

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

held Thursday 19 October 2023 at 6.00pm

Present Joanne Chilton (*Chair*), Jacquie Carman (*Principal*), Aisha Benachour, Shabir Chagan, Lee Smart, Sarah Dawson, Andy Hanson, Ian Hughes, Tiffany Harvey-Pallent, Alison Jarrett, Raj Joshi, Gail Rothnie, and Mark Sterling,

In attendance Joanne Williams (*Deputy Principal*)
Andrew Woodford (*Vice Principal and Chief Operating Officer*)
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

The Chair welcomed Andrew Woodford to his first Corporation meeting.

The Chair reported on the recent Ofsted inspection experience and thanked staff. The report was due to be published shortly. The College would continue to move forward with its focus on being exceptional.

Members shared experiences of the recent Open Day, which had been a very positive event, with a record number of visitors. The next Open Evening was scheduled for 8 November and governors were encouraged to visit.

1		Apologies
		Apologies were noted from Joanne Rouse, Chloe Naughton and Helene Jones.
2		Declarations of Interest
		All staff members present declared an interest in agenda item 7.3i Staff Pay.
3		Minutes
	3.1a	Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 5 July 2023
		The minutes of the Corporation meeting held 5 July 2023 were approved as a correct record.
	3.1b	Confidential Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Corporation held 29 August 2023.
		The confidential minutes of the Corporation meeting held 29 August 2023 were approved as a correct record and deemed as no longer confidential.
	3.1b	Actions and Matters Arising
		<p>Under Current Matters Arising: The Clerk updated members on the status of actions.</p> <p><u>From the meeting held 29 March 2023</u></p> <p>4.1c Principal's Report - Work in relation to being trauma informed around wellbeing and protection. This item remained pending to be addressed in December with a training update.</p> <p>6.1b Confidential - Business and Support Staff Contracts incorporating revised Annual Leave - All staff contracts, except those of Teaching Managers had been addressed. This item was deemed to be closed.</p> <p><u>From the meeting held 5 July 2023</u></p> <p>4.2a Principal's Report – It was noted that strengths and weaknesses highlighted for the new SAR and QIP would be reported to the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee and Corporation in December 2023.</p>

		<p>4.2b Principal's Report – The action for an update regarding student attendance was addressed under the current agenda item 5.1 on student results.</p> <p>7.5a FE Governance Code Update/Evidence Report -The new code of governance was provided under the current agenda for adoption.</p>
4		Strategic
	4.1	<p>Principal's Report</p> <p>Ofsted Outcome</p> <p>Jacquie Carman reported on the Ofsted inspection. It was noted that leaders knew the College well and where improvements should be made. Any points arising from the report would be incorporated into the College's Quality Improvement Plan. Following publication of the inspection report the College would publicise the outcome.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the College had valued the helpful support from the Association of Colleges and had in turn offered support to other Colleges.</p> <p>Agenda for Positive Change</p> <p>Jacquie Carman reported that the agenda for positive change had been announced to all staff and was in place to support rapid change across the College. The action to restructure the senior management team was concluded, with one vacancy for an Assistant Principal for Curriculum, Skills and Planning which was under recruitment.</p> <p>Work with a consultant to support the senior team group dynamic had commenced and was being broadened to the wider senior team. Additionally, development days for the senior team would be followed by an event for all College managers, to address the agenda for positive change, the new Strategic Plan and Quality Improvement Plan, with focus on what success looks like.</p> <p>Members noted that the communication strategy had commenced with a Save the Date card given to all staff at the start of the year. Weekly staff bulletins were also being provided and embedded as the definitive source of trusted information for staff.</p> <p>Principal's focus weeks had commenced and student feedback was positive. Students would be given feedback on the basis of "you said we did" at the end of each half term.</p> <p>It was further noted that clarity on data systems, with less reliance on bespoke provision, was being undertaken and that Marketing was much improved, with a review of actions at the end of term in preparation for a second phase.</p> <p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>Members considered the new Strategic Plan in its publishable format. Points of discussion included, government announcements on curriculum change and inclusion of the Ofsted outcome. A key point was that the Corporation require clear metrics on performance to sit within the Annual Plan.</p> <p>Transformational Projects</p> <p>Jacquie Carman noted that it was important that staff understood transformational projects.</p> <p>With regards to the purchase and development of Trinity Point, members were informed of the challenges and discussed staff engagement in moving to a new site. It was highlighted that overcrowding of the Whittingham Road site had been compounded by Radon Gas in Block 9. While awaiting the specialist's inspection report and taking of remedial work, staff and students had been removed from affected areas.</p> <p>Jacquie Carman noted that while early in the first term there were positive signs of improvement in attendance, with initiatives including penalties and rewards continuing.</p> <p>Support for good mental health and wellbeing were reported. The specialist provision of the new Hive at Five was open and being used, with positive feedback. The Principal</p>

