

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

held on 26 September 2017

Present Ian Jewkes (*Chair*), Helene Jones (*Vice Chair*), David Williams (*Principal*), Amanda Allen, Elaine Cammies, Karen Cocker, Peter Coley, Kiran Dior

In attendance Joanne Williams (*Director of Learning and Teaching*)
Jacquie Carman (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*)
Jonathan Priest (*Information and Infrastructure Director*)
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

Helene Jones took the Chair.

It was agreed that agenda item 8.1 Student Success Rates would be taken as the first substantive item.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Jamie Fox, Mark Johnson and Louise Jones.

2 Declarations of Interest

All staff present declared their interest in agenda item 6.7, Review of Pay.

3 Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 28 June 2017, including Confidential Minute and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held 28 June 2017, including the confidential minute, were approved as a correct record.

8.1 Student Success Rates 2016/2017

Jonathan Priest provided a comprehensive report on the College achievement data for 2016/2017, comparable with previous years and with National Achievement Rate Tables.

The College had exceeded targets for the three headline measures of Achievement, Retention and Pass Rates, showing a three year improvement trend.

Jonathan Priest highlighted that Level 2 course data was particularly strong in comparison with similar providers and that while improving, Level 3 courses for 16-18 year olds was slightly below benchmark.

David Williams cautioned on the complexity in comparing data against other providers due to a wide range of variables, therefore it was important to look underneath the data for greater understanding of performance.

Headline data on gender, ethnicity, equal opportunities, divisions, exam resits and AS Level performance was also considered.

Ian Jewkes joined the meeting.

Governors asked a range of questions about retention across all qualifications and areas for improvement and if there were any trends arising from analysis, particularly for disadvantaged students. Jacquie Carman confirmed that there were no achievement gaps regarding students where English was not their first language, that students in receipt of free meals had achieved slightly better performance and that performance of students with Education and Health Care Plans, which were spread across all curriculum areas, was within 2% of the overall rate. David Williams emphasised that the achievement levels of highest needs learners was testament to the diligence of College staff.

Members further considered achievement by divisional breakdown and AS Level Performance, focusing on course areas underperforming and subsequent management action that had been taken. Some excellent AS Level performance was noted. Some courses had subsequently been removed for 2017/2018 with alternative pathways offered to students.

David Williams explained that it was timely for broader consultation and research regarding the value and practicality of AS Levels as linear A Levels came on line.

Karen Cocker asked about subject performance dips on overall College data.

Kiran Dior asked about AS Level pass rates and progression onto second year A Level courses. Joanne Williams explained that where students had achieved an E grade it was probable that they would have progressed to an alternative course.

Joanne Williams also responded that detail on value added performance and the student journey would be more clearly presented in the forthcoming College Self-Assessment Report for 2016-2017.

The reports on achievement were received.

Jonathan Priest left the meeting.

Ian Jewkes resumed the Chair.

4 Governance

4.1 Search and Governance Committee Minutes, 12 September 2017

The minutes of the Search and Governance Committee held 12 September 2017 were received.

The Clerk highlighted that the Committee was addressing multiple applications from prospective governors whilst continuing to search for particular key skills

and experience. Members noted that a skills review would be forthcoming, to ensure information remained up to date.

Governor roles and links were also being considered, with a report to be returned.

The Clerk highlighted that the Corporation Self-Assessment Report had been provided for Joanne Williams as part of the whole College self-assessment process.

4.1.1 Search and Governance Committee Annual Report

The Search and Governance Committee Annual Report was provided for members as an overview of the efficacy of the Committee.

The Clerk reported that the breadth of search mechanisms had been expanded and continued to be developed.

The Committee had discussed the current Board model with no current change proposed. However, as governor attendance had also been raised during inspection, further consideration of the governance model could be appropriate.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Search and Governance Committee Annual Report, including Attendance.

4.1.2 Assurance Report on the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges

The Clerk explained that the overview of the evidence base, against the factors of the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges, was provided for assurance.

The Corporation accepted the Assurance Report on the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges as evidence of compliance, prior to the approval of the Annual Members' Report.

4.2 Review of Confidential File

The Clerk reported on the updated list of documents retained, with one item listed for release.

Jacque Carman indicated that under the new General Data Protection Regulations the approach taken for retention of confidential items may require review.

Action 4.2a The Clerk agreed that following research, changes to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations as they will come into force in 2018, would be addressed and reported as appropriate.

The Corporation reviewed the additions to the Confidential file as listed and agreed to the release of items as deemed appropriate.

4.3 Good to Outstanding Plan

Joanne Williams reported on taking forward actions within the plan, many of which focused on opportunities for governor participation. A 'Save the Date' leaflet was provided for governors which included many key dates and activities across the 2017/2018 calendar. Governors would need to respond to activities in which they could participate.

Peter Coley noted the importance of value added and how to move forward in motivating students to aspire and achieve higher grades.

Action 4.3a

The following actions were consolidated. That:

- proposals on Governors awards for students and staff would be provided by the College Executive.
- Value Added training would be provided for governors at the November 2017 meeting of the Corporation.
- a governor focus group could be provided for Student Survey feedback.
- governors would be invited to attend a session on initial advice and guidance in November 2017.

5 Audit and Assurance Committee

5.1 Audit and Assurance Committee Minutes of the Meeting held 22 August 2017

The minutes of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting held 22 August 2017 were received.

5.2 Risk Management Report

Jacque Carman highlighted the key strategic risks as considered by the Audit and Assurance Committee. Members recognised that there were also associated opportunities, such as the growth of Apprenticeships. The risk appetite remained balanced overall with some areas weighted as keen.

The mechanism for measuring risk, with likelihood and impact considered, was outlined and governors understood that the register would be subjected to termly review.

Ian Jewkes asked why Accommodation and Environmental had keen risk appetites. Jacque Carman responded that while the Campus provided a good environment there was work to be done to address the balance and mix of space and carbon. The Property Strategy would be further considered at the Corporation residential.

Amanda Allen sought clarification on adult student funding and on action to address risk against falling adult student numbers. Jacque Carman explained the current contract for classroom based learning and how course funding varied by level across the 19+ and 24+ cohorts, including the impact of the withdrawal of funding for some key courses such as the bursary for Nursing. The College wished to avoid a reduction in contract for 2018/2019. David Williams noted

that once the current intake was settled, work on options to recruit to the right in-year courses could be addressed.

On recommendation of the Audit and Assurance Committee the Corporation approved the Risk Management Report, highlighting the executive summary, accepting the identified net risks outside the risk appetite, which includes six risks rated as amber, and approval of the Risk Action Plan 2017/2018.

5.3 Revised Audit and Assurance Plan

Jacque Carman outlined the planned activity across internal auditors and external consultants to provide additional levels of assurance.

The agreed plan had been reviewed by the Audit and Assurance Committee, with any emerging issues raised.

On recommendation of the Audit and Assurance Committee the Corporation approved that the Audit and Assurance Plan 2017/2018 be finalised on the basis provided.

6 Strategic Overview

6.1 Principal's Update

David Williams reported on activities and actions taken since commencing as Principal.

A wide range of meetings including students, staff, Further and Higher Education providers and key agencies had been attended.

Management structure changes had been undertaken in addition to changes to some quality improvement reporting to show in-year performance.

A new post, that of Director of Learner Services was being advertised for and would address areas of Learning Support, Education Health Care Plans, Learning Resource Centres and Safeguarding.

Apprenticeship development both through levy paying organisations and application to deliver apprenticeships to non-levy paying companies was noted.

Changes to the apprenticeship team were being undertaken, in order to develop sales/assessor roles, to grow and manage individual caseloads.

David Williams also updated members; that the launch of T Levels was delayed, that there were changes to the way that retention was calculated as part of the lagged funding formula and that the requirement to re-sit English and maths as part of a study programme remained a requirement for those students with a grade D or 3.

The report was received.

6.2 Ofsted Inspection September 2017

David Williams explained the context and process for the recent full inspection undertaken by Ofsted. While the timing of the visit was very early in the academic year, the College was fortunate to be able to provide accurate data to support performance outcomes.

The inspection outcomes shared with the College indicated that key strengths outweighed areas for improvement. Outcomes would be provided in full through the formal report to be published.

David Williams formally thanked all staff for their responsiveness in evidencing good teaching and learning across the College. Special thanks was awarded to Joanne Williams as the nominee, Jacquie Carman, Julia Stevens and Jonathan Priest.

Ian Jewkes, extended the thanks of the Corporation and particularly noted that the students were a credit to the College.

Learner outcomes and experience proved that the College was working well for learners. In looking forward, David Williams emphasised that the work undertaken over the previous year had provided a solid platform to address the next three year cycle.

The report was received.

6.3 Provider Financial Review 2017

David Williams reported that the outcome of the funding audit undertaken would be an unqualified audit opinion with no causes for concern and thanked Jacquie Carman.

Jacquie Carman noted the rigour of the audit with the outcome supporting signing of the Annual Members' Report and Financial Statements in November 2017.

6.4 Annual Plan 2017/2018

The published Annual Plan 2017 was provided for members.

It was noted that some targets would be addressed through the appraisals process.

6.5 Student Recruitment 2017/18

David Williams reported that the current recruitment position was positive in comparison with the previous year and remained subject to the period of settlement in an increasingly competitive environment.

A Level and general 16-18 enrolment had increased, whereas fewer adults had been recruited. David Williams noted that there remained an adult skills gap in the region, but that changes to funding made it more difficult to take up courses.

Opportunities for adults were now predominantly through apprenticeships.

Ian Jewkes asked if the current College accommodation met need, and Jacquie Carman responded that the appropriateness of accommodation would need to be addressed in a review of the Accommodation Strategy.

6.6 External Review and Corporation Residential Planning

Members considered an outline of key areas proposed for consideration at the Corporation Residential and suggested some additional areas of focus around both governor training and the College's direction of travel.

Members discussed how student work experience was addressed.

Action 6.6a It was agreed that a report consolidating planning for the residential be returned to the October meeting of the Corporation.

6.7 Review of Pay 2017/18

In considering the Association of Colleges pay recommendation, the College position and a review of other College information, members discussed a pay award for 2017/2018.

Members discussed the Mutual Dividend Payment Scheme as previously deployed.

Amanda Allen asked questions about the College's comparative salary levels, financial position regarding surplus, affordability and the current budget, in addition to retaining staff and staff morale. Jacquie Carman answered questions regarding current pay costs and affordability for a proposed pay increase and noted the planned review of the College's financial strategy and health rating.

Members noted the additional considerations of pension schemes, national living wage and pay differentials. Staff turnover and levels of flexibility regarding full and part time staff and realising efficiencies were also discussed.

The Corporation resolved to approve a 1% increase for all staff, payable from January 2018 and that the impact of a £250 increase, where more beneficial, would be reviewed in readiness for the next year.

7 Finance and Resources Reports

7.1 Draft Outturn for 2016/17

Jacquie Carman reported that the financial outturn was, prior to pension costs, in accordance with budget.

Halesowen College Enterprises had underperformed and there had been a shortfall in expected Higher Education income. Additional pay pressures for learning support were also noted. However, the College had met or exceeded all financial targets

The report was received.

7.2 Review of Revenue Budget

Jacque Carman highlighted that under the income profile a higher percentage of College income was subject to realising economic activity, including apprenticeships. Under the expenditure profile more flexibility was required.

Members accepted that the College was stable, on course to meet targets and remained resilient moving forward.

Amanda Allen asked a number of questions to clarify the risks to the income base. Jacque Carman confirmed the budget model and that risks increased as the College moved towards a more commercial funding model.

The Corporation resolved to approve the budget review, dated 26 September 2017, noting the key risk factors to the 2017/2018 budget profile.

8 Students, Teaching and Learning

8.2 Student Conduct Report

The Student Conduct Report was deferred.

8.3 Student Destinations Report – Initial HE Destinations

Joanne Williams reported that while the number of university applications had decreased, reflective of a smaller College cohort, the conversion rate to places taken had increased. Local universities remained most popular and the subjects studied were similar to that of previous years.

Student shift from degrees to apprenticeships was noted, recognising the need to work with Higher Education partners regarding degree apprenticeships.

Members noted an encouraging picture.

8.4 Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

The revised Safeguarding Policy and Procedure was provided for approval. Revisions included the change in definition of Child Sexual Exploitation and inclusion of all members of the College safeguarding team, which had increased to five designated members of staff.

The Corporation resolved to approve the revised Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, dated 18 August 2017.

8.5 Criminal Records Risk Assessment

Members had been provided with the 'Risk Assessment of Existing and Potential Learners Policy and Procedure'. Final decisions on applicants under concern would be taken by the Principal.

Peter Coley asked about conditions of applicant review and David Williams responded on the process of risk assessment and of managing the identified risk.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Risk Assessment of Existing and Potential Learners Policy and Procedure, dated 18 August 2017.

9 Any Other Business

There was none.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The Clerk confirmed that the next Corporation meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 8 November 2017.

Forthcoming dates were highlighted as:

- Corporation – Tuesday 28 November 2017
- Christmas Function – Monday 11 December 2017
- Corporation Residential – 12/13 January 2018

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	Report from Faculty Director - A Level Director, Louise Craddock	Sept 2017	JWi
8.1a	Joanne Williams agreed that results to be provided by Faculty Area would provide a different view.	ongoing	
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			
9.3	West Midlands Superannuation Scheme	July 2017	JWi/JCa
9.3a	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.	Revised: September 2017	
Corporation Meeting 26 April 2017			
6.2	Student Applications Update	August 2017	JWi
6.2a	The College approach to marketing was discussed with members agreeing that a more proactive marketing strategy should be developed.	Revised.	
Corporation Meeting 26 September 2017			
4.2a	Review of Confidential File The Clerk agreed that following research, changes to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations as they will come into force in 2018, would be addressed and reported as appropriate.	March 2018	JSu
4.3a	Good to Outstanding Plan The following actions were consolidated. That: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ proposals on Governors awards for students and staff would be provided by the College Executive. ▪ Value Added training would be provided for governors at the October 2017 meeting of the Corporation. ▪ a governor focus group could be provided for Student Survey feedback. ▪ governors would be invited to attend a session on initial advice and guidance in November 2017. 	November 2017 November 2017 tba November 2017	JWi JCa JWi

Ref	Agenda item and action	Date/item for review	Reported by
6.6a	<p>External Review and Corporation Residential Planning</p> <p>It was agreed that a report consolidating planning for the residential be returned to the October meeting of the Corporation.</p>	November 2017	DWi