

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

Held Wednesday 31 March 2021

Present Helene Jones *Interim Chair*), Andy Dobson (*Principal*), Amanda Allen, David Allen, Joanne Chilton, Lance Hanson, Thomas Huntbatch, Mark Richardson and Joanne Rouse.

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*)

1		Apologies
		Apologies were received on behalf of Jake Hiatt and Zubeda Limbada.
2		Declarations of Interest
		The Staff governor and the Clerk declared an interest in agenda item 8.1iii Review of Staff Pay. The Clerk declared an interest in agenda item 10.2 Draft Minutes of the Remuneration Committee, 17 March 2021.
3		Minutes of Corporation Meetings held and Matters Arising
	3.1	Corporation Meeting 26 January 2021
	3.2	Corporation Meeting 29 January 2021
		The minutes of the Corporation meetings held 26 January and 29 January 2021 were approved as a correct record. The Clerk outlined that all actions scheduled for February and March 2021 were addressed under the current meeting agenda items. The Clerk reported that management action with regard to legal services to the College would be addressed by senior staff and updates to the Human Resources Annual Report were also being addressed by senior staff. There were no further matters raised.
4		Search and Governance
	4.1	Appointment of Corporation Chair
		Helene Jones vacated the Chair and the Clerk called for nominations. Joanne Chilton was nominated by Amanda Allen and seconded by Helene Jones. There were no further nominations.
		Joanne Chilton was duly elected and appointed as the Chair of Halesowen College Corporation commencing 1 April 2021.
	4.2	Minutes of Search and Governance Committee, 10 March 2021
		The Draft minutes of the Search and Governance Committee, held 10 March 2021 were received.
	4.2i	Corporation Membership and Appointment
		The Clerk outlined two recommendations from the Committee with regard to appointing to the current vacancy and to expanding membership. Members discussed previous concerns regarding the potential impact of good attendance across an increased membership. Members, acknowledged the

		<p>trigger for the recommendation and that while it pre-empted, it did not contradict external review findings, seeming a sensible way forward to support the Corporation's committee structure.</p> <p>The Clerk noted that the appointment of a new Chair impacted on current committee membership and roles, particularly that of the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Members considered practical steps for swift address of any vacancies to committee membership and roles.</p>
		<p>On recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee, the Corporation resolved to appoint Gail Rothnie as a member of Halesowen College Corporation, for the period 1 May 2021 to 31 July 2022, subject to meeting set eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Subject to agreement the Corporation recommended the appointment of Gail Rothnie to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.</p>
		<p>On recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee the Corporation resolved that the membership be increased from twelve to fourteen members and if approved, that the Instrument of Government be amended thus:</p> <p>2.(1)(a) Nine Eleven members who appear to the Corporation to have the necessary skills to ensure that the Corporation carries out its functions under article 3 of the Articles of Government.</p>
		<p>The Corporation approved changes to membership of committees, that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joanne Chilton join the Finance and General Purposes, Search and Governance and Remuneration Committees. • Joanne Rouse join the Audit Committee until the end of the current cycle.
	4.2ii	Update on Consolidated Assessment, Development and Training Report
		<p>The Clerk outlined that the report on self-assessment was provided for information, while aware that the current action plan would be augmented, if not overtaken by any action plan ensuing from the external review of governance. The updated report was received.</p>
	4.2iii	Additional Roles Membership Update
		<p>Members noted the updated table of membership.</p> <p>With regard to the role of Safeguarding lead it was agreed that Joanne Rouse would be available take on this role commencing in the new academic year 2021/2022.</p>
	4.3	Update on External Review of Governance
		<p>Joanne Chilton provided members with an overview of the draft initial findings of the external governance review. The Corporation had a reasonable position from which to move forwards.</p> <p>Joanne Chilton outlined the next steps of the review process which would involve working with key consultants around best practice in agile cycles of business, terms of reference and decision making and performance information frameworks.</p> <p>A more detailed report would be provided for members at the June meeting of the Corporation.</p>

5		Strategic Overview
	5.1	Principal's Report
		<p>Andy Dobson affirmed how positive it felt as the new College Principal now being able to attend College, welcome returning staff and students and gain a more tangible experience of how the College operates. He had noted a good</p>

		<p>atmosphere on campus and thanked all the staff and volunteers involved in the remarkable operations of Covid testing to support returning to site with a degree of confidence and safety.</p> <p>Key areas to note moving forwards were: effectively addressing teacher assessed grades, taking forward the next steps in developing the new strategic plan and continuing to engage with stakeholders. Discussions with the Black Country Chamber of Commerce and becoming a Further Education representative on the West Midlands Combined Authority Strategic Economic Development Board were highlighted.</p> <p>Members asked if arrangements under Covid, particularly teacher assessed grades, had negatively impacted on student progression.</p> <p>Joanne Williams reported that there had been an increase in UCAS applications and students were receiving offers of places. Andy Dobson noted that as student grades had been consistent, a normal distribution was expected and if universities were consistent, then the pattern of progression should remain similar. However, it was not yet clear if delayed take up of HE places would place stress on institution capacity.</p> <p>It was noted that Apprenticeship places were more challenging, but with increases in Pharmacy and Digital Marketing. In speculating about the impact of Covid on employment, it was felt that the College would need to work with students who were not progressing to Higher Education.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
	5.2	Annual Plan and Strategic Targets - Mid-Year Update and Information Exchange
		<p>Jacquie Carman provided an update on the current Annual Plan with actions in support of the strategic aims, an update of risk ratings and future actions.</p> <p>Members noted that actions were on course and no areas were rated as red under the traffic light system.</p> <p>Members congratulated management on the achievement of actions.</p> <p>In considering the Information Exchange report provided, members noted that the report being used by the College Leadership Team could provide a basis for performance information for governors, while the latter was being developed.</p> <p>The Corporation noted progress against targets and that there were no actions rated red.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
6		Audit Committee
	6.1	Draft Minutes of the Audit Committee, 9 March 2021
		<p>The Chair of Audit Committee drew out key points including that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the report on External Audit performance was deferred • internal audits were on course in accordance with the Audit Plan • the Digital Services audit had resulted in no issues of concern and that the College was working towards Cyber Essentials+ accreditation • the anti-fraud suite of policies had been considered by the Committee, with no concerns raised. <p>The Draft Minutes of the Audit Committee, 9 March 2021 were received.</p>
7		Students, Curriculum and Quality
	7.1	Draft Minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee, 16 March 2021
		<p>The Chair of Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee reported that governors had reflected on the considerable achievement of the College in</p>

		<p>provision of devices, meeting the challenges of online teaching and learning and the welcoming of students returning to site. Lessons had been learned that could have positive impact going forward.</p> <p>Members had also considered complexities around teacher assessed grades and it was reassuring that there was much evidence of student achievement in place.</p> <p>Andy Dobson noted that it was significant that FE Colleges had responded quickly and that it was very positive to see students both happy to be in College and focused.</p> <p>The Draft Minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee, 16 March 2021 were received.</p>
	7.1a	Quality Improvement Plan 2020 – 2021
		<p>Andy Dobson reported on the intensive assessment through Curriculum Area Reviews and quality improvement plans, adding the intention that more could be undertaken to drive the ethos of honest and self-critical evaluation throughout the organisation.</p> <p>A review of the college’s Self-Assessment processes would be undertaken, to ensure that they are effective as possible in bringing about improvements where needed.</p> <p>Andy Dobson further noted that due to Covid, the College would be without two years of standard published assessment data, however, assessment of actions and outcomes could still be undertaken.</p>
		The Corporation accepted the Quality Improvement Plan 2021/2021.
	7.2	Update on Students, Curriculum and Quality
		The update was addressed under 7.1 and 7.1a.

