

# Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

held on 30 November 2016

---

*Present* Leslie Williams (*Chair*), Joanne Williams (*Interim Principal*), Jane Chan, Karen Cocker, Mark Johnson, Helene Jones, Allison Matthews, Peter Mitchell, Monika Zilionyte, Jamie Fox (co-optee)

*In attendance* Jacque Carman (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*)  
Julia Stevens (*Organisational Development Director*)  
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

## 1 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Ian Jewkes, Geoffrey Elliott, and Harvey Owen.

## 2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

## 3 Minutes of Meeting held 9 November 2016, including Confidential Minutes, and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held 9 November, including the confidential minutes were approved as a true record.

Leslie Williams addressed the status of actions remaining under the Corporation minutes.

## 4 Governance

### 4.1 Search and Governance Committee Minutes of Meeting held 9 November 2016

The minutes of the Search and Governance Committee Special Meeting, held on 9 November 2016, were received.

#### 4.1.1 Recommendations on Appointments

Leslie Williams reported on the work of the Search and Governance Committee in meeting with prospective governors Jamie Fox and Shanelle Morgan. The Committee had recommended co-option of both candidates.

Jamie Fox introduced himself as Deputy Head, Acting Vice Principal of the Earls High School with particular experience in student achievement and improvement.

The Clerk explained that unfortunately Shanelle Morgan was unable to meet the current Corporation timetable of meetings.

**Action 4.1.1a** It was agreed that the Search and Governance consider the meeting structure going forward.

**The Corporation resolved to appoint Jamie Fox as a co-optee to Halesowen College Corporation, for one year commencing 30 November 2016, subject to meeting set eligibility criteria.**

## 4.2 Nominations and Elections of Office

Leslie Williams called for nominations for the role of Chair of Corporation.

Ian Jewkes was nominated by Helene Jones and seconded by Mark Johnson.

**The Corporation resolved to appoint Ian Jewkes as Chair of Halesowen College Corporation, commencing 1 January 2017.**

Leslie Williams called for nominations for the role of Vice Chair of Corporation.

Mark Johnson was nominated by Peter Mitchell and seconded by Karen Cocker.

Helene Jones was nominated by Leslie Williams and seconded by Jane Chan.

Members undertook a paper ballot.

**Following a majority of votes, the Corporation resolved to appoint Helene Jones as Vice Chair of Halesowen College Corporation, commencing 1 January 2017.**

Jane Chan spoke on behalf of members in recognising Leslie Williams' highly valued contribution as a governor and as Chair of the Corporation

## 5 Audit and Assurance

### 5.1 Minutes of the Audit and Assurance Committee

Peter Mitchell affirmed that the Audit and Assurance Committee had considered the reports provided in detail and received satisfactory answers to key questions asked.

The minutes of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting held 8 November 2016 were received.

### 5.2 Recommendations from the Audit and Assurance Committee

Jacquie Carman provided a presentation encompassing key reports addressing audit assurance prior to the signing of the Annual Members' Report and Financial Statements by the Chair and the Principal.

Members noted key points including the continued strong financial position of the College, the focus on public benefit, particularly objectives and targets, a clean audit opinion, accountability self-assessment and assurance in relation to internal control.

Jacque Carman highlighted that the Audit and Assurance Committee had discussed retirement benefits at length. The College like the sector had increased liability regarding retirement benefits and that while this was not a cash concern, it was an area for close risk monitoring.

The external auditors awaited the final letter of conciliation from the Skills Funding Agency, before the accounts would be lodged with both the funding agencies and Companies House.

Leslie Williams commended the very strong financial profile and assurance framework and noted that the recent Black Country Area Review had also provided assurance, in concluding that the College was a going concern and viable moving forward as an independent entity.

#### **5.2.1 Accountability Self-Assessment year ended 31 July 2016**

As recommended by the Audit and Assurance Committee this was received as part of the assurance framework.

#### **5.2.2 Summary of Assurance relating to Systems of Internal Control and Corporate Governance**

As recommended by the Audit and Assurance Committee this was received as part of the assurance framework.

#### **5.2.3 External Audit: RSM UK Audit Findings Report year ended 31 July 2016**

The External Audit Report with a clean audit opinion was considered as part of the suite of Audit and Assurance reports.

**The Corporation resolved to accept the RSM UK Audit LLP Halesowen College Audit Findings Report for Year Ended 31 July 2016 and the assurance therein**

**‘We consider that the audit and regularity assurance approach adopted will provide the Audit Committee with the required confidence that thorough and robust audit and regularity assurance engagements have been carried out.**

**Subject to the satisfactory clearance of our final audit queries, we can confirm that, at the date of this report, we anticipate no modifications from our proforma financial statement audit report or the regularity assurance report provided in the Audit Plan previously communicated to you.’**

#### 5.2.4 **Audit and Assurance Committee Annual Report year ended 31 July 2016**

The Clerk emphasised that the Audit and Assurance Committee Annual Report summarised the assurance provided and the work of the Committee across the year.

**The Corporation resolved that based on the review of the assurance mapping exercise together with the assurance presented to the Audit and Assurance Committee and Corporation throughout the year, to accept the Annual Report of the Audit and Assurance Committee 2015/16 and the opinion contained therein and forward this report to the Skills Funding Agency alongside the Annual Members' Report and Financial Statements 2015/2016.**

**The opinion contained therein being;**

**'For the period 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2016 the Audit and Assurance Committee is satisfied that the College's audit arrangements, governance framework\*, processes for risk management and control and processes for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness, the solvency of the institution and safeguarding of its assets were adequate and effective, and that there were no significant issues of concern.**

**The sources of assurance for the year are summarised in the paper 'Summary of Assurance relating to Systems of Internal Control and Corporate Governance' which was considered at the meeting held on 8 November 2016. The Committee is satisfied that the internal and external arrangements in place to manage and quality assure the data on which it relies throughout the Corporate Cycle of Business are effective.**

**The Audit and Assurance Committee is satisfied that there were no significant issues arising up to the date of the preparation of the Annual Report and that there were no significant matters of internal control included in the management letters or reports from auditors or other assurance providers.**

**The Audit and Assurance Committee has received the necessary assurance to advise the Corporation on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Colleges' assurance framework to support the signing of the Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control within the Annual Members' Report for the year ended 31 July 2016.'**

\* With reference to the scope of the adopted 'Code of Good Governance for English Colleges'.

#### 5.2.5 **Annual Members' Report and Financial Statements 2015/2016**

Jacque Carman in presenting the key reports drew particular attention to the Corporate Governance Statement.

In considering the College's financial strength Mark Johnson asked if the right balance regarding expenditure and reserves was being achieved. Jacque Carman explained the current basis of financial targets and the overarching approach underpinning confidence in the College and for capital development projects.

Mark Johnson felt that the College could reduce cash days in hand and still maintain an outstanding financial health rating. Leslie Williams responded that as the College had completed its major capital development plan, it was legitimate to debate strategy regarding investment in further improving teaching, learning and assessment. Joanne Williams noted that inspectors had provided assurance on the current level of resources provided.

Jamie Fox asked about comparable performance in the sector and the impact of further reduction in funding on Colleges. Jacquie Carman confirmed that Halesowen College performed very well in the sector where there was increasing focus on insolvency regimes. Jacquie Carman also highlighted that the College must continue to meet loan repayments and that there was an option to consider earlier repayment.

Leslie Williams proposed that the Strategic Planning Residential in January 2017 would be the appropriate place for such debate on financial strategy.

**The Corporation resolved to approve the Annual Members Report and Financial Statements 2015/2016 and that the statement of the College's regularity, propriety and compliance with the funding body terms and conditions of funding be signed by the Chair and the Principal.**

#### **5.2.6 Halesowen College Enterprises Ltd Directors Report and Financial Statements 2015/16**

Members received the accounts for the wholly owned College Company which had also been consolidated into the College accounts.

**The Corporation resolved to approve the Halesowen College Enterprises Limited Directors Report and Financial Statements 2015/16.**

#### **5.2.7 Review of Risk Action Plan 2016-2017**

Jacquie Carman summarised the Risk Action Plan Update, particularly the work done to increase safeguarding awareness and new procedures, in addition to work on information systems for the tracking and monitoring of students.

The Audit and Assurance Committee would continue to monitor the plan.

### **6 Strategic Overview**

#### **6.1 College Self-Assessment Report and Development Plan**

Joanne Williams provided a presentation for members to highlight the key points of the Self-Assessment Report.

The report was more evaluative and illustrated that a strong position had been maintained, with clear improvements made and some areas for development. Overall effectiveness was a Grade 2.

Joanne Williams provided detail underpinning the judgements made on curriculum areas, particularly where these had changed from the previous year.

Members noted the changed approach to reporting, focusing on evidence to support why the College was self assessed as good and what the College needed to do to become outstanding. Members also noted that it continued to be difficult to achieve outstanding.

Key points noted included year on year improvement in success rates, good outcomes, high retention and good progression and student satisfaction. Student support, advice and guidance and student safety were also good.

It was also noted that English and Mathematics provision was being maintained under very challenging circumstances.

Joanne Williams emphasised four areas of focus for improvement which included high grades and value added for A level students, increased external work placements, a review of high needs provision in light of student number increases and continued improvement on English and Mathematics.

Next Steps were also outlined and encompassed the Development Plan being in place in December 2016, continued use of subjects under notice and intervention panels and performance management.

Jamie Fox asked about triangulation and Joanne Williams confirmed the involvement of external specialists and a rounded view being taken.

Jane Chan asked for clarification on achievement rates and Jacquie Carman explained that this encompassed all qualifications and therefore a range of different pass/fail measures. Jacquie Carman also outlined what a 16-18 study plan incorporated and that the College was introducing additional value added measures to address deprivation and high needs.

**Action 6.1a It was agreed that provision of more detail about grades for pass and fail and value added would enhance governor understanding.**

Jamie Fox asked about high level achievement in relation to students with prior high grade attainment. Joanne Williams responded that value added remained inconsistent, with more work being done to support students at the higher grade level. The impact of qualification changes was noted.

Jamie Fox asked about any identified gaps relating to gender or ethnicity. Jacquie Carman reported that there were no identified cross college gaps, however, there were some individual subjects that were being reviewed. Additionally a new set of early warning indicators were being developed for September 2017.

Mark Johnson asked if there was an underlying reason for the large increase in students with high needs enrolling at the College. Joanne Williams responded that there was a general increase in students with high needs, noting increased challenges.

**The Corporation resolved to adopt the College Self Assessment Report and that this be used to inform the Development Plan for 2016-2017.**

## 6.2 Curriculum Target Setting 2016-2017

Joanne Williams explained changes to terminology for qualification success rates and highlighted the need and the challenges for continuous improvement.

Proposed success, retention and achievement rate targets provided small but measured improvement on the previous year.

**The Corporation resolved to set the overall College success rate target for 2016/17 at 89.1% comprising a retention rate of 94.4% and achievement of 94.4%.**

## 6.3 Investment and Property – Estates Plan 2016/17

Joanne Williams outlined for members proposals for the extension of Block 8 student social space and the redevelopment of the Whittingham Road frontage. Both proposals responded to student voice regarding social and quiet study space and wider community concerns.

Members considered drawings identifying the extension to Block 8 which would not compromise the valued open courtyard space. Initial costs were provided. However, with a tender exercise and planning application considerations, timeliness of completion was a noted risk.

Monika Zilionyte commended the proposals to extend Block 8 social space noting the importance of Munch for new students settling into College and making friends.

*(Jane Chan left the meeting)*

Development of the Whittingham Road frontage, which included proposals for improved student access, student hub and relocation of a visitor reception were considered.

Leslie Williams commented on the benefits in identifying a main entrance to the College and Monika Zilionyte noted that site access from Car Park A was a more attractive entrance for visitors.

It was agreed that draft plans could be shared with local stakeholders.

*(Mark Johnson left the meeting)*

**The Corporation resolved that the College engage in an initial dialogue with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council regarding traffic, highways and planning issues, following which an indicative budget could be established for the preferred option to be reported at the January residential.**

**The Corporation further approved that the College proceed with the plans for Block 8 producing tender issue drawings to conduct a competitive tender exercise and commence a dialogue with planners.**

## **6.4 AoC English and Maths – Strategy and Monitoring**

Members agreed that following recent updates on progress in meeting the challenges in addressing English and Maths GCSE, this remained a priority for the College. The Corporation would therefore continue to receive monthly updates.

