

## Corporation Board Meeting

Wednesday 12 June 2024

West Herts College – Watford (D114)

5pm – 7pm

### MINUTES

#### Attendees:

Governors	Role:	Other Attendees	Role
Phil Thompson	Chair of Corporation	Gary Dixon	Deputy Principal West Herts
Gill Worgan	Principal & CEO	Sarah Knowles	Deputy Principal
Guy Ainsley	External Governor	Eamonn McCarroll	Director of Finance
Zoubair Aouam	Student Governor	Tammy Nuthall	Deputy Principal – Barnfield College
Phil Berry	External Governor	Amanda Washbrook	Deputy Principal
Tony Breslin	External Governor	Aaron Caisley	Director of Marketing & Recruitment
Laura Dawson	External Governor	Anne-Marie Kinsella	Clerk to Corporation
Wendy Donovan	External Governor	<b>Apologies</b>	<b>Role:</b>
Irina Kendix	External Governor	Shaun Merton	Staff Governor
Richard Lewis	External Governor	Jason Smith	External Governor
Chris Nicholls	External Governor	Paul Thompson	External Governor
Stuart Ord	External Governor		
Martin Sidders	External Governor		
David York	Staff Governor		
Aisha Yusuf	Observer (remote)		

#### Ref Agenda Item

#### 50/23 1. GENERAL BUSINESS

##### 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.

Aisha Yusuf (AY) joined the meeting from Doha. AY had accepted a place at the University of Qatar to study HR Management. AY was attending the meeting as an observer as she was keen to continue her learning as a student governor until the end of her original term of office in July.

##### 1.2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

There were no additional declarations to declare.

##### 1.3. Requests for urgent business

There were no requests for urgent business.

#### 51/23 2. PREVIOUS MEETING

##### 2.1. Approve Minutes of previous meeting (8 May 2024)

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

##### 2.2. Action from previous Corporation meeting

Ref	Summary of Actions	Status
33/23/9	Discuss, prioritise, and agree a plan of action to take place at the Corporation meeting on the 12 June 2024.	Agenda item 6.3
40/23/8.2	Board member to feedback to the Clerk on the using online meetings in the yearly calendar of meetings.	Agenda item 2.2

##### 2.3. Matters Arising not on the agenda.

There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

#### 52/23 3. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The report illustrated through its dashboard, the in-year position across the Strategic Plan's key performance indicators (KPI) which are in line with previous months or exceeding target, in particular, the significant increase of students accessing additional academic support, financed by the Tuition Fund.

The majority of students are attending lessons regularly and the College is providing targeted support to students who are attending less frequently or refusing to engage in English and Maths.

In response to Governors questions, the Principal clarified that the slight decline in retention was not unusual at this time of year and was due to a number of factors, including, some students entering employment, poor mental health triggered by pressures associated with final assessments and next step expectations, or moving out of area as part of transient refugee programmes.

The Board noted the successful outcome of a recent phishing attack simulation which tested security awareness and resilience across the workforce. The College said that following analysis of the exercise, cyber security training will become a mandatory pre-employment requirement for agency staff

The College is the further education provider for the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) for Initial Teacher Training and as such formed part of the recent Ofsted inspection of UoB teaching training provision. The inspection outcome was very positive overall and particularly for the post-16 phase which was judged as 'Outstanding.' The Board congratulated the College on the recognition in the report.

The Board asked about the impact of a possible change in Government following the general election on the 4 July 2024. The College hoped that it might lead to the AOC's recommendation to pause and review the implementation of the level 3 qualification reforms. The College will keep the Board updated.

The Board were pleased to hear about the activities provided by the College to support students who would be voting for the first time and the College's involvement in hustings, which would further engage and develop students' knowledge and understanding of the political system.

The Board expressed their appreciation for Donaldson Timber Systems who have rewarded College students with new tools following the College's successful Ofsted inspection outcome. The Board also congratulated the 4 students who are progressing through the initial stages of the World Skills competitions in Hairdressing.

The report was noted.

## **53/23 4. RESPONSIBILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **4.1. Complaints – Annual Summary Report**

The report outlined the College's complaints procedure and the complaints and feedback received. Between August 2023 and May 2024, 78 complaints have been received. The College has managed all feedback effectively and has used the information received to make changes that improve the quality of education and wider College services.

No complaints have been referred to external agencies.

The College clarified that the complaints relating to the impact of teaching were primarily due to new and inexperienced staff who are developing the skills needed to manage complex and challenging situation

The Board discussed the Complaints process, and it was noted that the vast majority of complaints were resolved within the specified 10 days and where this was not the case it was usually due to the involvement of external agencies and the delay therefore being outside the College's control, it was noted that this information could be included in the report in future.

The Board considered the number of complaints to be low and not in excess of previous years. Governors discussed the primary reasons for complaints from specific groups and the possible actions that could be taken to reduce some of the triggers.

Although agreed that it would be difficult, a system of recording compliments should be researched.

The report was noted.

### **4.2. Predicted Achievements 16-18 - Adult – Apprenticeships**

The Deputy Principal (GD) gave a summary of the report which detailed the predicted qualification achievements across the College's 16-18 qualifications, GCSE English and Maths qualifications, Adult programmes, Apprenticeships, and Higher Education courses. It included the College's qualification achievement rates for the previous three years and compared them with national averages.

GD highlighted that the College has high expectations across all provision types and student performance is monitored routinely. The majority of students are expected to achieve their qualifications and those at risk receive additional support.

In response to Governors' questions, GD explained that the improvements to achievement rates are primarily attributed to the much-improved performance in external examinations and highlighted that exam attendance this year has been good and an improvement on previous years.

GD also clarified that English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Language Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) continue to be impacted disproportionately due to students being moved out of area as part of government refugee programmes before completing their learning.

In response to further questions from the Board about the A-Level provision, GD explained that the College has a small cohort of A-Level students which is expected to grow over time.

In terms of the differing results for GCSE English qualifications across campuses, the Board was assured that the quality of the provision is consistent across all campuses and the difference between GCSE English results in Barnfield reflected the initial lower starting point of these students.

The report was noted.

#### **4.3. Further Education Applications 24-25**

The Director of Marketing & Recruitment (AC) circulated a report to the board in advance of the meeting and then presented a summary of his report at the meeting. The presentation and the report outlined how the College is planning to meet the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) target of 6460 16-18 student enrolments in 2024-25 and included a demonstration of the analysis of data using the Power BI. The College has already received a high number of applicants expressing an interest in enrolling on courses in September and a significant proportion of the current students due to complete their studies in the summer are expected to return in September to undertake a next-level qualification.

In response to Governors' questions AC outlined the growth areas and clarified that on average, around 70% of applicants convert their applications to enrolment during the period June – September 2023 on receipt of their GCSE results. The College is currently on track to meet or exceed the target of 6460 enrolments.

The Board discussed postcode analysis of applicants and the College reach. Governors' suggested that there might be a market beyond the 'public transport within an hour' criteria.

The marketing tools and processes used to attract students to the College were outlined for the Board, these included the use of digital marketing such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Course Introduction Meetings (CIMs) and a team of experienced and qualified staff. The College also attends careers events at most local secondary schools.

The Board noted the continued increase in enrolments over the last 10 years, the College believed this was as a result of the redevelopment of the College estate which provided students with a learning environment and equipment of industry standard. The merger with Barnfield in 2019 also had a significant impact for the young people in Luton.

The Board also asked about the increase of applicants for T-Levels. The College said this was due to the defunding of Btecs. The advantages and disadvantages of T-Levels were discussed by the Board including the possible impact of a change of government and a review of the qualification reforms.

The report was noted.

#### **4.4. Finance Report** (confidential item – part 2)

*Please see separate (part 2) Minutes.*

### **54/23 5. REGULARITY COMPLIANCE**

#### **5.1. Draft Budget 2024 – 25** (confidential item – part 2)

*Please see separate (part 2) Minutes.*

### **55/23 6. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES & REVIEW**

#### **6.1. Learning walks**

Richard Lewis and Chris Nicholls had carried out Learning Walks at Hemel Hempstead campus and Barnfield College, respectively. Both governors gave positive verbal feedback on their visits, particularly commenting on their engagement with students and staff and the level of resources in the College.

RL and CN commented on the value of a Learning Walk, saying it had been 'uplifting' to witness all the good work of the staff and the positive impact it had on students' lives. It had also been an excellent learning experience for the Governors in understanding the complexities of assessment models and the progress made by students, not just academically.

The Chair thanked RL and CN for their feedback and encouraged other governors to arrange a learning Walk with the Clerk.

**6.2. Update on Corporation Membership**

The updated membership of the Corporation was noted.

**6.2.1. Jason Smith – Term of Office ends 8 July 2024**

Jason Smith’s term of office is due to end on the 8 July 2024. Jason will have completed 2 terms as a governor.

**DECISION:** Jason was reappointed for another 2 year term of office, and it was noted that due to a change in job it is anticipated that JN will resign, in December 2024.

**6.3. External Review Action Plan**

Following the External Review of the Board by Fiona Chalk, which concluded in February 2024 and the subsequent Corporation meeting held in March 2024 where the recommendations of the review were agreed, the draft action plan was considered by the Board.

The Board asked for the wording in recommendation 1 to be amended and for methods of monitoring its progress to be outlined at the next meeting.

**ACTION:** Amend wording in recommendation 1 and consider methods of monitoring its progress

**DECISION:** The Corporations approved the Action Plan pending the changes highlighted .

**6.4. Governance Model & Meetings for 2024-25**

As a result of the Corporation’s recent external review it was proposed that a new committee for Quality and Curriculum is introduced to further develop opportunities for scrutiny, support, and challenge and to deepen understanding across the Corporation.

The Board discussed the options and carefully considered whether the Quality and Curriculum Committee would add value to the Corporation. After a thorough discussion it was agreed by the Board that a Quality and Curriculum Committee should provide the Board with a good level of oversight and therefore be able to provide effective support and challenge to the College. The Committee will be trialled for a period 2 years with a review at the end of the first year. The Committee will report regularly to the Corporation and recommendations made by the Committee will be submitted to the Corporation for final approval.

**ACTION:** Terms of Reference and Business Plan to go to the next Corporation meeting for scrutiny.

**DECISION:** New Quality and Curriculum Committee to be introduced to the Corporation for West Herts College in September 2024.

**56/23 7. URGENT BUSINESS - None**

**57/23 8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 10 July 2024 - Watford**

Meeting closed: 7pm

**Minutes approved by the Corporation on the 10 July 2024:**

Ref	Summary of Actions	when
55/23/6.3	Amend wording in recommendation 1 of the External Review Action Plan for the Corporation and consider methods of monitoring its progress	10 July 2024
55/23/6.4	Terms of Reference and Business Plan for the new Quality and Curriculum Committee to go to the next Corporation meeting for scrutiny.	10 July 2024

Ref	Summary of Decisions
55/23/6.3	The Corporations approved the Action Plan pending the changes highlighted
55/23/6.4	New Quality and Curriculum Committee to be introduced to the Corporation for West Herts College in September 2024.