



Minutes of the electronic Corporation meeting held at 1700hrs on 9 December 2020

Present	Guy Ainsley	Phil Berry	Irina Kendix
	Richard Lewis	Matt Luheshi	Chris Nicholls
	Will Phipps	Ben Stapleton	Phil Thompson (Chair)
	Gill Worgan (Principal)	David York	
In Attendance	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)	Gary Dixon (DPQ)	Cath Gunn (Principal, Barnfield)
	Sarah Knowles (DP (P&D))	Eamonn McCarroll (DoF)	Tammy Nuthall (DP, Barnfield) (attendee)
	Louise Barden (Principal's PA) (Observer)		
Apologies	Jason Smith	Paul Thompson	

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

PART ONE

26/20 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- a. The apologies were approved. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there had been no interests declared.
- b. Electronic meetings were confirmed as compliant with Standing Orders (SO); members had submitted questions in advance, and these would be addressed at the relevant stage of the agenda. The meeting format was explained and agreed. **(Action 1)**

27/20 STANDING ITEMS

- a. re 20/20 (Action 5) the amount £25,432 was replaced with £25,532m, the Minutes (Part 1&2) of the meeting held on 11 November 2020 were then confirmed for electronic signature; the Clerk to Action. **(Action 2)**
- b. Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 24 November 2020 were explained by the Committee Chair and recommendations noted to inform Item 10, additionally the recommendation at Minute 16/20 re the Internal Audit Service (IAS) was considered and approved. **(Action 3)**
- c. Matters Arising. There were no matters arising.
- d. Outstanding Actions. All actions from the last meetings were considered and discussed; it was agreed that all had been implemented or were in progress.

See referenced minute for full detail.		Status
Action 1	17/20b. Meeting format agreed.	Complete
Action 2	18/20a. Last minutes (08.07.20 & 08.07.20) confirmed.	
Action 3	19/20c. IHRA to be reconsidered post AoC advice.	pending
Action 4	20/20a. Phase 1 Capital Project approved.	Complete
Action 5	20/20b. Phase 1 Capital Plan budget approved.	
Action 6	20/20c. Farrans Construction appointed.	
Action 7	20/20d. BC Nursery to close.	

- e. Matters arising. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

- f. Urgent Business. There was no urgent business requested.

**The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (Register 34/20 below)**

28/20 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- a. Nursery. The Principal updated the meeting on the position with the Nursery. Members were aware of local turbulence arising from the decision to cease provision as part of the new college capital project. There had been a meeting with the parents and continued email correspondence with others involved in the situation, which had now been satisfactorily resolved. It had been possible to delay demolition of the Willow building until April and, accordingly provision would continue in that building until then. The College has identified alternative places at other local nurseries for all current children; all concerned were actively co-operating to minimise inconvenience. More detail was included in the report.
- b. The Principal's report included the Performance Dashboard, which was considered. The ESFA Adult Education Budget currently "amber" at 39%, largely due to Covid-19 and restrictions on space in workshops and therefore student numbers. There was a waiting list for places and enrolments Jan to March would be key to the final outturn. The retention figure for the year would be activated post submission of the RO4 to the ESFA (confirming the number of students on roll and in funding on December 4th).
- c. Covid. Covid measures had adversely affected attendance and this would be considered later in the meeting. The general update was noted: 10 staff and 102 students had contracted Covid with 1687 students self-isolating for periods since the start of term, with the consequent shift to on-line learning, which clearly introduced difficulties for those students on courses with practical elements. Generally, work through the latest lockdown had operated effectively. A rapid result testing programme had been introduced in Luton and consideration was being given on how best to maximise benefit from the scheme.
- d. Free School Meals (FSM). The decision to fund FSM for eligible children until April 2022 was noted and welcomed.
- e. Additional Provision. A range of Digital qualifications (Digital Skills for Work, Digital Marketing & Analytics, Essential Digital Skills, Computer Aided Design, website software) and Health related (mental health, health and human sciences) was planned to be phased in during the new year.
- f. The Spending Review. The outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) (for 12 months only) had recently been released and several welcome sector-wide funding increases had recently been announced, these were listed in the attached document and were noted.
- g. College of the Future and the FE White Paper. The Annual Institute of Fiscal Studies (IfS) Report had now been published and confirmed that FE colleges had been the most severely impacted of any education sector. The "English College of the Future" which had supplemented the earlier publication "College of the Future" was recommending more collaboration between local colleges, these "networks", would have some associated overarching governance. The Report included 11 recommendations, which were listed in the paper. All detail was expected to be brought together in the forthcoming FE White Paper, which would now be published at the earliest around Easter 2021; this document was expected to signal major changes throughout the sector. The issue was generally discussed and the reasons for the suggestions examined, around 60 colleges were currently facing severe financial difficulties, some by March this year with others also vulnerable and the legal duty to collaborate was probably to force the failed (2015) Area Reviews rationalisation of small, unsustainable colleges into more sustainable entities. Regional networks would probably not follow current LEP areas since college catchment

areas did not generally match them. It was agreed that it would be appropriate to hold a Corporation strategy day after the White Paper had been published. **(Action 4)**

**The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (Register 34/20 below)**

29/20 STUDENTS

- a. Qualification Outcomes. Covid related impacts required that there would be no publication of qualification outcomes for 2019/20 although volumes would be reported. Members would remember that centre-assessed grades were substituted for examinations, locally these had been robustly moderated and subsequently moderated again at awarding body level with regrettable outcomes such as delayed notification of inaccurate grades, particularly in GCSE English and Maths (EAM). Accordingly, WHC had introduced a diagnostic assessment process to determine additional support needs. There had been differing challenges to apprenticeships associated with practical aspects and this had affected some with delays leading to continuation in the current year. Higher level qualifications had been determined in line with university requirements. The comprehensive report examined the spectrum of qualifications by type and campus both in narrative and graphical forms and was considered. HE performance was discussed, detail focused on achievement rates, which provided an overview of performance, but Office for Student (OfS) metrics were regularly monitored and would be included in the next Higher Education (HE) quality update. EAM outcomes for 19/20 were systematically and significantly higher than 2018/19 since centre assessed grades were based on assessments completed to date, not all curriculum had been delivered prior to lockdown. These centre assessed grades went through a robust moderation and were in line with the national picture of grade inflation. The DFE have confirmed that there would be a similar increase applied to the 2020/21 outcomes to ensure the 2021 cohort are treated fairly with their 2020 peers. Some apprenticeship qualifications had been delayed through lack of access to workplaces and to offset this, some practical assessments have been on campus; assessors also used technology to deliver virtual training and assessments. Those apprentices predicted to achieve in 19/20 would now achieve in 20/21. All 70 apprentices were engaged and making good progress.
- b. Quality of Provision. The Report, the first of a sequence to be presented through the year in line with the timings and content in the approved Corporation Business Plan provided information on the College's full-time FE provision. The information had been circulated in advance and members had familiarised themselves with the content. Members were reminded that on roll there were 5642 students:
 - (i) 1083 students at BC; and
 - (ii) 4559 students at WHC.

Quality of education was evaluated through 5 key elements:

- (iii) teaching and learning (T&L);
- (iv) target setting, performance reviews and action planning;
- (v) attendance;
- (vi) progress towards personal qualification targets; and
- (vii) satisfaction levels.

The Report examined progress against these and wider areas through textual updates and tabulated data for both colleges, outcomes were heartening. The Group quality of education was meeting expectations and planned updates would maintain and improve this. The report was discussed, and elements considered included how the essential process of evaluation of standards was proceeding when formal lesson observations were not possible. All learning areas had vision panels and learning walks continued as

a valuable tool for insight into behaviour management, levels of engagement in lessons and attendance. These and other quality indicators such as feedback from students, professional discussions with teachers and managers and routine qualification progress checks, enable sound quality assessments. For some areas such as Teacher Training, online lesson observations were in use to monitor quality of teaching; this was being extended to all College's provision in the new year. Pre lockdown it was normal for Members to share managers' learning walks and online observations for any Member interested in observing a lesson could be arranged. **(Action 5)** The new learning system "Century" had been introduced for English and Maths and students had been surveyed for first impressions. Initial feedback had been positive, students enjoyed the flexibility of the "on demand" process, some negative feedback around logging on issues and lack of IT resource at home had emerged and were being resolved. Engagement across the schools ranges from high 70's to the 60's and that was confidently expected to improve. The GAP team continued to engage with employers, exploring opportunities to provide a range of employer placements and continuing communication had been essential. There had been success in securing virtual placements, virtual tours, podcasts, masterclass, and online training, also there were opportunities for virtual placements and online training to develop into physical work experience as the pandemic eased.

- c. Tuition Fund. One off targeted central government funding had been introduced to provide additional tuition to Covid related "lost learning" disadvantaged students. Previously mentioned diagnostic assessments informed on where skills deficits progress existed and facilitated individual student remedial action; progress reviews allowed target updating. There was a high number of students affected often compounded by digital poverty, which was relieved by the loan of necessary equipment. The programme was then considered, informed by the report narrative, and supporting tabulated information and was welcomed.
- d. Student Destinations. Most students had secured positive destinations; a higher proportion than expected had returned to FE and were studying at their next level. Many who had entered the workplace had found positions not associated with their study discipline and a few had been apprenticed, most of both categories had been with local employers. Relatively few had progressed to HE. Those who remained unemployed would receive College support with their future plans. The report was then discussed. The number who found work unrelated to their studies was interesting and transferable skills were discussed. Transferable skills had always been a focus and work continued with focus on this; young people changed their minds and their aspirations, and this was to be expected. Barnfield students had been less successful in finding work than initially expected and this was considered. Employment in Luton was challenging, comparisons in the number of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants was higher in Luton (at 8.8%) than Watford (at 6.9%) or Dacorum (at 5.3%). Live vacancies showed the most opportunities in Transport and Storage, Health & Social Work and Administrative and support services. The College continues to work closely with the Skills and Employment Partnership, which included the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) and Luton Borough Council (LBC), to maximise a skills solution for the town.

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (Register 34/20 below)

30/20 RISK REGISTER

- a. Risk Management RM Policy. The attached Policy, which had last received Corporation approval on 11 December 2019 had been reviewed by the AC and included 2 changes: to para 7.2, which added the Covid Risk Register as a discrete risk category and deleted the Hemel Hempstead (HH) Phase 2 redevelopment as a special project. The Policy had been recommended for approval; that was accepted, and the Policy was approved. **(Action 6)**
- b. RM Register. The Risk Registers (RR) had been comprehensively refreshed and updated, and included:
 - (i) the WHC Risk Register (attached), which included a summary of High-Level Risks and a detailed Register, including the previous Covid Register; and

- (ii) two “special/specific” Registers, the HH and Barnfield College (BC) developments, respectively.

The updated and clearly marked up WHC Register, attached at Appendix 1 was considered and all changes described in the accompanying document, tabulated, and compared against the original, were individually considered and noted. Following the AC meeting in September all owners had reviewed their individual risk(s) description, assurance, and residual score, that had been completed and was included in the attached register. The HH Phase 2 redevelopment RR (Appendix 2) would now be discontinued as the project had been completed, 3 minor remaining risks would be monitored. The latest version of the BC Redevelopment (Appendix 3) was noted.

- c. Following discussion with auditors at the last SAC meeting the content and frequency of the Corporation consideration of the Register was considered and discussed. Several related issues arose, and members agreed that, consideration of the top three concerns that “keep you awake at night” or were difficult to classify would be useful and that would be considered. After discussion it was agreed that.
 - (i) the high-level Register would be brought to the Corporation once each term; and
 - (ii) the full Register would be brought annually. **(Action 7)**

**The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (Register 34/20 below)**

31/20 MEMBERS

There had been no visits or learning walks for Covid related reasons.

32/20 URGENT BUSINESS

There had been no urgent business requested.

33/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be at 1700 on 4 February 2021.

34/20 ACTION REGISTER

See referenced minute for full detail.		Resp	Date
Action 1	26/20b. Meeting format agreed.	Chair	wie
Action 2	27/20a. Last minutes (11.11.20) confirmed.	Clerk	
Action 3	27/20b. IAS to continue for 2021.22	DoF	
Action 4	28/20g. Post FE White Paper strategy day.	Chair	asap
Action 5	29/20b. Members welcome to virtual lesson observations.	DPQ	wie
Action 6	30/20a. RM Policy approved.	DoF	
Action 7	30/20c. RR approved.		

Ralph Devereux (Clerk) for Bill Thompson (Chair)

CorpMins9.12.20Pt1RDGWPTV2

Final Audit Report

2021-02-08

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