

## LTE Group Board

**DATE: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**VENUE: Openshaw 9.30-5.15pm**

**Present:** Paula Cole, Rhona Bradley, Tim Sargeant, Malcolm Sugden, Barry Lynch, Adam White, Philip Johnson (Chair), Nicholas Garbett, (teams) Garry Bridges, Ann Limb (teams), Anika Ephraim and John Thornhill

**Apologies:** Phil Lanigan, Angela Hunter, Malcolm Todd, Jenifer Burden and Amber Ambereen.

**In Attendance:** Lorna Lloyd-Williams (Company Secretary & General Counsel), Sherman Wu (Governance Officer), Peter Cox (MD Novus), Alison Close (Chief Finance Officer), Rachel Curry (Principal, The Manchester College), Melanie Nicholson (MD Total People), Ron Hill (External Board Reviewer), Sarah Johnson (External Board Reviewer), Rachel Robson (External Board Reviewer)

### DRAFT PART A MINUTES:

	<b>The meeting commenced at 09.02 am and was quorate with at least 7 Governors present.</b>
<b>56.23/24</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>  Apologies were received and accepted from Phil Lanigan, Malcolm Todd Jenifer Birden, Amber Ambereen and Angela Hunter.
<b>57.23/24</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  There were declarations of interest made by Rhona Bradley, Malcolm Sugden and Adam White.
<b>58.23/24</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE MEETING 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b>  The minutes of the meeting of the 14 <sup>th</sup> December were approved as a true and correct record.
<b>59.23/24</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>  The Company Secretary advised that there were two matters that were intentionally outstanding: 1. Additional Health and Safety training which was on the agenda.

2. The inclusion of reporting on B3 conditions at future UCEN divisional Board and Group Board meetings which was an ongoing item.

The Board were advised that the Artificial Intelligence strategy and People Plan would be brought to the Board later in the year and potentially there would be discussions regarding AI at the May strategy days.

60.23/24

### **CAPACITY ISSUE AND UPDATE ON UCEN REVIEW**

Members received an update on the capacity challenge facing the availability of post-16 places. Governors were provided with an overview of the interdependencies that would impact College capacity and the balance and mix of provision types in the coming years, and an update on actions to date. It was explained that there were a number of related factors and reviews under way which would impact the balance and mix of provision and these were:

- Completion of Phase 2 of the Estates Strategy and the exit from the Shena Simon campus
- The reform of post 16 technical education which will change the way provision is delivered and assessed
- A strategic review by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority of the funding of devolved adult provision for 2024/25 onward, and expectations for provision to be aligned to the priority skills needs set out in the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) – and a review underway currently by the College of its adult strategy to ensure that the curriculum is aligned to need and the support offer meets the needs of the different student groups
- The mid-point review of the UCEN Manchester strategy (covered elsewhere on the agenda for the LTE Group Board meeting on 26 March 2024)
- The development by the College of a Foundation Learning Strategy (the pre-entry/entry/level 1 curriculum for 16–18-year-olds)
- Policy changes announced by government that are set to increase the number of delivery hours for English and maths.

The Board were advised of actions taken including with external stakeholders such as Manchester City Council.

Governors enquired about the feeder schools and questioned whether there were problems with particular schools and it was explained that in particular this was a challenge for level 1 students and was given assurance that relationships with feeder schools had greatly improved and TMC was receiving more information to aid transition of students. The divisional Chair of TMC was invited to add her comments and advised that there was a great deal for the Board to consider and that she had heard anecdotally that people were moving within Manchester in order that they could go to TMC, in short there would be increased demand not just due to demographic. Governors commented that there should be a devolved government body

addressing this challenge and that due to the work of the Group there was now a real awareness of this issue.

Board members enquired about the capacity position for the forthcoming year and it was explained that this was a work in progress and that within the next 4 weeks there would be a clearer picture as to whether there could be more capacity but this was likely to only be in the order of 50 places without breaking the centre of excellence model. The Board questioned the impact of the influx of immigrants into the city and were advised that it was a major issue with large numbers of people coming into the city including those who were looking to study. The Principal explained that for the college they had approximately 200 young people in this situation with no parental supervision and this number included adult students who were having to sleep rough. Governors probed what was being considered regarding changes to the delivery model, giving a number of examples and the Principal gave assurance that all these possibilities were being considered, providing particulars. Governors asked whether it was possible to engage in joint initiatives with other FE providers. It was explained that the Combined Authority had undertaken a survey of all providers to look and see where there was capacity in the system and discussion were being had amongst providers. Governors also asked whether we were able to do the same in respect of the E&m challenge and were advised that this was the case and the college was ahead in delivering the higher number of E & m hours.

