

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

held on 25 September 2019

Present Louise Jones (*Chair*), David Williams (*Principal*), David Allen, Lewis Callary, Joanne Chilton, Peter Coley, Lance Hanson, Mark Johnson

In attendance Jacquie Carman (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*)
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

Presentation from the Principal

David Williams provided members with a comprehensive review of student recruitment.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Helene Jones, Amanda Allen, Paul Dyson, Tiffany Harvey-Pallent and Joanne Williams.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the Corporation

3.1 Minutes of the Meeting held 25 June 2019 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held 25 June 2019 were approved as a correct record.

With regard to addressing matters arising from the previous meeting:

Under item 4.5 Appointments of Chairs and Vice Chairs of Corporation, it was noted that the Chair and Vice Chair of Remuneration Committee would be readdressed under the current meeting agenda.

Under item 9.7 Treasury Management Review, Jacquie Carman reported progress in taking forward working with two additional banks.

Under item 10 Any Other Business:

- b) Equality and Diversity Forum Member, it was noted that Joanne Chilton had taken on the role, and
- d) GDPR, Jacquie Carman noted that GDPR including data breaches would be reported to the Audit Committee.

Under actions from previous meetings due:

6 November 2018, 7.1a Complaints Analysis Report, was provided for under the current agenda.

3.2 Confidential Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 25 June 2019 and Matters Arising

The confidential minutes of the meeting held 25 June 2019 were approved as a correct record, there were no matters arising.

4 Governance

4.1 Recommendations from the Search and Governance Committee

4.1.1 Search and Governance Committee Annual Report

Members received the report as provided from the Search and Governance Committee, noting the review of work and reported governor attendance.

The Corporation resolved to accept the Search and Governance Committee Annual Report.

4.1.2 Assurance Report on the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges

On recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee, members received the summary of assurance as part of the annual review of the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges, which now included The Colleges' Senior Post Holder Remuneration Code.

Members noted that the search for financially qualified governors remained a key action point.

The Clerk highlighted that the report formed part of internal assurance arrangements for governance.

The Corporation resolved to accept the Assurance Report on the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges as evidence of compliance, prior to the signing of the Annual Members' Report and Financial Statements.

4.1.3 Corporation Self-Assessment, Development, Induction and Training

The Clerk reported on consolidating the offer for review and support of governance which could be populated and monitored on a rolling basis by the Search and Governance Committee.

The Corporation approved the consolidated report on the approach to Corporation Self-Assessment, Development, Induction and Training.

4.1.4 Additional Roles

Members received the information on additional roles undertaken by members.

It was noted that a governor also attends meetings regarding Health and Safety in addition to Safeguarding.

With the amendment noted, additional roles were affirmed.

4.2 Update of Corporation Calendar and Committee Membership

The Clerk highlighted where changes to the calendar had been made and members agreed that the Corporation Strategic Planning Away Day would take place on 24 January 2020.

Under committee membership it was agreed that the roles of Chair and Vice Chair of the Remuneration Committee required action.

Helene Jones was nominated and elected as the Chair of the Remuneration Committee. Louise Jones was nominated and elected as the Vice Chair of the Remuneration Committee.

The Corporation approved the updated Corporation Calendar.

The Corporation appointed Helene Jones and Louise Jones as respectively Chair and Vice Chair of the Remuneration Committee for 2019/2020.

4.3 Corporation Away Day

Members discussed the content of the strategic planning away day scheduled for January 2020.

Areas to be considered included review of current strategy, curriculum and performance, governance under the revised model, the new inspection focus and challenges such as those around T Levels.

A programme and venue would be arranged in consultation with the Chair.

5 Strategic Overview

5.1 Principal's Report

5.1a Key Meetings and Events

David Williams updated members on key discussions held across a range of meetings and events, in particular continued local dialogue around preserving access to adult education in the Stourbridge area.

5.1b Transfer of provision from BMet Stourbridge

David Williams reported on the process leading to finalisation of transfer of provision from Birmingham Metropolitan College Stourbridge. Members noted the transfer and welcoming of staff and the enrolment, areas of study and early retention data for students.

5.1c Estates Strategy

David Williams explained that the redeveloped Block 2 should open in December 2019, before outlining that with full planning permission received for Blocks 4 and 5, development should commence with Block 4 in January 2020.

Members noted progress in relation to rental of accommodation at Coombs Wood Business Park, to address need during the estates work on the Whittingham Road campus.

5.1d Estates Strategy – Safer Campus Project

David Williams explained that campus security had been reviewed and reported on a range of actions were being taken to improve safety.

5.1e Quality Standards Review

Members recognised the importance of the forthcoming Quality Standards Review and that continued registration with the Office for Students was dependent on a satisfactory outcome.

David Williams noted that low continuation rates on some higher education programmes related to student course registration, whereby students had progressed to employment following completion of the HNC and not continued to the HND qualification.

5.1f Assistant Principal, Academic Studies

Members noted that the Deputy Principal would continue to manage Academic Studies until a new Assistant Principal could be appointed and that the recruitment process was live.

5.1g College of Sanctuary Status

Governors welcomed the College application for College of Sanctuary status, noting that this was part of the College's welcoming and inclusive culture, which would help the student body to better understand what it meant to be a refugee.

5.2 College Nursery

David Williams explained the process regarding further consideration of the College Nursery provision.

In light of review during due diligence and further consideration of consultation responses, the College Leadership Team had drawn up a revised plan, whereby transfer would be to the College subsidiary company Halesowen College Enterprises.

Members considered the details provided and noted key points relating to operation of the transferred Nursery.

Members asked a range of questions around continued quality of caring focus, Ofsted and inspection, efficiency and value of provision, and noted that no such venture was without risk.

The Corporation, notwithstanding its previous decision on seeking a third party provider or closure, agreed that the College Leadership Team continue with a revised plan, (as returned to them for consideration as outlined), leading to transfer of onsite child care provision to Halesowen College Enterprises.

5.3 West Midlands Further Education and Skills Productivity Group

Members received the report which outlined for participating College Corporations the functions, actions and outcomes of the West Midlands Further Education and Skills Productivity Group.

6 Audit

6.1 Recommendations from the Audit Committee

6.1.1 Risk Report including Policy

Jacque Carman outlined key points from the review of risk, with the suite of risk reports recommended by the Audit Committee.

Following the review and noting that the documents remain active, members noted the three risks that are outside the risk appetite. Members also noted the key themes that were highlighted.

There would be a further review point for the Corporation in the new calendar year and the action plan would be monitored through the Audit Committee.

On recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Corporation resolved to approve the risk management suite of reports.

7 Finance

7.1 Indicative Financial Performance 2018/2019

Jacque Carman had provided members with a summary on outturn, as at the end of the previous financial year, which illustrated a stable position, that the financial targets had been met or exceeded and that the College would retain outstanding financial health.

Jacque Carman also outlined the change in planned for student reduction which had been overtaken by BMet College Stourbridge Transfer. However, planned for non-pay efficiencies were realised.

Unconsolidated Statements of Comprehensive Income were provided but excluded FRS102 adjustments, and Jacque Carman stressed that the level of deficit in the Local Government Pension Scheme remained a concern. Colleges would be discussing how this would be reported in accounts going forward.

Members noted and accepted the report on indicative financial performance for 2018/2019.

7.2 Compliance with ESFA Conditions of Grant Funding

Members recognised the significance of compliance with the funding contracts and reviewed the RAG rated self-assessment of the College's response to each condition of funding, including actions where appropriate.

Jacque Carman stressed key areas of concern across the sector regarding ESFA current contract compliance. The Association of Colleges was taking this forward, with four areas of immediate concern, which had been included in the provided assessment and action plan.

Action 7.2a

The Corporation, having reviewed the self-assessment and action points in relation to the compliance with the ESFA Conditions of Current Funding 19-20, with due regard to the four named areas being addressed by the AoC, noted that this work would be further reported to the Audit Committee.

7.3 Letter to Corporation Chairs on Bournville College from CEO ESFA and College Assurance Report

A letter from Eileen Milner had been sent to College Chairs following publication of the investigation report on Bournville College and highlighted issues with recommendation for Colleges to consider.

The AoC had provided a list of areas to check and therefore the College had provided an assurance report, RAG rated with actions as appropriate.

Two actions arose, being the recruitment of a qualified accountant to the Corporation, or a Committee of the Corporation and to design reports for Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Members requested that this be reviewed by the Audit Committee.

The Corporation noted the letter from Eileen Milner including links to a range of supportive documents. The Corporation further noted the self-assessment of the requirements to ensure proper use of public funds by college governing bodies.

Action 7.3a

Progress against actions and risk identified through the ESFA instruction or recommendation report would be provided to the Audit Committee in November 2019 and the Corporation where appropriate.

7.4 Financial Benchmarking Tool

Jacque Carman reported that while the Corporation had received annual review of comparative data, there was scope to increase focus on more detailed analysis, to enable a more forensic approach to monitoring.

In comparing Halesowen College performance to that of all other GFE Colleges a number of key points were made, including heavier reliance on 16-18 study programme funding.

Members received the report and noted the detail of the financial benchmarking analysis and that detailed consideration would be addressed through the work of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

8 Annual Review

8.1 Annual Review of Complaints 2018/2019

The first year of the newly framed complaints analysis report was discussed by members, who considered the breakdown of complaints by category and that comparative data would be provided annually going forward.

Members asked questions about the nature of teaching and learning complaint handling, and David Williams explained how staff were very responsive to complaints and worked towards complaint resolution.

The report was received.

9 Performance Information

9.1 Annual Targets 2018/2019

In considering performance against target and against the previous year for pass rates, achievement and retention, members discussed areas of good progress and areas which had dipped.

David Williams drew out specific course detail and actions being taken to address where pass rates had declined.

The impact of the move to new qualifications with increased exams was also noted.

The report was received.

9.2 Key Performance Indicators 2019/2020

In looking to monitoring indicators for 2019/2020 members considered a new format and content in relation to the core functions of the board. The visual format demonstrated was welcomed.

Action 9.2a

It was agreed that previous year performance could be added to the Key Performance Indicators 2019/2020 for comparison.

The Corporation approved the revised mechanism for reporting against identified key performance indicators.

10 Policy

10.1 Policy on Wearing of the Kirpan

Jacque Carman presented the drafted policy regarding the wearing of the Kirpan at Halesowen College, in order to meet both health and safety and safeguarding responsibilities, whilst being respectful of religious requirements of practising Sikhs. Research had been undertaken to underpin the policy.

Members discussed the details of the policy, including the wearing of a symbolic Kirpan, addressing individual cases as needed and the opportunity to seek assistance from the Gurdwara Sahib, where this could be helpful.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Policy, Wearing of the Kirpan, as presented.

11 Committee Minutes and Reports

The Chair noted that under a revised system, the minutes of committees and their reports, not addressed as a Corporation agenda item, would be provided.

Members were asked to identify, prior to commencement of the meeting, if they wished to raise questions under these items.

11.1 Search and Governance Committee:

11.1a Search and Governance Committee Minutes of 10 September 2019

The minutes of the Search and Governance Committee held 10 September 2019 were received.

11.1b Review of Current Membership

The Search and Governance Committee report Review of Current Membership was received.

11.1c Governance Role Descriptors

The Search and Governance Committee report Governance Role Descriptors was received.

11.2 Audit Committee:

11.2a Audit Committee Minutes of 11 September 2019

The minutes of the Audit Committee held 11 September 2019 were received.

11.2b External Audit Tender

The Audit Committee report External Audit Tender was received.

11.3 Steering Committee:

11.3a Confidential Steering Committee Minutes of Meeting held 25 June 2019

The Confidential Steering Committee Minutes of the meeting held 25 June 2019 were received.

11.3b Confidential Steering Committee Minutes of Meeting held 18 July 2019

The Confidential Steering Committee Minutes of the meeting held 18 July 2019 were received.

11.3c Confidential Steering Committee Minutes of Meeting held 8 August 2019

The Confidential Steering Committee Minutes of the meeting held 8 August 2019 were received.

12 Any Other Business

Social Media

A governor asked about governors' use of social media.

Action 12a

Members discussed this and the Clerk agreed to forward the College's policy to all members.

13 Date of Next Meeting

The next Corporation meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 27 November 2019 at 6pm.

Closed: The meeting closed at 8.35pm

Actions from Meetings			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Date/item for review	Reported by
Corporation Meeting 27 February 2019			
4.1	Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee held 12 February 2019		
4.1a	It was agreed that both strategic planning dates and events to meet staff would be reviewed.	Dec 2019	JSu/DWi
Corporation Meeting 25 September 2019			
7.2a	Compliance with ESFA Conditions of Grant Funding The Corporation, having reviewed the self-assessment and action points in relation to the compliance with the ESFA Conditions of Current Funding 19-20, with due regard to the four named areas being addressed by the AoC, noted that this work would be further reported to the Audit Committee.	November 2019	JCa
7.3a	Letter to Corporation Chairs on Bournville College from CEO ESFA and College Assurance Report Progress against actions and risk identified through the ESFA instruction or recommendation report would be provided to the Audit Committee in November 2019 and the Corporation where appropriate.	November 2019	JCa
9.2a	Key Performance Indicators 2019/2020 It was agreed that previous year performance could be added to the Key Performance Indicators 2019/2020 for comparison.	November 2019	JCa