

CORPORATION AGENDA

Tuesday 26 January 2021 at 5.30pm, Virtual through Microsoft Teams

Governors are reminded of the College's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and the need to consider these issues, along with health and safety, in all Corporation business.

Standing Items

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interests

Governors must declare any interest in any agenda items, where there could be a conflict of interest. For any such declaration, they may be requested to withdraw from the meeting for the discussion/decision on that specific item and will not be eligible to vote on the matter under discussion.

3. Draft Minutes of the Search Committee Meeting held on 19 January 2021 (Paper LMC/S/10/20 refers) *(for approval) (paper to follow)*

- Re-Appointment of Member (Paper LMC/S/08/20 refers) *(for approval)*
- Appointment of Student Governor (Paper LMC/S/09/20 refers) *(for approval)*

4. Draft Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 01 December 2020 (Paper LMC/C/47/20 refers) *(for approval)*

5. Matters Arising

- Mandatory Responsibilities: Health & Safety, Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Corporation Action Checklist (Paper LMC/C/48/20 refers) *(for agreement)*

Performance Monitoring

6. Principal's Strategic Overview (Paper LMC/C/49/20 refers) *(for discussion)*

7. Termly Update on Achievement Against Strategic Objectives 2020/21 (Paper LMC/C/50/20 refers) *(for discussion)*

8. Performance Monitoring Report; Curriculum & Innovation, Personal Development & Welfare, Apprenticeships & Employer Engagement (Paper LMC/C/51/20 refers) *(for discussion)*

9. Termly Update on Progress Against the Quality Improvement Plan 2020/21 (Paper LMC/C/52/20 refers) *(for discussion) (paper to follow)*

Statutory Responsibilities

10. Corporate Services Report (Paper LMC/C/53/20 refers) *(for discussion)*

11. Latest Management Accounts and Funding Key Performance Indicators (Paper LMC/C/54/20 refers) *(for discussion)*

12. Annual Staffing Report, including Staff Professional Development Update (Paper LMC/C/55/20 refers) *(for discussion)*

13. Termly Governance Report (Paper LMC/C/56/20 refers) *(for discussion)*

14. Arrangements for Strategic Planning Day (Oral Update from the Governance Adviser)

15. Any Other Business

16. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 02 March 2021, 5.30pm through Teams

Saturday 13 March 2021, 9am through Teams (*Strategic Planning Day*)

17. Reflections on the Meeting Against College Mission, Values and Strategic Objectives

18. Confidential Item for Corporation Members only under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act; Strategic Report (*Paper LMC/C/57/20 refers*) (*for discussion*) (*Paper to follow in agreement with the Chair*)

NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2021 (Virtual Meeting held through Microsoft Teams)

Present:

Claire Povah (<i>Chair</i>))
Ian Haines (<i>Vice-Chair</i>))
Thelma Aye)
Robert Barratt)
Tim Cross) in
Peter McKenzie) External Governors
Yak Patel)
Lindsay Price)
Steve Wood)
Julian Filizanowski) Student Governor
Louise Evans) Support Staff Governor
Ryann Williams) Academic Staff Governor
Wes Johnson) Principal

In attendance:

Angela Bathgate	Director of HR Strategy and Support
Maggie Dodd	Director of Personal Development and Welfare
Peter France	Vice-Principal Finance and Resources
Iain Parkinson	Director of Curriculum and Innovation
Charlotte Rawes	Director of Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement
Oona Cushen	Governance Adviser and Clerk

STANDING ITEMS

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

C/20/320 The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2021 and reminded all present to mute their microphone when not speaking and to use the chat room or 'raise your hand' facility to ask questions or pass comment. The Director of HR Strategy and Support remains on standby to take over the clerking duties, should the Governance Adviser lose connection at any time. Apologies for absence were received from Jane Taylor.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

C/20/321 Conflicts of interests were declared for Ian Haines (EDF Energy), Rob Barratt (Lancaster University and Eden Project), Tim Cross (Ripley Teaching School Alliance), and Steve Wood (University of Cumbria). There are no other known conflicts of interest.

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2021

C/20/322 The Chair of the Search Committee, Claire Povah, reported on the meeting held on 19 January 2021, fully detailed and explained in the draft minutes, paper LMC/S/10/20. The Chair has made some minor word changes to the draft minutes. Jane Taylor has completed her initial term of office, which was limited to one year at her request to assess the requirements of the role against her current workload and other commitments. Professor Taylor has, subsequently, confirmed that she would like to extend the term of office to the standard four-year term and this is being recommended by the Committee. Professor Taylor's term of office would, therefore, run until 2023. The Committee also met with the Student Governor candidate, who observed the December Corporation meeting, and is also being recommended for appointment.

C/20/323 The Corporation received and discussed the Search Committee minutes and papers and approved:

- The re-appointment of Jane Taylor as a full, independent member, amending the original one-year term of office to the standard four-year term, effectively 11 December 2019 to 20 December 2023, paper LMC/S/08/20.
- The appointment of Julian Filizanowski as Student Governor with immediate effect, term of office 26 January 2021 to 25 January 2023, paper LMC/S/09/20.

