

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

held on 26 April 2017

Present Ian Jewkes (*Chair*), Helene Jones (*Vice Chair*), Joanne Williams (*Interim Principal*), Karen Cocker, Peter Coley, Jamie Fox, Mark Johnson, Allison Matthews

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

Staff governor Allison Matthews reported to governors on the successful trip of A Level History students to Washington DC. The students were great ambassadors for the College and had enjoyed a range of visits and activities, which were directly relevant to their curriculum in American history. It was noted that History was a high performing A Level as reflected in the teaching and extension activities.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Jane Chan and Geoffrey Elliott.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Corporation Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 30 March 2017, including Confidential Minute, and Matters Arising

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held 30 March 2017, including the confidential minute of item 4.1 addressing the Principal's contract and salary, were approved as a correct record.

With regards to item 11.1 of the minutes, West Midlands Pension Fund, members noted the letter from the service confirming revised contribution rates.

Under matters arising the Clerk reported that all actions for address scheduled for the meeting had been placed on the agenda.

4 Governance

4.1 External Review Report

Dan Grant reported across three outcome areas from the review of governance. These addressed headlines of strengths and areas to improve, a Good to Outstanding Action Plan and a draft format for quantitative data performance review.

Dan Grant noted that overall the Corporation was working effectively. Many governance strengths were identified including good attention to training and development of governors, sensitivity to values and culture of the College and keen drive to ensure best outcomes for students.

Areas for further attention included use of a dashboard, for ease in monitoring key performance areas, clarity from members on how staff should present information and governor attendance. Support from staff was recognised and governors were committed in pursuit for the College to be outstanding. Governors also discussed attendance and noted actions in place to support this.

Ian Jewkes asked how the new Good to Outstanding Action Plan would fit with the current College Development Plan. It was noted that the goal was to create a revised and ambitious overall Quality Improvement Plan. It was also agreed that swift action on the Good to Outstanding Action Plan and identified areas for governance improvement would be undertaken.

Dan Grant left the meeting.

4.2 Development Proposals for 2017/2018

The Clerk outlined a number of proposals to adjust the Corporation meeting structure. Members discussed the proposal to vary meeting days, meeting times for Audit and Assurance Committee and timing of meetings per calendar month.

The Corporation resolved

- **that Corporation meetings remain scheduled as close to calendar month end as practical.**
- **that Corporation meetings alternate between Tuesdays and Wednesdays for the 2017/2018 calendar.**
- **that Audit and Assurance Committee meetings be scheduled as evening meetings for the first two meetings of the 2017/2018 calendar.**

4.3 Calendar of Meetings and Cycle of Business

Action 4.3a Following discussion of proposals regarding Corporation meeting patterns, it was agreed that the draft Calendar provided be revised and returned to the May meeting of the Corporation.

4.4 Education and Skills Funding Agency - Letter from Peter Lauener

A letter sent to Principals and Chairs from Peter Lauener, in his capacity as Accounting Officer of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), had been provided for all governors. The letter shared key messages on financial management and governance of Colleges.

Jacque Carman explained that she would revise the current reporting on compliance provided for members to incorporate a response to the findings.

Mark Johnson noted the continued emphasis on value for money, and Jacque Carman expanded on Value for Money and Regularity as key to expenditure of funding as required. Members further discussed their accountability in financial management.

5 Audit and Assurance Committee

5.1 Minutes of the Audit and Assurance Committee 7 March 2017

The minutes of the Audit and Assurance Committee held on 7 March 2017 were received.

Mark Johnson outlined the work of the Committee and the satisfaction received from auditors.

5.2 Risk Management Mid-Year Update 2016/2017

Mark Johnson spoke to the comprehensive mid-year review of risk, as considered by the Audit and Assurance Committee and provided for all members for information.

In response to questions from Ian Jewkes, Jacque Carman explained the basis whereby risks became high scoring and outside the risk appetite and their subsequent management.

Karen Cocker asked about taxation under risk 2.2 acting within relevant company, taxation and pension and charities law. Jacque Carman responded that work had been done, including a briefing from the payroll provider.

The report was received.

6 Strategic Overview

6.1 Principal's Appointment/Commencement

Joanne Williams confirmed that David Williams had accepted the appointment and would commence as Principal on 1 July 2017.

6.2 Student Applications Update

Members noted that student applications remained similar overall, with variation on course totals. There remained uncertainties on Apprenticeships, however, the College had done all that it could at the current time.

Action 6.2a The College approach to marketing was discussed with members agreeing that a more proactive marketing strategy should be developed.

6.3 Multi Academy Trust Update

Joanne Williams reported that progress on the Stour Vale Trust was being made. Members considered the impact of Multi Academy Trusts on student applications and noted that the school student liaison strategy would be reviewed.

Jamie Fox and Peter Coley asked about the promotion of vocational qualifications as offered by the College and not provided through schools. There was concern for students being pushed towards A levels, remaining ignorant of the wider course offer from Colleges.

6.4 Shared Services Update

Members were provided with assurance regarding Corporation permission being required, prior to any further expansion of the South Black Country Education Limited (SBCE) taking place.

Members received the paper 'Transfer of Staff to SBCE'.

Mark Johnson noted that there was an audit of shared services scheduled for summer 2017.

The Corporation resolved to agree that Halesowen College continue to collaborate with King Edward VI College via South Black Country Education Limited (SBCE) for the current shared services and that the Director of Finance and Corporate Services explore with legal advisors and external audit, options for using Halesowen College Enterprises Limited as the employer for new starters in business support roles and/or sessional/casual staff.

6.5 Accommodation and Capital Programme

Members considered the report from PMP Consultants Ltd regarding tenders for capital programme work. The detailed breakdown giving additional assurance was provided with scoring across four key criteria.

Members noted the recommendation to approach the developments as three pieces of work and that the development of the College frontage awaited planning consent.

Karen Cocker asked about potential slippage and members acknowledged the challenging timescales. Ian Jewkes asked about the impact on students. Jacquie Carman responded that the College would work with the construction companies

to manage the process so that building work should not be detrimental to students.

The Corporation resolved that as planning consent has been received, Fuselek be appointed as the preferred contractors and an order be placed for the work to College Blocks 1 and 8.

The Corporation further resolved that Novus be appointed as the preferred contractor for College frontage works, with an order to be placed on securing planning consent.

6.6 Development Plan Progress Report

Joanne Williams updated members on positive progress made to the current year's Development Plan particularly focusing on English and Maths GCSEs, embedding Equality and Diversity in lessons and the further development of work experience. Joanne Williams also drew attention to student tracking and monitoring, the lesson observation profile and work to embed British Values and Prevent.

In response to actions to improve attendance, Ian Jewkes asked about College and national target comparisons. Joanne Williams confirmed that student attendance should be 90% and that this remained challenging. Actions included an attendance award and appointment of a mental health worker going forward.

Ian Jewkes suggested that the College could identify casual absence. Jacquie Carman responded that data could be split into whole day and single lesson absence.

6.7 Strategic Plan Update

Joanne Williams drew attention to apprenticeship development regarding entry to the Register of Apprenticeships and Training Providers and preparation for Ofsted Inspection.

6.8 Health and Social Care Update

Members received an update on progress made in Health and Social Care, which included photographs of a successful visit by an Entry Level group of students to a care home. The students, for whom English is a second language, were a credit to the College, resulting in the care home now wishing to do more work with the College.

6.9 Association of Colleges Membership

Following discussion with the West Midlands Regional Office the College was in position to join the Association of Colleges.

The Corporation resolved that Halesowen College join the Association of Colleges.

Allison Matthews left the meeting.

7 Monthly Performance Information

7.1 Finance

The finance data for monitoring was received.

7.2 Student Applications, Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Joanne Williams reported on additional English and Maths tuition over the Easter vacation.

Members noted the continued challenges of large numbers of students sitting GCSE exams over a three day period, which included meeting the needs of an increasing volume of students requiring special arrangements.

7.3 Staffing and Accommodation

Joanne Williams reported that there were no key trends in staff absence rates.

8 Students, Teaching, Learning and Assessment

8.1 Quality Strategy and Policy

The revised Quality Strategy and Quality Policy provided assurance on the College approach. However, given the rapid pace of curriculum developments, these would be returned to members to address further changes including Apprenticeships.

The Corporation resolved to approve the revised Quality Strategy 2017 and the Quality Policy (QT0004) as dated April 2017.

8.2 Halesowen College Digital Strategy

Jacque Carman explained that the Digital Strategy focused on learning and teaching and the infrastructure this needed. The plan addressed five key ambitions, each with an action plan with anticipated impact on learners.

Mark Johnson asked about the speed of obsolescence. Jacque Carman outlined the hardware and software replacement programme timescales and that the College invested every year in equipment.

Karen Cocker asked about responsibility for the Digital Strategy. Jacque Carman explained that she chaired the cross College digital group, with minutes provided for the Senior Management Team, to monitor and ensure that the strategy was being delivered.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Halesowen College Digital Strategy 2017 Quality Policy (QT0004).

8.3 Apprenticeships Update

Jacque Carman reported that the College remained positive that it would be included onto the Register of Apprenticeships and Training Providers. If successful a rapid response would be required to address resources and capacity. However, the College still required a contract with the funding agency for delivery to non-levy payers. Contracts were being continued until December 2017.

Ian Jewkes sought assurance that contingency arrangements were being considered. Jacque Carman responded that the College contingency planning including resubmission to the Register of Apprenticeships and Training Providers and alternative arrangements, such as subcontracting with another College.

The update was received.

9 Finance Reports

9.1 Budgeting Planning Scenarios

Jacque Carman presented the best and worst case scenarios for budget planning for 2017/18, considering both certainties and uncertainties under budget headings.

The worst case scenario could see the College slip from an outstanding to good financial health rating.

The scenario planning was noted and the budget would be produced in accordance with policy and procedure.

9.2 Review of Revenue Budget 2016/2017

The third review of the current budget provided a similar picture with the College in line to realise financial targets and maintain outstanding financial health.

The budget reflected changes around Free FE meals income and expenditure, partner university new funding tariffs and the Local Government Pension Scheme.

College coach costs had increased and this was being addressed.

Ian Jewkes asked about staff travel costs. Members noted that car mileage claims would increase in relation to delivery of Apprenticeships.

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

9.3 Insolvency Update

Jacque Carman explained the basis for an insolvency regime for Colleges under the Technical and Further Education Bill. The framework aimed to protect students in a financially failing College. Although the College remained financially outstanding, members were informed that the insolvency regime has impacted

more generally on FE in the way that the sector is viewed externally. A response had been included in the College Risk Register.

The Clerk highlighted the perceived impact on governor liability.

The Corporation noted the report and potential impact on the College and Corporation members.

10 Policy Review

10.1 Recognition of Prior Learning

Julia Stevens introduced a new procedure that would recognise student prior learning, assisting with identification, evidencing and accrediting. The procedure addressed responsibilities, staff development needs and robust assessment.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Halesowen College Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure dated March 2017.

10.2 Revision of Learning Support Policy

Julia Stevens introduced the Additional Learning Support Policy incorporating the Additional Learning Support Procedures.

Ian Jewkes noted the importance of dealing with student needs fairly and transparently. Student support needs were recognised as very emotive.

Karen Cocker asked if the College was challenged on the provision of support. Julia Stevens responded that the Education Health Care Plans were very clear about entitlement. The College was often asked to provide evidence where students were challenging the Education Authority.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Additional Learning Support Policy dated March 2017.

10.3 Revision of Freedom of Speech Policy

A significant revision of the Freedom of Speech Policy had been undertaken to achieve balance between legislation, respect and protection of students in an inclusive College.

Mark Johnson asked for and was given clarification on the Principal's authority regarding invited speakers and complaints. The majority of visiting speakers came directly through the curriculum.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Halesowen College Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (QC0008) dated March 2017.

10.4 Domestic Abuse Policy

Members considered the new policy provided to comprehensively address staff affected by domestic abuse, if disclosed in the workplace.

Staff development and awareness training would be provided as part of the College Safeguarding Suite, which would be open to governors.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Halesowen College Domestic Abuse Policy.

11 Any Other Business

- Peter Coley was assured that the previously reported safeguarding incident had been fully checked and that the student was happy going forward.
- Mark Johnson was assured that the Audit and Assurance Committee arrangements for membership and quorum would be considered under review of the Committee Terms of Reference.
- The Clerk provided invites from Sarah Dobson on behalf of students, to Mayfly 2017. The event being held on the afternoon and evening of 19 May 2017 was being organised by second year music students as part of their Major Music Project and included participation from other subject areas.

12 Date of Next Meeting

The Clerk confirmed that the next meeting of the Corporation was as scheduled on Wednesday 24 May 2017.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Actions from Meetings			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Date/item for review	Reported by
Corporation Meeting 28 September 2016			
8.1 8.1a	Report from Faculty Director - A Level Director , Louise Craddock Joanne Williams agreed that results to be provided by Faculty Area would provide a different view.	Sept 2017 ongoing	JWi
Corporation Meeting 30 November 2016			
6.1a	College Self-Assessment Report and Development Plan It was agreed that more detail about grades for pass and fail and value added would enhance governor understanding.	2018	JWi
Corporation Meeting 1 March 2017			
6.2.1 6.2.1a	Annual Provider Review Preliminary Assessment The final outcome of the HEFCE Annual Provider Review following moderation would be provided for governors.	May 2017	JWi
6.3 6.3a	Review of the Post Inspection Action Plan It was suggested that future updates RAG rate intended outcomes as achieved, in progress or not yet done.	May 2017	JWi
8.1 8.1a	Department for Education League Tables It was agreed that Jacquie Carman would adapt the table to include internal performance data for comparison.	May 2017	JCa
9.3 9.3a	West Midlands Superannuation Scheme The Corporation noted the position and the risks with the West Midlands Superannuation Scheme and approved that the Principal and Director of Finance and Corporate Services explore alternatives for future Corporation consideration.	July 2017	JWi/JCa
Corporation Meeting 30 March 2017			
7.6 7.6a	Labour Market Trends and Initiatives Ian Jewkes asked that the report recommendations from Labour Market Trends and Initiatives be drawn into an action plan.	May 2017	JWi/JCa
Corporation Meeting 26 April 2017			
4.3 4.3a	Calendar of Meetings and Cycle of Business Following discussion of proposals regarding Corporation meeting patterns it was agreed that the draft Calendar provided be revised and returned to the May meeting of the Corporation.	May 2017	JSu
6.2 6.2a	Student Applications Update The College approach to marketing was discussed with members agreeing that a more proactive marketing strategy should be developed.	August 2017	JWi