

## Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

**Held Wednesday 29 September 2021**

*Present* Joanne Chilton (*Chair*), Amanda Allen (*Vice Chair*), Andy Dobson (*Principal*), David Allen, Lance Hanson, Thomas Huntbatch, Helene Jones, Zubeda Limbada, Gail Rothnie, Joanne Rouse and Jonah Woodley.

*In attendance* Joanne Williams (*Deputy Principal, Director of Learning and Teaching*)  
Jacquie Carman (*Vice Principal and Chief Operating Officer*)  
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

<b>1</b>		<b>Apologies</b>
		There were none.
<b>2</b>		<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
		There were none.
<b>3</b>		<b>Minutes</b>
	3.1	Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 30 June 2021
		The minutes of the meeting held 30 June 2021 were approved as a correct record.
		Under Matters Arising the Clerk outlined the status of actions under the minutes of the previous meeting, held 30 June 2021. 4.2a - Opportunity to provide comments on the draft Strategic Plan. Item closed. 7.1.2a - Clarification on clauses in the internal auditor letter of engagement had been sought. Item closed. 8.1.2a - Biennial appointments to offices and membership of committees was being addressed in revisions to documents. Item remained pending. 8.1.3a - A meeting had been held regarding Committee Terms of Reference. The review was still current, but the action was closed. 8.1.4a - Planning on dates for training in October has not yet been reached. Item remained pending, but potentially replaced with purchase of Education and Training Foundation Modules.
		<b>Strategic</b>
<b>4</b>	4.1	<b>Principal's Report</b>
		Andy Dobson reported that there had been a busy start to the year, with an increased number of students enrolling at the College, particularly for A Level courses. Close monitoring of attrition, particularly any impact on A Level enrolment, (due to the complexities anticipated from predicted grades) was noted. While accommodation was challenging, many spaces had been quickly converted to classrooms. Initial analysis of 2020/21 results suggested a slightly lower headline figure than the national average. However, this was impacted by poor achievements in ESOL and Basic Skills, with most qualification types performing close to or above national rates.

		<p>Andy Dobson gave a presentation on his observations of the College, which addressed culture, strengths and challenges, moving forward through a period that had seen changes in leadership, response to and continuing recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Governors asked a range of questions around managing the impact of growth regarding;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deployment of increasing numbers of good teaching staff, staff wellbeing, management of personnel and a new governance committee overseeing personnel</li> <li>• accommodation</li> <li>• increased needs from students suffering from disrupted learning and/or difficulties in now being in a busy college environment</li> <li>• analysis of the pattern of growth and sustainability</li> <li>• recruitment to T Levels and course progression</li> <li>• student aspirations and enrichment</li> <li>• management culture.</li> </ul> <p>Andy Dobson responded;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that the College was interviewing for a new HR Manager and that the College was selective in employing teachers able to deliver courses,</li> <li>• that this year's growth had not exceeded the College's capacity, and that challenges were more about managing the distribution of the growth across course cohorts, as numbers had not necessarily matched the advance planning. There was still space on a number of courses. Continued growth would impact on the future. However, with reference to the Capacity Fund, some accommodation changes were being sought around replacement of mobiles and locating Hair and Beauty to a real work environment within the town centre. Class sizes and teaching hours were also areas that may need future consideration.</li> </ul> <p>Joanne Williams reported;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that the College had not recruited to the Health Care Science T Level and that increased visibility through marketing for T Levels would be needed. There were a range of progression opportunities for Health Care Science students, including apprenticeships and degrees. There also remained much debate about the impact of the introduction of T levels,</li> <li>• that the College would look again at stretch and challenge and higher achievement, taking account of past work through a gifted and talented stream and awareness of high achievers, often being very hard-working students.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the Principal's observations, members noted that the College had been through a strange phase and that the effect of Covid would extend for some years. While the College was working at a good level the question was now around 'what does excellence look like?'. Future focus was on strategic capacity, support and development for good management skills and enabling staff to reach their potential.</p> <p>The report and presentation were received.</p>
5		<b>Performance</b>
	5.1	<b>Safeguarding Update – Keeping Children Safe in Education</b>
		<p>Joanne Williams emphasised the increased expectations around governor responsibilities for safeguarding under the 2021 update of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.</p>