8		Finance and General Purposes
	8.1	Draft Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, 17 March 2021
		<p>The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee noted key points on reports outside those being directly recommended to the Corporation, these included that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital works under LEP Grant Funding were being delivered on schedule with grant payments being received accordingly. • there were revised benchmarks for financial health. <p>It was further noted that there was currently duplication of work between the Corporation and the Committee which was to be considered.</p> <p>The draft minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, 17 March 2021 were received.</p>
	8.1i	Review of Budget 2020 – 2021
		<p>The second in-year review of budget for 2020-2021 was considered by members. While there had been some variation on income and expenditure the overall position remained stable and in line with the forecast position. The review had taken into account costs relating to Covid-19 and the proposed recommendation on a pay award. There was good performance against financial targets, however pay as a percentage of income was close to the upper limit of the target and needed to be closely monitored.</p> <p>Members asked about adult budget funding and clawback.</p> <p>Jacquie Carman explained the threshold of 90% set by the ESFA for non-devolved AEB. While the College was currently at 81%, there was some reassurance from the position being taken by the devolved funding body, the</p>

		West Midlands Combined Authority, which accounts for the great majority of the college's AEB funding, and with whom the College remained in dialogue.
		On the recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the Corporation approved the revisions to the revenue budget for 2020/21.
	8.1ii	Tuition Fees Policy
		Jacque Carman reported on the annual update, emphasising the key principles that fees be derived fairly, communicated clearly and promptly collected. Members also noted the new lifetime skills guarantee and that increased flexibilities through the West Midlands Combined Authority would be incorporated into policy for 2021/2022.
		On the recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the Corporation approved the Tuition Fees Policy.
	8.1iii	Review of Staff Pay
		The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee explained that the Committee had taken additional time to ensure that the wish to provide a pay award could be underpinned by affordability. The Committee considered modelling data alongside the Association of Colleges' recommendation and awareness of what other colleges had undertaken. In balancing being a good employer, rewarding, retaining and attracting staff and both current and future affordability, the Committee was recommending a 1% award on a consolidated basis. However, it was stressed that this was not without risk, mindful of potential clawback of Adult Education funding, lower levels of Apprenticeships and reduced commercial income. Changes to financial benchmarks also meant that in addition to closer monitoring of the pay as a percentage of income ceiling, some efficiency savings would probably be needed in order to retain at least 1% surplus as a percentage of income. The Corporation continued to also be mindful of maintaining the balance between outstanding financial health, striving to be an outstanding College for students and being a good employer.
		The Corporation approved that a 1% pay award be made for 2020/21 and that this be consolidated.

9		Monthly Performance Information
	9.1	Management Accounts – February 2021
		Members noted that there were no concerns and that the College remained in line with targets and forecast operating surplus. The Accounts as at 28 February 2021 were received.
		<i>Under consideration of a resolution under Standing Order 8 Proceedings at meetings, with regard to withdrawal from the meeting, David Allen left the meeting.</i>
		<i>Joanne Williams and Jacque Carman left the meeting.</i>

10		Confidential Items
	10.1	Remuneration Committee Annual Report 2019 -2020
		The Clerk reported that the Remuneration Committee Annual Report had been reviewed and revised before being provided for the Corporation. It was noted that the report was transparent and accountable regarding fair and appropriate remuneration.

		The Corporation approved the Remuneration Committee Annual Report and that a statement based upon it would be published on the College website.
	10.2	Draft Minutes of the Remuneration Committee, 17 March 2021
		The minutes were received and the recommendation within was approved.
		That on recommendation of the Remuneration Committee the Corporation resolved to recommend to the Corporation a 1% pay increase to the Clerk in line with the staff pay award.
	10.3	Confidential Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 14 December 2020.
		The Confidential Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 14 December 2020 were approved as a correct record.

11		Any Other Business
		Members congratulated both Haroon Bashir and Joanne Williams on being nominated for the National Centre for Diversity's annual FREDIE (Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement) Awards.
12		Date of Next Meeting
		The next meeting of the Corporation is scheduled for Wednesday 30 June 2021.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm

Actions from Meetings			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Review Date	Reported by
Corporation Meeting 29 January 2021			
Action 9a	Strategic Planning Next steps A draft plan would be returned to the Corporation for consideration.	June 2021	ADo