

## Corporation Board Meeting

Wednesday 10 November 2021

West Herts College – Hemel Hempstead Campus

5pm – 7pm

### MINUTES

#### Attendees:

Governors	Role:
Phil Thompson	General - Chair of Corporation
Gill Worgan	Principal & CEO
Phil Berry	Independent Governor
Irina Kendix	Independent Governor
Richard Lewis	Independent Governor
Matt Luheshi	Independent Governor
Heather Lunn	Student Governor
Chris Nicholls	Independent Governor
Jamie Robertson	Student Governor
Jason Smith	Independent Governor
Ben Stapleton	Independent Governor
David York	Staff Governor
Other attendees	Role:
Gary Dixon	Deputy Principal West Herts
Sarah Knowles	Deputy Principal WHC Group
Eamonn McCarroll	Director of Finance WHC Group
Tammy Nuthall	Deputy Principal Barnfield
Sam Reeve	Stakeholder Strategy Advisor for the DfE
Amanda Washbrook	Director of Curriculum – item 6 only
Scott Gray	Head of School – Sport, Public Services, Care & Access to HE – item 6 only
Apologies	Role:
Guy Ainsley	Independent Governor
Paul Thompson	Independent Governor
Cath Gunn	Principal of Barnfield College

NO.	Agenda item - Discussions and Decisions Made
11/21	<p><b>Item 6 was taken at the beginning of the meeting to allow the Departments heads to leave the meeting</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Apologies for absence and quoracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologies were noted, accepted and the meeting was quorate.</li> <li>• Irina Kendix (IK) and Jason Smith (JS) had notified the Clerk that they would be arriving late.</li> <li>• Eamonn McCarroll (EMc) attended the meeting virtually via Teams.</li> <li>• The Chair welcomed new student governors Heather Lunn (HL) and Jamie Robertson (JR).</li> <li>• Sam Reeve (Stakeholder Strategy Advisor for the Department for Education) joined the meeting as an observer.</li> </ul> <p><b>1.2 Declaration of pecuniary interests in respect to items on the agenda</b></p> <p>There were no further interests to declare.</p> <p><b>1.3 Requests for urgent business</b></p>

	There were 2 items for urgent business, which were taken under item 8.
<b>12/21</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting (13 October 2021)</b></p> <p>2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record and confirmed for electronic signature.</p> <p>2.2 <b>Actions from previous minutes</b></p> <p>21/4.3 Measurable EDI objectives (EDIMS) – This action was deferred to the next meeting. <b>(Action 1)</b></p> <p>2.3 <b>Matters Arising not on the agenda</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>
<b>13/21</b>	<p><b>Principal's Report</b></p> <p>The Report was circulated in advance of the meeting for the Board's consideration. The following areas were discussed.</p> <p>3.1 Cyber security and its KPI's will now be a standing item in the reports. Staff who failed the phishing test had been notified and re-training has been arranged. Continual monitoring is in place and regular testing will continue.</p> <p>3.2 The College enrolment for 16-18 students is currently 100 short of target due to late enrolments, given the positive attendance rates for the majority of these late-starters, the College is not expecting a significant shortfall.</p> <p>3.3 The Reports and KPI's on Cyber Security were welcomed by the Board and although expressed some concerns regarding the staff who opened the link were assured that the College has recognised the risks and been proactive in taking measures to reinforce the importance of cyber security to staff through additional training. The Board was also assured that staff are fully supportive of the increased cyber controls in place, such as multi-factor authentication, which are viewed by staff as normal practice. Actions to control and manage any such cyber-attack were outlined and these included incident response plans, insurance, a backup safe system and automatic patching of the servers. Costs related to a cloud-based provision to reduce the number of servers was discussed.</p> <p>3.4 The attendance targets for English and Maths were set at 5% lower than other courses. This target is still very challenging and is based on overall attendance rates, nationally and within the sector for the subjects.</p> <p>3.5 The new role of the Director of Access and Widening Participation was discussed. The Principal outlined the challenges faced by the College to meet the wider curriculum requirements for 16-18 students, post pandemic and the increased emphasis on safeguarding. Investment in this area of support for students requires a strong strategic and operational focus and it will be remiss of the College if it did not apply sufficient resource to this area of work.</p> <p>3.6 The Board congratulated the College and students on the Dell Technologies Community Impact Award from the Princes Trust Programme.</p> <p><b>The Principals Report and received and noted by the Board.</b></p>
<b>14/21</b>	<p><b>Strategic Planning and Corporate Policies</b></p> <p><b>Environment &amp; Sustainability Policy</b></p> <p>4.1 The College recognises that it must respond to the net zero carbon challenge and drive the changes needed for a sustainable future. To meet this green challenge, the College is increasingly putting sustainability at the heart of its decision-making, from curriculum planning, to setting ambitious targets, and making green investment decisions. To maximise the contribution the College, more funds will be needed. Until additional funding is available the College will aim to achieve everything possible within</p>

	<p>its existing capacity and resources. This report is the first step in embedding the College’s commitment to the green agenda at all levels.</p> <p>4.2 To support and develop the work already undertaken by the Leadership Group, a specialist company has been engaged to establish a baseline for the College’s carbon footprint and provide recommendations to reduce that footprint, leading to a detailed action plan. The Board was assured that the consultant will review all initiatives available and find the best fit for the College.</p> <p>4.3 The Principal outlined the challenge the College has taken on by not only adding new qualifications to support the development of green skills but also the development of a Green Skills Strategy that drives the mapping of green skills into existing qualifications across mainstream employment sectors.</p> <p>4.4 It was noted that some sections of the policy required more detail. The Principal agreed that some areas were too generic due to a lack of knowledge regarding base-line information. The Policy will be subject to continual review as the Leadership team develop their knowledge of the College’s start-point, it would also be re-drafted following the consultant’s report.</p> <p>4.5 The development of a procurement policy was discussed. The balance of procuring the most environmental services and getting value for money was recognised by the Board as challenging and minimum standards may need to be agreed.</p> <p><b>DECISION: The Environmental Policy was formally agreed by the Board and the Principal would report back at least annually.</b></p>
15/21	<p><b>Annual Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2021 (including 2020/21 Measures of Success and 2021/22 Quality Improvement targets)</b></p> <p>The SAR was circulated in advance of the meeting for the Board’s consideration.</p> <p>5.1 In addition to the Report, the Principal gave a presentation which gave the Board progress updates on the post-merger key measures of success; quality judgements by school across both colleges, including reasons for underperformance where applicable and the college-wide areas requiring improvement and development.</p> <p>The self-assessment process provided sufficient evidence to upgrade many quality judgements compared to previous years, and highlighted areas that required additional support or resources. The new Skills Award initiative will have a positive impact on the College’s performance and Student employability levels.</p> <p>5.2 In response to Governor’s questions, the Principal explained that staff morale was good, staff undertook regular surveys and staff absence rates and performance reviews were low.</p> <p>The Board agreed that the SAR was well-written, engaging, and transparent. Governors had attended some of the SAR sessions and commented how the final report ‘brought to life’ these sessions.</p> <p>5.3 The Board queried why the College did not grade themselves as ‘outstanding’. The Principal explained that the achievement rates for English and Maths weighted heavily despite the issue being at a problem across the sector. The College is supporting students in Maths and English by ensuring through the Skills Award initiative that they achieve the required Maths and English skills to progress to their next steps. These skills achievements will be certificated by the college for the purposes of highlighting to employers the competencies of each student.</p> <p>5.4 The outcomes and reputation for Barnfield had improved. The Board was assured that the areas identified as requiring improvement at West Herts College are not a cause for concern and that comparisons between the two colleges need to take account of the complexity, size and scale of West Herts provision.</p> <p>5.5 The Board discussed the demographics of Luton and the challenges it presented in comparison to Watford and Hemel Hempstead. The Board agreed that the College is taking all necessary measures to further close achievement gaps.</p> <p>5.6 The Principal clarified the curriculum offer for adults to assist them in career changes and retraining.</p>

	<p><b>The Self-Assessment Report was noted and received by the Board.</b></p>
<p><b>16/21</b></p>	<p><b>Response to white paper – Skills for Jobs 21/22</b>  <b>NB: This item was taken at the start of the meeting before item 1.</b></p> <p>Amanda Washbrook (AW), Director of Curriculum and Business Development and Scott Gray (SG), Head of School – Sport, Public Services, Care &amp; Access to HE gave a presentation to the Board on the Colleges plans to meet the requirements of the Skills for Jobs (white paper).</p> <p>The Skills for Jobs white paper, when passed, may include a statutory requirement to produce and adhere to Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPS). The College’s response to this will be published on its websites.</p> <p><b>IK joined the meeting (17.06)</b>  Student destination data will assess the impact of the initiatives taken by the College and its effectiveness by evaluating whether students achieve their intended next steps. Curriculum planning will reflect the needs of employers and the skills students need to develop to be job-ready. The provision of additional occupational qualifications will provide students with the skills employers require and which are not included within generic vocational qualifications. On-the-job training will also be aligned to student intended destinations and the skills priorities across particular sectors and jobs.  Examples of the routes and plans were shown and explained for clarification</p> <p><b>JS joined the meeting (17.15).</b>  The Board supported the content of the Skills Award initiative and discussed how best to promote it to employers to give West Herts students an advantage when being interviewed for a job.  Certificates issued by the College will confirm student competency. The Occupational Pathways and Skills Awards had been developed with significant input from employers.  The Pro-Monitor system will be used to monitor student progress and attainment. The College’s current use of digital badging for English and Maths skills achievements will be extended to the Skills Award initiative. g.  The college has a strong engagement with local employers which is key in developing effective the necessary Skills Awards.</p> <p>The Board thanked AW and SG and they left the meeting at 17.26</p>
<p><b>17/21</b></p>	<p><b>Governance and Governors Reports</b>  <b>7.1 Safeguarding Designated Safeguarding Governor’s Update</b></p> <p>The Designated Safeguarding Governor (DSG), Matt Luheshi (ML) gave a verbal update on current issues. ML had attended a professional safeguarding training course in May which had highlighted the growing issue of sexual harassment and abuse in schools and colleges. Ofsted had recently carried out an investigation into sexual harassment and abuse across 30 schools and 2 FE colleges. The outcome of the investigation was summarised in a graph circulated to the Board. The graph showed that sexual harassment and abuse in schools and colleges is very high and recorded a much higher number of incidents than anticipated. The report contained recommendations which were discussed at ML’s meeting with the College’s Safeguarding Team.</p> <p>ML was happy to report that the College already has measures in place and all staff, including sub-contractor staff, have completed a comprehensive on-line training course on sexual harassment and abuse. The Safeguarding team and ML have agreed that ML will meet with a small focus group of students as part of his regular safeguarding learning walks. ML will feedback to the Corporation on his findings.</p> <p>The Board recorded their appreciation for the forward planning and efforts of Emma Doree, Designated Safeguarding Lead, and her Safeguarding Team and agreed that the new post of Director of Access and Widening Participation will be able to support the Safeguarding Team further.</p>

	<p><b>7.2 Learning Walks; Visits and events feedback</b>            Jason Smith had been taken on a tour on all campuses. JS reported that he had a very enjoyable day and was astonished at the scale of operations and its diversity. He remarked on how good it was to see students learning and the excellent engagement with staff.</p> <p><b>7.3 Corporation Membership</b>            David York's (Staff Governor/Support) term of office is due to expire on the 18 November 21 and Alberto Ucci (Staff Governor/Teaching) has resigned.            Both staff governor vacancies have been shared with all staff and elections will be run over the next few weeks.            Membership was noted and received by the Board.</p>
18/21	<p><b>Urgent Business</b>  <i>Confidential items, please see Part 2 minutes for details.</i></p>
19/21	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> – Wednesday 8 December 2021, 5pm, Watford.</p>
20/21	<p><b>Part 2            Finance Report</b>  <i>Confidential items, please see Part 2 minutes for details.</i></p>

Ref	Summary of Actions	when
12/21/2.2	Measurable EDI objectives (EDIMS)	08/12/21

Ref	Summary of Decisions
14/21	The Environmental Policy was formally agreed by the Board and the Principal would report back at least annually.

**Approved by the Corporation on the 8 December 2021**