

CORPORATION

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 13 October 2020 at 17:30
A Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Present

Governors:

Neill Bucktin (NB)	Chair
Denis Miles (DMi)	Vice Chair
Stuart Laverick (SL)	Principal
David Ash (DA)	
Nick Baldwin (NBa)	
Steve Bolton (SB)	
Helen Butler (HB)	
Angela Edwards (AE)	
Kevin Gaffney (KG)	
Peter Heath (PH)	
Fiona Hellowell (FH)	
Lucy Hodgson (LH)	
Tony King (TK)	
Debbie Morris (DMo)	
Robert Pearce (RP)	

In Attendance:

Nicki Williams (NW)	Vice Principal and Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Cherie Clements (CC)	Assistant Principal Finance & Corporate Operations
Charlotte Swain (CS)	Vice Principal Vocational & Technical Education
Julia Breakwell (JB)	Vice Principal Information Systems and Student Experience
Peter Robinson (PR)	Assistant Principal HE, Standards & Development
Kay Kavanagh (KK)	Clerk to the Corporation
Donna Gibson (DG)	Deputy Clerk

Action

44.1 Apologies

The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting.
Apologies were received and accepted from Sue Nicholls and Gary Woodman.

44.2 Declarations of Interest

Governors were asked to declare any Interests, financial or otherwise, which they may have in any agenda Item. No declarations were made.

44.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Governors **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020 as a true record for signature by the Chair.

44.4 Matters Arising

Governors reviewed the Matters Arising report and **noted** progress.
6 actions have been closed and 2 carried forward.

Governors **monitored** action taken and remaining to be taken in respect of Matters Arising.

Governors asked the following questions regarding the outcomes from the Remote Learning Survey 2019/20:

- **What percentage of learners responded?** Circa 20%
- **Will a further survey be conducted?** Yes, a similar survey will be carried out this term.

44.5 Determination of any other urgent business

Governors **determined** that there was no other urgent business.

44.6 Principal's Report

a. Principal's Update for Governors

The Principal's Report included commentary and updates on:

GCSE Grade Inflation & other assessment issues:

No comments received.

Providing a safe, sustainable service:

SL thanked the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for the work carried out in this area, and staff for promoting/following the guidelines.

The College will be taking a 'two-week circuit break', in line with prominent Public Health figures suggestions, and for the benefit of staff. The two-weeks will run at half-term with staff supporting the approach from the safety and well-being perspective as well as appreciating the gesture of some extra holiday days as recognition of the extra workload that Covid-19 is bringing.

Effective planning of 'student bubbles' and staff zoning continues to work well, coupled with good social distancing behaviour at all College sites. There have been 6 positive cases reported within College, with 40 students currently self-isolating. None of these cases have constituted an 'outbreak'.

Colleges have not yet been given any additional funds to cover related additional costs for Covid-19.

Governors raised concerns that student congregate off the College premises and do not adhere to social distancing guidelines. Governors **noted** that this is out of the control of the College as the students are not on site.

DMo **thanked** governors on behalf of the staff for the extra week granted over half-term. DMO added that the team spirit shown by staff when there has been a positive case, has been outstanding. Feedback from parents is good, with parents commenting on the professionalism of the College when handling positive cases. SL explained that following staff feedback some processes have been modified. The SLT will continue to take on board any feedback received from staff.

A governor asked if the target for online learning was still 50%. SL explained that circa 60% of learning is currently face-2-face, mainly due to Maths & English. Student engagement, both online and face-2-face, is good.

Prime Minister Adult Skills and FE White Paper Announcement:

The PM has announced that the White Paper will be published this year. The National Skills Fund will be used to fund an all-age level 3 entitlement.

SL added that there are early signs that circa 10% of L3 students need excessive support. This may impact future retention and success rates.

Governors asked the following questions:

- **Where will funding come from, as the response from the AoC to the White Paper has no mention of funding?** SL explained that there is a comprehensive spending review planned, but the College is not confident for any favourable outcome.
- **Should the College consider looking at alternatives for funding, e.g. Emergency funding?** CC confirmed that an updated Cashflow would be available in November once more accurate projections are known. Further information will be given at agenda point 44.6d.

