

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

held on 22 May 2018

Present Ian Jewkes (*Chair*), Helene Jones (*Vice Chair*), David Williams (*Principal*), Amanda Allen, Elaine Cammies, Karen Cocker, Peter Coley, Paul Dyson, Jamie Fox, Tiffany Harvey-Pallent

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

Amanda Allen was voted by those present to commence the meeting as Chair.

Members agreed to take agenda items 5.1 and 5.2 as the first substantive items following the minutes.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Louise Jones, Kiran Dior and Mark Johnson.

2 Declarations of Interest

David Williams and Jacquie Carman declared their interest in agenda item 8.3 Memorandum of Understanding regarding Halesowen College Enterprises.

The interests of members present being considered for appointment or reappointment under agenda item 4.1a were noted.

3 Minutes and Matters Arising

3.1 The minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 25 April 2018 were approved as a correct record.

3.2 Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that further action had been taken in reviewing the Corporation's confidential file, with a further report being returned to the Chair and the June meeting of the Corporation.

The Clerk updated members on actions for May 2018 review.

Ian Jewkes and Helene Jones joined the meeting.

5 Strategic Overview

5.1 Principal's Report

5.1a Key Meetings

David Williams outlined the recent key meetings attended covering a range of areas including the National Collaborative Outreach Programme, the Strategic Colleges Improvement Fund and potential involvement in an international project.

5.1b King Edward and Halesowen Colleges' Academy Trust

Members noted that Ridgewood High School had transferred from the King Edward VI and Halesowen Colleges' Academy Trust to the Stour Vale Multi Academy Trust.

David Williams confirmed that Ofsted's inspection report for Ridgewood High School had now been published. Members discussed the inspection outcome.

5.1c Curriculum Team Managers

Members received an update on changes to key posts and the combining of some curriculum areas. David Williams also highlighted that Adult Studies had been created, with new roles of Senior Tutor and Curriculum Team Manager.

Members asked what impact there had been on staff and David Williams confirmed that reactions were positive.

5.1d South Black Country Education (SBCE)

Members noted that arrangements were firmly in place for Halesowen College to withdraw from South Black Country Education by 31 July 2018.

5.1e Timetables

David Williams updated members on potential changes to the current timetable structure that were being considered. Changes were geared towards reducing student 'trapped' time, including Directed Study time and to revising the duration of A level periods. Members noted the difficulty in addressing changes that would not all be achievable for the next academic year.

5.1f Over 50s Club

As part of newly received responsibility for community engagement a member of staff was tasked with reviewing the provision for the over 50s. Members discussed historical and current offer for the Over 50s, noting the desire to refocus on educational value.

The Principal's report was received.

Ian Jewkes resumed the Chair.

5.2 Accommodation and Capital Developments Update

David Williams updated members on both planned work for Shenstone House and a wider ranging review of the Whittingham Road Campus.

Members considered Architects drawings for the third floor of Shenstone House and noted that planned refurbishment could be addressed across the summer, in readiness for September 2018. Focus was upon providing blended learning and social space spaces that felt 'grown up'.

With regard to Whittingham Road, it was clear that work would be longer term, therefore there was opportunity to consider the effectiveness of the campus as a whole. The driving force for development remained that of a more suitable Learning Resource Centre and the improvement of Blocks 2, 4 and 5. A more comprehensive report would be provided for the meeting of the Corporation on 27 June 2018.

Members asked about grant funding and David Williams recounted the response of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Members noted the importance of good learning spaces for English, maths, higher level skills and business education.

The Accommodation and Capital Developments update was received.

Jamie Fox joined the meeting.

4 Governance

4.1 Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee – 8 May 2018

The Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee held 8 May 2018 were received.

The Clerk referred members to minute 8.1 on monitoring of the Corporation Development Plan. A potential visit for governors to Gloucester College, a calendar of briefings for 2018/2019 and provision of safeguarding training for governors were all noted.

4.1a Corporation Appointments

The Clerk referred members to the work of the Search and Governance Committee; that terms of office for the proposed appointments was based on responses received from members and the approach of spreading completion dates across three-year cycles.

Members noted that the results of both staff and student governor elections would be brought to the Corporation in June 2018.

The Clerk also highlighted that Corporation eligibility documentation was currently being updated, to include the widening range of criteria effecting automatic disqualification under the Charities Act 2011, which would come into force on 1 August 2018.

The Corporation resolved to approve the following appointments subject to continuing to meet eligibility criteria:

- To appoint Paul Dyson as a governor of Halesowen College commencing 1 August 2018 for a period of two years.
- To reappoint Karen Cocker for a period on one year commencing 1 August 2018.
- To reappoint Peter Coley and Mark Johnson as governors of Halesowen College for a period of two years commencing 1 August 2018.
- To reappoint Louise Jones, Tiffany Harvey-Pallent and Amanda Allen as governors of Halesowen College for a period of three years commencing 1 August 2018.

4.1b Corporation Self-Assessment

The Clerk outlined the proposed range and timetable for governance self-assessment.

The Corporation resolved to agree the Self-assessment process for 2018.

6 Monthly Performance Information

6.1 Annual Targets 2017/2018

Jacque Carman reported that there were no new trends and that areas of focus remained those of room utilisation, student attendance and student work placements. Members noted a range of actions and interventions to improve each area.

Members asked questions to better understand the actions being taken, including the use of swipe cards and electronic registers, staff deployment and the challenges of finding work placements for students being more challenging in some curriculum areas.

The updated position was received.

6.2 Management Accounts

Jacque Carman reported a financially stable position, whereby the College should retain outstanding financial health. Increased student numbers had incurred increased cost for staff, however, the College was continuing to carefully manage budgets.

Members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the lagged funding model in relation to income, financial planning and investment in estates.

Jacque Carman noted that there were many factors to address in the budget going forward, not least potential increased cost pressures relating to pension schemes and the national living wage, despite no inflationary uplift to Further

Education funding since 2013. However, the forecast for 2018/2019 was improved, based on the lagged funding model and additional one-off sources of funding.

Recognising both an improved budget forecast for 2018/2019 and financial reserves, members discussed the reasoning behind proposed capital development projects. While it could not be evidenced that investment increased provider outcomes, student feedback illustrated the value of a good learning environment and up to date facilities particularly in specialised areas. These were noted as significant factors in student choices of provider.

The updated Management Accounts for April 2018 were noted.

7 Students, Teaching and Learning

7.1 Draft Employer Engagement Strategy

Joanne Williams engaged members in a dialogue about setting the right strategy for employer engagement.

Employers were increasingly at the forefront of activity and together with wider demands for work experience and placements there was a clear need to develop student employability skills. While the College delivered provision from levels one to five, members stressed the need to develop the soft skills that students often lacked in the business place and to highlight to employers that this was a focus.

Joanne Williams reported that the College developed good relationships with local employers, particularly across apprenticeship provision and wished to build on this on a mutually supportive basis. Members further noted that the growth in need for work experience was particularly challenging.

Members asked how employer links were being developed. Jacquie Carman outlined that a 'Skills Partnership' brochure had been drafted which included what the College offered and student testimonials. Governor discussion delved into ideas and actions and Joanne Williams welcomed the suggestions to potentially help in bringing employers together in partner networking and through a College accreditation scheme.

7.2 Lesson Observation Consultation

Joanne Williams reported on research undertaken to support the College to move teaching and learning forwards.

Ungraded lesson observations were being considered as a positive development to move the focus from grades to learner experience and continuous improvement, with greater positivity and sharing of ideas. This approach seemed to be successful in other colleges.

Members asked if there was a danger of an ungraded scheme being less focused and make it harder to measure progress. Joanne Williams affirmed that the process would still, like Ofsted, address all the key criteria. The proposed change lay in the observer giving development points that would be drawn up by

the area manager to form part of a teacher's development plan. David Williams noted that such a change would support the College to build a matrix to identify where good skills lay and where there were key areas for development and support, to which staff development could then be more keenly directed.

David Williams further explained that this could identify percentages of how good a skills base was in a given area, whilst acknowledging that this was only one factor in a range of mechanisms used to judge performance.

Members discussed the proposal noting the focus on students, potential for greater consistency, ongoing developmental ethos and scope for greater analysis and meaningful action.

7.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy Update

Joanne Williams was pleased to report the very positive findings from student focus groups conducted as research, prior to rewriting the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

Learner feedback was often linked to progression and employment. Students identified a range of "excellent learning experiences" including trips associated with their subjects, having a range of activities and approachable, knowledgeable staff. In relation to improvements, their feedback included some improvements to learning environments and resources, increases in favoured teaching methods and greater consistency in classroom management and staff.

Members appreciated the learner feedback including attributed quotes, which supported the College strengths.

8 Finance Reports

8.1 Review of Activities (Charities Act and Associated Legislation)

Jacque Carman highlighted the key points from the annual review of College activities, to ensure that the College was operating within its powers and in particular that activities were for public benefit. All activities had been assessed and risk rated on a traffic lights system.

Members considered the comprehensive review and the actions for 2018/2019 related to amber rated activities.

8.2 Student Financial Support Policies 2018/19

Members reviewed the four student support policies noting that passporting student support from the Adult Education Budget was at the College's discretion.

Members also noted that support was banded to support students where most needed and that support was provided for courses with increased associated costs, such as specialist clothing and equipment, or work placements.

It was suggested that the College may wish to explore charities that provide suitable interview clothing.

The Corporation resolved to approve the revised Student Financial Support Policies 2018/19 and that 19+ support funding would be addressed in the setting of the 2018/2019 budget.

8.3 Memorandum of Understanding

Jacque Carman highlighted the need to have a memorandum of understanding between the College and its wholly owned subsidiary Halesowen College Enterprises.

It was agreed that this be deferred until the meeting of the Corporation on 27 June 2018.

8.4 Finance Record Comparative

Members received the report on comparative figures across three key measures based on 2016/2017 financial records. The College performance was very strong on liquidity, remained strong on EBITDA as a percentage of income (while recognising that the performance gap was narrowing) and borrowing levels compared well.

The College had also exceeded its own target but noted a decline in surplus. Members also noted that the further education sector remained in deficit, despite a high proportion of College mergers.

9 Any other business

There was none.

10 Date of next meeting

The final meeting of the academic year was noted as 6pm on Wednesday 27 June 2018 in room 11.202.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm

Actions from Meetings			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Date/item for review	Reported by
Corporation Meeting 1 March 2017			
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 Ongoing Review February 2017 June 2018	JCa
Corporation Meeting 28 November 2017			
3a	Minutes of Meeting held 8 November 2017 and Matters Arising Governor Awards; It was agreed that proposed dates would be provided shortly to enable governor engagement.	January 2018 June 2018 Student Ambassador Awards	DWi
Corporation Meeting 27 March 2018			
5.1e	Capital Developments Members agreed with the strategic approach to potential Capital Developments and the underlying reasoning to move the College forward. A more detailed report with costs would be returned to the Corporation.	May 2018 and June 2018	JCa