

CORPORATION

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 26 January 2021 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)	
Leon Evans-Lochlin (LEL)	
Kevin Gaffney (KG)	
Fiona Hellowell (FH)	
Lucy Hodgson (LH)	
Tony King (TK)	
Debbie Morris (DMo)	
Sue Nicholls (SN)	
Robert Pearce (RP)	
Gary Woodman (GW)	

In Attendance:

Nicki Williams (NW)	Vice Principal and Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Cherie Clements (CC)	Assistant Principal Finance & Corporate Operations
Julia Breakwell (JB)	Vice Principal Information Systems and Student Experience
Claire Heywood (CH)	Vice Principal Inclusive, Commercial & Employer Learning
Peter Robinson (PR)	Assistant Principal HE, Standards & Development
Tony Green (TG)	Director Funding Data & External Contracts
Kay Kavanagh (KK)	Clerk to the Corporation
Donna Gibson (DG)	Deputy Clerk

Action

46.1 Apologies

The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting. No apologies had been received.

46.2 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.

46.3 Governor CPD Session – Adult Economic Recovery

TG and CH provided an overview of Adult Economic Recovery, including information on the following Schemes/Initiatives:

- Restart
- Kickstart

- Sector-Based Work Academy Programmes
- Apprenticeship Incentives

The following questions were raised:

- **Will HoW College be involved in the skills bootcamps?** TG explained that pilots were taking place regionally and that HoW College is not involved at this time. The College will continue to work with existing partners to offer and support technical skills training. CH added that for the bootcamps to be successful, there needs to be employers waiting for the students, which isn't currently the case.
- **How will the College deliver the above schemes?** TG explained that the College is already working with Serco and have applied to partner with PeoplePlus. The College also supports Colleges West Midlands (CWMA). We have an appetite to tender, utilising the College Collaboration Fund (CCF) and the European Social Fund (ESF).
- **Is the kickstart scheme viable for HoW College?** TG confirmed that we will concentrate on our core business and look for opportunities within all schemes. The current impact on apprenticeships is concerning. If the Kickstart scheme was linked to the Apprenticeship scheme this may help the apprenticeship levels.

46.4 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Governors approved the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2020 as a true record for signature by the Chair.

46.5 Matters Arising

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

46.6 Determination of any other urgent business

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

46.7 Principal's Report

a. Principal's Update for Governors

The Principal's Report included commentary and updates on:

FE White Paper:

SL explained that the FE White paper covered 34 policy areas and is likely to have impacts stretching through the next decade with curriculum reforms likely to occur through to 2030.

The paper details the strengthening links between employers and Further Education. HoW College has always ensured it remains relevant to employer's needs.

Comparison was made to the German system, but governors have reservations about the cultural change that this will require. The current business community does not have a heavy interest in training.

Governors await the Comprehensive Spending Review, to gain further insight of how the FE White paper will be able to be implemented.

Governors **noted** the elements of the white paper relating to Governance will be monitored by the Governance & Search Committee.

The following questions were raised concerning the white paper:

- **Is there any indication of when policies might be progressed?** SL explained that it is unclear where the priorities are, but with employers being key, mechanisms will need to be put in place. It is thought that policies that will be quicker with less costs may be implemented first, as quick wins.
- **How far from the model are we currently?** HoW College is fortunate that it already operates within a similar model, thanks to the progress and development over the last few years. The top floor of the Cathedral building is designed for employers, as are lots of the College spaces. SL is confident that we are already operating in the required model and is hopeful of no further bureaucracy or forced relationships.

Maths & English – November 2020 results:

The November 2020 resit results for Maths and English were provided:

- Maths: 79.49% (excluding known withdrawals)
- English: 52.17% (excluding known withdrawals)

However, it is yet to be confirmed what approach will be used for final assessments.

There has been good attendance, with both on-line and class-based materials being enhanced. There is also evidence of effective application of benefits gained from working with Weston College's team.

January vocational exams:

Planned GCSE/A level examinations are to be replaced by Centre Assessed Grading (CAG).

Practical assessments will take place after half-term, whilst ensuring students safety at all times.

b. Ofsted Annual Report

SL provided an overview of the Ofsted Annual Report 2019/20 and the FES composition in the report. The following was highlighted:

- 61% of colleges were graded good, and 18% outstanding. HoW College self-assessed as overall good for the 2019/20 academic year.
- Apprenticeships were one of the least successful provision types. Apprenticeship was the only student segment that was not assessed as good overall in HoW College's 2019/20 SAR. It was judged as Requires Improvement.

HoW College was one of the first FE Colleges who invited Ofsted in to see how online remote learning was being operated during the pandemic.

HoW College is a passionate advocate of blended learning, and the approach has benefited students across the country.

c. Curriculum and Quality Key Performance Indicators

Attendance and participation:

New monitoring of online activity is now on place. Attendance since November has dropped by 1%, to 89%. There has been a larger fall in English and Maths, to 80%. These are both above the levels at the same time last year, and do not include students that may access the lessons later.

Students are being given every opportunity to achieve qualifications this academic year, with a refresh element being planned for 2021/22 at level 3, to cover aspects of level 1 & 2.

Retention:

Retention rates collated at the beginning of January are at 98% for 16-18 and Adult groups. A drop is anticipated for adult retention rates, due to Covid-19.

SMART targets:

All learners have at least 1 SMART target in place. 3 will be in place by April 2021 and 5 by May 2021.

Academic Progress of Learners:

This target has been raised to Amber, although low levels of 16-18 students are reported as being at risk of not achieving (8% reported on Pro-Monitor).

Employer Voice:

This is an ongoing survey (Employer Satisfaction Survey) currently achieving 84%. The final review of employer satisfaction will take place at the end of this academic year.

Staff Absence:

Staff absence has increased to 2.25 average days from 1.99 days per member of staff. We have a target of 4.75. 2.25 remains below the sector average and previous rates at the College. Governors **noted** that home working is having an impact of staff absence levels, with staff continuing to work, whilst experiencing symptoms that may lead to absence in normal circumstances.

SL stressed that staff were being told to take time off if they are not well. It is a priority that staff take the time to get well. DMO **assured** governors that staff wellbeing is a high priority, bi-weekly Covid meetings are taking place and childcare efforts are being considered.

A governor **questioned** the impact on practical subjects, such as engineering. PR confirmed that due to lockdown, no practical lessons are taking place. Theory classes have been brought forward to allow time for practical attempts and assessments following the hopeful easing of lockdown restrictions. SL added that as soon as it is safe to do so, students will be back at College sites, following government advice. NW explained that protocols used last June will be followed again, to ensure students are kept safe and that College buildings are used effectively.

d. Financial Key Performance Indicators and Management Accounts Summary

CC presented the data for the five months ended 31 December 2020, including RAG rated indicators for financial outturn (1 amber, 2 green), financial health (3 green), other indicators (3 green) and bank covenants (1 green).

As at 31 December 2020 we are projecting a full-year operating deficit of £1,010,000 compared to a budgeted deficit of £1,532,000. This position is before any restructuring and pension adjustments.

The budget for Nursery and Cafeteria income was reduced by £357,000 for the potential impact of Covid-19. We have assumed reduced levels of income for a further 12 weeks of term; however, this will be reviewed again in February when further information about lockdown restrictions should be known. Some staff were flexibly furloughed in December within the cafeteria to ensure demand was more accurately met and financial use of the government scheme was maximised. Cafeteria and Nursery staff have now been fully furloughed during the latest lockdown.

CC confirmed that there will be a lower income from apprenticeships. More information will be available in March, but this is likely to impact budget setting for next year and possibly beyond.

A governor **questioned** if Covid-19 grants had been sought. NW confirmed that furlough grants are being used (to the maximum amount) however, no further grants are available to the College for the circa £400,000 extra costs due to Covid-19. MPs have been informed.

e. Learner Number Update

CC presented the student number vs target for 2020/21 as at 18 January 2021.

- 16-18 Full Time & High Needs was projected at 101%. Learner numbers are higher than the funding allocation and budgeted target, which will result in an increase in funding allocation for 2021/22.
- Adult Classroom Learning is at 91% of target.
- Apprenticeship numbers are projected at 78%.
- Higher Education (excluding the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals - CIPP) is at 97% of target. Most full-time courses are at or over target, with part-time courses being under target.

f. Health & Safety Update – Term 1 2020/21

NW presented the Health & Safety update for term 1, explaining that it was a mixed model with remote and onsite learning taking place.

- There has been a total of 49 reported incidents; of these a total of 18 (36%) were accidents. There have been no RIDDOR incidents during this period.
- 38 risk assessments have been completed by the Health & Safety Manager.
- 105 members of staff undertook Health & Safety training during the term, mostly online. The training for the Evacuation Chair must be carried out face-to-face at specific campuses.

- As at 31 December 2020, there were 163 first aid trained staff.
- Despite the challenges from Covid-19, Fire Evacuation Drills have taken place at most College Buildings during the term. The couple of remaining sites will be undertaken after the easing of the current lockdown.

Covid-19:

There have been 54 positive Student cases. 36 students have isolated due to close contact outside college and 248 students have isolated due to close contact inside college. This shows that measures have worked well to reduce the risk of spread from inside of college buildings.

21 staff members reported having a family member who tested positive. 32 staff members were awaiting results/self-isolating. 9 staff members have tested positive.

Governors **noted** that there had been no recorded on-site transmission. Governors were **assured** that this indicates the Covid-19 secure measures have been effective at the college sites.

The Corporation **received** the Principal's Report and **monitored** progress against targets.

46.8 Finance Record

The ESFA has issued an updated Finance Record for colleges to submit with their audited annual report and accounts for the college financial year 2019 to 2020. This requires colleges to complete a two-year return comprising an outturn statement for the 2019-2020 financial year and a budget forecast for the 2020-21 financial year.

The closing cash at year end was £6,340,000 in 2019-20 and forecast to be £4,289,000 for 2020-21.

A governor **challenged** the number of FTE staff. CC confirmed that 115 were teaching staff (lecturers only) and 333 were non-teaching staff (on business support contracts).

The ratio analysis for the contribution from catering, residences and conferences was **challenged** by a governor. CC confirmed that it was (£319,000) in 2019/20 and is likely to be (£531,000) in 2020/21.

Governors **approved** the Finance Record. The Financial record will be submitted to the ESFA by 31 January 2021 along with the Financial Statements.

46.9 Audit Committee

- a) The Audit Representation Letter
- b) Going Concern
- c) Financial Statements

Governors **approved** the Audit Representation Letter and gave **approval** for NB to sign.

Following the Audit Committee, both the Going Concern and Financial Statements had been brought up to date and some wording amended slightly.

Governors **approved** the Going Concern and Financial Statements.

46.10 Tender Committee

Governors **agreed** to move this item to confidential minutes.

Sue Nicholls left the meeting at 19:35

46.11 College Improvement Plan

Governors **monitored** the College Improvement Plan, noting the following:

- Reports through the Quality framework, direct student and parent feedback and attendance rates all show positive impact of the renewed leadership and increased focus on English and Maths. The national debate on the exam-based process remain unclear at this stage.
- The introduction of Quality Reviews for Engineering and Construction has been vital in capturing the improvement and progress being made. In some cases, improved consistency of process has not yet led to direct improvements in student experience or performance, thus the Amber rating in this area on some targets.
- Several the Amber ratings for 'Progress Monitoring' reflect that whilst it is known the process is being adopted across college, the impact on student final attainment, cannot be directly correlated as readily as previous years.
- All actions are Green for Mental Health. Significant focus has been given to supporting staff and students.
- The college has a strong reputation nationally and locally for 'Digital Development', as an institution and staff group, to the national lockdown, as represented by the Green actions. Those in Amber are where processes have begun but the ability to ensure they have made an impact at this stage is still emerging. The College will build on our successes going forward.
- The college recently gathered high levels of satisfaction from staff on the value and interest in the activities on Staff Development Days. The new HR portal has been warmly received.

46.12 Governance

a) Governance Improvement Plan

Governors **monitored** the progress of the Governance Improvement Plan 2020/21, noting that further updates will be made following subsequent meetings.

b) Committee Membership

All governors are now allocated to committees and/or T&F groups.

NB explained that governor succession planning and recruitment would be discussed at the upcoming Governance & Search Committee meeting.

Governors **approved** the latest committee/T&F group membership.

NB advised governors that Owen Jones had resigned as Student Governor with effect from 20th January 2021. As not all checks had been completed and therefore Owen Jones had not fully been approved as a student governor, governors **agreed** to offer the vacancy to Amelia Thomas, the previously unsuccessful candidate, with effect from 26 January 2021.

46.13 Corporation Workshop

Given the current Covid-19 restrictions and the likelihood of them continuing in some form, governors **agreed** that all remaining governor meetings for the 20/21 academic year should be carried out virtually. There will be no 'away day' during 20/21. SL thanked the governors for their understanding.

46.14 Corporation Training update

Governors **received** an update on governor training. LH advised that she is unable to access some of the training. Action (1): KK to contact LH to advise on accessing training.

KK

46.15 Any Other Urgent Business

It was determined that there was no other urgent business.

Staff and Student Governors left the meeting at this point

46.16- CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

46.18 These matters are recorded as Confidential Minutes

46.19 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 23 March 2021, at 17:30 via Microsoft Teams.

46.20- RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

46.21 These matters are recorded as Restricted Confidential Minutes.

The meeting closed at 20:05

Signed:

Date: