

CORPORATION

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 18 October 2022 at 17:30 B105/B106 Bromsgrove

Present

Governors:	Neill Bucktin (NB)	Chair
	David Ash (DA)	Vice Chair
	Stuart Laverick (SL)	Principal
	Andrew D'Arcy (AD)	
	Chris Hallam (CH)	
	Tony King (TK)	
	Denis Miles (DM)	
	Steph Simcox (SS)	
	Vivienne Stockill (VS)	
	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
	Claire Beaman (CB)	Executive Director for Quality
	Kay Kavanagh (KK)	Clerk to the Corporation
	Donna Gibson (DG)	Deputy Clerk

Action

57.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting. Apologies were received from Gaynor Cheshire, Jane Britton, Helen Butler, Steve Bolton, Harrison Ricketts, and Sarah Owen.

57.2 Declarations of Interest

Governors were asked to declare any Interests, financial or otherwise, which they may have in any agenda item. No interests were declared.

57.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Governors approved the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

57.4 Matters Arising

Governors **reviewed** the Matters Arising report and **noted** progress. One action is complete. One is ongoing.

57.5 Determination of any other urgent business

KK would like to raise an item regarding the location of the next meeting. Noted.

57.6 Principal's Report

a. Principal's Update for governors

16-19 Student Segment 2022-23

Many General Further Education (GFE) Colleges are reporting significant falls in 16-19 student numbers for the 2022/23 academic year.

The main contributor to this fall appears to be less progression (organic) growth from students who would normally be moving up study levels.

Reasons for this change are a combination of the labour market, coupled with inflationary pressures on family budgets. Many students have struggled largely due to pandemic related distortions in their learning and GCSE Teachers Assessed Grading (TAG) inflation.

SL confirmed that HoW College are also seeing reduced numbers. The exact 16-19 numbers for 2022/23 will be known in early November. Funding is protected for the current 2022/23 academic year, but lagged funding rules means there will be a reduction in funding in the 2023/24 academic year.

Potential International Work

SL state that historically the Corporation had agreed to not consider international work so soon after the merger. However, given the positive focus on the college's digital pedagogy, accelerated through the pandemic, SLT have started to look at international work.

CH added that there has been a resurgence amongst colleges to seize the opportunity and potential revenue that international work could bring, working with the DfE and the CCF network.

The AoC currently forms part of the UK Skills Partnership network to champion the work of further education colleges internationally.

CH continued to explain that there are ambassadors in every country who would work on our behalf. 30 Colleges across the UK currently carry out international work, with a clear gap for blended learning.

CH assured the governors that the risk of international work is low.

A governor **asked** if the College would be creating the e-learning packages, or hosting? CH explained that it could be both, and consultancy work. The recommended model is to work with another provider in the hosting country.

A governor would like the College to **consider** the opportunity cost. SL agreed.

Governors **confirmed** that they agree to the College considering international opportunities. The Corporation would need to agree the business cases to support this at the appropriate time

Office for National Statistics (ONS) review of FE Colleges

SL explained that the ONS are still considering if Colleges should return to the public sector. HoW College will work with the Audit committee and auditors to respond appropriately when the ONS review is finally announced and the DFE response is clarified.

Action: CC to send the ONS presentation to KK for distribution to all governors.

CC

Industrial Action in the FE Sector

SL explained that some colleges have been impacted by strikes. HoW College has a relatively small percentage of its teaching workforce aligned to the UCU or any other teaching unions. Relationships with unions are good.

There were no further questions.

b. Curriculum and Quality Key Performance Indicators

CH explained that a revised format to the Curriculum and Quality Key Performance Indicators was being presented. These revisions take into account the use of two data sets which broadly provide the following two categories of monitoring information (1) Real time data which changes throughout the year and (2) Annual measures which includes data which is generally updated annually or bi-annually only.

In addition, the real-time data has removed the section which covered teaching, learning and assessment. This section specifically reported on 'progress against targets' and summarised across the college. This data will now be reported via the Governor Insight Scheme Scrutiny Reviews

CB provided the following highlights from the report:

- Attendance is at 88% against a target of 90%
- English and Maths In-Year performance is 75% against a target of 85%
- Apprenticeship retention is at 80% against a target of 65%
- Overdue Apprenticeships are at 9% against a target of 8%
- Employer overall satisfaction is 'Good'.
- Percentage of vacancies filled on first advertisement is at 71%
- The annual measurement of achievement is currently the national average for all areas except Higher Needs
- Staff absence is below target (5.1 days) at 2.21 days

GW arrived at the meeting.

A governor **questioned** the funding being set after day 42. CB explained that this is the same across all FE Colleges, and will dictate the funding received in the following academic year (lagged funding)

A governor **asked** how 'Employer Satisfaction' was measured. CB explained that this is via a government-based survey, which employers are asked to complete. Data is based over the last 4 years and continued throughout the pandemic. A governor

further questioned the response rate to the survey. CB explained that the response rate was around 10%

A governor **asked** how the College felt about being below the national average on achievement. CB explained that the 16-18 rates have the most focus. SL added that the national averages suggest that catch-up funding is not needed.

A governor **questioned** why the 2022-23 target for the staff survey is less than achieved in 2021-22. CB explained that the target has remained the same and it was exceeded in 2021-22.

There were no further questions.

c. Financial KPIs

CC provided the following highlights from the report:

- Draft outturn is £908,000 higher than budget at £170,000 surplus
- Pay costs are lower than budget at year end by £278,000. The NMW and NI increase on April 22 have been realised in the accounts and are £68,000 lower than predicted. This is mainly due to vacancies.
- The Financial Health rating is projected, and currently, at 'Good'.
- Pension evaluation has had significant movement from a deficit position of £42,000,000 last year to £20,000,000 increase for 2021/22.
- Cash balance is at £9,527,000

CC explained that the internal auditors have been on site for 4 days, with PWC meeting in half term. The outcome of these will go to the Audit Committee.

There were no questions.

d. Learner Numbers Update

CC highlighted the following:

- ESFA learner numbers for 16-18 f/t and High Needs as at 7 October 2022 was 2411, against a target of 2448 (98% of target)
- Adults are currently at 86% (80% 21/22) of the target based on head count.
- College Apprenticeship all funding streams is at £1,031,386 against a target of £1,550,000
- HE learner numbers are at 164 against a target of 172.
- CC confirmed that the overall reduction in numbers will result in a reduction in allocation into 23/24.

A governor **asked** what the monetary reduction impact would be. CC explained that it would be circa £92,000.

e. Health & Safety Update

NW explained that the report covers term 3 for the 2021-22 academic year.

There was a total of 18 reported incidents during this period; of these 8 were accidents and 1 was a 'Near Miss'. There have been no RIDDOR reportable incidents during this period.

A total of 123 members of staff undertook Health and Safety training during the term. As of 31 August 2022, there are a total of 204 first aiders in college, which is an increase of 43%

At the June Health and Safety meeting it was agreed that a small number of bleed kits be purchased and strategically placed so that they are available for use if needed.

A governor questioned if an accident occurred whilst working at home, would it come under the College and the Agile Working policy? NW confirmed that it would.

Governors **received** the Principals Report.

57.7 Sustainability Report

PR provided an overview of the report:

1. Estates Development

The College have secured capital grant funding, via Worcestershire County Council, from the Public Sector Energy Efficiency Programme (PEEP) to support us to fit LED lighting and motion sensors throughout the Bromsgrove Campus, and in the All Saints building in Worcester.

The College has also added an electric van to the College fleet, replacing an old petrol vehicle.

2. Bespoke Decarbonisation Support (BDS) programme

HoW College secured funding under the above programme for Pro-enviro who are the delivery partner for WCC, for a scheme that will build on the Energy Efficiency assessments to support the development of a low and zero carbon strategy and will develop a plan of action for each of our buildings building to support HoW's decarbonisation efforts. The Zero Carbon Ready Worcestershire work is now complete and building by building energy analysis and reports were issued to the College in late September. Further details will come to Corporation in the next Sustainability report.

3. The BIG Switch OFF

The "BIG Switch Off" event has taken place, with staff turning off all non-essential items; PCs, lights, specialist equipment, kettles, anything off at the wall.

From this one action we reduced consumption compared to the same period last year by 1979 Kwh. Using industry standard measures, that's 420kg of carbon, using a rate of .25p per Kwh, around £495 saved.

This event will now be run at the end of every half term.

Action

Sustainability awareness continues to run through all curriculum areas, along with the Thrive programmes. This will be extended to Apprenticeships and HE.

We have joined the West Midlands College Group (WMCG) Carbon Reduction Group. One theme this group is exploring is the concept of green skills maps, to capture gaps and areas where there is training in these skills.

Tiny Forest – 600 trees still going strong that now has benches for staff to use for quiet periods and over lunch. Staff helped to weed and maintain the area during the summer staff celebration day.

A governor asked where the electric vehicle was based. NW confirmed that it was based in Worcester but used across all campuses. There are limited charging points across sites (one in Duckworth, one in Bromsgrove)

A governor **requested** photos of the Tiny Forest. **Action:** EW to provide photos of the Tiny Forest to KK for circulation to governors.

EW

DM, as lead governor for sustainability, assured governors of the enthusiasm and energy of all involved. DM also thanked SL for helping with the gardening work for the Tiny Forest.

Governors **received** the Sustainability report.

57.8 Accolades & Complaints

34 accolades were received by the Quality team, an increase of 6% from the 32 received in 2020/21.

The total number of formal complaints received during the 2021/22 academic year was 13, a decrease of 27% from the 18 received in 2020/21. 2 complaints were upheld; 4 complaints were not upheld; 7 complaints were partly upheld.

Main themes for the raising of complaints were:

- Reported lack of communication and perceived poor service
- Reported lack of support in classroom and exams
- Accusation of staff discrimination

Key Learning Points have been added to the report.

