

## CORPORATION

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 16 June 2020 at 5.30pm through Microsoft Teams

#### Present

##### Governors:

Neill Bucktin	Chair
Denis Miles	Vice Chair
Stuart Laverick	Principal
David Ash	
Steve Bolton	
Sara Finch	
Kevin Gaffney	
Peter Heath	
Fiona Hellowell	
Tony King	
Paul McCunn	
Debbie Morris	
Robert Pearce	
Susannah Twigg	
Gary Woodman	
Angela Edwards	
Helen Butler	
Nick Baldwin	

##### In Attendance:

Nicki Williams	Vice Principal and Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Cherie Clements	Director of Finance
Kay Kavanagh	Clerk to the Corporation

#### Action

#### 41.1 Apologies

The Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting.  
Apologies were received and accepted from Lucy Hodgson and Sue Nicholls.

#### 41.2 Appointments

In accordance with the recommendations of the Governance and Search committee, members **approved** the increase in determination of 1, in order to **appoint** Angela Edwards and Nick Baldwin to a first four-year term of office as Corporation Members from 16 June 2020 to 15 June 2024 and to **appoint** Helen Butler to a first four-year term of office as a Corporation Member from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2024.

The three new members each provided an introduction.

#### 41.3 Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any Interests, financial or otherwise, which they may have in any agenda item. Paul McCunn declared that his wife is a College employee. No further declarations were made.

#### 41.4 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Members **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2020 as a true record for signature by the Chair.

#### 41.5 **Matters Arising**

Members reviewed the Matters Arising report and noted progress, acknowledging the additional information provided in the notes. Eleven actions had been completed or would be completed during the meeting and four carried forward.

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

#### 41.6 **Determination of any other urgent business**

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

#### 41.7 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

##### **Principal's Update for Governors**

The Principal's Report included commentary and updates on:

- **Ofsted – understanding the blended 'new normal':** SL explained that the college was one of 6 organisations approached to help Ofsted to identify what is and isn't working well using on-line eLearning during the COVID-19 period.
- **GBSLEP/MMCA funding support:** The College has been awarded £250,000 towards the extension of the covered external brickwork area at Alliance House, Redditch. This will provide an outdoor space, with curtain sides for poor weather. NW highlighted the tight timescale of March 2021 for completion of the project.
- **Students return to HoW College:** The College re-opened on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June to enable vulnerable students to attend. As from the 15<sup>th</sup> June, the College has students on-site for Construction and Engineering courses. Staff and students are delighted to be back, and SL confirmed that the 'bubbles' of students are working well. The College has the added benefit of having numerous sites, which assists in creating social distancing requirements. SL added that curriculum and estates teams have worked tirelessly to ensure that the College was able to safely accept students and staff back into the College buildings.

An exceptional two-week break at October half term is being arranged, to give students and staff a much-needed rest as well as giving managers time to assess student demand and identify any possible changes required.

- **Student numbers:** The latest monthly enrolment figures were provided. The impacts of COVID-19 on student numbers is yet to be fully determined. Students are heavily reliant on public transport in order to reach the college sites. Current public transport constraints may have a detrimental impact on the College. There is also concern around the current apprenticeship market, with many businesses struggling to see how they can support this type of learning during the COVID-19 period. HoW College is confident that a good quality 50:50 blended learning offer can be made available to full-time students in the next academic year.
- **College Improvement Plan (CIP) and KPIs:** The CIP themes around English and Maths, Labour Market Intelligence (LMI), Digital and Staff well-being have been adapted to meet the COVID-19 circumstances. SL highlighted that LMI is key in assuring that what and how we teach is relevant to labour market needs. KPIs previously agreed are no longer fit for purpose. Student outcomes will be based on internally estimated grades based on in-year work and historical patterns.
- **The future of FE:** An FE White Paper being produced by Gavin Williamson could drive reform in the sector. HoW College continue to hold its partnership/collaborative values at the local, regional and national level.

Members asked the following questions:

- **Will 50:50 blended learning be the aim for all courses?** SL explained that 50:50 would not be possible for all courses. There will be differences for the more practical subjects, along with provision for SEN. The pedagogy of blended learning will include face to face, online, flip learning and follow-up activities. Further resources will require investment to fully support blended learning.  
NW added that students have been supported fully to enable them to benefit from blended learning. £100,000 has currently been spent to ensure students have the necessary equipment (laptops, home hubs, dongles etc.) for online learning.
- **What percentage of work was online prior to COVID-19?** SL confirmed that circa 20-30% of work was previously online over the last few years. This has given the College experience and the ability to now scale up.
- **Will blended learning impact the future need/usage of the estates?** The current need for more space, due to social distancing, means that classrooms are currently only half-full. The demographic of the estates has ensured that we can accommodate a safe number of students at any one time. The size of the estates has been beneficial and allowed some classrooms to be used as staff rooms. Longer term, the use of the estates will be monitored.
- **What has been the impact of online learning for English and Maths students been and have attendance levels been maintained?** English and Maths are currently being taught online only. This is not sustainable, as students are becoming tired and overwhelmed. Future learning must be blended.  
Attendance in areas other than English and Maths has been good. Attendance for English and Maths has been reduced, due to the assessment process.
- **What are the likely impacts of the reduction in apprenticeships?** Following a reduction in available apprenticeships, the College could see a sharp rise in the number of 16-18 students. Given the lagged funding for these students, there could be a financial implication.
- **Can you provide further detail around the impacts on staff?** Staffing levels are currently manageable in all areas. A survey has been issued to all staff to enable the College to monitor individual circumstances to ensure all staff can be supported. 'Bubbles' are in place to assist in infection control should a positive case of COVID-19 be confirmed within the College.

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

*Robert Pearce left the meeting at this point due to connectivity issues.*

#### **41.8 College re-opening plan**

The full College re-opening plan was included in the Supporting Papers pack. NW explained that there had been a 2-phased approach to re-opening. The first phase from the 1<sup>st</sup> June for vulnerable and EHCP learners. The second phase began on the 15<sup>th</sup> June, with small groups of learners invited into specific curriculum areas to complete work and to undertake assessments in line with awarding body guidance.

Members asked the following questions:

- **Would the College set-up a Governance and Leadership Task & Finish group, as recommended by the DfE?** This would enable the governors to main oversight of the plan. A fortnightly call is suggested.

All members **agreed**. **Action:** Fortnightly call to be arranged to provide oversight and progress of the College re-opening plan.

- **How are costs of re-opening being monitored?** Two separate cost codes have been created in order to monitor the costs of re-opening and the wider direct costs of COVID-19. NW explained that many businesses have inflated their prices during the epidemic, and circa £15,000 has already been spent for screening. It is unlikely that these costs will be able to be recouped.
- **How are the College policing the adhering of the plan by staff and students?** Staff will take responsibility of their groups, but the College is reliant on staff and students complying. Staff and students are fully aware of their obligations to follow, in accordance with the plan. Members **noted** the procedures and efforts to police the plan that were in place.
- **Should a positive case of COVID-19 be confirmed within the College via track and trace, what responses will the College take in respect of communications?** The website will be used to communicate any updates concerning COVID-19. We are aware of the potential issues with sharing data for track and trace and are working with safeguarding leads across the county to ensure we can support track and trace effectively.
- **Are there any impacts on staff contracts?** No, there are no changes to staff contracts. Staff receive regular communications via all staff emails. There are weekly management meetings to keep staff informed of any updates or changes.

Members thanked NW for the very thorough and detailed plan and agreed to formally **receive** the College re-opening plan.

#### 41.9 Finance update

The finance update included:

- **Financial KPIs 19/20 and impact of COVID-19:** The projected deficit has reduced from £1,384,000 at the end of March 2020 to £1,072,000 at the end of April 2020. This reduction is primarily to due reductions in pay costs of £70,000 and non-pay costs of £295,000. The projected deficit does not include furlough claims, which are likely to be circa £300,000. Members discussed the impact on EBITDA and **noted** that savings of £400,000 would put the College in good financial health.
- **Revenue budget:** This paper is to provide an update on progress towards setting the 20/21 revenue budget. The final 20/21 budget is scheduled for the July 2020 Corporation meeting for approval.
- **The draft budget before any impact of COVID-19** as at 8 June 2020 highlights a deficit position of £357,000. A high-level review of funding streams has been completed and concerns are now highlighted within the report. The income streams have also been rated, Red, Amber and Green and a comment has been added detailing the assumptions made. There is currently a high-level of uncertainty around enrolment patterns in September. Given this, it was felt that the College should review the position in October 2020. Members **noted** the revenue budget progress for 20/21 and potential impacts of COVID-19.
- **Cashflow budget:** The cashflow forecast indicates a closing balance of £2.6m at July 2021 and at its lowest point in March 2021 at £1.9m. Members **noted** the cashflow budget progress for 20/21.
- **HE fees policy:** There are no significant changes to the policy. Changes that have been made are highlighted in yellow. All members **approve** the HE fees policy.

- **Procurement policy:** There are no significant changes to the policy. Changes that have been made are highlighted in yellow. All members **approve** the Procurement policy.

Members asked the following questions:

- **Is there opportunity for increasing income for new courses, utilising off-the-shelf training?** SL confirmed that the College are already doing this, by re-purposing materials, submitting various bids for one-off projects and securing resources. Until these are realised, it is a prudent and conservative budget. CC added that £73,000 had been secured in additional grants to date.
- **Are the declines in cash reserves common across the sector?** Yes, the sector has been struggling over several years, with more Colleges now in 'Requires Improvement' than in 'Good'.

#### 41.10 Governance and Search Committee

Members **received** the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2020 and **noted** the committee's advice.

Members **resolved** to **re-appoint** Gary Woodman and Fiona Hellowell to a second four-year term of office from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2024.

#### Governance Improvement Plan

Members **monitored** the progress against the Governance Improvement Plan for 2019/20, **noting** that the Governance and Search Committee will meet again in the Autumn to update the plan.

#### 41.11 Any other urgent business

None notified

#### 41.12 Date and Time of Next Meeting

- Tuesday 14 July 2020, 5:30pm via Microsoft Teams

*Staff and Student Governors left the meeting at this point.*

#### 41.13 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

These matters are recorded as Confidential Minutes.

*CC left the meeting at this point.*

#### 41.14 RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

These matters are recorded as Confidential Minutes.

The meeting closed at 19:45.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

Matters arising:

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Owner</b>
41.8	Fortnightly call to be arranged to provide oversight and progress of the College re-opening plan.	NW