

Corporation Board Meeting

Wednesday 11 May 2022

West Herts College - Watford

5pm – 7pm

MINUTES

Attendees: (v = virtual attendance)

| Governors | Role: | Other Attendees | Role |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Phil Thompson | General - Chair of Corporation | Gary Dixon | Deputy Principal West Herts |
| Gill Worgan | Principal & CEO | 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 | Anne-Marie Kinsella | Clerk to Corporation |
| Matt Luheshi (v) | Independent Governor | Emma Doree (17.00-17.25) | Director of Student Experience |
| Chris Nicholls | Independent Governor | | |
| Jason Smith | Independent Governor | Apologies | Role: |
| Ben Stapleton | Independent Governor | Sue Farnfield | Staff Governor |
| Paul Thompson (v) | Independent Governor | Heather Lunn | Student Governor |
| | | David York | Staff Governor |
| | | Guy Ainsley | Independent Governor |
| | | Jamie Robertson | Student Governor |

Ref Agenda Item

51/21 1.1 Apologies for absence and quoracy

- Apologies were noted and accepted, and the meeting was quorate.
- All reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting for the Board's consideration.
- The Chair asked that going forward virtual attendance at Corporation meetings should be by exception only and Governors were asked to send their apologies if unable to attend meetings in person.
- Item 5 would be taken as the first item to allow Emma Doree (ED) Director of Student Experience, to leave the meeting.

1.2 Declaration of pecuniary interests

There were no declarations to declare

1.3 Requests for urgent business

There were no requests for urgent business.

52/21 2.1 Minutes of the last meeting (9 March 2022)

2.1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were approved for electronic signature.

2.2 Actions from previous minutes

2.3 There were no outstanding actions.

2.4 Matters Arising not on the agenda

There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

53/21 3. Principal's Report

The College is performing well against the majority of key performance indicators. Cyber-security is still a key priority for the College.

T-Levels remain a concern due to the mandatory industry placements required. The College is deploying significant levels of resource to secure industry placement opportunities for students and to meet the target number set by the ESFA

(Education Skills Funding Agency). The College will commence its rollout of T-level qualifications from September 2022 with the introduction of the Education and Care qualification.

Rising costs continue to present financial pressures. In addition, some students have left their course to seek employment due to family financial pressures.

There has been an increase to the funding base rate, and there is now a requirement to add an additional 40 hours of learning to study programmes which has in turn reduced the level of new funds available to the College next year.

The College has been awarded capital funding from the latest allocation of the FE Capital Transformation Fund (FECTF) in support of the Barnfield College Phase 2 project.

The DfE appointed the Principal as an NLFE (National leader of Further Education) in February 2022. The NLFE post is not remunerated but the DfE provides colleges with an annual bursary of £10k.

The College is leading two collaborative bids for funding from the Strategic Development Fund (SDF); on behalf of Hertfordshire colleges and Southeast Midlands region.

Apprentice Jemma Crawley was awarded 2nd place in the finals of the Concept 2022 Hairdressing Professional competition. The Craft Guild of Chefs honoured the College with a Diploma for its work, events, and competitions, over many years in support of the Guild.

In response to Governors questions:

T-Levels:

The work placement requirement for T-Levels is 45 days, this is a big commitment for employers. The 45 days can be shared between two employers which also has its limitations. Students who do not complete 45 days' work placement will be awarded a statement of achievement and not a full qualification.

160 BTec qualifications are being withdrawn from 2024, this will have an impact on the College and students.

It is too early to know which T-Levels will be popular. The College recruitment target for the Education and Care T-level introduced September 2022 is thirty learners (15 Barnfield College; 15 West Herts College), the College has received twenty applications so far. Uptake numbers are low nationally. If the College does not meet its target the financial impact will be negligible.

Cyber-Security:

Cyber-security was discussed, the Corporation were updated on the outcome of the recent phishing exercise and its subsequent actions.

Capital Fund:

The Education Capital Transformation Fund allocation to the college is conditional upon the College satisfying one condition – this is not considered to be problematic, and a grant funding letter is anticipated.

Strategic Development Fund (SDF):

. If successful, the SDF bids will enable all colleges included in each bid to buy equipment that they may not have bought otherwise – focussing on priority skills areas.

Awards:

The Corporation congratulated the Principal on becoming a national leader, student Jemma Crawley for her award in Hairdressing and the recognition received by the Food Academy.

The report was noted.

54/21 4. Strategic Planning and Corporate Policies

4.1 Sale of Enterprise Way site: Offers received – Presentation - Confidential item - Please see part 2 of these minutes.

4.2 Sustainability: College Carbon Footprint

The College has pledged its support to The Association of Colleges Green College Commitment and will aim to reduce its carbon emissions over the coming years. The College is working with a specialist company that helps organisations measure its current carbon emissions, set targets, and identify initiatives that will deliver reductions.

The report includes an update on the College's baseline position and the initiatives that can be implemented to deliver a reduction in its carbon emissions. These will form part of the College's key policy decision-making and will be evaluated via the College's annual self-assessment process. A review of the Sustainability Policy and Progress reports will be provided to the Corporation on an annual basis.

The Governors commended the Principal on a clear and systematic policy. Some minor changes were made to the wording to accurately reflect what actions the College could realistically take while still managing the College effectively. The proposed initiatives were discussed. Governors appreciated that conscious and informed decisions would be made going forward and asked that value for money be considered as well. The Policy will be shared with staff and students. The Policy would not go on the College website but going forward the College's Carbon Footprint may need to be disclosed in the financial statements.

The report was noted.

55/21 5. Monitoring School & Department Presentation – Student Mental Health

This item was taken after item 2 and before item 3.

Emma Doree (ED), Director of Student Experience gave a presentation on Mental Health, The presentation included data from NHS digital and National Statistics on the national picture and the increase in the number of referrals for mental health since the pandemic. The presentation outlined the referrals received by the College's student support services, the interventions and actions taken to support students with a focus on helping them achieve and keeping them in education.

The College had received 819 referrals in comparison to 250 referrals pre-covid and 46.4% of all student support interventions have been mental health related. The highest proportion of mental health referrals are for anxiety. The majority of students are referred by teachers and there has been an increase of referrals from parents.

All student support advisors are trained mental health first aiders, both colleges are involved in Public Health England Mental Health Support and Just Talk Mental Health Ambassadors who work in partnership with Public Health England to support enrichment events promoting well-being.

In response to Governors questions ED explained that more females are accessing the support services than males. The data did not give a clear picture for ethnicity and the larger proportion of referrals came from students on courses in Forensic Science and Performing Arts.

Students could be Mental Health Ambassadors; it was not appropriate for students to be Mental Health First Aiders. The College has good working relationships with external agencies such as CAMHS but there are long waiting lists. The College focussed on early intervention to try and avoid crisis points. The College has adequate resources to support the increased number of referrals, additional staff have been employed. The Corporation thanked ED for her presentation, and she left the meeting at 17.25.

56/21 6. Quality of Education HE, Apprenticeships and Adult Provision

Tammy Nuthall (TN) Deputy Principal of Barnfield College presented the following information to the Corporation.

Apprenticeships:

The College is performing well against all of the ESFA indicators for apprenticeships. In December 2021 Ofsted judged the College's apprenticeship provision to be outstanding and post-pandemic attendance, retention and achievement rates are strong and exceeding pre-pandemic national rates. The College's internal auditors audited the College's apprenticeship provision in November 2021 and gave the assurance opinion as 'strong' with no recommendations.

The College was invited to reapply for approval as a registered apprenticeship training provider on the Register of Apprenticeship Providers (RoATP) in January 2022. The approval process is complex and time consuming. The College received notification in April that approved status has been awarded.

In response to Governors questions TN explained that marketing for Apprenticeship opportunities is being extended to the Luton and Bedford areas. Recruitment of teachers in some areas, such as plumbing was proving difficult. Together Training Ltd (the College's Joint Venture with Oaklands College) offers higher level apprenticeships across the professional services and the College offers vocational / occupational apprenticeships in line with the College's core provision to avoid duplication between the two organisations. . The retention of apprentices following electrical installation was noted as being lower than other apprenticeships- this was considered to be because of the 4-year programme and the fact that some apprentices change their circumstances and aspirations over this time.

Higher Education:

Currently, 292 students are enrolled across the College's higher education provision, the predicted achievement rates for academic year 2021/22 are strong.

As part of the Annual Self-Assessment process, the College will consider whether remote learning should be reinstated for some aspects of course and qualification delivery next academic year due to its popularity.

The College makes all Office of Students (OfS) returns timely and in line with all other requirements. Changes to the OfS regulatory framework came into effect from the 1st May 2022 and will be incorporated formally into the Colleges quality assurance processes as part of the Annual Self-Assessment process and ongoing in-year quality monitoring arrangements.

In response to Governors questions TN explained that The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is a national exercise, introduced by the government in England which aims to assess excellence in teaching at higher education providers and assess how they ensure excellent outcomes for their students in terms of graduate level employment or further study. Following the merger the College was assessed as Silver having previously been rated 'Gold' at West Herts College and Bronze at Barnfield College.

Adopting a blended learning model will only apply to HE learners as many universities are using this hybrid approach. It is not appropriate for younger learners aged 16-18 on further education courses as attending college is part of their learning and developmental process.

The report was noted.

57/21 7. Governance and Governors' Reports

7.1 Learning Walks; Visits and events feedback

ML gave the Corporation a brief summary of the recent Governors AoC Conference he attended which included:

- Presentation by an Ofsted Senior Inspector about good governance, ML thought this was a good model for the induction of new governors.
- The new requirement for an external review of Corporations every 3 years which has no formal/approved standard to follow.
- Mental Health which supported the presentation in item 5.
- EDI – Good practice examples from Milton Keynes and Solihull

7.2 Corporation Membership

7.2.1 End of Terms - Student Governors (16/06/22)

It was noted that the next meeting would be the last meeting for this years student governors. Elections for student governors for 2022-23 would be held in September.

7.2.2 End of Term – Phil Thompson (31/07/22)

PT declared that he would like to be reappointed for another term of office and to remain as Chair. This was noted by the Corporation to take forward to the next meeting.

The current membership was noted.

58/21 8. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business

59/21 9. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 8 June 2022 – Watford.

60/21 10.1 Finance Report – *Confidential item - Please see part 2 of these minutes.*

10.2 Budget 2022-23 – Income Allocations and Key Observations - *Confidential item - Please see part 2 of these minutes.*

Meeting closed: 18.43

Minutes approved by the Corporation on the 8 June 2022

| Ref | Summary of Actions | when |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|
| | There were no actions recorded for part 1 of the minutes. | |