

Corporation Board Meeting

Wednesday 13 October 2021

West Herts College - Watford

5pm – 7pm

MINUTES

Attendees:

Governors	Role:	Other attendees	Role:
Phil Thompson	General - Chair of Corporation	Gary Dixon	Deputy Principal West Herts
Gill Worgan	Principal & CEO	Cath Gunn	Principal of Barnfield
Guy Ainsley	Independent Governor	Sarah Knowles	Deputy Principal WHC Group
Phil Berry	Independent Governor	Eamonn McCarroll	Director of Finance WHC Group
Irina Kendix	Independent Governor	Tammy Nuthall	Deputy Principal Barnfield
Richard Lewis	Independent Governor	Apologies	Role:
Matt Luheshi	Independent Governor	Heather Lunn	Student Governor
Chris Nicholls	Independent Governor	Jamie Robertson	Student Governor
Jason Smith	Independent Governor	Paul Thompson	Independent Governor
Ben Stapleton	Independent Governor	Alberto Ucci	Staff Governor
David York	Staff Governor		

NO.	Agenda item - Discussions and Decisions Made
21/1	<p>1.1 Apologies were noted and accepted, and the meeting was quorate.</p> <p>1.2 There were no interests to declare.</p> <p>1.3 There was one item of urgent business which was taken immediately.</p> <p>1.3.1 The Board formally approved the appointment of the new clerk.</p>
21/2	<p>2.1 The Minutes (part 1&2) of the meeting held on the 14 July 2021 were confirmed for electronic signature; Clerk to action. (Action 1)</p> <p>2.2 The unconfirmed Minutes of Audit Committee (AC) meeting held on 28 September 2021 were presented by the Committee Chair. The AC had received the internal audit reports for 2020-21. The record of findings was good and the delay in signing the apprenticeship agreements had been addressed. There was no impact on the learners and details of the measures taken to address the issues and any potential costs were outlined in the finance report.</p> <p>2.3 All actions from the last meeting were considered and discussed. It was agreed that all had been implemented.</p> <p>2.3.1 92/20. Analysis of EDI audit to next meeting – Completed</p> <p>2.3.2 92/20. Protected Characteristics info in future reports. – Completed</p> <p>2.3.3 94/20. Information on Cyber Essentials to all Members. Completed</p> <p>2.3.4 97/20. CPSG Update to Next Meeting. See agenda item 7.2.</p> <p>2.4 There were no matters arising.</p>
21/3	<p>Governor Training – Ofsted Inspection-ready</p> <p>Cath Gunn, Principal of Barnfield College gave a presentation to the Board. The following items were considered and discussed.</p> <p>The key principles of inspection including the College’s links to employment, higher education, intended destinations, and personal development.</p>

	<p>The purpose of 'deep dives' was clarified explaining that it was a vertical cut into the curriculum, choosing one area to look at in detail in line with intended destinations. This included lesson visits and scrutiny of learners work over a period of time as well as case studies on individual students, with a specific focus high needs and safeguarding.</p> <p>The Governors and stakeholder's role was to provide evidence to OFSTED to enable them to triangulate the information. It was important that Governors understood the College's vision and are familiar with its strengths and priority areas.</p> <p>Priority areas were discussed, and the Board were satisfied that suitable actions were in place to deliver improvement and agreed that the College had a strong vision and culture of ambition with good access to opportunities, quality teaching and effective links with employers. GAP was a distinctive aspect of the College which provided a strong focus to, on-job-training and exposure to workplace environments.</p> <p>Governors asked about the Continuous Professional Development that is available for staff w and were assured that there is an effective and comprehensive staff development programme in place, which included development days for pedagogy and industry upskilling.</p> <p>Achievement levels in English and Maths was discussed. The College is supporting learners by focussing on the specific functional skills required to carry out their chosen vocation and is certificating these skills as and when they are achieved. Governors queried whether these certificates would replace emphasis on GCSE qualification outcomes and were reassured that the additional skills will be delivered alongside the GCSE qualifications. The targets were tracked throughout the year, moderated by the Heads of School and were measurable and achievable.</p>
21/4	<p>Principal's Report</p> <p>The Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting for the Board's consideration.</p> <p>4.1 Enrolment - 6,000 students aged 16-18 had been enrolled across Barnfield and West Herts College. Students were engaged and positive about their initial experiences of the College and their course, the differences in behaviour and attitudes as a result of the lockdowns was noticeable.</p> <p>4.2 Cyber Essentials - The College had been accredited with the Cyber Essentials Award. The Board recognised the significance of this award and congratulated the College on their achievement.</p> <p>4.3 EDI recruitment - Data was now collected and collated and the College took a number of steps to ensure the recruitment process was carried out fairly and without bias. Governors asked whether other measurable EDI objectives (EDIMS) are in place and were informed that they will be circulated at the next meeting as part of the College's Annual Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Action Plan. (Action 2)</p> <p>4.4 Spending Review - The Chancellor is expected to deliver an Autumn budget and three-year spending review on Wednesday 27 October. The College is not optimistic that there will be an increase in funding. There is no indication if the new minister is in favour of the new T-Levels and the College hoped that BTEC's would run alongside the T-levels when introduced. To gain a T-Levels qualification students must achieve a GCSE in English and Maths (grade 9-4) which will be challenging for many young people. The requirement to complete an industry placement will also be problematic for young people in locations where the availability of employers and businesses in particular T-level disciplines is limited. Many colleges have the same concerns regarding T-Levels and the Association of Colleges (AoC) is lobbying the case on behalf of colleges. The Principal will provide a risk and implications report in regard to T-Levels at the meeting in February. (Action 3)</p> <p>4.5 Attendance - Action to improve attendance for English and Maths lessons is being addressed, this included phone calls to students, parents, and the involvement of employers to promote the importance of the subjects. The initial concerns regarding 1200 students had been reduced to just over 400. Governors queried the likelihood of attendance improving to target levels (minimum of 80%). Management responded with optimism that 80% would be achieved.</p> <p>4.6 Covid - The College is working with Herts and Bedfordshire Public Health officials to promote vaccinations. The College is reporting a small number of positive cases and minimal disruption. .</p> <p>4.7 Tuition Funding – The College has over 3000 students who are eligible for funding. The plans for the £700k tuition will be implemented after half term.</p> <p>The Report received and noted.</p>