ACTION: Governance Adviser to inform Professor Jane Taylor accordingly.

Julian Filizanowski joined the meeting.

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 01 DECEMBER 2020

C/20/324 The Chair referred members to paper LMC/C/47/20 and advised that no amendments had been received. The minutes were considered to be extensive and accurate.

C/20/325 The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 01 December 2020, paper LMC/C/47/20, were agreed as a true and accurate record. The Chair's electronic signature will be applied to the minutes.

MATTERS ARISING

Mandatory Responsibilities: Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

C/20/326 This item provides Governors or senior managers with the opportunity to raise any concerns that have arisen since the previous meeting, in regards to the Corporation's statutory responsibilities, which are not covered within the standard reports. There were no issues raised under this item.

Corporation Action Checklist

C/20/327 The Governance Adviser referred members to paper LMC/C/48/20 and advised that all actions were complete, with the exception of youth volunteering, which is in progress. Yak Patel, Chair of the Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions (CVS), recently met with the Director of Personal Development and Welfare to look at the development of the Community Learning Network. The Director of Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement, along with the Head of Learner Services, is looking at volunteering opportunities within College and a volunteering questionnaire will be developed in the near future.

C/20/328 The Corporation discussed and agreed the Corporation Action Checklist; paper LMC/C/48/20.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

PRINCIPAL'S STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

C/20/329 The Principal referred Governors to paper LMC/C/49/20 and advised that the confidential section of the report is for Corporation members only under sections 22, 41 and 43 of the Freedom of Information Act. Paragraphs C/20/332 to C/20/338 are, therefore, minuted separately.

C/20/330 As detailed within the comprehensive executive summary, the team received daily Government guidance throughout the Christmas break, all of which is now out of date. Prior to the start of term (and before the Government announcement), the Critical Incident Team took the decision to move towards the requirements of the first lockdown, i.e. only essential staff, vulnerable students and children of key workers to attend site. The position was almost inevitable and the decision was based on an evidential risk assessment. The Critical Incident Team's two golden rules, no knee jerk reactions and no lurches in policy, have served the College well since March 2020.

C/20/331 From a governance perspective, this lockdown is different in a number of ways, with different expectations within various Government declarations, but Governors' focus should remain on the quality of education. Staff already hold high expectations of themselves, and there are acute responsibilities for safeguarding. There were two Governors in attendance at each Assessment Board, where key issues were reviewed in forensic detail. Despite everything, the College continues to push ahead with its key projects and achievement of its strategic objectives. The Adult Education Budget (AEB) poses the biggest risk to in-year finances and will depend on the reconciliation limit from the Government. A proposal for a new unitary authority has been submitted; this is a Cumbria focused unitary authority and there is no competing proposal from Lancashire County Council as Lancashire has not been asked to submit any proposal. This is a unique cross-county proposal, and the timescale for any Government decision on the proposal is not yet known. In light of the White Paper, there needs to be strong representation backed by a strong local plan from the area, whatever that area turns out to be. The College remains apolitical and will adopt an apolitical stance in all meetings but there is significant cross-party support for the proposal, as well as business and community support, across all three areas.

C/20/339 **The Corporation received and discussed the Principal's Strategic Overview, paper LMC/C/49/20.**

ACTION: *Video link or transcript of Cat Smith MP's Parliamentary question on funding, referencing Lancaster & Morecambe College, to be circulated to Governors, once published.*

TERMLY UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2020/21

C/20/340 The Principal referred Governors to paper LMC/C/50/20 and advised that this is the final year of the current Strategic Plan, which ends in July this year. Last year, Governors approved the defined key performance indicators (KPIs) for 2020/21 and this is the first term progress update, providing a snapshot of where the key risks lie in achieving the strategic objectives for this year. Most of the information will have already been provided through the performance and corporate reports, as well as the Principal's strategic overviews. The majority are coded amber, with a few green, within the first term, but there should be no surprises and more detail will be provided with each update. These objectives and associated indicators are used in a range of ways, including for the interim appraisal reviews, demonstrating clear alignment between the strategic objectives and the annual appraisal and target setting for staff, including the senior team. The objectives, and progress towards achievement, should provide Governors with a clear line of sight and accountability against directors' responsibilities.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

C/20/341 Governors should be able to see the clear link between these objectives and the senior team's annual reviews and individual objectives.

C/20/342 **The Corporation received and discussed the Termly Update on Achievement Against Strategic Objectives 2020/21, paper LMC/C/50/20.**

PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT; CURRICULUM & INNOVATION, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & WELFARE AND APPRENTICESHIPS & EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

C/20/343 The Director of Curriculum and Innovation referred Governors to paper LMC/C/51/20 and advised that the confidential appendix of the report is for Corporation members only under section 44 of the Freedom of Information Act. Paragraph C/20/352 is therefore, minuted separately.

- C/20/344 The report will be taken as read and provides the current position at the time of writing. Despite the national lockdown being implemented on the first day, there has been a positive start to this term, with remote learning working very well. Retention, attendance and engagement in class all remain at very high levels, although not comparable to last year as the first national lockdown had not yet been implemented. There are one or two areas of concern across College, but the team is fully aware of these and continues to work more closely with these learners, particularly 16-19 learners on Level 1 courses, as evidenced through the Assessment Board reviews. It is pleasing to see engagement at Levels 2 and 3 is very positive and is testament to the hard work of all staff teams.
- C/20/345 Remote provision is ever evolving with new updates etc. but there is confidence that the teams are working extremely hard in difficult circumstances to provide all learners with good quality education. There has been changing Government guidance in regards to exams scheduled through January until March 2021. These are national exams and the specific sections relating to industrial qualifications and Functional Skills that learners need to undertake to complete their courses will continue. The quality cycle is still being followed; Assessment Boards continue and the team are starting to undertake remote observations for full-time learners across different teams. Deep dives and remote learning walks will also have been completed for apprenticeships by the end of this term. The College has successfully achieved a diamond award for the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, which forms part of its Tackling Inactivity programme and is a positive addition to the full-time curriculum. The award provides a financial grant to support further activities with learners through increased resources.

Robert Barratt joined the meeting.

- C/20/346 The Director of Personal Development and Welfare advised that 45% of those learners who sat the GCSE English exam in November received grade 4-9; most of these learners had been given a calculated grade 3 in the summer. There are 11 English papers being re-marked as they were only one or two marks short of a grade 4. There was a similar outcome for maths resits. There is a current consultation process in regards to this year's GCSE exams, which will depend on the national situation. Awarding bodies should consider preparing papers that are either completed at home or in small groups on-site. The weighting of exam papers should also be reviewed against all of the other evidence that needs to be gathered to make calculated decisions for learners this year. The deadline for consultation responses is short and it is hoped that definitive guidance is published early, before providers have to make those decisions in June. It is also being considered to move GCSE results day to July, rather than August, which would help to give learners longer time to make decisions on their next steps. The College will continue to run Functional Skills exams, as these are 'on demand', with groups limited to no more than five learners to enable strict adherence to the rigorous Covid rules, e.g. seating etc. to help keep learners as safe as possible. This will also be the case for apprentices.
- C/20/347 Much staff time is spent on safeguarding and ensuring learners are safe; staff are dealing with very diverse issues, but safeguarding remains an absolute priority for the College. There are an increasing number of learners on-site each day and, on the whole, are those learners that staff feel the College should be safeguarding by bringing them on to site. Some groups are following their normal timetable, some are doing half days but staff feel it is important that these learners are seen as much as possible. All on-site groups are risk assessed, with adequate teaching space to ensure learners are kept safe. There is also an increasing demand for learner safeguarding support, such as emergency food bags to families in need etc. Staff concerns on all sorts of learner issues are continuously logged, with safeguarding updates being issued constantly. The deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has attended further Prevent training and safeguarding governance, as part of a Lancashire-wide initiative; as there is a strong focus around Prevent and learners' increased vulnerability of being more online than before and the potential for grooming situations.

- C/20/348 The College took the decision at the start of term to provide qualifying adults, as well as those 16-19 learners who are eligible, with free school meals through the Adult Education Budget (AEB). The College has also loaned out to learners almost 300 laptops, 32 phones and 10 Wi-Fi dongles. A further 40 laptops are also ready for learners to borrow. These were being offered by a local charity and were requested by and offered to the College. The Department for Education (DfE) should be providing up to 10% of the required equipment (about 89 laptops), but these have yet to be received. These will be needed in the longer term. All learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) have a nominated social worker and risk assessments are regularly reviewed. The College provides a weekly update to the Local Authority, via 'Virtual Schools'. Additional learning support continues to be provided to support learners in online classes, as it would be in an on-site classroom, with additional catch-up funding being used wherever possible. All special schools were advised by the Department for Education (DfE) to continue with their expected provision. Learners from Morecambe Road School are, therefore, attending on-site College provision, but the Wings School has deferred their start until after half term, due to a Covid outbreak.
- C/20/349 The Director of Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement advised that the confidential national headline data has been provided by the Association of Colleges (AoC) and MiDES, and shows where the College sits against the national position. There was an overall 21% reduction in national apprenticeship starts between 2018/19 and 2019/20, but LMC only saw a 1% reduction, which was a great start to that year. Those starts will now help push forward the achievement and funding for this year. The College is, however, struggling with recruitment for 2020/21 and this will have a significant impact going forward. The pie charts show the changing make-up of apprenticeship provision; there are significantly more 24+ apprentices in proportion to 16-18 apprentices, which is a direct reversal of the normal position. 24+ apprentices naturally have lower achievement rates, so the increase in numbers will, most likely, lead to lower achievement rates over the next two years. 16-18 apprenticeship starts are struggling and this is replicated in the national position. No national data on 16-18 apprenticeship starts has been published, most likely due to the very low numbers, so there is no current comparative data for what has been a very challenging situation. Business confidence remains low and apprenticeships continue to be a key risk area. The College is anticipating meeting its apprenticeship funding target for this year, due to the high numbers of carry-ins, but there will be a significant financial impact from 2021/22. Retention has dropped compared to previous years, but there has been a number of withdrawals due to Covid reasons. These withdrawals cannot be excluded from the overall data in order to follow national reporting, but it is hoped that this data will eventually be reported separately. There is also disparity in retention with learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) and the team are tracking and supporting those as much as possible with more intervention work.
- C/20/350 The Kickstart Scheme was launched on the 20 September 2020 and the College received formal approval as a gateway employer on 20 December 2020, with 73 placements approved. The team is now working with employers on job descriptions for those opportunities, which will be uploaded to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). 30 out of the 49 new businesses have not previously engaged with the College, so the team is also working on other potential opportunities with these companies. Under the 'Plan for Jobs' announced by the Government in July 2020, employers can claim £1,000 to support traineeships; this funding and details of how to claim, however, have not yet been released but this incentive payment is crucial to further support that project. An announcement is expected this week, but the delay in this funding has negatively impacted businesses. The College is part of a bid submission, via The Lancashire Colleges (TLC), on how to promote technical education and has received approval to be part of this project. The project should start in April 2021 and will run through to July 2022. This is a good project and will create some capacity for Programme Area Managers (PAMs), along with additional resources to spend on technical education and those areas for continued development.

C/20/351 Applications remain on par with this time last year, which is good considering the team have had very little access into schools. An update on the future of the international projects, along with the current context and available funding. European project funding remains until the completion of the current projects and will then be replaced by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. All projects are already aligned to the framework around people, community and local businesses. There are already many good projects, but there will be capacity to build new projects to support moving forward.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

C/20/353 Governors thought that, in the circumstances, retention is very positive and the information provided at the Assessment Boards was very encouraging and represented learner-focused activity.

C/20/354 It was suggested that a letter of congratulations be sent to those involved in the award for the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

C/20/355 All staff continue to work hard to safeguard all learners, but the senior team and wellbeing group are conscious that staff are not necessarily applying the same rules to themselves. Programme Area Managers (PAMs) and support managers have been asked to remain extra vigilant in recognising any staff member who may be struggling and the same intuition that they would with learners. Some staff will admit they are finding things difficult and worry constantly about needing to be in front of their computer to deliver whilst trying to manage home schooling of their own children. Some local primary schools have refused places for children of College staff, even though they are key workers, which makes it difficult for those staff trying to teach online lessons. Post pandemic, it may be worth considering a therapeutic space in College for staff to use.

C/20/356 There is an increase in calls from adult learners, in particular, who are struggling with attendance. They may only be able to attend class for half hour sessions whilst home schooling and Programme Area Managers (PAMs) will support wherever possible. If adults are unable to attend sessions, staff will work with them in different ways, as adult learners are normally very motivated and want to continue with their course. Staff are constantly trying to find ways for increased flexible engagement, but the College must also consider the exhausting toll on staff. There is a lot of very good work but it is hard for staff who are also juggling various personal circumstances and, although reassuring on one level in terms of the College, it is nationally very concerning for learners.

C/20/357 With the increasing number of vulnerable learners and overall safeguarding concerns, support from external agencies, e.g. Social Services, should be crucial in supporting College staff. Some of the external agencies that the College works with have provided very good levels of support, e.g. mental health agencies, but social workers are no longer making home visits etc. as they are also working from home. Staff do have the impression that some 'social work' is now being perceived as the role of educators and the team is having to be quite assertive on occasions in what is within the College remit, which has been difficult. Staff still have to attend all the multi-agency and Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings and, although the College has 334 learners with an allocated social worker, the College has had no contact from any of the social workers. If staff have concerns and are unable to contact learners, they contact the local Police Family Liaison Officer (FLO), who has provided incredible support and will initiate a welfare check visit. The Police also have knowledge of other services and are able to access support for families that would be unavailable through College. In direct contrast, staff are struggling to work with some external agencies, as every service is under some strain. The Chair thanked staff for the substantial work undertaken, but advised Governors that they need to be mindful of the intense pressure that all staff will be under, particularly in relation to safeguarding.

- C/20/358 It is thought that the change in the Kickstart Scheme rules to allow employers to run the scheme themselves, will not have significant impact locally, particularly given the confusing and delayed funding. It is right for the College, and, in indeed, all colleges, to act as a gateway employer to support local businesses with the administration and the ten wider employability skills. Each placement generates a £1,500 set up fee, but it has been found that some gateway employers are retaining this for themselves. As an organisation, the College receives £300 and the employer will receive the £1,500 and wraparound support is being funded through the Adult Education Budget (AEB). This is the College's contribution to working with the scheme and as a partner with the Chamber. Businesses can choose to go for it themselves, but the application process is difficult and there will be further delays until approval is granted.
- C/20/359 Both the Leading Lancashire and Upskilling Lancashire projects help the College employ staff and, from that, create and develop new opportunities and programmes for businesses. These are not necessarily income generating projects, but the funding does help to pay for marketing, resources etc., rather than using College funding. ON a like for like basis, this income will not offset any potential reduction in apprenticeship funding. It is hoped, however, that learners on these projects will progress onto apprenticeships and generate associated funding. As previously mentioned, there is early warning to Governors for apprenticeship income; this year, the funding target should be achieved due to the very strong recruitment for the previous two years, but next year will be very tight as recruitment this year has struggled for all the known reasons. Some apprenticeship teams are already low on numbers and will be over-staffed, so the College is working on how these staff can be fully utilised through supporting full-time curriculum teams as apprenticeship provision will bounce back.
- C/20/360 The work and progress of the College is remarkable, given the unprecedented and challenging year. The 73 Kickstart placements are a good achievement and will benefit young people and staff should be commended for their consistency and tenacity.
- C/20/361 **The Corporation received and discussed the Performance Monitoring Report; Curriculum and Innovation, Personal Development and Welfare and Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement; paper LMC/C/51/20.**
- ACTION:** *Governance Adviser, on behalf of the Board, to send a letter of congratulations to those staff involved in the Duke of Edinburgh award.*

TERMLY UPDATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020/21

- C/20/362 The Director of Curriculum and Innovation referred members to paper LMC/C/52/20 and advised that Governors approved the new holistic approach to quality improvement before Christmas. The areas in the plan have now been populated and identify the key aspects for improvement. The document was only fully populated within the last month, so there are some initial points of progress but with much more to complete. There have been strong discussions at senior level and with all Programme Area Managers (PAMs) and support managers on the work that needs to take place. The behaviours of quality improvement are already spreading across all teams, including support teams, to ensure quality improvement is being driven across all areas of College, not just within the curriculum. There will be different iterations of progress to ensure that holistic approach is fully embedded, but this is the direction of travel favoured by the College to incorporate wide-ranging plans for whole College improvement.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

- C/20/363 The holistic diagram previously presented was very useful in helping Governors picture the vision for this exciting new approach to quality improvement, as well as being more engaging. The Director of Curriculum and Innovation agreed, therefore, to update the diagram for the next update.

- C/20/364 The approach was tested with the FE Commissioner's team, who commended the whole College approach, which is considered 'out of the norm'. Generally, quality improvement plans are written with a third-party audience in mind, but this plan is a whole college holistic approach, solely for LMC's purpose, which will be deep and sustainable for the whole College. All managers can see their role and the process is genuine, transparent and tangible. The documented process will further develop over the coming weeks.
- C/20/365 The revised approach is very aligned to the 'College of the Future' and that cultural change and ownership is impressive. The team should be commended for this approach.
- C/20/366 The Corporation received and discussed the Termly Update on Progress Against the Quality Improvement Plan 2020/21, paper LMC/C/52/20.**
- ACTION:** *Director of Curriculum and Innovation to update the holistic diagram for inclusion in the next termly update.*

STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

CORPORATE SERVICES REPORT

- C/20/367 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources referred members to paper LMC/C/53/20 and advised that the College is required to report various figures to the Department for Education (DfE) on a daily basis, including the number of Covid cases, students and staff in self-isolation plus the number of staff and learners on site. The summary table provides an overview as to the volumes involved and the numbers affected, with January seeing an increase in the number of cases. The Critical Incident Team (CIT) continues to meet twice weekly to digest updated guidance and relevant actions. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing team are constantly updating the risk assessments and managing the day-to-day response to Covid. In addition to the Covid mitigation, work with I-Safe continues on developing new health and safety systems to meet ISO45001 standards, although the College is not seeking formal accreditation. No on-site audits are planned, but there is a virtual health and safety audit planned in March 2021.
- C/20/368 Capital works continue; the replacement fire doors are virtually complete and the remaining fire stopping work is also nearing completion. The College has appointed a contractor to install the replacement windows in both B and D blocks as part of the capital works. The contractor is, however, reporting delays in obtaining windows from the preferred suppliers, with an anticipated start date now late February. This will mean that the project will not be completed by the 31 March 2021 deadline. An application was made to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to extend the completion deadline to the end of September 2021 and this has been approved. A contractor has also been appointed to progress the installation of door access controls and the floodlights on the 3G pitch will also be replaced within the next two months.
- C/20/369 Details for the next round of capital funding were released last week and has been reviewed by the senior team. This second round is not as flexible, as the College will now have to bid for further funding, whereas the first round was a specific allocation. This will be a two-stage process. The deadline for stage one is 15 March 2021 and the criteria is quite strict. There is a minimum spend of £500k, to include a 50% college contribution, which is higher than normal (33% or 25% previously). The outcomes of bids should be to improve the condition of the estate, and is specifically targeted as colleges with buildings in categories B, C and D. Category A is for those building in the best condition, so projects should focus on accommodation in poor condition, as well as being aligned to developing curriculum in line with the White Paper. The team are considering various projects that would fit the bid criteria, as well as being aligned to the new Strategic Plan. Proposed projects will be presented to the Corporation in February 2021, alongside a draft accommodation strategy.

- C/20/370 The financial update will be provided under the management accounts. The College has been able to provide digital devices to all learners who have requested them and has gone beyond Government guidance to use the bursary fund in providing these. The Computer Services team continue to work towards the Cyber Essential accreditation and an update on progress will be provided in next month's report. The tender specification for replacement switches is being prepared, with the tender most likely going out after Easter so installation will be complete for the start of the next academic year. A brief update on subcontracting partners and Freedom of Information requests has also been included.
- C/20/371 The Director of HR Strategy and Support advised that the Covid reporting overlaps with the update provided by the Vice Principal Finance and Resources. The testing programme on a small scale is in place and running with Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) for two mornings per week for staff. As soon as there is sufficient staff to scale up, this will be extended to a limited number of students attending site. The College will also explore various avenues to increase staffing levels to extend the testing programme to four mornings per week, so staff may receive two tests per week and also to extend to any student attending site on those days. This will include advertising for casual staff and there may be some adult learners who could use it as work experience or get paid for casual work, providing this did not clash with their course timetable. The next stage would then be to prepare for mass testing when all staff and students return to site. Strategic plan consultations continue with external stakeholders and students, which will feed into discussions on Strategic Planning Day. Termly updates on College IP, data protection and complaints have also been included.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

- C/20/372 Flooding has been worsened since the completion of the bypass road, and reasons for this are known through original dialogue with Lancashire County Council. The road design was flawed as the land adjacent to the road is not designed to cope with the amount of water now experienced. A second reason relates to inadequate maintenance of the culverts, which fall under the responsibility of the County Council. The culverts are continually blocked and dialogue on this issue remains ongoing with Lancashire County Council. Morecambe Road School has also reported more frequent flooding, so the College is discussing with them the common issues. There is a negative impact of flooding on the training pitch, with more frequent heavy rain, and this is something that will have to be reviewed in any plans for that pitch. It will be difficult for any drainage works to meet the criteria for capital funding.
- C/20/373 The capital funding does not extend to off-site provision and can only be used for those buildings owned by the College or held under a long-term lease (125 years).
- C/20/374 The College buildings mainly fall into categories A and B, with some minor parts in category C and no buildings in category D (described as unfit for occupation). This will limit the available projects qualifying for funding to some degree. The estates survey was not done in whole blocks, but on a floor by floor, room by room basis. There are some variations between the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) survey and the one commissioned by the College a few years earlier, so there is some scope to use the College survey as evidence in some circumstances. If a suitable project was identified, it may be the case to appoint a surveyor to update the College's own condition survey of a particular building to provide required evidence. There will be a further round of funding, but the risk is that all funding is allocated early. The College could also seek to link any potential projects into the Lancashire Carbon Net Zero Strategy.
- C/20/375 Income from use of the 3G pitch is currently generated through the lease arrangement with Morecambe Football Club. The College has no plans to run any new activities as these may incur cost and/or liability.

C/20/376 In regards to the introduction of the College IP system, there was very good feedback received from staff, although some engage much more with the system than others. It is more difficult to get a feel for how staff are finding the process, as everything is being completed remotely. Staff can no longer be in the same to sign off targets, so this is having to be done by the Director of HR Strategy and Support following confirmation by both the manager and the staff member. The upcoming management training session will focus on target setting, staff engagement and better use of the system and to gain feedback from the managers' perspectives. Generally, it appears to be working well, but it is hard to determine in the current climate.

C/20/377 **The Corporation received and discussed the Corporate Services Report; paper LMC/C/53/20.**

LATEST MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND FUNDING KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

C/20/378 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources referred members to paper LMC/C/54/20 and advised that the November accounts are for the end of period four. The year-to-date deficit stands at £154k, which is £47k better than the budgeted deficit of £201k. The breakdown of income is included in the commentary, but Governors must be aware that the single biggest risk factor is the Adult Education Budget (AEB). The funding guidance currently states a tolerance level of 97%, which is the normal limit, but the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) relaxed this for 2019/20 to 69%. The Association of Colleges (AoC) is pushing for a similar relaxation this year and the budget is premised on that basis. Currently, the College is forecasting to achieve 75% of its Adult Education Budget. If the tolerance level is reduced again to 69%, the College would not be subject to any claw back and would receive the full allocation. If the tolerance level is not relaxed, there would be a significant claw back, circa £350k, at year end. This year has seen a more negative impact as national and local lockdowns were implemented much earlier in the academic year and, therefore, have had a bigger impact. Many colleges do not have any substantial cash reserves and enforcing the 97% tolerance level would likely put some colleges into a potential insolvency situation, so there is some confidence that the level will be relaxed to some degree. Apprenticeship income is holding for this year, due to the large number of carry-ins and the College is still expecting to achieve its budget of £1.75m. This is still a £350k reduction on the previous year's outturn and there is the potential for a much larger and significant reduction in 2021/22. HE income is also below budget. Some courses, in conjunction with EDF Energy, were planned to start this term but these have been pushed back to the start of the next academic year, leading to a shortfall in expected income. Income from international projects is released in stages but is offset by cost, so there is no major concern and should have no real impact.

C/20/379 Staff costs are £57k under year-to-date budget, mainly due to vacant posts at the start of the year. Costs for the month are slightly over budget by £5k, as these posts became filled and monthly expenditure comes back into line. On pay costs are currently £94k under budget, partly due to the European projects, but this saving is offset by the increased expenditure as a result of required Covid mitigation, conservatively estimated to be around £50k so far. This expenditure includes additional computer equipment, Wi-Fi dongles, laptops, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and additional cleaning products, e.g. sanitiser. Some costs have been absorbed into normal College budgets, so it is difficult to work out all the specific costs directly attributable to Covid. Overall, the finances remain slightly better than budget and on track to achieve the year-end budget, retaining a good financial health position. Cash balances are currently high, but include the upfront capital funding, the additional tuition fund payments and the workplace capacity development fund. All of these are front loaded, so the cash balances will fall back into line with the Treasury Management Policy (no more than 50% with any one institution) once the expenditure for these projects is processed. As detailed within the funding key performance indicators, 16-18 learner numbers are now ahead of allocation for the first time in several years, which will lead to an increase in next year's funding allocation.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

- C/20/380 There is currently no additional funding from the Governments to cover the additional £50k expenditure on Covid mitigation measures. There is specific funding for learner catch-up sessions, but not for general costs, such as increased cleaning supplies or PPE. The sector is campaigning for additional funding to cover costs directly attributable to the pandemic and the College did highlight the impact of these costs in its financial return. The College does not have to pay for the testing kits, which are provided by the Government, and has also received £19k to cover staff costs in implementing the testing programme. It is likely, though, that this will not fully cover all of the costs related to implementation of a mass testing programme.
- C/20/381 Governors acknowledged that the budget is premised on zero claw back on the Adult Education Budget, which remains a significant risk and will only be fully known once the reconciliation level has been published.
- C/20/382 The Corporation received and discussed the Latest Management Accounts and Funding Key Performance Indicators; paper LMC/C/54/20.**

ANNUAL STAFFING REPORT, INCLUDING STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

- C/20/383 The Director of HR Strategy and Support referred members to paper LMC/C/55/20 and advised that this is historic data from the previous academic year. The report follows a similar format to other years and contains a vast array of information relating to staffing and HR. The report include statistics on job applications and recruitment, the staff profile as a snapshot in time (end of July 2020), teaching staff qualifications, which are probably the least use in some ways, and a summary of staff professional development opportunities. Sickness absence was an interesting one to pull together and to see how this plays out. There is definitely some distortion in the sickness data, with certain things being absent, particularly around mental ill health and wellbeing. There has been a significant drop in reporting, with many staff working from home for much of the year so it is likely there is a hidden element. Some sickness possibly went under the radar or turned into a Covid-type absence (not all positive cases or self-isolation but relating to levels of anxiety and not coming into work etc). This is, therefore, not necessarily a true picture and there may be other potential absence reasons not included and Governors should be mindful of that. It is very hard to draw comparisons with previous years as the external circumstances have been so different. When moving to remote working, there is a challenge with reporting and systems need to be up differently. It was recognised that the current system was not quite fit for purpose under the circumstances, so this will be improved for this year. Depending on which statistics are considered (with or without Covid), the key performance indicators could be deemed as being met.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

- C/20/384 Despite an ageing workforce and limited staff development, staff satisfaction rated higher this year, indicating staff are happier than expected under the circumstances. Some specific questions around Covid were added to the staff survey and the responses scored highly for a number of reasons, which means the College must be doing something right. Staff, in general, felt the College response to the Covid pandemic was largely very positive throughout a difficult time. It would be interesting to see the results if the survey was undertaken now, as mental wellbeing and physical strain starts to take a stronger toll, leading into some sickness absence. What remains unknown is issues hidden within the sickness data. Staff resilience has been, and still is, amazing given the extraordinary demands, but exhaustion is setting in and it is questionable how much longer staff can keep going at this pace in these circumstances.

- C/20/385 Work based skills (WBS) is included in teaching delivery as this relates to apprenticeship delivery of the curriculum within a work-based environment.
- C/20/386 Recruitment for certain posts had been identified as a strategic risk, but the College has recently been able to recruit to traditional 'hard to fill' posts. This remains the case, with posts easier to fill and is good progression, but the underlying issues in regards to levels of pay will potentially make ongoing recruitment difficult in some areas. The current uncertainty in the external environment has played in the College's favour for some roles, but the better recruitment is due to the external circumstances rather than changes within the College. The data collected is not an exact match to that collected by the Association of Colleges, so only a loose comparison is normally made. This year, this data is not available. There will be a requirement for more stringent workforce data reporting in the future, but accurate and comparable data is potentially lost not only for last year but this year also. It is demonstrable, however, that the College has successfully supported staff, with survey responses evidencing that staff feel secure in an insecure external environment, that they have felt looked after by their employer and this has been appreciated.
- C/20/387 The changes seen in sickness absence reporting has been seen in many organisations over the past 12 months, as staff are not necessarily reporting in the same way they normally would. It is possible that staff who would have reported sick in normal circumstances felt able to do some work, if working from home. Others may have just not reported being sick, which is a breakdown in the process. As the College has to report daily statistics to the Department for Education (DfE), the system changed for 2020/21. An 'attendance' register system was created for staff, covering on-site attendance, at home working, not required to work and various sickness categories. This should provide a more immediate and complete picture of absence but will not necessarily help with any follow-on data for reasons for sickness absence. Benchmarking with other colleges is problematic in a normal year as colleges all report sickness differently, so there is little like-for-like data. The Association of Colleges' (AoC) data is provided, but this is always in retrospect and does not cover the same year's data as that included in the usual report.
- C/20/388 It was commented that so much of the data, in all papers, is difficult to compare and put into context with prior years, as the situation is so extraordinary. The quality of reports, however, is constantly improving.
- C/20/389 The Corporation received and discussed the Annual Staffing Report, including Staff Professional Development Update, paper LMC/C/55/20.**

TERMLY GOVERNANCE REPORT

- C/20/390 The Governance Adviser referred members to paper LMC/C/56/20 and advised that the report follows a similar format to the annual report and provides a summary of Corporation business, along with Governor attendance and activity, for the first term. Governors' attention was drawn to the high level of Governor involvement in additional activities and the significant number of volunteering hours that Governors have contributed to date.
- C/20/391 The Corporation received and discussed the Termly Governance Report, paper LMC/C/56/20.**

ARRANGEMENTS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING DAY

- C/20/392 The Governance Adviser informed members that the Strategic Planning Day will be held online this year. The focus will be on group discussion and planning for the new five-year Strategic Plan, with no presentations. The discussion topics will follow the internal and external stakeholder consultations and should allow Governors to fully drive the content of the new plan.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

C/20/393 Governors suggested the following items for inclusion in discussions:

- How does the Board monitor wellbeing within the organisation and what is the Board's vision for wellbeing at LMC?
- What is the Board's strategic view of sustainability and what does that encompass at LMC?
- How might College change when the country exits the pandemic, looking at student numbers, curriculum offering for both 16-18 and adults, mental health, staff recruitment? Are there opportunities that can be identified and planned for in advance?

ACTION: *Governors to forward any further suggestions for the day to the Governance Adviser to incorporate into the agenda.*

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

C/20/394 Governors thanked the senior team for their detailed reports and commended them for 'business as usual' in the middle of the pandemic. The amount of effort and detail in the reports is appreciated.

C/20/395 The Student Governor advised that there had been a recent incident locally (bomb alert) over a weekend, and questioned how students could raise urgent safeguarding issues or concerns with staff. The Director of Personal Development and Welfare advised that there were various routes available to allow students to raise any issues. The first point of call should be their course tutor, or they can email the general College addresses (ask@lmc.co.uk or help@lmc.co.uk). There are also safeguarding contact numbers on the College website for places to access help and learners could also contact the College via any of its social media channels. Staff are fully available between 8.30am and 4.30pm during the week (4pm on Fridays). Staff try constantly to ensure that all learners are aware of this information, but any feedback from learners on how to improve this, or for other avenues to use, is welcomed.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

C/20/396 Tuesday 02 March 2021, 5.30pm (virtual through Microsoft Teams)
Saturday 13 March 2021, 9am (virtual through Microsoft Teams) (*Strategic Planning Day*)

REFLECTIONS ON THE MEETING AGAINST COLLEGE MISSION, VALUES AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

C/20/397 Governors are requested to individually reflect on discussions and decisions within the meeting and whether they have upheld the College's purpose, mission and values. Following reflection, any thoughts or comments can be passed through to the Chair of the Corporation or the Governance Adviser.

STRATEGIC REPORT

C/20/398 This is a confidential item for Corporation members only under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act. Paragraphs C/20/399 to C/20/415 are, therefore, minuted separately.

The Corporation agrees that these non-confidential minutes are an accurate record of the meeting.

SIGNED: NAME: (Chair)

DATE: