

Minutes of the Corporation Special Meeting – Development Day

Friday 26 January 2024

Held in the Block 2 Seminar Room

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

In attendance Joanne Williams (*Deputy Principal*)
Andrew Woodford (*Vice Principal and Chief Finance Officer*)
Jon Priest (*Director of Information Services*)
Craig Tucker (*Assistant Principal Quality and Standards*)
Sarah Bullas (*Assistant Principal Safeguarding and Students*)
Hayley Edwards (*Head of Marketing*)
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Development Day before setting the scene and outlining the focus of the day.

1	Apologies
	Apologies were received from Joanne Rouse, Chloe Naughton, Sarah Dawson and Helene Jones.
2	Declarations of Interest
	There were none.
3	Themes for Discussion
	<p>Jacquie Carman presented an overview of the refreshed College values, objectives and the One Direction path to be exceptional through the agenda for positive change that was underway.</p> <p>Gaining greater clarity across the approach to strategies and policies was outlined, with focus on how each underpinning strategy should clearly support the overarching Strategic Plan and objectives. These would be supported by clear measures to clarify actions needed. The approach would support the College in managing through such an increased pace of change in the sector.</p>
	Marketing
	<p>Marketing considerations highlighted the diverse audience and therefore diverse use of platforms required to communicate and celebrate what the College does. Maximising opportunities was discussed including employer networking and improved tracking of the learner journey.</p> <p>Highlighting the need to understand our audience, members took part in a quiz which highlighted what adults don't understand about the culture of being a seventeen-year-old.</p> <p>Governors asked questions and discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of local press in addition to traditional sector routes including FE News and the Association of Colleges. • Responding appropriately and diversifying communication to encourage different target audiences.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement of stakeholders, such as employers, to forward on success stories and communicate through their networks. • What constituted a unique selling point, noting that Halesowen College had, in addition to the College coaches, an overarching focus on values, ethos and culture, and that safety in approach and location was also of note. • Measuring success through key points, such as registrations converting to enrolments, while managing growth with integrity.
	Action 3a	With reference to communications through social media governors were asked to engage with College posts through their chosen platform.
		<p>Learner Involvement</p> <p>Sarah Bullas presented an evolving picture of engaging with and listening to the voice of all learners across the different cohorts. Key to this was in strengthening the quality of engagement and evaluation of data, gained through a variety of mechanisms including surveys. The College Leadership Team had increased their visibility and engagement with students, not least through the Principal’s focus groups and a new development ‘Time for Tea with CLT’. From feedback to date it was clear that students like to be consulted. Members understood that the aim was to grow student confidence and particularly with those who are harder to reach.</p> <p>Members asked about targets and measuring outcomes. It was noted that the College continued with it’s “You said, we did” approach and measured response rates. Members noted that they would want to also see impact.</p> <p>It was noted that in addition to focus groups, further projects were being considered, which would be put out for consultation.</p> <p>Members noted the potential for a student shadow board and raised questions about how governors could better engage with learners, noting that the Chair attended several student focus groups and asking if one student governor was appropriate.</p> <p>The responsibility to respond to the diverse points raised by students was also discussed. While some areas were generic some were curriculum specific.</p>
	3b	It was proposed that Governors meet to discuss how the College was taking learner engagement forward.
		<p>Curriculum</p> <p>Curriculum Strategy was outlined by Joanne Williams with a continuously moving approach now needed, to respond to such a rapid pace of change in the sector. While the range of courses the College offers remained a positive for prospective students, customer expectations change. The College needed to market what it offers that is different, best or unique. Within the course offer the College needed to embed equality, sustainability and skills, aiming for students to be equipped with a power pack of skills to enable them to progress.</p> <p>It was increasingly difficult to be creative with the current curriculum changes and funding, while trying to maintain quality, address skills gaps and defend wider course offer (which did not meet what was now considered the priority curriculum offer).</p> <p>Members understood their duty to review provision on how local skills needs were being met and would need to consider this within the context of quality, staffing, course demand and affordability. With defunding of some courses, it was challenging to pin down a prospectus for the next year.</p>

	<p>Discussion by members included the wider impact of regional and national policy of curriculum offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local jobs and growth versus student wishes • Careers guidance and helping students who did not have a clear path • Impact of two-year qualifications on retention and achievement • Greater understanding of qualifications and progression, working with employers to better understand qualifications • University progression and recognition of T levels • Development and flexibility of staff in delivering changing qualifications • Opportunities for all being more difficult for some students, with defunding of some courses and a subsequent gap in provision • Tackling NEETs and intensive resources to do this • Unemployment and best practice for Swaps and Bootcamps • Capping of courses if funding the level has been reached e.g. Counselling. • Addressing GCSE English and Maths in a different way • Embedding sustainability into courses and offering stand-alone qualifications such as EPQ • Adult offer under life-long learning with a more modular approach <p>It was noted that there were some hard challenges and decisions for the College to make regarding courses and class sizes.</p> <p>It was also noted that the College remained focused on supporting and developing the student as a whole person</p>
Action 3c	<p>It was agreed that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Students Curriculum and Quality Committee would consider new qualifications and their challenges. • The Corporation would receive an update report on the curriculum at each meeting.
	<p>Where are we now and progress to be exceptional.</p> <p>Jacque Carman led governors through a real time survey exercise as part of measuring understanding of where the College was on the journey to become exceptional.</p> <p>The agenda for positive change had moved on at pace and it was appropriate to take a baseline measure through self-assessment of managers, the College Leadership Team and governors.</p> <p>Questions being measured related to Ofsted’s characteristics of being an ‘oustanding’ provider.</p> <p>Members discussed where there was parity and where there were differences in perceptions, however, the perception was that the survey offered a positive start, with the College on the right trajectory to move forward, with key points on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole College being a team • Ambition to move forward and celebrating success • Supporting staff to understand the educational landscape and developing skills for the journey
5	<p>External Review</p>
	<p>Rob Lawson, a National Leader in Governance, contracted to undertake the Corporation’s external review, outlined the process of the review and his general findings from reviews he had undertaken to date.</p>

		<p>Members discussed the final review of the ensuing report and how this would be reported.</p> <p>Members noted that the Corporation could draft its own development plan or ask Rob Lawson to provide this for them.</p> <p>The importance of survey responses being provided was stressed.</p> <p>The survey would be circulated week commencing 29 January 2024.</p>
		<i>Joanne Chilton left the meeting.</i>
3		<p>Digital</p> <p>Jon Priest provided a comprehensive presentation on the pace of digital change that impacted on the College, both in its infrastructure, teaching and learning practice and overarching culture.</p> <p>Members were taken through a key review of how the pace of digital change had increased, with an explosion of development in the past two years. It was key to understand that the College was now operating in a culture of adaptation to not adoption of digital developments.</p> <p>Jon Priest demonstrated how AI (Artificial Intelligence) was impacting all areas, but particularly communication, teaching and learning. Impact on the employment sector was particularly salient, with the need to upskill students to be digitally competent and confident. This in turn had cost and development implications for College's staffing.</p> <p>Delivery across and through the curriculum and gaining understanding of students and their use of digital developments, including AI, were noted. In particular, that a key challenge was in sending students from College using AI and technology with integrity.</p> <p>Governors also highlighted the need to tap into industry specialists moving forwards and to collaborate with the sector and with industry, asking the right questions about what planning was needed, for the short and longer term.</p> <p>Members also summarised that triangulation regarding productivity was necessary, to be able to focus on employment and providing the right skills at the right time.</p> <p>In summary safe usage and comfort in dealing with digital adaptation and change remained a key ambition.</p>
	Action 3d	The risks and costs of managing rapid digital developments were noted, to be considered by the Audit Committee.
4		<p>Performance Monitoring</p> <p>Continuing the discussion around the impact of curriculum reform Craig Tucker and Andrew Woodford presented an overview of quality and finance, with need to balance drivers to achieve overarching performance improvement.</p> <p>Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity in providing the College as a place for everyone, with a variety of quality offer needed, including different qualification needs of employers • Value Added data was being looked at for vocational courses • Positive destination measures from the WMCA were now a key driver • Reporting in a timely manner to support monitoring and improvement was of increased importance • There was challenge and focus on changes in student behaviour and attitudes, with dips in attendance and punctuality • Work readiness needed more employer engagement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff utilisation was a balance to be managed effectively • Staff absence had increased • The College had to address the rising agenda of sustainability in the curriculum and subsequently inspection • There was potential need for additional metrics to measure AI literacy/digital skills, with a baseline to commence this • External measures continued to impact on financial strategy in addition to the College's own policy led measures.
6	Committee Actions
	<p>Governors and senior management broke into groups to consider committee effectiveness.</p> <p>The Vice Chair invited committee chairs to summarise key points from their group discussions, which included the following:</p> <p>Audit Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised front pages for reports to improve summaries and categorisation • More concise reports • Clarity on the committee functions re Annual Members' Report and Financial Statements and sufficient time to interrogate the report before presenting the Corporation. • Review of risk management process/reporting <p>Students Curriculum and Quality Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing governor opportunities to hear from learners • Challenge re the student governor role, and variability across the appointments • Vocational value added being considered this year • Targets needed for employer engagement and industry engagement • Assistant Principal's should be invited to talk about their areas and encourage their accountability <p>Personnel Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the People Strategy was the focus for the work of the Committee which needed a little longer to embed. <p>Finance and Resources Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater focus on clarity of metrics and easy to read more concise documents • Visibility of three-year planning • Increased scrutiny of areas for improvement <p>Jacque Carman highlighted that areas of risk had run through the day's activities and that as the College was now working in a different educational landscape, it was timely to consider how risk management permeated through the committees and if the risk framework remained fit for purpose.</p> <p>Jacque Carman also highlighted that the digital revolution meant that in embracing developing technology there needed to be consideration of the ways the Corporation and Committees worked and communicated.</p>
	Members were thanked for their attendance and participation and the event was closed.
7	Date of Next meeting

		The next meeting was noted as scheduled for 20 March 2024.
		The meeting closed at 3.55pm