

CORPORATION

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 25 January 2022 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)	
	Zalina Bingham (ZB)	
	Steve Bolton (SB)	
	Helen Butler (HB)	
	Leon Evans-Lochlin (LEL)	
	Kevin Gaffney (KG)	
	Tony King (TK)	
	Sarah Owen (SO)	
	Steph Simcox (SS)	
	Evan Whakahau (EW)	

In Attendance:	Nicki Williams (NW)	Deputy Chief Executive Officer & Vice Principal Corporate
	Cherie Clements (CC)	Vice Principal Finance & Corporate Operations
	Julia Breakwell (JB)	Vice Principal Student Experience & Stakeholder Engagement
	Claire Heywood (CH)	Deputy Principal
	Peter Robinson (PR)	Vice Principal Curriculum & Standards
	Tony Green (TG)	Assistant Principal Funding Data & External Contracts
	Claire Beaman (CB)	Executive Director for Quality
	Kay Kavanagh (KK)	Clerk to the Corporation
	Donna Gibson (DG)	Deputy Clerk

Action

52.1 Apologies

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

52.2 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.

52.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

KK advised of the following requested amendments:

- DM left the meeting after item 51.14 at 19:15
- Two additional agreements connected to the ending of the T&F Sustainability Group, these being that a second governor be sought to join the internal Eco Group, and that the Corporation receive formal reports on Sustainability and the Road to Net Zero twice a year.

CB has advised that the following should be removed:

- Regarding the table on page 59 of the report, would it be possible to add the detail of direction? For example, is an area moving towards a higher or lower grade. CB confirmed that this detail could be provided.

And the following added instead:

- The missing grade was to be added into the table on page 59. Governors questioned which areas are better than good (heading towards outstanding potentially) and the direction of the areas marked as RI.

Action: KK to update the minutes with the required amendments.

KK

Governors approved the minutes with the above amendments, as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

52.4 Matters Arising

Governors **reviewed** the Matters Arising report and **noted** progress. 1 action has been carried forward.

52.5 Determination of any other urgent business

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

52.6 Principal's Report

a. Principal's Update for Governors

The Principal's provided an overview of the report.

Ofsted Annual Report:

The Annual Report provides a national view of education and children's social care over the 2020 to 2021 academic year. During this period, much of Ofsted's routine inspection work was suspended.

SL highlighted the following from the report, where it is felt the College performed well:

- The loss of education, disrupted routine, and lack of activities led some children to develop physical and mental health problems. Loneliness, boredom, and misery became endemic among the young.
- Significant disruption in Colleges with the need to manage 'varying blends' of remote learning during the year. Variable ability to effectively blend learning identified.
- Apprenticeships were hit badly, especially in retail, customer service, childcare and health and social care sectors. End-point assessments (EPAs) were a problem that delayed timely completion rates.
- Strong providers carried out rigorous initial assessments to gauge starting points. They used this to logically structure and adapt the curriculum to build knowledge, skills, and behaviours. They were able to blend learning with high quality on-line delivery.
- Increased mental health problems amongst students was widely reported.

SL added the College recognises much of what the report highlights and recommends. The limited amount of catch-up funding and difficulties in

recruiting additional staff has not helped with recovery. Emotional, behavioural, and academic development issues all playing a part. Teacher assessed grades and a disrupted education over the previous two years also means that a significant number of students are having difficulties with the level and intensity of their learning as they transition into College.

16-17yr old base rate funding increase:

SL explained that the College has been pro-active in supporting the lobbying that has been focussed at raising base rates and programme weighting funding.

Colleges will see an 8.4 per cent increase in the national base rate for full time students aged 16 and 17 from August 2022. The rate will rise from £4,188 to £4,542. Most of the increase will pay for 40 additional teaching hours that will be monitored (SL explained that how it will be monitored is still under discussion).

SL is positive about the increase, although it's not at the rate of inflation. A Governor **questioned** if the increase was for the next three years. SL clarified that this is for the first year, but a 3-yr settlement has been agreed.

Pandemic: Omicron variant

SL explained that changes are moving fast, as the government reviews measures against Covid. Currently, the College is managing to deliver most of the curriculum offer as planned.

There have been some cancelled classes and some additional on-line delivery.

Most students are behaving responsibly in terms of mask wearing and keeping their distance. The College continues to utilise screens and fogging to help reduce the risks of spreading. To support the vaccination push St Wulstan's building in Worcester is continuing as a permanent centre and pop-up vaccination service is being supported in Redditch.

b. Ofsted Annual Report

See above.

c. Curriculum and Quality Key Performance Indicators

PR provided an overview of the KPI's, highlighting the following:

- Attendance is at 88%. This is expected to reduce further and the target of 90% may not be met.
- Retention remains good at 97%.
- New data is available for English & maths, which now includes progress rates. 70% of students in English and 74% in maths have improved their mark since the start of the academic year and Christmas.
- Overall achievement rates for apprenticeships is at 47%, against a target of 68%. This is not marked in red due to there being no national average to benchmark against. Apprenticeships remain an area for improvement.

d. Financial Key Performance Indicators and Management Accounts Summary

CC presented the data for the period ended 31 December 2021.

Forecast outturn is £105k ahead of budget at £633k deficit.

CC explained that there had been movements in income, these being an increase due to the 16/19 Tuition Fund (£584k), CCF Project (£383k) and High Needs (£479k) but reductions with Consortium (£973k), AEB (£365k) and Apprenticeships (£130k). There is a projected full year adverse variance on Fee Income of £93k based on actual learner numbers.

Pay costs are projected to be higher than budget at year end by £122k. The NMW increase at April 22 and NI increase are factored into the forecasts.

Non-pay costs are projected to be lower than budget at year end by £206k.

The Bromsgrove LRC project is ongoing, and the Worcester Lecture Theatre project has been tendered. The GBS LEP have agreed a £60k grant for Alliance House works. A new project for Peakman study centre has begun the planning stage. All further projects are TBC however do not anticipate going over the £660k allocation.

The Financial Health rating is projected, and currently, at 'Good'. Current points are 210, if the College's score drops to 170 it would be 'Requires Improvement'.

A governor **questioned** what the consequences of the score dropping below 170 would be. CC explained that the ESFA would become involved with leading to possible intervention.

A governor **questioned** the £1.7 million against Funding Agency Reconciliation in the 2022/23 cashflow forecast. CC explained that there has been a reduced clawback for the last two years and the benefit of the ESFA reductions. This cashflow recognises the actual allocation and the cashflow for that allocation.

A governor **questioned** if consideration had been given to repaying the loan, given the healthy £10.1 cash balance? CC confirmed that it should be considered over the coming years, once more accurate data is known regarding the need for the cash, future student numbers and the impact of the national minimum wage increase. SL added that it can be debated in the long-term strategy discussion.

e. Learner Number Update

CC presented the student number vs target for 2021/22 as at 14 January 2022.

16-18 Full time and High Needs actual numbers are at 99.9% when comparing to allocation of 2499 but below the planning target of 2642. Students do not become "funded enrols" until they have attended the first 6 weeks, 2497 will be used to inform the College 2022/23 allocation.

The two T-Level courses planned for 2021/22 did not recruit viable numbers to run.

College Apprenticeship all funding streams are at 97% of budget.

Consortium Partners stands at 73% of a £1.83 million target.

Higher Education students overall are currently at 85% of target. This excludes any CIPP enrols. Full-time courses are at 96% (129 vs 134) to target and part time courses 70% (65 vs 93) to target.

f. Health & Safety Update

NW presented the Health & Safety update for term 1, advising the governors to read the report with caution due to Covid impacts. The following points were highlighted:

- There has been a total of 75 reported incidents; of these, a total of 29 (39%) were accidents.
- There have been five 'Near Misses' reported, and no RIDDOR incidents during the period.
- 22 risk assessments have been carried out by the Health & Safety Manager and Health & Safety training has been completed by 166 members of staff.
- As of the 31 December 2021 the College had a total of 176 first aid trained staff.
- Fire information boxes (Fire Boxes) have been installed in all college buildings. These boxes contain up to date floor plans and important emergency information for the fire service. This is a new initiative for 2021/22.
- Despite the ongoing challenges from Coronavirus, Fire Evacuation Drills took place for all College buildings this term.

A governor **asked** if there are any Mental Health First Aiders at the College? NW confirmed that 12 members of staff are trained as Mental Health First Aiders, plus a lead mental health coordinator.

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

52.7 College Strategic Plan

PR explained that the College Strategic Plan is still being developed, with the 2021/22 plan currently still in use at this time. PR added that the updated plan will be discussed with Governors, in March, to determine the college's strategic focus and ambition from 2022 to 2025.

TK advised that as Chair of the Estates committee, he would like the committee to provide input into the Strategic Plan. TK would also like the Corporation to consider if 3 years is a suitable timeframe for a strategy, or if a longer-term strategy should also be considered. TK is keen for the strategy to be broad moving forward. PR confirmed that all ideas can be discussed and considered. SL added that there is a longer-term strategy particularly around the reduction of carbon emissions. Strategic decision should always look beyond the 3 years.

The Chair conveyed that the Strategic Plan will be presented in the March Corporation meeting, with the Strategy Task & Finish group meeting prior to that meeting.

52.8 College Improvement Plan

CB explained that the 2021-22 College Improvement Plan identifies 6 key areas of focus, each with a series of actions to support achievement of these. The first review of the College Improvement Plan took place at the end of November 2021 at which point RAG rated judgements were made against each action point.

Each action point was discussed in turn:

1. Implement refinements to processes and systems to ensure more accurate and consistent monitoring of learners' progress across curriculum areas throughout the 2021-22 academic year. (AMBER)
 - 85% of learners completed diagnostic assessments in mathematics and 83% in English
 - Effective identification of at-risk learners in most areas, however there is a need for timelier and more robust follow up and intervention in a few areas
 - Not all learners have been given a RAG rating, and not all learners had overall course targets set.
2. Ensure successful planning and implementation of changes to curriculum that reflect local skills priorities, Government strategies and adjustments needed to ensure learners are prepared well for and can progress successfully within college. (GREEN)
 - Actual enrolments after day 42 versus target is: Construction (Redditch) 101%, (Worcester) 91%, Automotive (Worcester & Bromsgrove) 77%, Engineering (Worcester) 83%, (Bromsgrove) 107%, public services (Worcester & Redditch) 104%, sport (Worcester & Redditch) 98%.
 - Attendance is variable
3. Address under performance in key curriculum areas and provision. (AMBER)

A governor **questioned** if the delay on removing BTECs is still the case? SL explained that funding for BTECs is being reduced and it is likely that they will be fully replaced by T-Levels. CB advised that HoW College will be offering T-Levels and BTECs will not be an option for students.

SL queried endpoint assessment and the impact on Apprenticeships. CH advised that there are moving more efficiently, but staff shortages remain an issue.
4. Improve the attendance and achievements across areas where these were significantly below college KPI in 2020-21. (AMBER)
5. Ensure any gaps in the delivery and embedding of wider curriculum themes and aspects are addressed as learning returns to its pre-Covid state. (GREEN)
6. Continued development of culture where staff feel valued, motivated, well informed and equipped to manage their health and well-being and are supported by leaders and managers to perform their roles effectively. This will encompass CPD, responding to feedback and addressing points raised through the college survey. (GREEN)

A governor **questioned** what happens at the end of the 'Build' programme. CB explained that there is a period of reflection and creating a plan for development - this continues via individual PDR's (Personal Development Review).

CB confirmed that the College Improvement Plan will be presented to the Corporation after each of the milestones within the plan.

The Chair thanked CB for a very comprehensive report. Governors **approved** the 2021-22 College Improvement Plan.

52.9 Human Resources Report 2020/21

This item was moved to the confidential agenda.

52.10 Redundancy Policy

NW explained that this is the periodic review of the redundancy policy. One change is proposed concerning a member of staff returning to employment at the College post redundancy.

There were no questions. Governors **approved** the Redundancy Policy.

52.11 Governance

a) Corporation Training Update

KK provided an update on governor training reminding governors of the ETF modules and noting the lead governor visits for safeguarding.

b) Cover Paper update

Following the workshop in October and the governance self-assessment exercise, the Governance Improvement Plan was updated. One of the actions related to the cover papers provided for meeting papers. The proposed template was shared with governors. Governors **approved** the cover paper template. **Action:** KK to advise SLT of the new Cover Sheet template to be used from March 2022.

KK

c) Statement of Governance Principles and Scheme of Delegation

KK explained that this had been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Governance & Search committee. There were no questions. Governors **approved** the Statement of Governance Principles and Scheme of Delegation.

52.12 Any Other Urgent Business

Governor Questionnaire:

The Chair highlighted an email that had been sent to governors prior to the meeting concerning a request from the Internal Auditors for governors to complete a questionnaire. Governors **noted** the reminder.

Plant a tree:

PR explained that the College had been accepted for a 'mini forest' as part of the Eco initiative. Governors are invited to attend the College on 14 February to plant a tree.

Staff and Student Governors left the meeting at this point

52.13- CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

52.15 These matters are recorded as Confidential Minutes

52.16 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 22 March 2022, Function Room, Peakman, Redditch.

52.17- RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

52.18 These matters are recorded as Restricted Confidential Minutes.

The meeting closed at 19:20

Signed:

Date: