

## Corporation Board Meeting

Wednesday 10 July 2024

West Herts College – Watford (D114)

4pm – 6pm

### MINUTES

#### Attendees:

##### Governors

Name	Role
Phil Thompson	Chair of Corporation
Gill Worgan (arr. 16.54)	Principal & CEO
Guy Ainsley	External Governor
Zoubair Aouam	Student Governor
Phil Berry	External Governor
Tony Breslin	External Governor
Laura Dawson	External Governor
Wendy Donovan	External Governor
Irina Kendix	External Governor
Richard Lewis	External Governor
Chris Nicolls	External Governor
Martin Sidders	External Governor
Jason Smith	External Governor
Paul Thompson	External Governor
David York	Staff Governor

##### Other Attendees

Name	Role
Gary Dixon	Deputy Principal West Herts
Emma Doree	Director of Student Experience
Cath Gunn	Principal of Barnfield College
Sarah Knowles	Deputy Principal WHC Group
Eamonn McCarroll	Director of Finance WHC Group
Amanda Washbrook	Partnerships & Business Development
Anne-Marie Kinsella	Clerk to Corporation

##### Apologies

Name	Role
Shaun Merton	Staff Governor
Stuart Ord	External Governor

#### Ref Agenda Item

#### 23/58 1. GENERAL BUSINESS

##### 1.1. Apologies for absence and quoracy

Apologies were noted and accepted, and the meeting was quorate.

It was noted that all reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting for the Board's consideration

##### 1.2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

There were no declarations

##### 1.3. Requests for urgent business

There were no requests for urgent business.

#### 23/59 2. PREVIOUS MEETING

##### 2.1. Approve Minutes of previous meeting - 12 June 2024

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

##### 2.1.1. Actions from previous Corporation meeting

Meeting Ref	Summary of Actions	Status
9/23/1.1	Statistics on retention of staff across different subject areas to be included in the HR Report.	Agenda item 5.1
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	Completed
55/23/6.4	Draft Terms of Reference for the new Quality and Curriculum Committee to go to the next Corporation meeting for scrutiny. Final version to be agreed at the first Quality and Curriculum Meeting	Completed
55/23/6.4	Draft Business Plan for the new Quality and Curriculum Committee to go to the next Corporation meeting for scrutiny. Final version to be agreed at the first Quality and Curriculum Meeting.	Completed

## **2.2. Audit Committee Minutes and Recommendations – 25 June 2024**

The minutes of the Audit Committee were noted, and the Chair of the Committee gave some highlights from the meeting. It was noted that the Audit Committee had carried close scrutiny of the internal and external audit plans and had recommended both plans for approval by the Corporation.

2.2.1 Financial Internal Audit Strategy – (on recommendation)

2.2.2 Financial External Audit Strategy (on recommendation)

The Director of Finance (DoF) confirmed that the Corporation were asked to approve the plans for 2024-25 only and any data provided in the report that was beyond 2024-25 was for information purposes only and not yet agreed.

**DECISION:** The Board approved the Internal and External Audit Strategy Plans for 2024-25

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

There were no matters arising.

## **23/60 3. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Principals report included information on the potential impact of the general election; plans for devolution; the impact and effectiveness of Local Skills Improvement Plans and the latest research into T-level's.

It was noted that an update on End of year outturns relating to the key performance dashboard will be provided to the Corporation in the Annual Self-Assessment Report.

The Board discussed the outcome of the general election. The College were hopeful that the new government would honour their commitment to pause and review the reforms. The College will conduct a PESTEL analysis to identify any new threats and opportunities of the new government and will share their key findings for discussion at the Autumn Corporation Meeting.

The Board discussed the performance of T-level qualifications and the options available to students who withdraw. The Board were satisfied that contingency plans were in place for the College to meet students' needs in all eventualities.

The Board asked for clarification on the retention of adult learners and the College explained that the low retention rates across English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Language Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) continue to impact disproportionately on top level achievement rates when students are moved out of area as part of government refugee programmes before completing their learning.

The report was noted.

## **23/61 4. STRATEGIC AIMS FOR EDUCATION PURPOSES**

### **4.1 Strategic Measures of Success**

The report provided an evaluation of the progress the College is making against the key strategic objectives approved by the Corporation.

The 5 strategic aims are underpinned by 23 measures of success. The report outlined in detail how each of the 23 measures is progressing, including the actions taken to address any issues.

The Board were pleased with the overall progress against targets and further clarification was given on the reasons for some areas requiring intervention. The Board also discussed ways in which learning programmes could include content about climate change and sustainability and the possible resources required. It was noted that some courses already include masterclasses about climate change and sustainability as part of the Bravura Project and the inclusion of these topics needs to be further developed across some of the College's Adult, Apprenticeship, and Higher Education provision.

The report was noted.

## **23/62 5. RESPONSIBILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **5.1. Human Resources Annual Report**

The report provided assurance to the Corporation that the HR policies and procedures in place are fit for purpose and appropriately underpin the key strategic aims of the College. It included details on safer recruitment, wellbeing, performance management, continuous professional development, and the gender/ethnicity pay analysis.

The annual staff turnover for 2023/24 was discussed and further clarification was requested on the breakdown of staff turnover in terms of areas. The Board was assured that shortages in teaching staff for Construction, Engineering, Health Education and Care have improved.

The Board discussed the opportunities available outside of education for flexible working, which have come about since the pandemic and how this has provided new competition for schools and colleges when recruiting support staff.

The College clarified the apprenticeship levy and what considerations are given to using apprenticeships as training solutions for employees. It was noted that overall investment in staff training and development is excellent and highly valued by the staff.

The report was noted.

## **5.2. Environment & Sustainability Policy**

The College has engaged external specialist consultants to help reduce carbon emissions in line with the College's Strategic Plan and government expectations. Several initiatives to reduce the College's carbon emissions have been implemented and currently showing a positive position compared to 2020 levels. The specific actions undertaken by the College to reduce its carbon emissions are outlined in the report.

The College is improving how it calculates its carbon emissions due to the increased availability of specialist support services, systems, and software and has been awarded a certificate and a quality standard logo, which can be used for publication on the College website and other social media platforms. The logo validates the College's carbon footprint information and its commitment to climate change.

The College's rag rated action plan included in the report is based on the Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education roadmap.

The Board noted that the Director of Information Technology is researching data centres and that 2 of the major systems at the College are already cloud based.

The base lines for targets could not yet be assessed as the College still need to develop further its understanding and awareness of calculating carbon emissions – particularly relating to the College commute.

The College's Environment and Sustainability Policy outlines the type of actions the College will take to promote more responsible operations and to reduce its impact on the environment and its local communities. It has been reviewed and no changes are recommended on this occasion.

The report was noted.

**DECISION:** The Board approved the Environment & Sustainability Policy.

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

*Confidential item – Please see part minutes.*

## **23/63 6. COLLABORATION & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

### **6.1. Sub-Contractor Annual Performance**

The College works with the Princes Trust, and iSales to deliver provision on a subcontracted basis. Over the last year, the level subcontracted provision has been reduced, is in line with the College's strategic aims and well within the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requirement.

Subcontracting provision is subject to all College quality assurance arrangements and the College considers the quality of provision to be high and have no concerns.

The College has achieved the ESFA's subcontracting standard and, therefore, annual internal audits are no longer required.

The retention of students on the Princes Trust programmes was queried by the Board and it was noted that future reports would benefit from separating the data for Adult and 16-18 learners.

The report was noted

## **6.2. Subcontractor Fees & Charges Policy 2024-25**

The policy for 2024-25 has been updated to reflect a reduction in overall subcontracting activity from £930k to £600k. No other changes are proposed.

**DECISION:** The Board approved the Subcontractor (Supply Chain) Fees and Charges Policy for 2024-25

## **23/64 7. REGULARITY COMPLIANCE**

### **7.1. Budget 2024-25 - (confidential item – part 2)**

*Confidential item – Please see part minutes.*

**DECISION:** The Board approved the budget for West Herts College for 2024-25

### **7.2. Corporate Risk Register**

The DoF presented the latest version of the College's High-Level Risk Register (Appendix 1).

It was noted that the Audit Committee had reviewed the full College's risk register in detail at its last meeting on the 25 June 2024.

There are currently 4 High-Level Risks on the College's Risk Register and since the last report to Corporation in March 2024, no risks have been added to or deleted from the High-Level Risk Register.

The report was noted.

## **23/65 8. BOARD & ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

### **8.1. Learning walks**

There were no learning walks since the last meeting.

### **8.2. Update on Corporation membership**

The Board noted the membership and agreed the following appointments.

#### **8.2.1. Chairs of Committees and membership**

**DECISION:** The Corporation agreed the following:

- Chair of Audit Committee – Irina Kendix until the 31 December 2024 and then Stuart Ord from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.
- Chair of Quality & Curriculum Committee – Chris Nicholls
- Chair of Search & Governance Committee – Richard Lewis
- Membership to be agreed at the first committee meeting of 2024-25.

**ACTION:** Governors to register their interest in joining a committee with the Clerk before the end of July.

#### **8.2.2. Designated Safeguarding & Inclusion Lead**

**DECISION:** The Board agreed Designated Safeguarding & Inclusion Lead – Laura Dawson

#### **8.2.3. Meeting Dates for 2024-25**

The meeting dates were noted. Meeting invites will be sent out over the summer.

#### **8.2.4. Business Cycles for Corporation 2024-25**

The Business Cycle for 2024-25 was noted.

## **23/66 9. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 9 October 2024, 5pm, Watford.**

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Meeting closed: 5.20pm

**Minutes approved by the Corporation on the 09 October 2024:**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Summary of Actions</b>	<b>when</b>
23/65/8.2.1	Governors to register their interest in joining a committee with the Clerk before the end of July.	31 July 2024

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Summary of Decisions</b>
23/59/2.2.1/2.2.2	The Board approved the Internal and External Audit Strategy Plans for 2024-25
23/62/5.2	The Board approved the Environment & Sustainability Policy.
23/63/6.2	The Board approved the Subcontractor (Supply Chain) Fees and Charges Policy for 2024-25
23/64/7.1	The Board approved the budget for West Herts College for 2024-25
23/65/8.2.1	The Corporation agreed the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair of Audit Committee - Irina Kendix until the 31 December 2024 and the Stuart Ord from the 1st January 2025.</li> <li>• Chair of Quality &amp; Curriculum Committee – Chris Nicholls</li> <li>• Chair of Search &amp; Governance Committee – Richard Lewis</li> </ul>
23/65/8.2.2	The Board agreed Designated Safeguarding & Inclusion Lead – Laura Dawson