	<p>Senior managers had reviewed what was provided for governors on the culture around safeguarding and assurances that in addition to a policy that is effective, systems were promoted and accessible, with reporting being easy to do.</p> <p>Joanne Williams reported on how the College addressed areas being highlighted, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• peer on peer abuse,</li> <li>• increased vulnerability of SEND and Home Educated students</li> <li>• violence and sexual harassment being endemic</li> </ul> <p>Further thought was being given to how safeguarding was being addressed in the curriculum and the College was also setting up a sexual violence/harassment panel.</p> <p>Additionally following the planned approach of Ofsted, the College would be undertaking single sexed consultation panels on safeguarding in College. Considering the work on gender identity the College had undertaken, Joanne Williams agreed that a gender non-binary group could also be added.</p> <p>In keeping members apprised the number and categories of reporting under the College system was reported, with mental health concerns being the most prevalent.</p> <p>Members raised questions and were assured of confidential information storage.</p>
	<p>It was agreed that contextual reports on safeguarding would be provided for members, for ongoing reassurance regarding the reporting of concerns and the actions being taken to look after students.</p>
5.2	<p><b>Final Review of Annual Plan and Targets 2020/2021</b></p>
	<p>Jacque Carman provided the final update on review of the 2020/2021 annual targets. Most actions were complete with the new Digital Learning Strategy remaining pending. Members noted that there was an opportunity to harness the positive areas of progress in digital working, arising from digital working throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The update was received.</p>
5.3	<p><b>Strategic Plan 2021-2025</b></p>
	<p>Andy Dobson presented the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, which had been recalibrated since consideration by members in June 2021.</p> <p>Feedback from key stakeholders had been mostly positive, with further statements regarding collaboration with other Colleges being incorporated.</p> <p>Points provided from the Black Country LEP had been circulated, also for incorporation.</p> <p>Members noted that the SMART targets would sit in the Annual Plan together with high level key performance indicators.</p> <p>Members further noted the updates and raised questions in relation to supporting teaching and learning outcomes, which would sit within the remit of the new Quality Director, and the working title which remained to be confirmed.</p>
	<p>The Corporation resolved to approve the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, following the incorporation of the addendums provided, with the overarching title to be confirmed.</p>
5.4	<p><b>Annual Plan and Targets 2021/2022</b></p>
	<p>Andy Dobson reported that the current year plan was drawn from the high-level objectives for 2021/2022.</p> <p>Two key finance questions were raised.</p>

		<p>Firstly, the target to retain outstanding financial health was questioned. Jacquie Carman responded that the budget was predicated on growth, which would require investment, for which demonstrating financial resilience was key. Achievement of in year funding for growth was yet unknown and staff pay was challenging regarding the increase of teaching staff. Therefore, there did remain a caveat to this target.</p> <p>Secondly a member asked about the increased activities of Halesowen College Enterprises Limited. Jacquie Caman outlined the difficulties due to Covid-19, despite great initiative from the Bistro. However, increased activities in the Bistro, increased demand and turnover in the retail outlets and increased take up of places in the nursery were positive.</p>
		The Corporation resolved to approve the Annual Plan and Targets for 2021/2022.
	<b>5.5</b>	<b>Corporation Away Day January 2022</b>
		<p>Joanne Chilton explained that as work on the Strategic Plan had just concluded and the Corporation had scheduled a review in May 2022, it was practical to focus the Corporation's Away Day on other areas. It was planned to consider the FE White Paper (Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth), Safeguarding and Ofsted/Education Inspection Framework.</p> <p>In discussing any further needs arising, it was noted that as many new governors had not met, it would be useful to facilitate members in getting to know each other.</p>
		<b>Compliance</b>
<b>6</b>		<b>Finance</b>
	<b>6.1</b>	<b>Indicative Financial Performance (previous year)</b>
		<p>Jacquie Carman reported that the final position would be incorporated into the Annual Members Report and Financial Statements, which was currently in progress, to be reported to Audit and Finance committees later in the Autumn term.</p> <p>The indicative report revealed that the College performed well, reflective of budget, despite a challenging year and 'Outstanding' Financial Health was retained.</p> <p>There were positive variances in non-pay due to the College period of closure. Financial Targets were achieved, except for pay as a percentage of income. Pay costs were an area of risk, with increased cost pressures and the unknown impact of pension valuation.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
	<b>6.2</b>	<b>College Financial Funding Return</b>
		<p>Jacquie Carman reported that the College Financial Funding Return, replaced the previous return and was submitted in July 2021, on the authority of the Accounting Officer. The report, in the proscribed format was provide for governor information.</p> <p>Jacquie Carman emphasised that the College was required to demonstrate financial resilience and that it remained a going concern across the year, in the face of current grant funding, which was provided in unequal instalments.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>
	<b>6.3</b>	<b>Compliance Report on Conditions of ESFA Funding</b>
		<i>It was agreed that item 8.1 the letter from the Interim Chief Executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency to Accounting Officers and the College's</i>

		<p><i>corresponding report would be taken in parallel with item 6.3 on Compliance with conditions of Education and Skills Funding Agency funding.</i></p> <p>Jacquie Carman reported that a self-assessment report against the many conditions of grant funding was undertaken. The College was not in breach of any conditions and there were no areas of concern, however, there were areas of further work that could be undertaken to support best practice, as reported.</p> <p>Detailed questions on conditions relating to data and information and requirements on insurance and tax were raised. Jacquie Carman confirmed the position regarding data protection and that the required level of insurance cover is in place.</p> <p>Jacquie Carman highlighted the key points raised in the letter from John Edwards as the interim Chief Executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the College's review of those. These included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplementary Bulletin to Post 16 Audit Code of Practice, which was being addressed by the Audit Committee.</li> <li>• Integrity of ILR Data, now requiring additional audit work, with the Audit Committee to consider in more detail.</li> <li>• Related Party Transactions and actions taken to maintain transparency and deter conflicts of interest.</li> <li>• Audit Committee and appropriate, necessary skills of members.</li> <li>• Training for the Governance Professional and the Chief Finance Officer.</li> <li>• Auditor appointments, with clarity regarding required retendering every five years.</li> <li>• OfS Accounts Direction, ensuring compliance and making of disclosures.</li> </ul> <p>Following assessment, two areas were RAG rated as amber, being;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bank Covenants and the initial concern raised by the bank over FRS102. This technical adjustment had been explained and no further concerns were raised,</li> <li>• Guidance from the external auditor had been sought regarding the application of the correct accounting treatment regarding government issued laptops.</li> </ul>
		<p>Members considered the self-assessment of compliance with conditions of ESFA funding and agreed that the Audit Committee would monitor achievement of the action points arising from the review.</p> <p>Members further considered the report and assessment against the areas raised in the letter from the Education and Skills Funding Agency dated 22 October 2021, with a report on PDSATs alongside a self-assessment of data validation process being provided for the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Members noted that the Supplementary Bulletin to Post 16 Audit Code of Practice was being addressed by the Audit Committee.</p> <p>The Corporation further approved the Covid-19 addendum to be submitted to the external auditors.</p>
<b>7</b>		<b>Search and Governance</b>
	7.1	<b>Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee held 15 September 2021</b>
		Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee held 15 September 2021 were received.
	7.1.1	<b>Search and Governance Committee Annual Report 2020/2021</b>

		<p>The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee presented the Committee's annual report, which addressed actions and effectiveness against the remit. Going forward it was being recommended under the governance review that the Committee become solely a Search Committee, with items on governance being addressed directly by the Corporation or by the Audit Committee, under revised remits and cycles of business.</p> <p>The Corporation received the Search and Governance Committee Annual Report.</p>
	<b>7.1.2</b>	<b>Recommendations on Governor Appointments</b>
		<p>The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee explained the focused work on seeking prospective governors, with regard of current vacancies and the skills needs of the Corporation and associated committees.</p> <p>The Clerk provided a brief overview of each candidate.</p>
		<p>On recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee, and subject to meeting set eligibility criteria, the Corporation approved that Tiffany Harvey-Pallent and Andrew Hanson be appointed for three years, commencing 1 October 2021.</p> <p>The Corporation further approved that subject to their agreement, that Tiffany Harvey-Pallent be appointed to the Audit Committee and that Andrew Hanson be appointed to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Remuneration Committee.</p>
	<b>7.2</b>	<p><b>Governance revised framework documents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scheme of Delegation</b></li> <li>• <b>Committee Terms of Reference</b></li> <li>• <b>Cycle of Business</b></li> </ul>
		<i>This item was deferred, subject to consideration by the College solicitors.</i>
<b>8</b>		<b>Any Other Business</b>
	<b>8.1</b>	<b>ESFA - Letter to Accounting Officers</b>
		<i>This item was addressed at 6.3.</i>
		<b>College Open Day</b>
		The Clerk invited members to attend the College Open Day on Saturday October 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2021.
<b>9</b>		<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for 14 December 2020</p>

<b>Key</b>	Ap	Approve	ADo	Andy Dobson	JCh
	M	Monitor	JWi	Joanne Williams	HJo
	R	Receive	JCa	Jacquie Carman	AAI
			JSu	Jennifer Sunter	LHa

Actions from Meetings			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Review Date	Reported by
<b>Corporation Meeting 30 June 2021</b>			
Action 4.2a	<p><b>Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2025</b></p> <p>Members were asked to provide any further comments to Andy Dobson by 9 July 2021. Andy Dobson would review the matters raised by governors and return the strategic plan to the Corporation for approval.</p>	September 2021 Closed	ADo
Action 7.1.2a	<p><b>Reappointment of Internal Auditors</b></p> <p>Clarification on the clauses used in the Internal Audit Letter of Engagement and Terms of Reference would be sought from TIAA.</p>	September 2021 Closed	JCa
Action 8.1.2a	<p><b>Governor Offices and Membership of Committees, including Additional Roles Membership Update</b></p> <p>Members agreed that biennial appointment to offices should be taken forward in the review of framework documents.</p> <p>September 2021 – Pending</p>	December 2021	JSu
Action 8.1.3a	<p><b>Committee Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>It was agreed that a meeting be arranged with the Chair of Finance and Resources Committee to further consider the Committee Terms of Reference.</p>	August 2021 Closed.	JSu
Action 8.1.4a	<p><b>Calendar of Meetings 2021/2022</b></p> <p>Members agreed to additional committee dates in October 2021 to specifically address training combined with an overview of the start of the academic year 2021/2022.</p> <p>September 2021 - Pending</p>	August 2021	JSu