21/5	<p>Strategic Planning & Corporate Policies:</p> <p>5.1 Health & Safety Policy and Annual Report The Health and Safety (H&S) Report and Policy was circulated in advance of the meeting for the Board’s consideration. Internal and external Audits had given good assurance for the College’s management of H&S. Changes in the policy were highlighted and it was noted that aspects relating to covid had been retained. Employees are expected to be back at college for work but working from home is still an option for some roles across Business Support services. Equipment is provided where necessary. Students are expected to attend college in person.</p> <p>The Board noted that the report and its analysis was very helpful, in particular the benchmarking with other colleges, and suggested extending this to include incidents and accidents. The College is developing an Environmental Sustainability strategy which will be discussed in line with the Corporation Business Plan schedule. This will include data on energy usage. The College has a well-being strategy in place to help reduce the absences for anxiety and stress, this included Mental Health first aiders, referrals to occupational health and monitoring by HR. There have been no H&S issues at Barnfield College following an issue over the summer period when fire engines were unable to access aspects of the site. This was rectified immediately and regular meetings with the building contractor are now in place to continually monitor and sign-off health and safety matters.</p> <p>The Report was received and noted, and the H&S Policy was approved.</p> <p>5.2 Safeguarding Policy This was the statutory annual review of the policy which had been updated in line with the DfE’s ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ September 2021. The small number of changes were highlighted. The Safeguarding Policy was approved.</p> <p>5.3 Modern Slavery Statement The Modern Slavery Statement was approved.</p>
21/6	<p>Governance:</p> <p>6.1 This was an annual review of the regulatory documents. There had been no changes with the exception of a new Post 16 Audit Code of Practice which had been adopted by the Audit Committee. The regulatory documents and codes of practice were accepted and agreed.</p> <p>6.2 The Corporation’s committees and membership were agreed.</p> <p>6.3 The Corporation and Audit Committee Business Plans were agreed.</p> <p>6.4 Matt Luheshi was re-appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Governor</p>
21/7	<p>Monitoring:</p> <p>7.1 Student Enrolments & College Reach The College is currently slightly above their 16-18 enrolment target for 21/22. There is an increase in enrolments for Barnfield College for its 16-18 provision, in particular for level 3 qualifications. The College is working hard to ensure students are retained and eligible for funding. Students enrolling on Construction and Engineering courses has increased. Governors asked about the availability of teachers within ‘hard to fill’ areas and were informed that there is a shortage of teachers in engineering in the south east of England. The college is working with agencies, offering welcome packages, and linking up with universities to attract graduates. Delivery models across campuses and colleges is being considered. Governors queried the significance of the College’s HE provision given the level of decline in student numbers in recent years. It was confirmed that Higher Education (HE) provision is important in that it creates aspiration for other students and is positive in terms of income. The Report received and noted.</p> <p>7.2 Barnfield College Capital Project</p>

	<p>The report covered the 3 capital projects: Barnfield College Phase 1, Barnfield College Phase 2, and Hemel Hempstead Plot A. The CPSG group reported that all phases were going to plan and budget. Despite concerns about delivery of materials in the current climate the building contractors are on target for a timely completion and within budget.</p> <p>Barnfield College is fully operational, and completion of phase 1 of the build is expected for late May 2022. The application for Capital Transformation Funding has been submitted and if successful the College will receive 50% of the total cost. The level of funding applied for was queried. The College reported that remaining within the official guidance (50%) will increase the possibility of it being successful.</p> <p>The Report received and noted.</p>
21/8	<p>Governors Reports</p> <p>8.1 The Chair encouraged governors to resume their visits to college for learning walks and thanked those governors who had attended recent self-assessment reviews at college.</p>
21/9	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>Please see item 1.3.1</p>
21/10	<p>Date of next meeting – Wednesday 10 November 2021</p>

Minutes approved by the Corporation 10/11/21

Ref	Summary of Actions	Resp	Date
1	21/2.1 Last minutes confirmed for electronic signature	Clerk	wie
2	21/4.3 Measurable EDI objectives (EDIMS) would be circulated at the next meeting.	Principal	10/11/21
3	21/4.4 Risk and implications report in regard to T-Levels at the meeting in February.	Principal	09/02/22