

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

held on 30 September 2020

Present Louise Jones (*Chair*), Joanne Williams (*Interim Principal*), Amanda Allen, David Allen, Loleta Atkinson, Joanne Chilton, Lance Hanson, Jake Hiatt, Tiffany Harvey-Pallent, Mark Richardson

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

1		Apologies Apologies were received from Helene Jones.
2		Declarations of Interest There were none.
3		Minutes
	3.1	Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 8 July 2020 The Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 8 July 2020 were approved as a correct record, subject to corrections on appointment of Vice-Chair of Corporation. There were no matters arising.
4		Strategic Overview
	4.1	Principal's Report incorporating: 1. Challenges for the College – March – August 2020 Joanne Williams provided a comprehensive update for members on the challenges continuing to face the College in operating through the Covid-19 pandemic. This addressed the rapid transition to online teaching and learning, addressing quality and retaining student engagement, the management and impact of centre assessed grades, the cost of estate adaptations, ongoing safety provision and management of cases, the impact on Apprenticeships and the speed of Government policy changes. Members asked a range of questions to which managers responded; that the College had received additional catch-up funding, and while welcomed, this came with quite narrow guidelines on its application

that some students might require different measures to encourage their interaction in online lessons, and that while this may improve with experience, a range of options could be explored, notwithstanding the limitations of working through Microsoft Teams.

that some staff were more concerned than others, but the safety measures were more apparent

that online enrolment had been effective and encouraging for further use of technology to support processes.

2. Start of the year – enrolment and recruitment

Joanne Williams reported that online enrolment had been fast paced, and that online chat had supported the process, in that it enabled many queries to be answered quickly.

The College had achieved above contracted levels of students enrolled, with some courses declared full, with waiting lists introduced. Some positive feedback on the enrolment process was shared with members.

3. Headline A Level data

Members noted that pass rates were good, as expected. However, overall achievement would be lower, due to lower retention of students between A1 and A2 years. This was recognised as an issue to be addressed and that the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee would be looking at this in more detail.

4. Exams 2021

It was recognised that autumn resits for English and Maths posed a challenge. Joanne Williams explained the approach to addressing teaching and learning on-line, and the difficulties in managing student bubbles for sitting of exams.

5. Ney Review

Jacquie Carman reported comprehensively on the findings of the Ney Review and sector commentary on how this may relate to the Government's forthcoming White Paper and subsequent changes for the sector. A radical change to Adult Education and a change to the Government relationship with the sector were indicated. However, the level of prescription potentially to be placed on Colleges, was not yet known.

Focus, was placed on creating a strategic vision for FE, structured through regions, and based on an understanding and identity of place and how Colleges would address the needs of the areas they serve.

Underpinning this was an expectation of good governance in strategic leadership, for appropriate curriculum, culture of learning and good financial planning.

Members noted that the number of Colleges in intervention or difficulty remained a driver of change to financial oversight. Change that simplified funding was attractive to the sector to support continuity.