had also signed up for the new THRIVE initiative being launched by the WMCA to support positive mental health.

College Values

Jacque Carman highlighted that in consulting staff and students on College values, vote outcomes had been very similar. However, it was noticeable that students did not include ambition in their highest responses. This reflected some awareness of students who did not feel 'good enough' for Russell Group institutions. Members discussed this more widely regarding 'imposter syndrome'. The College would continue to work with students to support and raise aspirations. Positively, Joanne Williams reported that nine students had sat the current Oxbridge exams.

It was emphasised that the College values, once approved, needed to be communicated, owned and demonstrated.

CEFS (Curriculum Efficiency and Financial Sustainability)

Jacque Carman explained that the approach of the FE Commissioner team was now one where colleges were encouraged to ask for active support. The College had therefore taken the opportunity and worked with a deputy FE Commissioner. This work specifically considered curriculum and deployment of resources, underpinned by the two pillars of quality and finance, to help the College move forward. A number of recommendations had been made and a subsequent action plan would be launched with managers regarding setting of targets.

The Chair stressed the importance of this work as part of the College's responsiveness.

Jacque Carman concluded that this work had also helped to increase the network of contacts for sharing of help and support.

Lecturer Staff Contracts

Members noted the work undertaken with regards to recalibrating the Lecturer staff contracts. Trade union representatives had been engaged and key aspects addressed included those of contact and non-contact time, protected time, cover and holidays.

Members asked a range of questions for clarification and noted that:

- contact time would be compatible with benchmarks,
- the probation period reflected the length of time to address all aspects necessary,
- differentiation in minimum and maximum staff hours contained an important point of clarification for staff on fractional contracts,
- annual leave for teaching staff was addressed in days.

Partnership Working

With regards to the Local Skills Improvement Plan funding, the College was working with other colleges and leading on both digital strands, addressing lower-level skills to support people into work and higher skills relating to gaps across industries.

The College was also working with ICCA on possible digital delivery of AAT through a consortium of colleges. This was a possible route to address a priority area which was under challenge through a lack of available accounts lecturers. It was also hoped to develop this beyond Level 4 to address a qualifications gap.

Continuing with Digital needs, Jacque Carman also reported on a potential bid via colleges West Midlands, for funding through the Innovation Fund, to provide a Help Hub for small and medium businesses, this would be with a local or regional consortium.

A member asked if there was funding limit, noting that this was two million pounds.

Feedback on minister visit

	<p>Members received feedback on the visit of the Principal and Deputy Principal to meet with Minister of State, Robert Halfon. Points on both educational reform and funding had been made and concerns regarding T levels and Work Placement were also raised.</p> <p>Members noted that it remained a fluid time for educational reform with the announced changes for English qualifications, a planned white paper for 2024 and an approaching requirement for a general election. Updates would be incorporated into reports for the scheduled December meetings of the Students Curriculum and Quality Committee and the Corporation.</p> <p>Student Numbers</p> <p>It was noted that at this early point in the year the number of students enrolled at the College exceeded the main ESFA contract.</p> <p>RAAC</p> <p>Jacque Carman confirmed that the College had responded to the Department for Education and while it was currently believed that the College had no RAAC, surveys of the relevant estate were being undertaken.</p>
	<p>The Corporation approved the Refreshed Strategic Plan subject to minor changes as discussed.</p> <p>The Corporation approved the College Values for adoption, those being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusion • care • ambition • respect <p>The Corporation approved the Lecturer Staff Contracts and associated documents as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lecturer’s contract of employment • The Trainee Lecturer’s contract of employment • The collective agreement, titled Workload Allocation for Lecturer’s Agreement • Revised Annual Leave Policy for Lecturers and Curriculum Management.
5	Performance
5.1	Student Results
	<p>Joanne Williams provided the headlines in a summary report on achievement, which would be considered in more detail by the Students Curriculum and Quality December meeting.</p> <p>Overall there had been an increase in achievement. While achievement had moved forward, it was understood that further improvement was necessary. Headlines included that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 achievement was better than Level 1 and 2. • AS Levels, which had been introduced initially to assist students, were no longer serving their purpose, therefore these had been stopped and replaced with linear based A Levels. • Mides data on English was in line with benchmark but Maths required more work. • Student attendance at lessons (directly linked to performance chances) remained a challenge, but this was improving. • Apprenticeship data for colleges was generally low, and while the College achievement rates had improved, there remained a need to further improve. <p>With regards to achievement there was a gap for care experienced learners. Additionally, the College had a larger cohort of students in the current year and was therefore undertaking a project to do more work with this cohort.</p>

	<p>With reference to destination data and Higher Education, members discussed the challenge of increasing higher grades and noted that a new Assessment Lead post would support teachers, particularly in teaching students' exam craft.</p> <p>The Students Curriculum and Quality Committee would consider more detail regarding grade bands, student projections and actual achievement, with regard to value added and subsequent progression.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
5.2	<p>Student Attendance Update</p>
	<p>Joanne Williams reported on actions undertaken in year to improve attendance. A very small increase was realised, with more actions in pace to impact the current year.</p> <p>The report provided covered the approach being taken and that attendance was a focus of transformational projects.</p> <p>Members asked about student behaviour with regard to reports of cannabis offsite but in the locality. Staff had been working to address this and further suggestions regarding addressing addiction issues were raised.</p> <p>Members also asked if there were concerns regarding student tensions in relation to the current conflict between Israel and Gaza. Staff were alerted through the Staff Bulletin to resources and asked to remain vigilant to any concerns.</p> <p>The update was received.</p>
5.2a	<p>The Chair noted that she would contact Chief Superintendent Tagg re support in addressing issues around Cannabis usage.</p>
5.3	<p>Apprenticeships Current Position</p>
	<p>Joanne Williams reported that the Ofsted inspection outcome for Apprenticeships confirmed the self-assessed grading.</p> <p>In light of continual challenges in delivering apprenticeships members asked about the impact, should the College stop this provision. Jacquie Carman responded that this would impact negatively on meeting the skills agenda and Halesowen College's role in the educational landscape. The College also remained on course to meet its LEP grant target for apprentices, which was a requirement of refurbishment funding.</p> <p>Joanne Williams outlined the importance of apprenticeships in the post 16 choice, which for some learners could be the only viable option. That this remained a valuable route for adult learners and did support the development of employability skills.</p> <p>It was noted that the complexity of apprenticeships did deter employers with the number decreasing over three years. Additionally, some apprenticeship standards did not provide a qualification that could be passported.</p> <p>Looking forward, the current inspection outcome had provided the basis to take significant action and that the College should increase capacity, performance and contribution of this curriculum area. Therefore a monthly performance summary would be monitored closely and curriculum would be reviewed regarding impact on skills deficits in the area.</p> <p>It was noted that achievement rates should be improved to at least the NART level and positive destinations achieved and recorded.</p> <p>A member asked about expectations of employers who were in hybrid or solely home working models. Jacquie Carman felt that the hybrid model could be addressed however, complete home working was more challenging.</p>
5.3a	<p>The Corporation received the update and wished to be kept informed of progress, with a deep dive undertaken through the Students' Curriculum and Quality Committee, with wider Corporation membership engaged for support as required.</p>

5.4	Final Review of Annual Plan 2022/2023 and Annual Targets
	<p>For final review of the 2022/2023 plan, it was noted that while most actions were closed, a few would be taken forward to the 2023/2024 plan.</p> <p>New issues highlighted with retention and attendance were also addressed under transformational projects and new year targets.</p> <p>The new plan and targets would, once approved, be reported on systematically through the 2023/2024 cycle of business.</p> <p>The update was received.</p>
5.5	Annual Plan and Targets 2023/2024
	<p>Members discussed the proposed plan and targets for 2023/2024 to sit under the new Strategic Plan, comprehensively covering all aspects and used to drive the organisation's objectives forward. Jacquie Carman outlined that some actions held longer lead times and that the plan should be live, with potential to review in year adding actions where required.</p> <p>A member asked and was assured that staff had been consulted on the contents of the plan.</p> <p>Members were asked about reporting and monitoring requirements and if monthly reporting and RAG ratings would be beneficial. Members raised a number of points including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increased use of metrics and data to be clear on targets/goals/actions and what had been achieved. • Value added target for A Levels • Greater clarity and rigour on what would be monitored through committees and Corporation. • Insights • Benchmarking data • Links to the risk plan • Income generation and savings targets in relation to CEFS
5.5a	It was agreed that a monthly data report to chairs should be instigated and that a meeting of the committee chairs should consider the metrics for committees and Corporation reporting.
	The Corporation approved the Annual Plan and associated KPI's for 2023/24 as a draft working document, which would be returned to the December meeting of the Corporation.
6	Compliance
6.1a	Safeguarding Update – Keeping Children Safe in Education
	Joanne Williams updated members on the key changes to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. None of the changes were seen as problematic and these had been picked up in revisions to the Safeguarding Policy.
6.1b	Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
	Having noted the changes to guidance under 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' members had no further questions regarding the annual review of Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.
	The Corporation approved the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure 2023-2024.

7		Finance and Personnel
	7.1	Indicative Financial Performance (previous year)
		<p>Jacque Carman reported that in line with Budget Revision three, there were no surprises to financial performance for the previous year. There was strong financial performance across 2022-2023 and the College should retain an outstanding financial health grading as of 31 July 2023.</p> <p>With regards to pensions, members discussed the accounting treatment of FRS21, which had unusually generated a large asset but which could not be recognised as such. Jacque Carman informed members that questions had been raised about what was seen as an inappropriate accounting treatment for the sector, the technicalities of which would be considered by the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Members raised questions for clarification.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
	7.2	Accountability Agreement and Skills Statement
		<p>Jacque Carman emphasised that the Accountability Agreement remained pivotal to the College's contribution under the Local Skills Improvement Plan and growth. This was an active document to be reported to each Corporation meeting.</p> <p>Good progress had been made with College actions as reported against aims.</p> <p>Members considered continued monitoring and noted that while actions were closed, monitoring should be continued to report on impact. In particular the monitoring of employer boards across the curriculum should be reported to inform the Students Curriculum and Quality Committee.</p> <p>The update was accepted however, it was felt that the whole report should continue to be returned to the Corporation.</p>
	7.3	Draft Personnel Committee Minutes 11 October 2023
		<p>The Draft Personnel Committee Minutes of the meeting held 11 October 2023 were received and it was noted that these would not remain confidential following the Corporation meeting.</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee outlined the areas considered and that members of the Finance and Resources Committee had joined the meeting for discussion on Staff Pay.</p> <p>The Committee had also noted that increased use of data, trends and benchmarking were necessary for monitoring performance across the year.</p>
	7.3i	Staff Pay
		<p>Jacque Carman outlined the timeline of pay consideration. The Corporation had approved the budget for 2023/2024, that had not incorporated a pay award. However, the Department for Education shortly thereafter provided additional funding, applied through the 16-18 model, with a strong steer to apply directly to staff pay. While this was not the same for each College, as it depended on 16-18 learners, the College award equated to 5.2%.</p> <p>The Association of Colleges subsequently made a sector pay recommendation of 6.5%. Jacque Carman had considered the wider position of the College and consulted other College principals before providing options to the Personnel Committee. Risks to delivering the College's strategy would be impacted if the College failed to retain and recruit staff, while a 6.5% award would, under current budgeting leave a small deficit to address. There was potential through the actions from the CEFS review, and also staff vacancies. However, all other risks to the budget model, as highlighted, remained.</p>

		<p>Members were also made aware of risks of industrial action (correspondence on which was already received) and the potential negative impact on students.</p> <p>Jacquie Carman further outlined the proposed separate non-consolidated award from the previous year's surplus and the basis on which this could be provided.</p> <p>Jacquie Carman also highlighted that pay formed one part of a new HR Strategy, which focused on the triangle of wellbeing, workload and wages. The new approach offered two staff wellbeing days which would be collectively decided by staff.</p> <p>Members felt, in light of the challenges to colleges as outlined, that the 6.5% pay award should be made on the basis of the recommendation.</p>
		<p>On the recommendation of the Personnel Committee with the support of the Finance and Resources Committee members who attended, the Corporation approved a consolidated pay award to staff of Halesowen College of 6.5% with effect from 1 September 2023.</p> <p>That this is conditional on the acceptance of the new contract for teaching staff and clarity that there will be no further routine non-consolidated awards for any staff moving forward from that currently proposed.</p> <p>That it is aimed to make payment in November, should this be agreed and given that the College is not in any industrial dispute with a recognised Trade Union.</p> <p>The Corporation agreed a flat rate non-consolidated, non superannuable award to qualifying staff of Halesowen College Group of £930 gross, to be paid in December 2023. This would be pro-rata for fractional staff.</p>
8		Governance
	8.1	Draft Minutes of the Search Committee held 20 September 2023
		The Draft Minutes of the Search Committee held 20 September 2023 were received.
	8.2	Search Committee Annual Report
		<p>The Clerk reported on the work of the Committee across the previous year, highlighting succession and recruitment actions.</p> <p>In response to advertising governance additional suggestions were made by governors.</p>
		The Corporation adopted the Search Committee Annual Report.
	8.3	New Code of Governance for FE
		The Clerk reported on the publication of the previously discussed new Code of Good Governance for FE, which would be launched at the AoC November conference. The Code had been provided with a template for supported review and the Corporation would on adoption begin to embed the code.
	8.3a	The Chair reported that the AoC were looking for volunteer colleges to review use of the new Code and members felt that it was positive to support this.
		The Corporation adopted the new AoC Code of Good Governance and agreed to base reporting on the template provided.
9		Any Other Business
		<p>The Chair reported that the Remuneration Committee had undertaken a Special meeting and recommended to the Corporation that should a staff pay award and non-consolidated, non superannuable award be approved, that the same award be applied to Senior Post Holders and the Clerk, including the same qualifying caveats.</p> <p>The Corporation approved the recommendation.</p>
10		Date of Next Meeting

	Scheduled for Tuesday 12 December at 4pm
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The Meeting closed at 8.05pm

Actions from Meetings			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Review Date	
Corporation Meeting 13 December 2022			
6.3a	Equality and Diversity Annual Report It was agreed that research on the impact of staff diversity in relation to student diversity would be undertaken and reported to the Corporation.	March, July, Dec 23	HBa/ RCh
Corporation Meeting 29 March 2023			
4.1c	Principal's Report Work in relation to being trauma informed around wellbeing and protection was noted and would be highlighted through reporting to the Personnel Committee.	Autumn 23 Spring 24	
Corporation Meeting 5 July 2023			
4.2a	Principal's Report Strengths and weaknesses highlighted for the new SAR and QIP would be reported to the Students Curriculum and Quality Committee and the Corporation.	September 2023-SCQC and Corp Dec 23	JWi
8.4b	Instrument and Articles of Government Detailed review of Standing Orders and Instrument and Articles of Government would be undertaken 2023/2024.	July 2024	JSu
Corporation Meeting 19 October 2023			
5.3a	Apprenticeships Current Position The Corporation received the update and wished to be kept informed of progress, with a deep dive undertaken through the Students' Curriculum and Quality Committee.	SCQC November 2023	Jwi/ JCa
5.5a	Annual Plan and Targets 2023/2024 It was agreed that a monthly data report to chairs should be instigated and that a meeting of the committee chairs should consider the metrics for committees and Corporation reporting.	Nov/Dec 23	JSu
8.3a	New Code of Governance for FE The Chair reported that the AoC were looking for volunteer colleges to review use of the new Code and members felt that it was positive to support this.	Nov 23	JSu