

**CORPORATION**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 6 July 2021 at 17:30  
A Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Present**

**Governors:**

Neill Bucktin (NB)	Chair
Denis Miles (DM)	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)	
Tony King (TK)	
Sue Nicholls (SN)	
Robert Pearce (RP)	
Gary Woodman (GW)	

**In Attendance:**

Claire Heywood (CH)	Deputy Principal
Nicki Williams (NW)	Vice Principal and Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Julia Breakwell	Vice Principal Information Systems & Student Experience
Peter Robinson (PR)	Vice Principal Curriculum & Standards
Cherie Clements (CC)	Assistant Principal Finance & Corporate Operations
Tony Green (TG)	Assistant Principal Funding Data & External Contracts
Kay Kavanagh (KK)	Clerk to the Corporation
Donna Gibson (DG)	Deputy Clerk
Hannah Griffiths	(For item 49.4 only)
Steph Simcox	Guest
Andrea Borwell-Fox	Guest
Sarah Owen	Guest
Kyra Peace	Guest
Zalina Bingham	Guest

**Action**

**49.1 Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted from Lucy Hodgson and Evan Whakahau.

**49.2 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.

### 49.3 Appointments

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

In accordance with election procedures, governors unanimously **approved** the appointment of Leon Evans-Lochlin and Kyra Peace to a one-year term of office as Student Governors from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022.

In accordance with election procedures, governors unanimously **approved** the appointment of Evan Whakahau and Zalina Bingham to a four-year term of office as Staff Governors from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2025.

### 49.4 Staff Survey Evaluation

Governors **received** a presentation from Hannah Griffiths regarding the Staff Survey, Spring 2021.

Governors noted that the presentation is largely positive with most staff being proud to be a member of staff at HoW College and feeling able to contribute to the values.

Most staff believe that the College is well led, managed and that leaders and managers are considerate of workload and wellbeing.

Negative themes are communication and pay.

Future opportunities and plans include:

- Staff social events
- Agile Working Policy
- Staff quizzes
- Fitness and Sports clubs

Next steps include:

- Action plan
- Creation of a College-wide staff group
- SLT staff briefings
- Staff briefings explaining staff pay constraints
- Continuing to celebrate success

A governor questioned if it was possible to distinguish between full-time and part-time staff, and by department? HG explained that as the survey is anonymous, it is not possible to distinguish between full-time and part-time or by department.

Governors thanks HG for the presentation and the work carried out for the survey.

### 49.5 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Governors **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2021 as a true record for signature by the Chair.

#### **49.6 Matters Arising**

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

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

Governors **determined** that there were no other items of urgent business.

#### **49.8 Principal's Report**

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

##### **FE White Paper**

SL confirmed that the main themes of the second reading of the whitepaper included:

- The limited number of courses eligible under the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.
- The lack of level 3 and below provision in the Lifelong Loan Entitlement
- The lack of maintenance support provisions in the Bill.
- Ensuring that Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) take account of what relationships already exist and the importance of bringing stakeholders other than employers into the fold.
- Limiting Universal Credit Rules on adult learners.
- The importance of careers advice and guidance.
- The need for clarity on the role and accountabilities of employer representative bodies (ERBs) in developing their LSIPs.
- The lack of sustainability and net-zero carbon economy opportunities.
- The confusion over regulation and the role of providers and funding bodies in the legislation.

SL provided an overview of the 'Review of how well the education or training provided meets local needs' recently issued, noting that the document is still in draft form and could be updated.

SL explained that it is likely that a full curriculum review will be required by the end of 2021/22, then every 3 years plus an interim review. More robust evidence sources will be required. Governors noted the update and agreed to re-visit once the paper has been approved.

##### **Capital Funding**

SL confirmed that HoW College bid into the first three funding pots but the delay in the capital transformation fund was not unexpected.

##### **Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) and Appeals**

SL explained that the additional work placed on College colleagues to provide robust and secure evidence to support grades for GCSE and Vocational and Technical (VTQs) qualifications has been considerable.

SL thanked teaching colleagues who have carried out much of this extra workload. The internal quality process has been very well managed. SL gave particular thanks to Peter Robinson and Claire Beaman who have led the process with some excellent support from Chris Hazelwood who heads the exams team.

Governors noted that the biggest challenge will be the appeals process.

### **T levels**

SL explained that the College has deservedly received a very strong internal audit report for their T level work. Lesley Baker, Yvonne Thomas, James Duckhouse and Bridgette Robinson deserving a lot of credit for leading and managing this development.

Despite a significant push from Colleges there is weak appetite for an untested qualification that looks relatively unattractive to existing VTQ alternatives. This is particularly the case for young people who need to earn and learn.

SL added that a concern is that government will try and force numbers down the T level route by closing off many of the existing alternative VTQs.

### **HE Pressures**

SL explained that there is a reduced number of international students, due to the pandemic, Brexit and many universities giving unconditional offers.

There is a growth in University foundation level courses that are designed for those who are not considered to be academically ready for University based degree level study.

#### **b. Curriculum and Quality Key Performance Indicators**

Governors **noted** performance in 2020/21.

- Attendance is up from 2019/20 but remains below target. Retention rates have also increased and are above target
- Achievement rates are not yet available
- % of learners in positive destinations is at 97%, against a target of 95%
- Staff absence rates are up at 2.94 days – this is still below the target of 4.75 days

Governors **approved** the KPIs for 2021/22.

#### **c. Financial Key Performance Indicators**

There is a projected full year operating surplus as at May 2021 of £689,000. This position is before any restructuring and pension adjustments.

Current forecasts for apprenticeships suggest the projection is £1.8m, based on carry over income and confirmed new starts. This has seen a small increase on April projections.

Financial Health is at good. EBITDA is at 8% (rounded).

Cash balances remain higher than previous forecasts at £5.8m at July 2021.

There were no questions.

Governors **received** the Principals report.

#### **49.9 Collaborative Projects update, including Bids**

NW and CH advised that there was no update that could be provided yet.

#### **49.10 Subcontractors Performance Report**

TG provided an overview of Partners, as at May 2021.

The performance of active partners in apprenticeship terms shows broadly positive outcomes, with projections indicating a slight over-performance against MCV.

For the Adult Education Budget, again the projected outturn is relatively positive at 91% of MCV, with activity buoyant in some areas compared to others.

The rates listed are based on internal PICS data, and therefore may be subject to change. The impact of the pandemic can be seen on some partners more than others (e.g., Licensed2Train is a small specialist provider to the hospitality and catering sector and Shropshire Training specialises in butchery). Adult Education Rates continue to perform well despite the current constraints.

TG confirmed that there are no areas of concern.

There were no questions. Governors **received** the report.

#### **49.11 Partner Management Fees Policy**

TG confirmed that the policy is largely unchanged and adheres to ESFA requirements.

Governors **approved** the revised Partner Management Fees Policy (Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy) for 2021/22.

#### **49.12 Subcontracting Partners**

This report is provided annually to governors, prior to issuing contracts for the upcoming academic year to subcontracted partners.

There are 14 subcontracted partners. There are no new subcontracted partners to approve, and all those in Annex 2 continue to be organisations which the College has had a long-term contracting relationship with.

Governors **approved** the Subcontracting Partners for 2021/22.

#### **49.13 FINANCE & MANAGEMENT**

##### **a) College Fees policy**

The policy has been updated for 2021/22 in respect of the ESFA Funding Guidance for 2021/22. There are no significant amends within the policy for 2021/22

Governors **approved** the College Fees Policy 2021/22.

##### **b) Revenue Budget**

The draft budget for approval by Corporation as at 29th June 2021 highlights a deficit position of £738,000; this is before restructuring or any pension costs.

CC provided the following highlights:

- Apprenticeships - historical budget levels are around £2.5m, with 2020/21 actuals at £1.8m. The budget for 2021/22 is £1.5m, a significant reduction on historical levels and reflects the lasting impact of the pandemic on take up of apprenticeships during lockdown and the number of learners “in learning”.
- Budgets include the increase to salary scales from the National Minimum Wage increase in April 2021. A further increase is planned for April 2022 at a higher rate of 5%, a provision for £165k has been included within the budget assuming this is applied on the same basis as the increase in April 2021.
- Pension costs budgeted reflect the current Teachers Pension employer which is not anticipated to change until September 2024. The budgeted Local Government Pension costs reflect the agreed 3 year planned rates, this will see a 0.7% increase in the employer contribution rate in April 2022 and an increase of £111k in the lump sum deficit payment.
- The College has made the decision to mothball both Osprey House and St Wulstans buildings for the 2021/22 academic year. We anticipate this will save around £187k in non-pay costs and this reduced in spend has been included within the budget.
- Final Cash Balance projected as at 31 July 2021 is £5,842,000 and at 31 July 2022 is £4,645,000.
- The College will closely monitor Government policy on FE funding and the planned Comprehensive Spending Review due later in 2021.

A governor **questioned** if CC was aware of the positions for other Colleges in relation to apprenticeships. CC stated that Leicestershire and Staffordshire are heavily reliant. SL added that the issue is nationwide, with further impacts likely from furlough changes. NW explained that smaller business had had to forego their apprenticeships during furlough to stay afloat.

A governor **questioned** if the disposal of the two mothballed buildings should be considered? SL explained that if it were normal times, the uplift would be higher. Due to the impact of the pandemic, we need to wait and see the overall impacts of numbers to see if we need the capacity again. NW clarified that by next Easter, we should have a better understanding of building needs.

Governors **approved** the revenue budget 2021/22.

### c) **Capital Budget**

How College submitted 3 first stage application for transformation fund funding by the 22 March 2021 deadline. One for Worcester Campus, one for Redditch Campus, and one for Bromsgrove campus. The bids included the remodelling of the College Learning Centres, the development of new curriculum areas, alongside a number of works – primarily roof and window replacements – as identified as falling into condition category B, C and D by the DfE Surveyors during September 2019.

NW confirmed that Colleges should have been notified if their stage 1 Transformation Fund applications had progressed to stage 2 of the process by 21 May 2021. Unfortunately, the DfE have failed to meet their announcement deadline and no announcements have been made, and we remain unaware of when these announcements are expected.

Governors **noted** that because of the delay in announcements regarding the Capital Transformation Fund, NW is unable to prepare a detailed capital budget proposal for 2021/22.

**d) Student Union Budget**

CC confirmed that the only income item is £500 for Totum cards. No income is expected for the use of Pool tables.

Costs of £500 are included for Freshers week (virtual), campaigns, trips, and NUS Subscription.

Governors **approved** the Students Union budget 2020/21.

**e) ESFA Financial submission 2020/21-2021/22**

CC advise that the ESFA have issued a new financial return for colleges to submit before 31 July 2021 (The College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR)).

CC confirmed that the CFFR includes the following requirements:

- that the corporation has approved the CFFR
- that the CFFR supports the corporation's strategic objectives.
- the accounting officer confirms that the supporting commentary has been prepared with due regard to the financial planning checklist
- the opening cash balances have been reconciled to bank statements.
- the re-introduction of a 3-year financial return.
- the inclusion of proposed updated financial ratios and financial health scoring method (which may be used to calculate financial health scores and therefore used to determine financial health grades for colleges in the future)

CC explained that at 2 July 2021 the return and narrative are incomplete. The College have found the current reporting and analysis compared to the new return is not always aligned, and this has resulted in additional work to remap HoWC data into the return.

ESFA briefing sessions are being held by the ESFA week commencing 5 July 2021 to cover best practice and Q&A. CC envisages the return being fully complete for 12 July 2021.

CC **proposed** that approval is delegated to the Chair / Vice Chair and Chair of Audit. All documents will be uploaded to the Governors portal by 12 July 2021. CC will be available following this for any Q&A that were to arise from the documents ahead of submission by 30 July 2021.

Governors **approved** the process for the ESFA Financial submission 2020/21-2021/22, agreeing that approval be delegated to the Chair/Vice-Chair and Chair of Audit.

**49.14 Learner Voice Report and Action Plan**

JB explained that the Learner Voice process is fully embedded into the College calendar, despite the pandemic.

Over the four years from 2017/18 to 2020/21 trends show continued high participation response rates for learners participating in Arrivals survey (1,203 learners) and Satisfaction survey (1,094).

SSLT events did not take place due to Covid-19.

JB confirmed that the results are pleasing, with KPIs exceeded.

Governors **noted**:

- 99.7% of students stated that they know how to keep themselves safe online.
- 99.1% of students feel they are on the right course.
- 95.5% of students stated the teaching on their course has improved their skills and
  - understanding of the subject
- 95.4% of students stated they have an understanding of British Values and
  - Prevent, showing a 6.8% increase.

A governor **commented** that they have missed student presence at governor events during the last 18 months. JB explained that the learner voice strategy is being reviewed, with a potential student conference taking place in 2021-22.

Governors **received** the Learner Voice Report for 2020/21, including the Student Satisfaction Survey overview and Learner Voice Action Plan.

#### **49.15 Equality and Diversity Impacts Measures**

JB explained that the EDI objectives focus on reducing gaps for those with socio-economic deprivation and hardship and to positive promote the benefits of positive mental health and wellbeing and supporting those who have been identified as an EDIM category.

Mental health support for staff and students continues to be high priority.

Care Experienced, those Living Independently and Young Carers are supported and remain a priority group on the Wellbeing Team's caseload. Extensive support is put in place to ensure learners can keep themselves safe and attend and participate in lessons.

There were no questions.

Governors **monitored** the Equality & Diversity Impacts Measures.

#### **49.16 Staff Survey Results**

See agenda item 49.4 above.

#### **49.17 Agile Working Policy**

NW explained that During the Coronavirus Pandemic the College introduced a pandemic Working from Home Policy and risk assessment as an interim measure. Whilst the pandemic continues with further lockdowns and enforced homeworking resulting from this, the College also recognises the ongoing benefits of agile working on staff wellbeing (as highlighted in the 2020/21 Staff Survey), productivity and moral, whilst being mindful of more negative aspects of homeworking that staff have brought to our attention. We



also believe this more flexible approach will add to the range of benefits we offer staff and will support future recruitment.

Governors **raised** the following questions:

- **What is the anticipated occupancy of buildings moving forward?** Some buildings have staff at all times, others will be more agile moving forward, with rotas being put in place.
- **Have staff acted responsibly when working from home?** NW confirmed that staff have worked responsibly when working from home and have not abused the position.
- **As this is a new policy, will it be reviewed?** NW explained that the policy will be communicated to staff and will be reviewed prior to the 3-year review date, via HR updates.
- **Will staff have to keep records of their working hours?** There is no set template, however, departments can develop their own should they feel that it is appropriate. NW added that staff are encouraged to take breaks when working from home.

Governors **approved** the Agile Working Policy.

#### **49.18 AUDIT COMMITTEE**

##### **a) Audit Committee Minutes**

KG provided an update of the Audit Committee held on 22 June 2021, highlighting:

- No major changes to the Risk Register
- Internal Audit reports and Strategy were discussed
- Bishop Fleming attended their first committee meeting.

##### **b) Audit Committee Recommendations**

Governors **approved** the following items, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee:

- Internal Audit Strategy 2021-2024

Governors **received** the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting on 22 June 2021 and **noted** the Audit Committee's advice.

#### **49.19 TASK & FINISH GROUPS**

##### **a) English & Maths**

TK explained that the meeting was positive with assurance that learners are engaging well.

The work carried out by both staff and students over the past year has been commendable and an audit trail of work is available.

TK proposes that the need for the task and finish group is now removed. English & Maths should be monitored at Corporation moving forward. SL added that the teams have appreciated the approach of the task & Finish group and agrees that it has been effective.

Governors **received** the notes of the meeting held on 17 June 2021 and **agreed** to English & Maths being monitored via KPIs moving forward.

**b) Quality & Progression**

GW confirmed that the task and finish group had met on 23 June and the meeting was informative and positive.

Appeals are expected, but GW was assured that the College procedures allowed for robust processes to have been followed.

FH added that it was clear that staff had clearly worked hard during the process, including moderation.

GW confirmed that a further meeting would be held in the Autumn term to review the outcomes for students.

Governors **received** the notes of the meeting held on 23 June 2021.

**49.20 GOVERNANCE**

**a) Governor Insight Scheme**

Throughout 2020/21 COVID19 has continued to impact upon the activities that would have historically been available for Governors to participate in. Being mindful of the Covid-19 measures in place Governors have been invited to participate in College activity that has been undertaken remotely via Microsoft Teams.

DM is hoping that 2021-22 allows governors to return to College and for learning walks to commence.

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

**b) Governor One-2-Ones**

NB confirmed that he had met all governors virtually, with the impact of Covid being a theme throughout, along with the confidence of governors regarding the handling of the pandemic via SLT.

NB would like for governors to start thinking more strategically about the direction of the College moving forward.

**c) Workshop & Away Day**

Governors **considered** the agendas for the September Workshop and November Away Day, agreeing that the Workshop will be Strategy focussed.

A governor **proposed** that 'Sustainability' be covered during the Away Day. All governors **agreed**.

**d) Governance arrangements for obtaining staff and student views Policy**

Governors discussed the policy, noting the following required changes:

- Paragraph 2 on page 221 refers to a Corporation of 18 members but we officially increased to 19 last year.

- Paragraph 2 on page 221 has a reference to anyone being able to request to attend a meeting is based upon the "Access to Corporation Information Statement" - not entitled as a "Policy"

Governors **approved** the 'Governance arrangements for obtaining staff and student views Policy', following the above changes.

**Action:** KK to make the required changes to the 'Governance arrangements for obtaining staff and student views Policy'.

KK

**e) Governor Training, Development, and Induction Policy**

Governors **discussed** the Governor Training, Development, and Induction Policy, noting the following required changes:

- A 'purpose' is to be added on the front cover ("Provisions for the Training, Development and Induction programme for Governors")
- Amend the sequence of the policy so that training and development is before induction
- The wording on page 24 referring to the "Governors' Annual Planning Event" is to be updated with "Governors Workshop".

Governors **approved** the 'Governor Training, Development, and Induction Policy' following the above changes.

**Action:** KK to make the required changes to the 'Governor Training, Development, and Induction Policy'.

KK

**f) Statement of Governance Principles and scheme of delegation 2021-2024**

KK advised that the previous version approved in 2018, unfortunately has sections missing. KK proposes that the documents is fully reviewed and presented at the next Governance & Search Committee, ahead of full approval by Corporation in the Autumn Term.

Governors **approved** the proposal for the Statement of Governance Principles and scheme of delegation 2021-2024 to be reviewed by the Governance & Search Committee, ahead of Corporation approval in the autumn term.

**Action:** KK to add 'Review of 'Statement of Governance Principles and scheme of delegation 2021-2024' to the next Governance & Search committee meeting.

KK

**g) Governance Improvement Plan**

KK advise that the Governance Improvement Plan has been updated and will be fully reviewed in September for 2021/22.

Governors **received** the Governance Improvement Plan.

**h) Committee Membership 2021/22**

Governors discussed the committee membership for 2021/22 **approving** the following:

- Quality & Progression Task & Finish Group to meet once more in the Autumn Term

- The Sustainability Task & Finish group will meet once more during the Autumn Term, then updates will be provided to Corporation, via the College Eco Group
- Appeals Committee to be re-added to the list of committees
- The Estates Group should be re-added to the list of committees
- Governors to advise KK of their expressions of interest to join a committee

Governors **noted** the governor membership of committees and T&F groups for 2021/22.

**Action:** All governors to advise KK of their expressions of interest to join a committee.

**ALL**

**Action:** KK to update the Committee Membership lists for 2021/22.

**KK**

**i) Cycles of Business**

Governors **approved** the 2021/22 Cycle of Business for:

- Corporation
- Governance & Search Committee
- Audit Committee
- Remuneration Committee

**j) Vice-Chair Appointment**

KK confirmed that 1 nomination and 2 proposers had been received for David Ash to be appointed as Vice-Chair for 2021/22, for a 1-year term of office.

Governors **approved** the appointment of David Ash as Vice-Chair for 2021/22, for a 1-year term of office.

Governors thanked DM for his time served as Vice-Chair.

**k) Corporation Calendar 2021-22**

Governors **received** the Corporation Calendar for 2021-22.

**49.21 Any Other Urgent Business**

It was determined that there was no other urgent business.

**49.22 Thank You and Farewell**

The Chair **thanked** outgoing and continuing Governors. KK confirmed that governors have received a certificate and voucher, with student governors receiving a certificate and merchandise gift bag.

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

**49.23 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

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**49.27**

These matters are recorded as Confidential Minutes.

**49.28 RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

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**49.30**

These matters are recorded as Restricted Confidential Minutes.

**49.31 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

- Corporation Workshop: 21 September 2021, 17:30 - The Source, Worcester
- Corporation: 12 October 2021, 17:30 – Function Room, Peakman, Redditch

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:00

**Signed:**

**Date:**