		<p>Jacquie Carman outlined recommendations to respond the Ney Review, based on the College setting out its capital and curriculum against government priorities. These included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Strategic Plan • An Annual Plan with targets and performance indicators • An internal audit review of Governance • Re-scoping the Risk Register • A review of partnerships • A review of Curriculum <p>Members asked how it was perceived the Government would respond to the Ney Review recommendations and the timeliness of leading on these.</p> <p>Jacquie Carman responded that the recommendations were based on good practice and that there was definite change for FE. The College was following a common sense approach in focusing on meeting the needs of the community and the learners and addressing good financial management and governance.</p> <p>6. Annual Plan</p> <p>Jacquie Carman further outlined the basis of the Annual Plan for 2020/2021. Rigour would be applied through targets and performance indicators, with more integration of curriculum and financial planning, on a constant cycle of self-evaluation, monitored by the Corporation's committees.</p> <p>Members suggested that the plan could benefit from specific reference to the wider community and actions undertaken, to reinforce the civic role and place, and could be more specific on partnership and employers.</p>
	Action 4.1 5a	Jacquie Carman agreed to amend the Annual Plan for 2020/2021 and to circulate the update to members.
		<p>The Corporation received the Principal's update report and approved the Annual Plan and Targets for 2020/2021 and the recommendations provided in the report on the Ney Review, those being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a new strategic plan with clear intent and milestones. • Develop an annual plan with associated targets to ensure ongoing excellent financial management, quality improvement, effective estates planning and robust regularity. • Work with internal audit to scope a review of governance ensuring best practice. This would require the Audit committee to reconsider the audit plan for 2020/21. • Update the risk register accordingly. • Retain and develop strategic links within the community and local economy for example, Halesowen Bid, Chamber of Commerce, Dudley Resilience forum etc. and report the impact of these activities to Corporation to inform future decision making.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct further curriculum review to meet the needs of learners, employers and the wider community. • Continue to work in partnership with other local providers through Colleges West Midlands and Black Country Colleges Consortium.
	4.2	<p>Corporation Away Day January 2021</p> <p>The Chair outlined the plan for a Corporation Away Day, to be held electronically on the scheduled date of 29 January 2021.</p> <p>The plan aimed to include webinars in advance of the date and to divide the day into morning and afternoon sections, with supportive mechanisms and opportunities for question and answer sessions.</p> <p>The work undertaken would lead to a revised Strategy moving the College forward.</p> <p>Members welcomed the plan and asked that the national perspective be included. Members were also enthusiastic to embrace technology to support the day's activities.</p>
5		Finance
	5.1	<p>Compliance Report on Conditions of ESFA Funding</p> <p>Jacque Carman reported that the self-assessment report, addressing the College's compliance with its ESFA funding contract had been considered by the Audit Committee in June 2020. Actions had since been updated and were provided for the Corporation for assurance.</p> <p>Members noted that most actions were addressed, were in progress or pending and raised a number of questions, particularly on actions rated red.</p> <p>Jacque Carman responded to questions raised explaining that;</p> <p>the College was required to respond on multiple digital platforms with regards to necessary document signatures, and that actions were being put in place to mitigate against the College missing any required returns,</p> <p>the College had reviewed its approach to DBS checks and decided that these should be undertaken by staff every three years.</p> <p>It was noted that the report would be returned to the Audit Committee in November 2020 for monitoring.</p>
		That Corporation reviewed the self-assessment of compliance with conditions of ESFA funding and were satisfied with progress against all points identified.
	5.2	<p>Early/Indicative Financial Performance (previous year)</p> <p>Jacque Carman reported that while the accounts were yet to be externally audited, the outturn was largely in accordance with the budget revision of June 2020. There had been some changes in income and expenditure, predominantly in relation to College operations under the Covid-19 pandemic,</p>

		<p>however, the key financial ratios and targets had been achieved and the College continued to operate from a position of strength.</p> <p>Jacquie Carman noted that the ESFA had begun to take on board the work of the national group of Finance Directors, calling for a different approach to funding. A Covid-19 spending return would be returned to the ESFA in January and would further inform the ongoing position. The sector was also mindful of the possible Comprehensive Spending Review.</p> <p>Members accepted the indicative report and asked for further information on the large increase in other operating expenses, and the impact of Covid-19 on the College finances.</p>
	Action 5.2a	It was agreed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee would look at the more detailed breakdown of expenditure and would also receive the College's return on Covid-19 expenditure being provided to the ESFA.
6		Search and Governance
	6.1	<p>Search and Governance Committee Annual Report including Attendance</p> <p>The Chair outlined the key findings of the Search and Governance Committee Annual Report. Recruitment had been broadened, with success in expanding educational expertise and diversity of membership, however, appointment of Chartered Accountants has not yet been achieved.</p> <p>Members noted the review of self-assessment, induction and training regarding take-up and expansion of online opportunities, with self-assessment benefitting from alignment with the College's areas for improvement.</p> <p>The Chair also noted improved attendance and that as the committee system was, on the whole, well received, the delayed review was going ahead.</p> <p>The Corporation received the Annual Report of the Search and Governance Committee.</p>
	6.2	<p>Membership and Appointments</p> <p>Members considered the outcome of the student governor election process and the recommendations of the Search and Governance Committee on appointments.</p> <p>Since the Committee had met, one governor had provided their resignation. Members thanked the outgoing member Tiffany Harvey-Pallent for her commitment and contribution.</p> <p>The Clerk outlined the subsequent changes to the Corporation membership of committees. Following recommendation on the Chair of Audit Committee, the Chair asked that members contact the Clerk directly regarding committee membership and offices.</p>
		The Corporation resolved to make the following appointments to Halesowen College Corporation, commencing 1 October 2020, subject to meeting set eligibility criteria;

		<p>Jake Hiatt was appointed as the student governor for the academic year 2020/2021,</p> <p>Zubeda Limbada and Jo Rouse were appointed for one year in the first instance, in line with Corporation procedures.</p> <p>The Corporation further resolved to appoint Joanne Chilton as the Chair of Audit Committee.</p>
	6.3a	<p>Assurance Report – Code of Good Governance for English Colleges</p> <p>Members noted the report provided for members on compliance with the adopted code and the inclusive 'Colleges' Senior Post Holder Remuneration Code'.</p> <p>The Corporation agreed that it was satisfied with the review.</p>
	Action 6.3a	<p>It was proposed that the Audit Committee consider the recommendations from the Ney Review.</p>
	6.3b	<p>Corporation Self-Assessment, Development, Induction and Training Report</p> <p>Members considered the key points of the report provided, which addressed the approach to self-assessment for the current year and associated induction, training and development opportunities and direction.</p>
		<p>The Corporation approved the approach for Self-Assessment, Development, Induction and Training Report as provided.</p>
7		<p>Monitoring Reports</p>
	7.1	<p>Review of Confidential File</p> <p>The Clerk reported on the status of the confidentially filed documents and proposed action to release items, where deemed appropriate.</p> <p>Members asked about specific items and assurance on their appropriate release.</p>
		<p>The Corporation approved the release of items from the confidential file, following further checks undertaken, as reported.</p>
8		<p>Committee Minutes and Reports</p>
	8.1	<p>Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee held 16 September 2020</p>
		<p>The minutes of the Search and Governance Committee held 16 September 2020 were received.</p>

The following agenda item from the Search and Governance Committee was provided for information, with no discussion raised.

9		<p>Items from the Search and Governance Committee held 16 September 2020</p>
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	9.1	Membership, Recruitment and Appointment Report and Skills Matrix.
10		Any Other Business Two items were raised through the Chair.
	10a	Legal Advisors to the College
	Action 10a	It was agreed that it was timely to review the provision of professional legal services to the College.
	10b	Minutes
		Members approved the Minutes of the Corporation Special Meeting held 25 September 2020.
11		Date of Next Meeting The next meeting is scheduled for 14 December 2020, commencing 6pm.

Actions from Meetings			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Date/item for review	Reported by
Corporation Meeting 30 September 2020			
Action 4.1 5a	4.1 Principal's Report – 5 Ney Review Jacquie Carman agreed to amend the Annual Plan for 2020/2021 and to circulate the update to members.	November 2020	JCa
Action 5.2a	5.2 Early/Indicative Financial Performance (previous year) It was agreed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee would look at the more detailed breakdown of expenditure and would also receive the College's return on Covid-19 expenditure being provided to the ESFA.	November 2020 F&GP Committee	JCa
Action 6.3a	Assurance Report – Code of Good Governance for English Colleges It was proposed that the Audit Committee consider the recommendations from the Ney Review.	November 2020 Audit Committee	JCa
Action 10a	Legal Advisors to the College It was agreed that it was timely to review the provision of professional legal services to the College.	2020/2021	JW