 5.3.14 To what extent might the new requirements test the Board's appetite for risk? There might need to be a relook at this.
- 5.3.15 The broad concept of collaboration could open up the potential for more subcontracting which would be contrary to the current position.

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1 There was no other business.

7 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 11 June – Strategic Session
- 14 July