## **6.5 Leaders in Diversity**

Julia Stevens reported on the awards ceremony held by the National Centre for Diversity. The College was awarded West Midlands FE Provider of the year 2016. Halesowen College was fifth in the country and the third most improved College.

Members commended and congratulated Julia Stevens and the College on such positive work.

## **7 Monthly Performance Information**

### **7.1 Finance**

The monthly performance monitoring data, inclusive of the RAG rating assessment, accounts, dashboard data and SFA Assessment confirming an outstanding grade for Financial Health was received.

### **7.2 Students, Teaching and Learning**

Student applications monitoring for 2016/17 and 2017/18 was received.

### **7.3 Accommodation**

Members noted that the refurbishment of Block 3 remained on schedule.

## **8 Students, Teaching and Learning**

### **8.1 Student Charter Report**

Julia Stevens highlighted key points arising from the Student Charter Report, addressing responses of students, parents and guardians, covering entry to College and the first period on programme of study.

Members noted that the College was importantly judged to be a safe place.

Leslie Williams noted that the coach service had received a lower rating and Joanne Williams responded that this was being reviewed.

With regards to progression to Higher Education, it was notable that Creative Media was joint first place with Nursing as the most popular courses and that Leicester De Montford University had become the fifth most popular destination.

The report was received.

## **8.2 HEFCE Assurance Report**

Joanne Williams reported that while the College had always undertaken evaluation of HE provision and that each course had an external examiner certifying that standards were being met, it was now a requirement to provide an annual assurance report to the Corporation, as part of the new Annual Provider Review Process.

Joanne Williams reported on key trends and developments, with further use of student voice and development of the Teaching Excellence Framework highlighted.

The Corporation received the report and action plan which indicated that standards had been appropriately maintained.

## **9 Finance Reports**

### **9.1 Review of Revenue Budget 2015/2016**

Jacque Carman referred members to the changes in the financial health evaluation methodology and that the College remained outstanding.

Key risks to the budget were reported. The position indicated a slightly reduced level of surplus. However, the College remained on schedule to achieve its targets and outcomes.

**The Corporation resolved to approve the second budget review noting the key risk factors to the indicative 2016/17 budget profile.**

## **10 Any Other Business**

### **Principal Recruitment**

Leslie Williams reported that due to unforeseen circumstances the process had been postponed.

## **11 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Corporation is scheduled for 13 January 2017.

Closed: 8.25pm

Actions from meetings			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Date/item for review	Reported by
<b>Corporation Meeting 23 March 2016</b>			
10.3a	<b>Budgeting Policy</b> It was agreed that a key review report would be provided for the Corporation in August or September 2016.  Revised date.	Aug/Sept 2016  30 Nov 2016	JCa
<b>Corporation Meeting 28 September 2016</b>			
8.1	<b>Report from Faculty Director - A Level Director, Louise Craddock</b>	Sept 2017	JWi
8.1a	Joanne Williams agreed that results to be provided by Faculty Area would provide a different view.		
5.7	<b>External Review and Corporation Residential Planning</b>	Jan 2017	LW/IJ
5.7a	The Corporation noted the areas for consideration to be developed into an itinerary and agenda for the Corporation Strategic Planning Residential, as scheduled for 13 and 14 January 2017.		
5.10	<b>West Midlands Combined Authority – Adult Education Funding</b>	Jan 2017	JWi
5.10a	Leslie Williams responded that while it was too soon to take an assessment of risk it was appropriate to consider any information arising and draw out options at the Corporation Residential in January 2017.		
<b>Corporation Meeting 9 November 2016</b>			
6.3	<b>Staff and Accommodation</b>		
6.3a	It was agreed that summary evaluation of teaching room assessments would be provided as part of the Estates Plan for the Corporation meeting on 30 December 2016.	30 Nov 2016	JCa
<b>Corporation Meeting 30 November 2016</b>			
4.1	<b>Recommendations on Appointments</b>	9 Feb 2017	JSu
4.1.1a	It was agreed that the Search and Governance consider the meeting structure going forward.		
6.1	<b>College Self-Assessment Report and Development Plan</b>	?	JWi
	It was agreed that more detail about grades for pass and fail and value added would enhance governor understanding.		