HE Reforms:

The government is raising the equity of flexible Technical Education as a higher education pathway.

No comments received.

Governors thanked SL for the comprehensive report and **agreed** to formally **receive** the Principal's Report.

b. Curriculum and Quality Key Performance Indicators

Due to the blended models of delivery being used this academic year, the College are monitoring attendance to both onsite and blended sessions. Attendance is currently 91.95% for 16-18 and adults combined. Attendance for Maths and English is currently 82.85%, however not all registers have been activated for this area as grade reports are still being checked and initial assessments undertaken to determine whether learners will complete GCSE or Functional Skills programmes.

GCSE English and Maths results show that for English 29% of learners were awarded a 9-4 grade, and for Maths 20% were awarded a 9-4 grade. This shows an improvement from 2018/19 but is in the context that learners did not sit exam papers, there is no record of exam absences and the results are based on the informed judgements of staff. The rate of learners achieving 9-1 grades has increased for 2019/20 with 98% achieving English and 93% achieving Maths. Results for other subject areas will be provided at the next Corporation meeting.

c. Financial Key Performance Indicators and Management Accounts Summary

CC provided an overview of the Key Financial Indicators, giving the following highlights:

- Projected full year operating deficit as at 31 July 2020 is £58,000. This has reduced, largely due to an increase in AEB funding (due to no clawback)
- Based on the draft year end projections, Financial Health remains at GOOD

- Santander bank covenant measures are breached as at 31 July 2020, this is a direct result of the increased pension deficit valuation at 31 July 2020. As a result, the Long-Term liability value with Santander will now show in 'Current Liabilities'
- Cashflow at 31 July 2020 was £6,341,000, which was better than expected.

Governors asked the following questions:

- **Has the breach been raised with Santander?** CC confirmed that it had, and that Santander are suggesting removing of the covenant and then issuing a new agreement. A response is expected in the next few weeks.
- **Do the Auditors have a view on the breach?** Yes, this will be explained fully at the Audit Committee meeting.
- **Will there be any impact to the Audit Committee meeting in December, given the delay to the Financial Accounts to January 2021?** No, the Audit Committee can still go ahead on 1 December 2020.

d. Learner Number Update & Funding Update

Learner numbers:

The 16-18 full-time funding allocation from the ESFA is higher than budget at 2463. 16-18 full-time learner actual numbers are exceeding the budgeted target of 2432 by 200. Adults are currently at 53% of the target based on headcount, down from 78% in 2019/20.

The value of projected starts provided by sales/apprenticeship opportunities is £443,667, making a total for College apps of 77% of the combined full year target.

Higher Education students are currently at 91% of target at 221, against a target of 244. Due to a small number of part-time enrolments still being processed, it is hoped that this will rise to 94.1%.

Programme offers/Covid-19 funding changes (1-year only):

The various funding options have been detailed. These assist internally for advice and guidance and will be incorporated into the KPIs.

A governor questioned if the College was likely to see any benefit from the Kickstarter scheme. CC explained that there is likely to be little benefit to the College.

e. Health and Safety Update

Governors **noted** that for most of the report covered by this update the College was in a lockdown position due to Covid-19.

2 incidents were reported during the period; 2 of these were accidents and 1 was a medical incident. All were assessed by the Health & Safety Manager and investigated further where required. There have been no RIDDOR reportable incidents during this period.

A total of 119 members of staff undertook Health & Safety training during the period. Wherever possible, training was/will be delivered remotely via Microsoft Teams during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The report detailed the physical measures put in place following Covid-19.

SL added that CH, NW and JB ensured that Health & Safety was considered for members of staff working from home, along with staff wellbeing during the pandemic (ongoing).

Governors **noted** the likely impact on heating costs during this time due to the windows and doors having to remain open.

The Chair **proposed** that a thank you letter is sent on behalf of all governors to staff and the SLT, thanking for their support throughout the pandemic. All governors **agreed**. **Action – NB** to issue a thank you letter to all staff and SLT thanking them for their ongoing support during Covid-19.

NB

44.7 College Self-Assessment Report

Governors were asked to **consider** the draft College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2019/20 and to **note** that a final version will return to the Corporation for approval on 15 December 2020.

The SAR format has been amended for 2019/20 to be in line with the new EIF and reflects the new style of Ofsted reports. It also now includes a section on the College position and impact in relation to Covid-19, rather than this being a theme running throughout the report.

For 2019/20 it is proposed that a grade 2 'Good' is awarded for all aspects of the College SAR.

Within the SAR, grades are reported for 18 areas of curriculum. The following is proposed:

- Outstanding – 4 areas
- Good – 10 areas
- Requires Improvement – 4 areas

Curriculum SARs will be validated in November, with final grades and a completed College SAR in place for the December Corporation meeting.

Governors **received** the report and were reminded of the Quality Reviews that Governors are invited to attend.

44.8 College Improvement Plans

The College Improvement Plan for 2020/21 reflects the EIF:

- Intent: What is the key issue and why it is a key area for improvement for the College?
- Implementation: What are we doing to address the issue?
- Impact: What will happen as a result of completing each aspect of the milestones?

There will be 3 milestones for reporting throughout the academic year (October, January and April).

For 2020/21 the CIP focusses on 6 key themes:

1. Progress monitoring for English & Maths
2. Performance Gap in Engineering

3. Progress monitoring inconsistencies
4. How leaders are ensuring that learners are safe and well and well-informed about potential risks, including from online sources
5. Digital skills of staff and learners
6. Effective engagement with staff to support their well-being and continuous professional development

A governor requested that a matrix be produced to show where Covid-19 has impacted areas. **Action** – CS to create a matrix to show where Covid-19 has impacted areas (provision, learning walks, face-2-face tutorials, work placements, IT changes etc).

CS

Governors thanked CS for the comprehensive report and **agreed** to formally **receive** and **approve** the Draft College Improvement Plan.

44.9 Student Standards Policy

The Student Standards Policy for 2020/21 has been amended to reflect some changes to the college structure and expectations for students conduct linked to Covid-19. CS explained that some of the changes would be removed again after the pandemic has ended.

A Student Expectations document has been developed to give students clear guidelines on how to keep themselves safe whilst at college, when completing online or remote learning, when using the intercampus bus and when using public transport.

Copies of both above documents are available to students via Pro Monitor.

Governors **approved** the Student Standards Policy.

44.10 Accolades and Complaints

Accolades:

A total of 46 accolades were received by the Quality Office for both Business Support and Academic areas. This is an increase of 253% from the 13 accolades received in 2018/19. The large increase is partly due to an improved process for capturing the accolades and a promotion of the importance of recording accolades to all staff at the start of 2019/20.

Complaints:

The total number of formal complaints received during the 2019/20 academic year was 29 – a decrease of 19% from 2018/19.

The complaints fall into the following categories:

- 9 complaints related to HE provision
 - 20 related to academic departments
- (1 complaint reached stage 4 of the complaints procedure)

Governors **agreed** to formally **receive** the Accolades and Complaints Report 2019/20

44.11 **GDPR Annual Report, including FOI**

Subject Access Requests:

In 2019/20 the Data Protection Officer received 7 Subject Access Requests.

There were no breaches in data protection reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) during 2019/20.

Freedom of Information (FOI) requests:

In 2019/20 the Data Protection Officer dealt with 15 FOI requests compared to 8 requests received in 2018/19.

A governor **questioned** if there had been any internal breaches. JB confirmed that there had – relating to email attachments sent in error.

Governors **agreed** to formally **receive** the GDPR Annual Report, including Freedom of Information 2019/20.

44.12 **Policy Updates**

a. Safeguarding Policy 2020/21

Governors were asked to approve the changes to the Safeguarding Policy and to read and follow the changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 (KCSiE 2020).

Various changes and additions have been made to the policy and governors were provided with the details.

Action – KK to email all governors to ensure that KCSiE 2020 has been received and read. KK to confirm to JB once complete.

KK

Governors **approved** the Safeguarding Policy.

b. Grievance Policy (SPH)

There were no changes to the policy.

Governors **approved** the Grievance Policy (SPH).

c. Probation Period Policy (SPH)

There were no changes to the policy.

Governors **approved** the Probation Period Policy (SPH).

d. Disciplinary Policy (SPH)

There were no changes to the policy.

Governors **approved** the Disciplinary Policy (SPH).

Governors **noted** that had changes been required, these policies would have first been presented to the Remuneration Committee for review and recommendation to Corporation.

e. Treasury Management Policy Statement

No changes are envisaged to be required to the policy for the next three years. Interest rates have declined significantly overall, resulting in less opportunities to benefit from investments.

Action – CC to expand section 4.1 of the Treasury Management Policy to define ‘Upper Medium Grade’ more clearly.

CC

Governors **approved** the Treasury Management Policy, with the above change made.

44.13 Governor Attendance

Overall governor attendance for 2019/20 was 86%. For Corporation only, attendance was 87%, with a target of 85%. Governors **agreed** to keep the target for Corporation at 85% for 2020/21.

44.14 Governance Improvement Plan

Governors **noted** that the Governance Improvement Plan for 2020/21 will be tabled at the Governance & Search Committee on 3 November 2020 and tabled at Corporation on 15 December for approval.

44.15 Corporation Self-Assessment

Governors **noted** that the Corporation Self-Assessment for 2019/20 will be tabled at the Governance & Search Committee on 3 November 2020 and tabled at Corporation on 15 December for approval.

44.16 Task & Finish Committees 2020/21

Governors discussed the ‘Cycle of Business’ T&F group that was in place in 2019/20. Governors **agreed** that this T&F group should be re-visited at a later stage and following the publication of the White Paper.

Governors approved the following Task & Finish groups for 2020/21:

- English & Maths
- Quality & Progress
- Sustainability

KG and LH **volunteered** to be on the Sustainability T&F group. KK and DMi have produced a first draft Terms of Reference for the Sustainability Committee.

Proposed dates for the committees are:

English & Maths:

- 24th November 2020
- 23rd February 2021

Quality & Progression:

- 12th January 2021
- 4th May 2021

Sustainability:

- 2nd March 2021
- 15th June 2021

Governors **agreed to formally appoint** Denis Miles as Chair of the Remuneration Committee. Governors **agree** that the members of committees can be **delegated** to Governance & Search Committee in November.

44.17 Governor Insight Scheme

DMi explained that due to Covid-19, limited activity had occurred for the Governor Insight Scheme in 2019/20 and this continues to be the situation for 2020/21. DG has advised governors of details of Academic Quality Review meetings, and all governors are **reminded** to advise DG if they are able to attend any of the sessions.

Governors **agreed** to keep the Governor Insight Scheme under review.

44.18 Governor Training, Development and Induction Policy

There were no changes to the policy.

KK explained that the policy would be reviewed prior to the 3-year review, to consider changes and improvements following lessons learnt from Covid-19.

NBa confirmed that the policy had not been able to be followed during the pandemic, but there were elements that could have been actioned, but hadn't.

Governors **approved** the Governor Training, Development and Induction Policy, **noting** it will be presented to Corporation again within the 3-year approval period, having been discussed at Governance & Search Committee in November.

44.19 Any Other Urgent Business

It was determined that there was no other urgent business.

44.20- CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

44.22 These matters are recorded as Confidential Minutes

SLT members and DG left the meeting at this point

44.23 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 15 December 2020 at 17:30 via Microsoft Teams.

NB confirmed that due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Away Day would be postponed until governors are able to meet again in person.

Staff Governors left the meeting at this point.

44.24 RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

These matters are recorded as Restricted Confidential Minutes.

The meeting closed at 19:30

Signed:

Date: