

## CORPORATION

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 22 March 2022 at 17:30 Peakman, Redditch

#### Present

|                   |                      |            |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------|
| <b>Governors:</b> | Neill Bucktin (NB)   | Chair      |
|                   | David Ash (DA)       | Vice Chair |
|                   | Stuart Laverick (SL) | Principal  |
|                   | Steve Bolton (SB)    |            |
|                   | Helen Butler (HB)    |            |
|                   | Denis Miles (DM)     |            |
|                   | Sarah Owen (SO)      |            |
|                   | Steph Simcox (SS)    |            |
|                   | Evan Whakahau (EW)   |            |
|                   | Gary Woodman         |            |

|                       |                      |  |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--|
| <b>In Attendance:</b> | 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   |
|                       | 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

#### 53.1 Apologies

The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting. Apologies were received from Zalina Bingham, Leon Evans-Lochlin, Kevin Gaffney, Tony King, Kyra Peace and Peter Robinson.

#### 53.2 Declarations of Interest

Governors were asked to declare any Interests, financial or otherwise, which they may have in any agenda Item. Governors noted the all-staff interest in the Pay Award item on the confidential agenda.

#### 53.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Governors approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2022, as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting, with one minor change.

#### 53.4 Matters Arising

Governors **reviewed** the Matters Arising report and **noted** progress. All actions were complete.

#### 53.5 Determination of any other urgent business

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

## 53.6 Principal's Report

### a. Principal's Update for Governors

#### Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)

LSIPs will aim to better align colleges courses to local employers' needs. SL explained that this is an ongoing process in which the college needs to remain proactive.

12 FE Colleges have been involved in the Pilot Scheme, none of which were in the West Midlands. SL explained that the scheme has been extended, possibly into 2023-2024.

#### War in Ukraine

SL confirmed that the College has relatively few staff/students who identify as having either Ukrainian and/or Russian heritage. The students concerned are adults studying on English for Speakers of other Language (ESOL) programmes, AAT Accounting and with our CIPP partner. The College will support these students and colleagues.

There are early signs of increased anxiety amongst several students. Student/Learning support teams will continue to advise and support students to help them gain a more balanced and proportionate view and to manage their anxieties. The College is also being proactive in helping to signpost colleagues to a sector initiative aimed at helping provide aid to the Ukraine.

The College has some capacity within the ESOL team to support relatively small increases in demand but will be considering ways to respond if local Ukrainian relocation numbers grow quickly.

#### HE & FE

A report called 'Going Further and Higher: How collaboration between colleges and universities can transform lives and places' was launched Feb 2022.

The College will continue to be proactive in looking to develop a tertiary education system that is collaborative and looks to optimise education, skills and behaviour outcomes that benefits the individual, business, and the wider society. SL added that as part of the new 3-year strategy the college will look to strengthen links with our local university for improved collaboration across Worcestershire and beyond.

#### 16-19 Funding and Extra Hours

Full-time 16-19 funding rate will increase by approximately 8% from the start of the 2022-23 academic year. It will mean the present £4,188 per student base funding will rise to £4,542. However, "an extra 40 hours of learning" is required in return -the new 'minimum' for full-time students increasing from 540 to 580 hours p.a.

SL stated that HoW College is well placed to deliver much of these additional hours by leveraging its extensive blended learning resources capabilities. During the pandemic students have shown a willingness and ability to effectively work with high quality digital learning resources that augment face-to-face delivery.

#### Disadvantage gap data

The TAG process, which did not impact (inflate) vocational and technical qualifications like it did GCSEs and A Levels, has distorted the market.

SL explained that across English GFE Colleges, 16-19 student numbers fell by 2% in 2021-22 at a time when demographics would have predicted a 3% increase. This suggests the market will be in disequilibrium for several years to come.

#### FE staffing

The College continues to have difficulties in retaining and recruiting staff. These concerns about the “staffing crisis” have been echoed by staff unions, including the University and College Union (UCU) and Unison.

A governor **questioned** on HE/FE future collaboration, if there were universities other than our local one that the College will work with on collaboration opportunities. SL explained that the College works with the University of Wolverhampton for Engineering and Construction, and progression agreements are in place with various universities.

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

CB provided an overview of the Curriculum & Quality 2021/22 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

Governors noted:

- Attendance is at 87% against target of 90%
- English & Maths attendance is up by 2%
- Retention is at 92% for 16-18 students
- Progress for English and Maths stands at 71% and 80% respectively
- 68% of students are on track.
- Staff absence is at 4.05 days, ahead of the target of 4.5 days.

A governor questioned if the data includes Covid impacts? CB confirmed that Covid data was included.

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

CC provided an overview of the Financial Key Performance Indicators, as at 28 February 2022.

Governors noted:

- Forecast outturn is £235k ahead of budget at £520k deficit
- The Financial Health rating is projected, and currently, at 'Good'

A governor challenged why the EBITDA was most at risk, given the improved forecast. CC explained that a deficit is being predicted for this year, and the EBITDA needs to get over 3% to not be at risk.

Governors **received** the Principal's Update.

### 53.7 Subcontracting Performance Report

Governors received the report, noting the report is divided into apprenticeships and then active and inactive partners.

Overall, the performance of active partners delivering apprenticeships shows broadly positive outcomes, with forward projections indicating relatively stable activity.

Governors noted that Track Training, currently listed as an active partner under Apprenticeships will no longer be recruiting new learners as they have failed the ESFA RoATP (Register of Apprenticeship Training Provider). The College will continue to work with them on their remaining (or 'in-learning') apprentices.

For the Adult Education Budget, the projected outturn is positive at this mid-way stage of the contracting year, with activity buoyant in some areas compared to others.

TDLC has moved to being an inactive partner, but achievement rates are still monitored. RITE has also moved to inactive as their company has changed to Willowdene and is therefore a 'new' contract entity within active partners.

SL added that the College are supporting with the Commonwealth Games. We are working with Licenced2train, where 49% have secured employment for the games.

Governors **monitored** partner performance/ quality outcomes to date in 2021/22.

### 53.8 Equality and Diversity Impact Measures and Action Plan

The college has made significant progress against each of the E&D objectives in the 2021-22 Action Plan. The EDI objectives focus on reducing gaps for those with socio-economic deprivation and hardship and to positively promote the benefits of positive mental health and wellbeing and supporting those who have been identified within an EDIM category.

An alternative approach has been taken with the EDI Strategy Group, with smaller working groups in place to work on key aspects of the action plan. The action plan also highlights the targeted work completed by College staff supporting learners identified in the 'vulnerable' category.

JB highlighted the following from the report:

- The Good for Me, Good for FE campaign has been promoted to staff. Staff have been encouraged to complete a survey detailing their volunteering. Foodbank collections resulted in over 400 items of food being delivered to local foodbanks.
- The Student Experience Team share opportunities for students to engage with their community by taking part in surveys and focus groups.
- Parent engagement responses have increased from the pandemic.
- A Sexual Harassment and Misconduct (Students) and Mental Health and Wellbeing (Staff) Audit was completed on 24th January 2022 by RSM. JB confirmed that the final feedback meeting indicated a good level of assurance.
- The Whisper (anonymous) reporting system has been promoted via inductions, tutorials, and newsletters.
- For Living Independently Learners, the current retention rate is 78.9%

- All Young Carers are identified and offered support. The current retention rate is 94.1%
- Retention for learners receiving free college meals remains high at 98%. Additional funding received from Worcestershire County Council and Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Council enabled the College to offer additional support over the Christmas holiday and February half term.

Governors **raised** the following questions:

- Does the College engage with the Poverty Scheme? JB confirmed that it did.
- How is the Mental Health of students currently? JB explained that there is more prevalence, with additional welfare staff being utilised. Anxiety levels are high and are likely to continue to rise. Mentoring for young people has been introduced along with workshops around anxiety and resilience management.
- How will the mental health for new starters be managed in the Autumn Term? JB clarified that the Thrive program is commenced at induction. JB added that the College's mental Health Strategy is on of preventative not treatment.
- Is there a heightened level of anxiety due to the war in Ukraine? JB stated that the College has a couple of learners with family in the Ukraine, but currently, anxiety is higher due to local situations with crime and poverty issues mainly emerging.

Governors **approved** the Equality and Diversity Impact Measures and Action Plan.

### 53.9 Freedom of Information Policy

There are no substantive changes. Ownership of the policy now sits with the Assistant Principal, Funding, Data and External Contracts.

TG noted the following governor concerns:

- A governor suggested a change of wording concerning the completion of the Request For Information Form.
- Governors also requested that the website be enhanced so that the search facility is improved, and users can access more information about the college to reduce the number of FOI requests received.

Governors **approved** changes to the Freedom of Information Policy.

### 53.10 Audit Committee Minutes

Governors **received** the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting on 8 March 2022, noting the Audit Committee's advice.

**Action:** DG to issue the 3 mentioned reports to all governors (Be scam savvy, External Quality Assessment & Higher Education Briefing January 2022)

**DG**

Governors **approved** the Risk Register.

### 53.11 Governance

#### a) Governance and Search Committee

Governors **received** the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2022, and noted:

- The 360-Chair process has commenced
- There are currently 4 governor vacancies
- ABF continues a leave of absence until August 2022
- DA is temporarily filling the role of HE Lead Governor
- Governor attendance has improved, but still below target.
- An External board review needs to be carried out in 2022-23. This has been deferred to the autumn term

#### b) Sustainability

DM confirmed that DM and EW are now attending the internal College Eco Group.

Governors approved the decision to receive a report on Sustainability in the November and May Corporation Meetings.

#### c) Governor Recruitment

There are currently 4 governor vacancies. KK and DG will launch a governor recruitment campaign shortly, with interviews taking place prior to the May G&S Committee meeting. There will be a focus on accountancy skills.

KK explained that the FE Inspiring Governance website, no longer supports recruitment for the FE sector.

#### d) Governor Insight Scheme

The report provided an update on the Governor Insight Scheme.

Governors were reminded to advise DG of their availability to attend upcoming student performances and availability for learning walks.

Governors acknowledged the difficulties in governors attending daytime events and **approved** the use of recordings as 'attendance', once watched.

#### e) Governor Meeting Calendar 2022/23

Governors **received** an update on the proposed 2022/23 meeting schedule, noting that attending face-2-face meetings remotely should only be done as an exception.

KK highlighted that meetings would take place in Worcester, Redditch, and Bromsgrove during 2022-23.

Governors **approved** the Governor Meeting Calendar 2022/23.

#### f) Access to Corporation Information Statement

There were no changes and governors **approved** the 'Access to Corporation Information Statement'.

**53.12 Strategy Task and Finish Group Feedback**

CH explained that the group had met twice previously, and the draft version of the Strategy was provided. Further amendments are planned around the Annexes and Sustainability within the strategy.

CH confirmed that stakeholder groups would meet over the coming weeks. The T&F group will then meet again in June, to enable the final version to be presented during the July Corporation meeting, for final approval.

NB requested that the data that was shared during the first meeting, on Labour Market Information (LMI) for Worcestershire, be shared with all governors. **Action:** DG to share the Labour Market Information (LMI) for Worcestershire report with all governors.

**DG**

**53.13 Any Other Urgent Business**

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

**53.13- CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

**53.15** These matters are recorded as Confidential Minutes

**53.16 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 24 May 2022, via Microsoft Teams

*Remaining SLT members and Stuart Laverick (as Principal) left the meeting at this point*

**53.17- RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

**53.18** These matters are recorded as Restricted Confidential Minutes.

The meeting closed at 20:30

**Signed:**

**Date:**