

CORPORATION

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 25 May 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)	
Kevin Gaffney (KG)	
Fiona Hellowell (FH)	
Tony King (TK)	
Debbie Morris (DMo)	
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
Claire Heywood (CH)	Deputy Principal
Peter Robinson (PR)	Vice Principal Curriculum & Standards
Tony Green (TG)	Assistant Principal Funding Data & External Contracts
Kay Kavanagh (KK)	Clerk to the Corporation
Donna Gibson (DG)	Deputy Clerk

Action

48.1 Apologies

Sue Nicholls provided apologies. No other apologies were received.

48.2 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.

48.3 Appointments

Following successful interview, in accordance with the recommendations of the Governance and Search committee, Governors unanimously **approved** the appointment of Steph Simcox to a first four-year term of office as a Corporation Member from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2025.

48.4 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Two corrections were highlighted. A further action was noted. **Action:** KK to gain approval for the new governor application process from the Governance & Search Committee.

KK

Considering the above, governors approved the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021 as a true record for signature by the Chair.

48.5 Matters Arising

Governors **reviewed** the Matters Arising report and **noted** progress.

48.6 Determination of any other urgent business

Governors **determined** that there was one further item to be added to the agenda which will be covered by CC under item 48.11.

48.7 Principal's Report

a. Principal's Update for Governors

FE White Paper – Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP), Strategic Development Fund (SDF)/College Business Centres (CBC)

The Principal explained that the Department for Education (DfE) has invited bids for trailblazer projects for Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP) and to test ideas linked to the Skills Development Fund (SDF) / College Business Centres (CBC) concepts that are key elements of the FE White Paper.

HoW College is working with the Hereford and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce (HWCC), Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) and Worcestershire County Council (WCC) are co-creating a LSIP bid that is focused on the Worcestershire skills market.

Other Colleges have also sought to collaborate, including the Warwickshire College Group. We are also working with the University of Wolverhampton who are keen to further our relationship.

ESFA/FE Commissioner Annual Conversation with HoW College

The first meeting with the ESFA and FE commissioners' team on the annual conversation has taken place. HoW College were one of the first to take part.

SL explained that the call was aimed at understanding what was working, challenges and the needs of the College. The Corporation's Chair, Vice Chair and Chair of Audit also attended along with SLT.

The ESFA and FE Commissioner team were very reassured and noted that we're a value driven organisation in terms of our strategy and our governors are advocates for our students. The focus on inclusivity was also highlighted.

Governors **noted** the response letter, acknowledging the positivity of the letter.

A governor **questioned** if the concerns/messages raised by the College would be fed back and if any impact would be made. SL echoed the concern but is assured that the feedback will be made.

Queen's Speech - FE White Paper

FE Skills headlined the Queen's Speech. Governors **noted** that unfortunately, the news talked about other matters, and the FE Skills did not get the coverage that was so critically need.

A governor commented that it was pleasing to see that the pilots are now including capital for both physical and virtual/digital assets.

Concerning the Queen's Speech and the mention of 'support for outstanding teaching', a governor stated that the best support we can ask for outstanding teaching is to make some inroads to college teachers' remuneration being at least the same as schoolteachers. SL agreed.

b. Curriculum and Quality Key Performance Indicators

PR invited questions on the reports provided. Governors **raised** the following questions:

- Is the attendance for English & Maths higher than 78%? PR explained that the lessons have concluded for English and Maths, with assessments now taking place. 78% has taken into account the increase from Easter to students now sitting assessments.
- Is the target of 66% correct on the staff survey? PR explained that the target was set at 66% and the outcome is 96%. NW added that the low target had been set as the question had never been asked before, and we weren't sure if everyone would understand how they contributed to the mission and values of the organisation. 96% was a very pleasing outcome.

c. Financial Key Performance Indicators

The financial KPIs at the end of April 21 were provided. CC highlighted the following:

Financial Outturn

- Projected full year operating deficit as at March 2021 was -£246,000
- Projected full year operating deficit as at April 2021 is £66,000. This increase is due to extra releases of income and vacancy savings.
- Current projections for the cost of restructuring exercises in 2020/21 is £500,000, this will be updated as the processes complete.
- Financial health remains at good.

Cashflow

- The College cashflow currently shows cash days in hand of 101 and balance of £7.8m which is anticipated to reduce to 66 and £ 5.1m at July 2021. This is an improved position over the original forecast in July 2020 which projected a closing balance at July 2021 of £2.6m.

A governor **sought reassurance** that the College isn't relying on extra funding that has been received this year (non-recurrent), for future years. CC confirmed that high risk income streams were identified in the budget (apprenticeships, nursery provision and cafes). They are also reflected in next year's budget. CC added that the College have projected much lower and realistic income levels and removed the non-recurrent items. The final budget will come to Corporation in July for approval.

d. Health & Safety Report

The report covers Health and Safety activities for the period from 1 January to 18 April 2021.

During the period there were a total of 7 reported incidents; of these 2 (28%) were actual accidents.

In house training has continued remotely.

Seven first aid training sessions are scheduled starting from May 2021 with a total of 42 members of staff already allocated places on these courses either for initial training or for re-qualification. Currently there are a total of 130 first aid trained staff in college.

The Health and Safety Committee meeting took place on the 25 February 2021. There were no items discussed that raised any significant issues.

The Principal **thanked** NW and her team for the work done on supporting students and staff for H&S whilst working at home.

Governors **received** the Principals report.

48.8 Collaborative Projects update, including Bids

NW explained that the result of the first phase of the capital transformation fund bids should have been announced week, however, no announcement has been made. The guidance concerning the second stage of the bid process is also yet to be released.

CH explained that the College is applying for two funds:

- 1) with Grimsby college to produce 300 videos for online learning, focusing on renewables, electric automation, construction engineering and mental health.
- 2) with Bridgend College, to drive demand for school aged pupils towards making a choice to take up technical vocational options for their future careers.

If we are successful in both projects, they will be worth around £750,000 pounds. The outcome will be known by the end of July.

Governors **noted** the update.

48.9 College HE Fees Policy

The policy has been amended to be a two-year rolling policy, to acknowledge an earlier publishing of information on HE fees and the application process, giving confirmation of fees for the coming 2 years.

Additional narrative has been included regarding fees from potential EU students.

A governor **questioned** what percentage of HE students are from the EU. CC explained that very few students (1 or 2) are EU students.

Governors **approved** the College HE Fees Policy.

48.10 Revenue Budget

Funding allocation

There are 2603 students in 2021/22, of which 2507 are full-time.

T Level delivery is new for 2021/22 and we have an allocation included within the 2603 of 22 learners, these would have previously been within the FT numbers. These are paid at a higher rate than traditional FT learners at £5061 for Band 7 (Digital) and £4363 for Band 6 (Childcare).

Adult Funding

For 2020/21 the three allocations totaled £4,353,540. We have received the ESFA allocation which has seen a small reduction but has included an amount of £80,850 for the National Skills Fund (L3 officer for learners aged 24+), we are awaiting the WMCA allocation and expectations are it will be at 2020/21 levels.

The Advanced Learner Loan (ALL) allocation was initially increased to £637,368 for 2020/21, this has seen a reduction in year reflecting actual take up of loans. The allocation has been reduced to £519,569 for 2021/22, current planning levels suggest this allocation will be sufficient. The associated Bursary allocation has also reduced.

Office for Students

The OFS allocation for 2020/21 totaled £609,569. Due to volume reduction experienced over the past few years initial plans are at 90% of 2020/21 levels.

Progress on revenue budgets 2021/22

The draft budget prepared in April 2021, indicated a deficit position of £1.2m without further action. Modelling suggested a deficit of around £0.5k would maintain a "Good" financial health rating and would protect cash balances.

Departments were targeted to review budgets and put forward savings where possible. In addition, SLT have explored the "mothballing" of St Wulstans and Osprey House, which could result in savings of around £271,000. In addition, we have targeted facilities to make financial savings against energy, supported and complimented by the work of the Eco/Sustainability group, this will require a Whole College approach which we will promote as we approach the new year.

Cashflow forecast through to July 2022, including AEB clawback below 90%, indicates closing cash balances at July 22 of £3.7m and the lowest cash balance in March 22 at £2.9m.

Governors raised the following questions:

- **For the 22 students completing T Levels, what is our degree of confidence to be able to get these into employers?** PR explained that employers have been contacted in advance, with some positive responses however, awareness for T Levels remains low. The uncertainty around a new qualification in Covid times is also having an impact.
- **Regarding the mothballing, this has been mentioned before, so why is the timing now?** CC explained that as we are still at a deficit position, and the reduction in apprenticeships is significant, the mothballing is a short-term strategy. NW added that in order to not impact staff too heavily, the two buildings being mothballed have roles that can be moved to other sites. SL

expressed his disappointment that having worked with partners to co-locate businesses into College space successfully, and to improve on economic regeneration, the support and support from bids, has not been provided in all cases. We continue work closely with the University of Wolverhampton, which may hold future opportunities for the mothballed buildings.

- **How many redundancies will be made by mothballing the two buildings?** 3.6 FTE are at risk due to mothballing.
- **What are the plans for the Executive Team and is there any space planned for Governors?** NW explained that both the Peakman and Bromsgrove buildings have low utilisation with good spaces available, including meeting rooms. Due to staff not needing to be on site 5 days a week, co-working spaces can be created.
- **Osprey House is the registered address, will this be changed?** NW confirmed that Peakman will become the new registered address for the College and also for 'Molinna' and 'NewCel'.

Governors **noted** the position in terms of revenue budget and the funding allocations.

48.11 Value for Money Policy

The policy was presented for a 2-year update. There have been no significant changes. Changes include:

- Removal of the bullet points detailing specific VFM responsibilities
- Update to the reference to VFM as stated in the Conditions of Funding document between the College and funding agencies.

Governors **approved** the Value for Money Policy.

Financial statements to ESFA.

Following the financial statements being approved in January, they are submitted to the ESFA. Governors **noted** the letter of response nothing the financial health and 2 control points.

Governors also **noted** the financial dashboard, acknowledging the comparisons to the sector.

There were no questions.

48.12 College Improvement Plan

PR explained that the college improvement plan is the overarching plan that arises from our self-assessment review each year. There are 5 main themes:

1. Improving performance in English and maths
 - Some good improvements seen in some areas, but not consistent improvements to attendance rates across all areas.
 - Continued monitoring of attendance by heads of English and Mathematics and CRQ manager
 - PR is confident that students will, as a minimum, achieve the same performance as last year

2. Correcting underperformance in Engineering
 - There is some good progress against the set quality measures in Engineering and Construction. Retention overall is at 93% in Engineering and 91% in Construction. This area will not be able to take advantage of TAG -based certification, due to the practical nature of the programmes and the occupation entry status applied by Awarding Bodies.
3. Progress Monitoring
 - Parents/Students reports have had to be delayed due to the inability to provide full report on assessments and the potential for conflict of interests relating to TAG process.
 - Plans are in place to assist students at risk of not achieving. These include actions around a TAG based process or enabling the student to complete their practical work one in a very condensed time.
4. How leaders are ensuring that learners are safe and well informed about risks
 - There is very positive feedback from staff and students on Mental Health support, which is good evidence for the success of the activities in this theme.
5. Further enhancement of Digital Skills
 - There has been significant investment in previous years, which is now enabling staff to get the full benefit of those resources and those facilities in their teaching practice
 - A new Moodle platform is being launched – ‘Elements’ programme is replacing ‘SOLA’.
 - Positive feedback received from schools following us sending materials for students about to finish school but who want to continue doing some study in preparing for their next steps.
6. Engaging effectively with staff to support their well-being and investing in their continuous professional development
 - Positive feedback from staff regarding the support they are receiving supporting their mental wellbeing.
 - 96% of staff say they feel that they contribute to the college's mission
 - Staff absence rate is low compared to national benchmarks

Governors raised the following questions:

- **Regarding the 75 learners with initial assessment outstanding for English and Maths, will that have had an impact on their learning experience going forward from last October and are they contributing to the 22% attendance?** PR explained that it wouldn't directly impact on their experience and they will still go to classes and be expected to attend.
- **Pre-Covid, analysis was provided of the distribution of students with low attendance, is that data still available?** PR explained that the data reviewed on a regular basis and provided to teachers.

Governors **noted** the College Improvement Plan.

48.13 Qualification Achievement Report 2019/20

Both the Qualification Achievement Report and the Value-Added Report (see agenda item 48.15) are national sets of data produced by the government; we then use them as a guide to see how we performed against the benchmark.

Governors **noted** that the government has not created these report this year. It is also not clear if there will be reports for 2020/21.

48.14 Learner Destinations and Progression Report 2019/20

The college employs a variety of methods, both internally captured and externally validated, to ascertain the destinations of FE students. These results are for learners achieving in 2019/20. This information was collated by the end of May 2021, which supports a view that these are sustained destinations, 6 months after achieving.

HE data is collated by the Government through the Graduate Outcomes survey. This is for leavers in 2018/19.

Further Education

- The College captured 1804 destinations, 54% of all students included in the sample, (a 13% increase on 20-18/19 results), (71% (61%) of 16-18 yr olds, 33% (41%) of Adults). This is from courses “in scope” during an Ofsted Inspection, in effect, FE Learners.
- 16 - 18 Destinations – 97%, (98%), were in a positive destination. 82%, (82%) were in education, (incl. Internships and Apprenticeships). 16%, (2%), were in employment. A significant change is that 41%, (66%) of Level 3 Learners, (excl. Yr 1 of a 2 year programme), were studying in higher education.
- Adult Destinations – 98% (94%) were in a positive destination. 94%, (85%), were in education. Very few were in an employment outcome, Part of this will be due to the difficulty in capturing this information on an annual basis and in a COVID year.
- EHCP Learners – The College educated 234 learners with an EHCP in 2019/20. 96%, (97%), were in positive destinations. 91%, (86%), were in education. 3%, (3%) were in employment.

Higher Education - Graduate Outcomes (2018/19 leavers)

- 83%, an increase of 9%, of HE graduates stated that “I am utilising what I learnt during my studies in my current activity”. The national measure for this question, in 2019, was 72%.
- 73%, of full-time learners were in employment. 86%, (59%), of that cohort, were in full-time employment and 43% in highly skilled jobs. In 2019, the average percentage of full-time graduates in full-time employment nationally, was 65%.
- 98% of our Chartered Institute of Payroll Professional graduates were in employment, 85% in medium skilled jobs, 97%, (93%) in 2019, were in full-time employment.
- 97%, of our other, non-CIPP, part-time graduates were in employment. 69% were in highly skilled jobs. 89%, (94%), were in full-time employment.
- The national measure for part-time learners being in full-time employment, in 2019, was 72%.

Well-being

The Graduate Outcomes Survey asks respondents four “Well-being questions”:

- How Anxious did you feel yesterday?
- How Happy did you feel yesterday?
- To what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

- How satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

Results from the 2018/19 students were provided within the report. PR confirmed that they are a positive set of results, but caution should be taken when making judgements against them.

A governor **questioned** if the College was obliged to produce this report, given only a 54% uptake rate. PR confirmed that the College was obliged to produce the report and added that it contributes to the Ofsted EIF.

Governors **noted** the Learner Destinations and Progression Report 2019/20.

48.15 Value Added Report

See agenda item 48.13.

48.16 Academic Board Minutes

There are circa 274 HE students and 676 students on the Chartered Institute of payroll professional programme (two-thirds are full-time). HE students account for circa 8% of College income.

The Academic Board have:

- approved the report for the OFS for our Access and Participation plan.
- reviewed upcoming curriculum developments including a new HND in Sport
- reviewed the adaptations of the Business programme (where a blended learning model is being introduced)
- reviewed plans for 2022 to introduce a degree option for Engineering
- heard positive accounts from students in relation to the handling of Covid-19 and the support received

Learner Voice has been carried out using the 'Padlet' software. This has been highly successful, and this method will be used in following years.

Governors **received** the Academic Board Minutes.

48.17 HE Strategic Plan 20/21

PR talked through the HE Strategic Plan explaining that updates had been made in relation to Covid-19. Future HE objectives will be added into a future College strategic plan, rather than having a separate HE plan.

The HE Strategic Plan is split into four areas:

1. Resourceful

Good progress has been made in achieving these objectives. Much work has taken place around digital resources. In 2016, the percentage of on-campus students who stated, "I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to", has increased from 72% to 84%.

2. Innovative
Changes in curriculum, our offer and the content have been made. Some progress has been made on creating smaller, modules that can be used across a variety of courses. The focus now is on creating a set of common employability skills, for all HE students.
3. Stimulating
Previous reports have shown some positive improvements from NSS survey results, which show that students enjoy their work. The recent destination survey showed how students are at higher than national average and showing that they're using the learning that they've had with us in their employment.
4. Employable
The recent graduate outcomes data is suggestive of an effective and impactful HE experiences, and learning gain that students employ regularly in their workplace and career progressions. The next aim is to build more into the student programmes around skills such as leadership, problem solving, lateral thinking.

There were no questions.

Progress against the HE Strategic Plan 20/21 was **noted** by governors.

48.18 Governance

a) Governance and Search Committee

- Governors **noted** the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2021.
- Governors **approved** the appointment of David Ash to a second and final four-year Term of Office as a Corporation Member from 1 August 2021 until 31 July 2025.
- Governors **approved** the changes to the Standing Orders and agreed for them to be re-formatted.
- Governors **approved** Gary Woodman and Steve Bolton as Safeguarding Lead Governors from 1 August 2021.

b) Governor Insight Scheme

Governors **received** an update and summary of activity from the Governor Insight Scheme.

Governors will continue to receive invitations to participate in events for the remainder of 2020/2021. Recent invitations have been sent out for the following event activities:

- Vocational Grade Presentation Boards
- End of Year Activities for events involving students from the Arts, Music and Design curriculum areas

c) Governor One-2-Ones

The Chair advised that these have been arranged to take place in June. Governors yet to book a session were encouraged to contact KK to arrange.

d) Governor Training

Governors **received** an update on governor training.

Following the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee to purchase the training offered by ETF (£200/year per organisation), FH commented that the material had been developed and various methods of training are included i.e. webinar, podcasts and face-2-face. The Principal added that some of the modules will be useful for staff development too.

Governors **approved** the purchase the governance training modules offered by ETF (£200/year per organisation).

e) Vice-Chair Appointment

The Chair advised that at the end of this academic year there'll be a vacancy for the Corporation Vice-Chair, and nominations are now invited. Self-nominations should be sent to the Clerk to the Corporation.

f) Sustainability Task & Finish Group

The first meeting of the Sustainability Task & Finish Group has taken place. The group was attended by both governors and members of staff. DMO explained that the group will meet again in July and then for a final time in the Autumn term.

The group reviewed the FE Climate Change Action Plan, noting the 3 areas of progress and the 5 areas of assessment.

An Eco Group has been set-up internally at the College, encouraging staff to reduce carbon emissions and increase awareness of sustainability.

On the **recommendation** of the Sustainability T&F Group, governors **approved**:

- The Target of '50 in 10' (To reduce carbon emissions by 50% in the next 10 years, using the baseline data from 2018/19)
- Denis Miles as the Sustainability Lead Governor
- The signing of the letter to confirm that the College has set a carbon emissions reduction target.

DMO advised the Corporation of an updated AOC Code of Governance that is currently under development. **Action:** KK to ensure that the Governance & Search committee review the updated AOC Code of Governance when it becomes available.

KK

48.19 Any Other Urgent Business

It was determined that there was no other urgent business.

Staff and Student Governors left the meeting at this point

48.20- CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

48.22 These matters are recorded as Confidential Minutes

48.23- RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

48.25 These matters are recorded as Restricted Confidential Minutes

48.26 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 6 July 2021 at 17:30 via Microsoft Teams.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19:45

Signed:

Date: