



Special FE Corporation Minutes

Meeting held on Thursday 21st March 2024 at 5.30pm, SRC 310 and via Teams

- Governors:* Fabienne Bailey, Rachel Beeken, Stuart Blackett (Corporation Chair), Louise Davies, Liz Dixon (Staff Governor), Grant Glendinning (Chief Executive and Group Principal), Relon Mfunda (Student Governor), Amanda Olvanhill, Dot Smith, David Watson and Mark Wilson
- Apologies:* Subhash Chaudhary, Aiden Flynn, Himeetjuia Kajau, Alfie Mearman, Lorraine Preston, Hamish Rutherford, Andrea Tomlinson and Gary Wright
- Officials:* Jason Faulkner (Executive Principal, Redcar & Cleveland College and NETA), Phil Hastie (Chief Operating Officer), Sean Johnston (Director of NETA Training), Patrick Jordan (College Principal, Bede Sixth Form College), Erika Marshall (Group Director of Marketing), Fiona Sharp (Chief Financial Officer), Kay Taylor (Group Director of HR & People Development), Sarah Thompson (Clerk to the Corporation) and Sam Young (Governance Support Officer)

24/36 Agenda Item 1 – Welcome, apologies for absence, declarations of interest, notification of other items of business

The Corporation Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Apologies for absence from Subhash Chaudhary, Aiden Flynn, Himeetjuia Kajau, Alfie Mearman, Lorraine Preston, Hamish Rutherford, Andrea Tomlinson and Gary Wright had been received and were **accepted**.

Amanda Olvanhill declared a potential conflict of interest under agenda item 2 due to her employment with Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC); she confirmed that she had no direct involvement in the All Access Academy contract and, following discussion, governors **agreed** that this did not constitute a conflict of interest. No other attendees declared a personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of this meeting.

A quorum was present and the required meeting notice of seven calendar days had been given.

24/37 Agenda Item 2 – All Access Academy

The Chief Operating Officer explained that governors were being asked to consider and formally approve the funding agreement with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC) for £4.7m of capital funding for construction of the All Access Academy at Redcar & Cleveland College (RCC), with no match funding requirements. He confirmed that Stone King, the group's legal advisers, had reviewed the draft funding agreement as circulated; changes to this draft included amending references to RCC to read Education Training Collective (Etc.), the softening of some clauses and removal of some of the more onerous clauses, for example, the Council being able to reduce or withdraw grant funding should funding be reduced or withdrawn by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). These changes were designed to protect the group.

In response to a governor's question about ring fencing of the funding, the Chief Operating Officer explained that the council had ring fenced the funding received for this specific project and that the council intended to release all funding to the group before the end of their financial year.

A governor expressed his support for both projects but asked [REDACTED] whether the group had the financial and human resource to take on both the All Access Academy and NETA relocation projects. [REDACTED] The Chief Operating Officer added that the group would be receiving the £4.7m for the All Access Academy upfront and that £4m in DfE grant funding for the NETA project had already been received which would give some financial headroom.

Acknowledging that the full construction costs for the All Access Academy would be covered, a governor asked if the ongoing maintenance and staffing costs had been factored into budgets. The Executive Principal RCC & NETA explained that, in terms of provision costs, the related NETA portfolio would simply be transferred for delivery at RCC. The Director of NETA Training added that the associate model would be used for the anticipated growth in staff numbers and that existing scaffolding equipment would be moved from NETA and the Materials Processing Institute (MPI) to the All Access Academy.

The Chief Executive and Group Principal confirmed that the All Access Academy was a sound strategic and tactical investment and a solution for accommodating the scaffolding provision currently provided at MPI and NETA Pennine Avenue.

A governor asked whether there was any risk that, having received the money, RCBC would not pass it on to the group. The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that the local authority had already received the funding from the DLUHC and had committed to spending it during the current financial year.

Governors **agreed:**

- i) that Etc. enters into the grant funding agreement with Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council for the funding of the All Access Academy at Redcar & Cleveland College;
- ii) to authorise the Chair, or in his absence, the Vice Chair or the Chief Executive to authenticate use of the college seal, with a second authenticating signature to be provided by any other member of the FE Corporation.

24/38 Agenda Item 3 – Any Other Business

NETA relocation

This item had been received as an item of other business in advance of the meeting and a paper circulated, though after the seven-day meeting notice period.

The Chief Operating Officer explained that the Thornaby Town Deal funding had previously been considered and agreed by the Corporation but that formal approval of the grant funding agreement with Stockton Borough Council had not been sought from the FE Corporation to date. The final funding agreement, following review by Stone King and changes agreed with the local authority, had been circulated to governors and, once signed on behalf of Stockton Borough Council, would require application of the Etc. seal and authentication by two members of the FE Corporation.

A governor noted the importance of keeping the funding segregated and asked where it would be deposited. The Chief Financial Officer explained that the funding would be deposited with Barclays, the group's banking provider, and that she had met with Barclays to discuss maximising interest; however, the group's current account paid comparable interest to savings accounts and gave a reasonable return. Other options, including easy access savings accounts, would continue to be explored with Barclays but the Chief Financial Officer explained that the group was reluctant to tie up cash and jeopardise meeting payments. She added that the group had been earning interest on other grants received from the Department for Education (DfE) but not yet spent and that a further FE Conditions funding grant of [REDACTED] would be received in May 2024.

Governors **agreed**:

- i) that the Education Training Collective should enter into the grant funding agreement with Stockton Borough Council for the Town Deal funding of the NETA development at Stockton Riverside College;
- ii) to authorise the Chair, or in his absence, the Vice Chair or Chief Executive to authenticate use of the college seal; with a second authentication signature to be provided by any other member of the FE Corporation.

There were no other items of additional business.

24/39 Agenda Item 4 – Dates, times and venues of upcoming meetings

- Governor Workshop – Thursday 18 April, 5.30 pm, Stockton Riverside College
- Governors' Strategic Conference – Friday 26 April and Saturday 27 April, Hardwick Hall Hotel
- FE Corporation meeting – Thursday 16 May, 5.30 pm, Stockton Riverside College

24/40 Agenda Item 5 – Approval of Documents for Public Inspection

It was **agreed** that the agenda for the current meeting be made available for public inspection. All submitted reports and funding agreements were deemed to be confidential for business sensitivity reasons. Minutes of the meeting would be made available following approval and consideration at the next meeting.

(The meeting ended at 5.45 pm)

Approved at a Corporation meeting held on 16 May 2024