57.9 College Improvement Plan

CB explained that the report showed the final summary for 2021/22, against the 6 action points.

Four of the action points were green, with two remaining at Amber. The two actions remaining at amber are covered by both the CIP and the SAR. Monitoring and progress reporting of these actions will continue during this academic year.

A governor asked how the actions are linked to the SAR. CB explained that they are reflected in the SAR.

57.10 College Self-Assessment Report

CB explained that the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) is produced annually as an overarching summary of performance against the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF). It commences in June, and is finalised in September, with the judgements feeding into the College SAR.

Grades 1-4 are used, and it is proposed that all aspects of the College SAR are judged as 'Grade 2 (Good).

Provision types are graded separately, and the following is proposed:

- Education programmes for young people (EYP) - Grade 2 (Good)
- Adult learning programmes - Grade 2 (Good)
- Apprenticeships – Grade 3 (Requires improvement)
- Provision for learners with high needs - Grade 2 (Good)

Governors **asked** the following questions:

Are you happy that process is fully owned? CB confirmed that she is and explained that validations have taken place along with robust conversations with constructive but challenging questions. Milestones have been set throughout the year for continuous challenge.

Is the process stretching enough? CB gave assurance that as the process for inspection is high, the College does aspire for outstanding, and evidence of outstanding practice is sought. Deep dives of areas take place, with feedback provided between areas, providing a good culture for reflection across the college.

A governor commented that they have observed a SAR validation session and confirmed that it was very self-reflective and positive too.

Governors **approved** the College Self-Assessment Report.

57.11 GDPR Annual Report, including FOI

CC explained that this is an annual report, prepared with data supplied by the college's DPO.

GDPR training is mandatory for all staff and is therefore included in staff induction. Further developments for the new DPO include regular 'refresher' sessions for existing staff.

3 advisory points were made following an internal audit covering 2021/22 (All points are either completed, or in progress under the new DPO.

During 2021/22 the College received 12 Subject Access Requests, 1 was not completed on time.

There were no breaches in data protection reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) during 2021/22.

In 2021/22 the DPO dealt with 10 Freedom of Information requests, all of which were fully disclosed.

57.12 Governance

a. Governor Attendance

Governors discussed the governor Attendance target for 2022/23 and **agreed** for the target to remain at 85%.

Governors **agreed** that a hybrid approach was still to be offered for governors who were unable to attend in person, but who would be able to attend virtually.

Governors **noted** that the attendance figures for 2021/22 were impacted by the low attendance of 2 governors plus absences due to Covid and other illness.

b. Register of Interests

Governors **noted** the Register of Interests.

***Minute addendum:** KK simplified the entry for NW regarding the Related Party, and in doing so, entered incorrect information. KK to replace the Related Party information with the full wording from the signed Declaration of Interest provided by NW. KK advised that the original signed declaration (with full wording) has been used for Auditing purposes, and the error has only occurred in this supporting paper.*

57.13 Governor Insight Scheme

a. Update on Deep Dives

CB advised that further to the workshop, where deep dives were discussed, the dates of the deep dives have been shared.

The Deep Dives will comprise of 4-day deep dives, in areas that haven't been covered previously, plus deep dives from the last academic year, in order to benchmark progress (Engineering, construction, discrete SEN and apprenticeships, will be subject to short (2 day) review in 2022-23). Governors will join the deep dive sessions on day 2 and 3.

A governor **asked** if Staff Governors can attend, CB confirmed that they are.

b. Update on GIS

DG confirmed that – several governors have already attended 2 activities for this academic year. Details of 2021/22 are contained within the report.

Dates for events during 2022/23 will be circulated when known.

Governor display boards are to be put up in all buildings moving forward. EW confirmed that all photos are now available, and the boards can be put up imminently. The display board will also detail the link to the governance page of the College website.

57.14 Policies

To **approve** the following policies:

- a) Whistleblowing
- b) Student Standards Policy
- c) Safeguarding Policy
- d) Managing Allegations Policy
- e) Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- f) Health & Safety Policy
- g) Disciplinary Policy
- h) Redundancy Policy (SPH)
- i) HE Fees Policy

Governors **noted** the revisions highlighted within the policies. Two policies have been added to the portal for review. Governors **noted** that changes to policies were not always clear.

Governors **approved** all policies with the caveat that the version-controlled versions of the policies would be circulated where changes were not clear, so governors could fully review.

57.15 Any Other Business

No other business was declared.

57.16 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

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57.21

See Confidential Minutes.

The Staff and Student Governors and remaining SLT members left the meeting at this point

(Excluding SL, CH, NW & CC)

57.22 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be held on December 13th at 17:30. Governors **agreed** that this meeting would now be held virtually.

All remaining members of SLT left the meeting at this point (excluding the principal)

57.23 RESTRICTED ITEMS

57.25

See Restricted Minutes

There being no further business the meeting ended at 20:20

Signed:

Date:

