

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

held on 14 December 2020

Present Louise Jones (*Chair*), Joanne Williams (*Interim Principal*), Amanda Allen, Joanne Chilton, Lance Hanson, Jake Hiatt, Helene Jones (*Vice Chair*), Zubeda Limbada, Mark Richardson, Joanne Rouse

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

It was agreed that agenda item 10.1 would be taken as the final agenda item.

1	Apologies Apologies were received on behalf of David Allen.
2	Declarations of Interest Joanne Williams and Jacquie Carman declared their interest in agenda item 10.1, Minutes and Recommendations from the Remuneration Committee.
3	Minutes of the Corporation Meeting
3.1	<p>Minutes of meeting held 30 September 2020</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held 30 September 2020 were approved as a correct record.</p> <p>Matters arising actions from the meeting were outlined:</p> <p>4.1 Principal's Report – Ney Review. The amended Annual Plan 2020/2021 would be provided as part of the Corporation strategic planning away day, on 29 January 2021.</p> <p>5.2 Early/Indicative Financial Performance (previous year). The Covid-19 ESFA Return was provided for the Corporation.</p> <p>6.3 Assurance Report – Code of Good Governance for English Colleges. The Audit Committee had considered the recommendations from the Ney Review and the Governance Review had been added to the 2020/2021 Audit Plan.</p> <p>10 Legal Advice to the College A timely review would be addressed by senior management.</p> <p>Items addressed would be removed from the actions table.</p>
4	Strategic Overview
4.1	<p>Principal's Report</p> <p>4.1.1 Covid-19 Update</p> <p>Joanne Williams provided an update for members on the impact of Covid-19 and current actions. The decision had been taken to move to online delivery for the last week of teaching, and ESFA agreement had been received for this. It was noted that many other local providers were taking this action.</p>

More guidance on delivery for the new year was expected and in preparation the College was modelling 75% and 100% face to face delivery. Within this, both delivery of GCSE's and tutorials, particularly to A Level groups, were highlighted.

4.1.2 Ofsted Update

Members were informed that normal inspections were not expected to commence before summer 2021, however, monitoring and assurance visits would continue. In addition, there would be a T Level survey.

4.1.3 Key Issues for the College moving forward

Joanne Williams explained that exams, work experience and T Levels were key issues.

Exams were commencing as early as 6 January 2021 and guidance on measures had not yet been received, increasing the challenges to put appropriate measures in place.

Governors noted that schools were awaiting information from exam boards before setting mock exams, however, the College had actual vocational exams commencing.

Work experience could not be met in normal terms. Some placements would not accept students until vaccinated. However, the College continued to communicate with employers to maintain engagement.

Members asked if there was any indication of what was expected knowing work experience could not be undertaken as required, particularly for the more practical courses. Joanne Williams and Jacquie Carman responded that the College was working to keep students engaged in the employability agenda and explained the use of virtual and in-house work experience and supported internships.

Members noted that T Levels were being launched at the College in September 2021, with consideration by both the board and the Students, Curriculum and Quality in the new year.

4.1.4 Spending Review

Jacquie Carman recognised that while there was immense pressure on the public purse, it was disappointing to not have a three-year comprehensive spending review.

She summarised for members that while there had been additional sector funding of £700m, this covered specific commitments; the increased base rate of funding, National Skills Fund, Level 3 as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee and growing higher technical provision.

Jacquie Carman further noted that the Teachers' Pension Scheme was to be funded until March 2022, but that there was uncertainty thereafter. Meanwhile, the Association of Colleges had recommended a 1% sector pay increase, where affordable.

Members noted that the College remained relatively stable and that the greatest risks to cash flow were claw back of adult funding, not reaching apprenticeships targets and ongoing costs to address Covid-19 measures.

4.1.5 Prevent Risk Assessment

Jacquie Carman provided the term one review of the Prevent Risk Assessment, noting the importance of regular review. Recent terror attacks in France and an increase in extreme right activity in the locality, highlighted the need for

		<p>vigilance. The College was proactive and undertaking work on freedom of speech, with planned activities for the new term.</p> <p>The Principal's Report was received.</p>
	4.2	<p>Update on Corporation Away Day - 29 January 2021</p> <p>The Chair outlined the developing plan for the strategic planning away day, with some sessions to be provided beforehand, such as question and answer sessions with the Assistant Principals. The aim was to provide a structured offer, with opportunities for follow up questioning.</p> <p>Focus would be on the economics of provision and opportunities for the future.</p> <p>Members noted the outline of timings for the day and that further information would be provided in the new year.</p>
	5	<p>Finance</p>
	5.1	<p>Review of Revenue Budget (1) 2020/2021</p> <p>Jacquie Carman reported that while the College remained financially stable, had a similar forecast out turn and retained outstanding financial health, at least in the short term, there was a noticeable change in the basis of income. The current year had considerable funding that was non recurrent, was addressing smaller classes, increased staff, blended learning and Covid-19 safety measures.</p> <p>Key risks moving forward were outlined, and included, non-recurrent sources of funding, potential in year clawback for the adult funding contract, a dip in the apprenticeship profile, from there being few starts in April to August 2020, and other ongoing Covid-19 related costs.</p> <p>Members recognised that while the current position was stable, the financial framework held more inherent risk than hitherto.</p> <p>Governors asked about the costed curriculum and Jacquie Carman outlined the variation of contribution rates, due to class sizes or course needs, but also noted the broader picture, which included consideration of the profile of students, and issues of both quality and finance. A dashboard had been developed and was being refined. The Chair noted that this would be helpful for the Corporation's away day.</p> <p>Members also asked about blended learning in normal times. Jacquie Carman responded that this could continue to work well in opening up access for students, with Access to HE being a good example. Joanne Williams noted that there would likely be some changes to delivery for some subjects, with use of directed study time and focused use of time in the classroom.</p> <p>The discussion also raised questions about the scope of provision and attracting learners from greater distance. Jacquie Carman noted that while ESFA directly funded learners could be funded for courses provided by the College, learners in areas funded directly through devolved budgets could not.</p>
		<p>On recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the Corporation approved the first review of revenue and capital budgets 2020/2021.</p>
	5.2	<p>Human Resources Annual Report</p>

		<p>Jacque Carman highlighted the headline data and that the College was performing well in comparison with the sector. The report provided was moving towards a more informative dashboard model.</p> <p>Members recognised that it was positive to see processes working and progress in reporting mechanisms moving forward.</p>
	5.2a	It was necessary that any anomalies in the Human Resources Annual Report were updated for the record.
		The Human Resources Annual Report was received.
	5.3	<p>Covid-19 November 2020 ESFA Return</p> <p>The ESFA return had been provided in the prescribed format and members were informed that this would, in turn, be supported by the financial statements, to be lodged in January 2021. Changes to reporting meant that the historic review would be supplemented with data on cash-flow moving forward, addressing July to December 2020.</p> <p>The ESFA were concerned that many colleges have weak cash flow positions. Halesowen College was able to report a stable position, and the report provided the assumptions used, which had been made clear, the financial priorities and financial performance against indicators.</p> <p>Jacque Carman highlighted areas of increased costs, as detailed in the report, including increased staffing costs, smaller class sizes, increased support for mental health, increased cleaning, a change in approach to catering, and not least, loss of income.</p> <p>Members were also informed that while the College was above contract in 16-18 learners, extra funding was not assumed.</p> <p>The College awaited the ESFA's response to the report.</p> <p>The report was received and the finance team were thanked for their work.</p>
	6	Audit
	6.1	<p>Revised Audit Plan 2020/2021</p> <p>The Chair of Audit Committee reported that the Committee had reviewed the 2020/2021 plan, which remained substantive and clearly aligned with the College's risk register. While an audit of work placements was delayed, a new audit of governance had been included.</p> <p>Members discussed progress made in commissioning the governance review and options regarding agencies, including skills mix and cost to conduct it.</p>
		On recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Corporation adopted the revised audit plan for 2020/21.
	6.2	<p>Risk Suite of Reports 2020/2021</p> <p>The Chair of Audit Committee reported that the Committee had reviewed the risk suite of reports, which remained a comprehensive working document for the College.</p> <p>Three risks remained which were rated outside of the risk appetite, following consideration of mitigating factors.</p>

		It was also noted that the governance review may consider how risk assurance is reported to the Corporation going forward.
		<p>On recommendation from the Audit Committee, the risk management suite was approved by the Corporation comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Register - 2020 2021 • Risk Plan - 2020 2021 • Risk Action Plan - 2020 2021 • Risk Management Policy and Procedure <p>and noting the risks rated, which remained outside of the risk appetite, those being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competition from other providers – Red rated 2. Being unable to meet funding contractual targets or exceeding maximum contract value – amber rated 3. Adverse financial impact due to changes in funding methodology/ resource allocation – amber rated
	6.3	<p>Appointment of External Auditor</p> <p>The Chair of Audit Committee explained the process regarding auditor appointments and review.</p> <p>Jacquie Carman reported that there was a good working relationship with external auditors, and that while there had been some operational challenges, due to Covid-19, these were being addressed with partners going forward.</p>
		<p>On recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Corporation approved the appointment of RSM Tenon as External Auditors for 2020/2021.</p>
	7	<p>Students, Curriculum and Quality</p>
	7.1	<p>College Self-Assessment Provisional Findings</p> <p>Joanne Williams touched on provisional findings of key strengths and areas for improvement from the self-assessment review, which would be fully reported to the Corporation in January 2021.</p> <p>Overall areas remained steady, however, there were areas on which to focus, including continued review of teaching and learning, improving attendance overall, review of apprenticeships offer and some adult provision.</p> <p>The provisional findings were accepted.</p>
	7.2	<p>Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2019/2020</p> <p>The Chair of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee reported that while there had been few exams, the data was provided on the basis of predicted and centre assessed grades.</p> <p>Joanne Williams noted that this was of consideration in recognising, that while value added was improved for A Levels, it was down for BTEC qualifications.</p> <p>Members noted that the report provided many aspects of positive work, including the support provided for students with Education and Health Care Plans and those who are Looked After Children during lockdown.</p> <p>Joanne Williams also highlighted the excellent work across College, that was celebrated in the Halesowen + newsletter.</p>

		Members noted that the results of the review for reaccreditation as Leaders in Diversity, had not yet been received. The Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2019/2020 was received.
8		Governance
	8.1	Governance Update Report The Clerk reported on the vacancy of Vice Chair of Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee and the updated additional roles undertaken by governors.
		The Corporation resolved to appoint Joanne Rouse as Vice Chair of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee, commencing 15 December 2020. The Corporation affirmed the changes to governor additional roles.
9		Committee Minutes and Reports
	9.1	Draft Minutes of the Audit Committee – 10 November 2020 The draft minutes were received.
	9.2	Draft Minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee – 17 November 2020 The draft minutes were received.
	9.3	Draft Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee – 24 November 2020 The draft minutes were received.
<i>The following agenda items from Committees of the Corporation were provided for information, and no discussion was raised.</i>		
1		Items from the Audit Committee – 10 November 2020
	a)	Accountability Reviews
	b)	TIAA Internal Audit of Payroll
	c)	Covid Aware Audit
	d)	Progress Report on Audit Action Plans
	e)	Review of Recommendations Following The Ney Review
	f)	Review Process for Internal Audit Performance
12		Items from Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee – 17 November 2020
	a)	Update on Student Enrolments against contract - In-year 2020/2021 Data
	b)	Student Performance Report 2019/2020
	c)	Value Added Report for 2019/2020

	d)	Review of Courses Under Notice
	e)	Current year 2020/2021 – Targets
	f)	Pastoral Report 2019/2020
	g)	Progress Report on Quality Improvement Plan for 2019/2020
	h)	Higher Education Self-Assessment Report
	i)	Update of the Education Inspection Framework
13		Items from the Finance and General Purposes Committee – 24 November 2020
	a)	Management Accounts as at 31 July 2020
	b)	Management Accounts as at 31 October 2020
	c)	Student Financial Support 2019/2020
	d)	Value for Money Report 2019/2020
	e)	Staff Development Annual Report 2019/2020
	f)	Pensions Update
	g)	Review of Pay
	h)	Estates and Premises Update
	i)	Health and Safety Report 2019/2020
	j)	Minutes of the Estates and Health and Safety Group
14		Any Other Business There was none.
15		Date of Next Meeting The next meeting was noted as scheduled for 26 January 2021
<p><i>Under Standing Order 8, Proceedings at Meetings, it was resolved that the student governor be asked to withdraw from agenda item 10.1, addressing senior post holder remuneration. Jake Hiatt left the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Joanne Williams and Jacquie Carman, having declared their interests, left the meeting.</i></p>		
10		Confidential Items
	10.1	Minutes and Recommendations from the Remuneration Committee 18 November 2020 - Senior Post Holder Pay and Conditions A separate confidential minute was taken.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm

Actions from Meetings			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Review Date	Reported by
Corporation Meeting 30 September 2020			
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	JWi
Corporation Meeting 14 December 2020			
Action 5.2a	Human Resources Annual Report It was necessary that any anomalies in the report were updated for the record.	January 2021	JCa