The Principal gave assurance that the College was carrying on and would continue to do so until a solution was found. Governors commented that they were not sure and were concerned as to whether there was a local solution that was deliverable. Members asked whether there was an opportunity to create a working group to look at different initiatives to think outside of the box as to ways to try and solve this. The Board noted that this was a huge challenge for the college and for the City with no solutions being presented by the Government.

The CEO advised the Group had already done this once in terms of being the change in the system with Phase 1 of the estates strategy. It was emphasised that this would be hard, the Group was leading on this and it was a delicate balance in taking it forward. The CEO took the Board through the particulars of the following three key themes to be noted

1. The nature of governance and accountability mix
2. Thought leadership
3. Overlay of choice

#### Update on UCEN Manchester Mid-Point Review

The Board were provided with an update on the review which would focus on the following five key themes:

- Brand proposition/customer choice research
- Competitor analysis
- Data evidenced market analysis

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher education policy/landscape review</li> <li>• UCEN Manchester infrastructure review, specifically in the context of the application for Degree Awarding Powers.</li> </ul> <p>Governors were provided with an overview of the approach being taken to the mid-year review, the activity commissioned, and progress updates. It was noted that this had been considered by UCEN divisional board and would be part of the strategy days.</p> <p>The Principal highlighted to the Board the degree awarding powers process and what the granting of BDAPs would mean. It was explained that the challenge would be that a probation period would be for 3 years during which OfS would monitor and oversee. The Board were given assurance that we would be in a good position to start this. The Chair advised the Board how much was being spent on validating degrees.</p>
<p>61.23/24</p>	<p><b>STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT</b></p> <p>Members had received a paper which outlined the work the Group had been undertaking in respect of stakeholder engagement since December and the progress against a number of approved and related recommendations. The CEO provided the Board with particulars of the following key activities explaining the rationale for them and giving the Board assurance that a lot of time was spent testing strategies before they are presented to the Board. Key activities were noted to be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Apprenticeships review with DfE. - the Group view was that the apprenticeship model was not fit for purpose and needed changing.</li> <li>2) ONS Review with DfE- it was explained that the DfE was wrestling a number of issues with Treasury arising out of this. The Board were advised that a number of case studies were being sent to the DfE and given examples of these.</li> <li>3) Review session with Secretary of state for Housing and levelling up.</li> <li>4) Review session with Lord Blunkett – House of Lords- agreed an input with other providers into the Labour Party manifesto.</li> <li>5) Manchester City Council Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>6) DfE annual strategic conversation- focused on a small number of key issues</li> </ol> <p>In summary after the election health and economy will be the key focus and partnering which the Group have traditionally relied on will be more limited.</p> <p><b>The Board took a break at 11.04.</b></p>
<p>62.23/24</p>	<p><b>TMC/UCEN</b></p> <p><b>The Board reconvened at 11.18</b></p> <p>The Board had received a paper with the highlights, lowlights, emerging challenges and opportunities and key priorities which the Principal added to in advising the Board that the college now received the NARTs data and</p>

TMC was in a strong position against these, 6.5% higher than national rates for 16-18 and 4.3 % higher than national rates in relation to adults.

Governors asked whether there was a correlation between deep dives, quality and achievement rates. The Principal explained there was a correlation between attendance rates and achievement and that the deep dives had enabled the management to consolidate their view regarding areas of the curriculum that need improvement. Some output from this had resulted in change in the strategic approach.

In relation to lowlights the Principal advised the college was improving its approach to enrichment and had developed a new strategy which would be in place from the new academic year. Governors questioned the reasons for learners not having access to enrichment and it was explained that the college had not been running the right things in the right place at the right time.

#### UCEN

Members were advised that UCEN had now received a reply to the TEF representations and UCEN was graded as TEF silver. It was also highlighted to the Board that UCEN was changing to a more HE approach and by way of example it was explained that a symposium had been developed. Regarding lowlights, students were experiencing difficulties in relation to the IT structure and the Board were informed of the work being done to address this with updates on progress going to divisional board The Board discussed the enhancement to divisional Boards of having students attending each divisional UCEN and TMC Board.

Governors asked whether we engage with parents and carers of students. It was explained that we do not because in relation to UCEN the students are adults. The exception to this would be if a student had an education healthcare plan (EHCP). In relation to 16-18 years olds, the Board were advised that TMC holds parents' evenings which had seen an upturn in attendance and also TMC had been issuing parent reports. In conclusion members were informed that parent engagement had increased and would be tested at Ofsted inspection.

Governors also probed on progression between TMC and UCEN and were informed that in the current round of applications there had been an increase of 85. The Board received assurance that this was one of the key themes being addressed as part of the UCEN review.

63.23/24

#### **HEALTH AND SAFETY - TRAINING**

##### **The Board reconvened at 13.18**

The Director of SHE gave an overview of H&S in the UK and talked to the Board about potential impacts to the business when it goes wrong **and** the offences of corporate manslaughter and corporate homicide (Scotland). The

	<p>Board were also appraised of the sentencing guidelines for breaches and the Board were advised there can be personal prosecution as well as corporate prosecution. Members were advised that personal prosecutions can result in fines or imprisonment.</p> <p>The Director of SHE put this into context for the Board by giving recent examples of cases. The group position in relation to H&amp;S and its safety management system was outlined to the Board with members being reminded that we had achieved ISO4501. Governors asked how this was all monitored from the centre for the Group. The SHE director set this out for the Board and explained that there were H&amp;S advisors, an internal audit schedule, large kit inspected by insurers, safety walks and education of colleagues. Governors asked if students were ever involved in H&amp;S and this was detailed to the Board. Governors also tested how health and safety was managed for subcontractors and it was explained there were inductions, subcontractor assessments and the Board commented that they were still responsible and it was important that subcontractors were fully complaint with Health and Safety requirements. It was explained to the Board how we manage H&amp;S on other organisations sites where we work and noted that there were H&amp;S risk assessments for employers we work with.</p> <p>In terms of going forward, the Board were advised that the emphasis was on fully embedding a positive health and safety culture.</p>
<p>64 23/24</p>	<p><b>H&amp;S POLICY</b></p> <p>The Board were advised that the H&amp;S policy had been independently verified and were not recommending any changes now. It was also noted that the unions had been consulted regarding the policy. It was</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> to approve the Health and Safety policy</p> <p><b>The SHE director left the meeting at 13.52</b></p>
<p>65 23/24</p>	<p><b>GROUP SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT &amp; PREVENT ACTION PLAN &amp; verbal feedback from Safeguarding Governor</b></p> <p><b>The Vice Principal Student Support and Experience and Group Head of OD joined the meeting at 13.53.</b></p> <p>The Board received a report which provided an update on Safeguarding Legislation, LTE Group's compliance with the legislation and a headline safeguarding update for each business unit and its 100% owned subsidiary Total People.</p> <p>Members were advised that a lot of work had been undertaken on safer recruitment with an updated policy approved and distributed to staff. A refresh process had been implemented across the Group for Dbs. Additionally, a new process had been introduced where safeguarding concerns are raised in relation to staff.</p>

The Board discussed mandatory training and were reminded that every year there was an update and that it was also good practice to have a face-to-face session each year at divisional Boards. Governors tested how comfortable we were as a Group in terms of our safeguarding. The Board received assurance and advised that in relation to TMC, an independent consultant had tested the single central record and the safeguarding processes and policies and was comfortable with where the College was. The CFO advised the Board that under the terms of the policy internal auditors have to do an internal review on safeguarding which will go through ARC.

The Safeguarding Link Governor talked about the need to be flexible and agile to add to policies when there are new safeguarding developments such as Martins Law and gave assurance that she was confident that the divisional leads fully understand the responsibilities and requirements in relation to safeguarding and were fully aware of all safeguarding matters as a safeguarding operational committee. From a governance view she advised she had been to TMC divisional Board and would be going to the next TP/MOL Board meeting. It was noted that in addition to the mandatory training the Link Governor had also undertaken the NSPCC training which had been extremely beneficial particularly as it was so nuanced.

The Link Governor was challenged as to whether there were any alarm bells and she advised whilst not an alarm bell that there was a need to be alert as to how Prevent is changing and changes were anticipated. It was commented that safeguarding was about not just students but staff too. Governors commented on the safeguarding update they had received earlier in the year and the amount of engagement with other external organisations, which the Vice Principal gave further particulars of. It was explained that how we safeguard adults is very different from how we safeguard young people.

The Board noted the recommendations which were

To continue to implement Emergency Planning Policy and processes across the LTE Estate and understanding of resource implications aligned to this.

- To create a more meaningful suite of training modules to improve the relevance and impact of safeguarding related training and education.
- To continue to develop consistency of safeguarding referral reporting across the business units.
- To implement the process for dealing with a safeguarding allegation made against a staff member.
- To continue to develop processes and awareness around sexual assaults within NOVUS
- To develop the Safer Recruitment Framework which will include the implementation of a new improved Safe and Fair Recruitment Policy and relevant training for hiring managers.

and it was

	<p><b>Resolved</b> to approve the annual safeguarding report.</p>
<p>66 23/24</p>	<p><b>EDI ANNUAL REPORT &amp; verbal feedback from ED&amp;I Governor</b></p> <p>The Board were provided with a paper that gave an overview of Group activities in the last 12 months to improve the approach to EDI in practice to support the Board to approve the EDI report for publication. The Board were advised that the foundations were being put in place with business units making progress, details of which were provided in the paper.</p> <p>The Board were advised that the report concentrated on data for students and it would be good to replicate this going forward from a staff perspective. The ED&amp;I Link Governor advised that there had been a discussion earlier about moving forward strategically with ED&amp;I being a golden thread throughout the Group and that there was strong board desire to take this forward and ED&amp;I would be on the agenda at the forthcoming strategy days.</p> <p>The Board were reminded of the requirement of the Public Sector Duty under the Equality Act to publish information annually about how the organisation meets the Act, and to provide an update on actions taken and progress to date relating to the Group approach to creating an inclusive environment for colleagues across LTE group. The Board noted that public sector equality duties expected the LTE Group to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate discrimination</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity</li> <li>• Foster good relations</li> <li>• Tackle prejudice</li> <li>• Promote understanding and</li> <li>• Remove or minimise disadvantages</li> </ul> <p>Following discussion and noting the strategic intent regarding ED&amp;I</p> <p>It was</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> to approve the annual equality and diversity report for 2022/23</p>
<p>67 23/24</p>	<p><b>GENDER PAY GAP REPORT</b></p> <p>The Board were advised that there were three reports and that the key points in the core report meant the pay gap had increased by 1.6% which was in line with the sector. The Group Board were taken though the median figures. In relation to the combined report, it was noted that there were not many differences but bonus gap was slightly higher.</p> <p>Governors asked if there were any areas of concern and were advised that the Group would be monitoring out of cycle increases going forward against gender and ethnicity. Governors commented that it would be helpful to have analysis, narrative and an action plan to assist them. The CEO explained that the Group was reporting more than the legal minimum and that it would look to build a report that enshrined the legal requirements but had more</p>



than data going forward to help more with operational decisions going forward.

Governors asked if there was more work to be done regarding the bonus statistics and what this means in reality. The HRD agreed that it gave a false impression when one off recognitions to teams were classified as bonuses. In the future the Board will be provided with a report discharging the legal requirements and the wider report will provide more of the detail that is needed. It was noted that when legislated for Gender pay Gap reports were designed for large corporate organisations.

It was

**Resolved** to approve the three annual Gender Pay Gap Report for 2022/23

**14.44 the Board took a break**

68 23/24

**MID YEAR QUALITY REVIEW**

**14.55 the Board reconvened and the Group Director of Quality joined the meeting.**

The Board were taken through the proposal to shift the self-assessment timetable forward in the year with the reason for this being explained. In short it was proposed that the SAR and QIP would be produced at the same time rather than staggered in business units, apart from group professional services where further development was required before combining the processes. Both the Principal and the Divisional Chair set out the advantages of this with the trial that had been undertaken in the college. It was

**Resolved** to approve the production of the SAR and QIP at the same time in business units save for group professional services commencing in the academic year 24/25

The Group Director also explained the rag rating system to the Board. Members then received a particularised overview of quality in relation to each business unit the summary of which was as follows:

TMC – feel confidence in ability to achieve a Grade 2  
UCEN – now TEF silver and noted with high quality features across student experience and outcome. Continuation rates above B3 thresholds  
Novus – challenging operating environment but a strengthening position in the Novus wide SAR. The Board were also made aware again of the notice of improvement in London which both the business unit and quality teams was responding to. The Board were advised that when the Group takes on the new contract there will be quality challenges to be worked through which Novus is very familiar with.  
TP- Strengthening position with a mock inspection earlier this year but concerns remain over study programmes and AEB which are being

	<p>addressed. If remove key area of weakness in TP/Mol achievement rates would be at the same level in NARTS as other providers MOL- strong provision and learner voice was increasingly positive.</p> <p>The Board noted that SAR process been expanded to professional service and were now on the second stage of this. Governors asked if there were any areas of worry across the Group and were advised that the key challenge was the recruitment and retention of staff and this was a critical factor affecting quality. Thanks were expressed for the work undertaken</p> <p><b>15.19 the Group Quality Director left the meeting.</b></p>
69 23/24	<p><b>Financial Regulations (consent)</b></p> <p><b>On the recommendation of the Audit &amp; Risk Committee it was Resolved</b> to approve the amended Financial Regulations.</p>
	<p>Signed:</p> <p>Chair:</p> <p>Dated:</p>