

Corporation Board Meeting

Wednesday 8 June 2022

West Herts College - Watford

5pm – 7pm

MINUTES

Attendees:

Governors

Governors	Role:
Phil Thompson	General - Chair of Corporation
Gill Worgan	Principal & CEO
Guy Ainsley	Independent Governor
Irina Kendix	Independent Governor
Richard Lewis	Independent Governor
Matt Luheshi	Independent Governor
Chris Nicholls	Independent Governor
Ben Stapleton	Independent Governor
Paul Thompson	Independent Governor
David York	Staff Governor

Other Attendees

Gary Dixon
Cath Gunn
Sarah Knowles
Eamonn McCarroll
Anne-Marie Kinsella

Role

Deputy Principal West Herts
Principal of Barnfield College
Deputy Principal WHC Group
Director of Finance WHC Group
Clerk to Corporation

Apologies

Jamie Robertson
Jason Smith
Phil Berry
Heather Lunn

Role:

Student Governor
Independent Governor
Independent Governor
Student Governor

Ref Agenda Item

61/21 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 additional declarations to declare

1.3 Requests for urgent business

There were no requests for urgent business.

62/21 2 PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Minutes of the last meeting (11 May 2022)

2.1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting, parts 1 and 2 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were approved for electronic signature.

2.2 Actions from previous minutes

Action	Ref	See referenced minute for full detail.	Status
1		No actions from previous minutes (part 1)	
2	54/21/4.1	Final plans for approval on the sale of Enterprise to come to an Autumn Corporation Meeting.	Not due yet.

2.3 Matters Arising not on the agenda

There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

63/21 3 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The College is performing well against the majority of key performance indicators. Cyber-security remains a key priority.

The Association of Colleges (AoC) recommendation for pay awards for this year is 2.25%.

The Principal assured the Corporation that everything possible was being done to support provide employees with the maximum pay award that is affordable for the College. The College is already paying the foundation living wage and a

2.25% pay increase will be awarded to all staff in the 2022/23 budget. In addition, All qualified teachers' salaries will increase to a minimum of £30k per annum.

A reduction of hours was not feasible, but flexible working is being trailed with teachers next academic year which will allow teachers up to 30 days a year to work from home to reduce their travelling costs and to improve work/life balance during particularly pressured periods e.g., marking student work. In addition, a one-off bonus is being considered for the end of the year (21/22).

Despite the Unions asking for a 10% pay increase the Principal did not envisage conflict as employees would be aware that 10% pay increase was unrealistic. The staff morale was good, the College had made consolidated pay awards every year and the shutdown at Christmas is well received. The Staff Governor noted that the extended break at Christmas is considered by all staff as 'phenomenal.'

The Principal reported that the number of vacancies was average for the time of year, the difficulty was in recruiting for some posts. AoC have reported that colleges are suffering the worst staffing crisis in two decades and this has been evident in the College's ongoing difficulties in recruiting teachers in Construction and Engineering and Systems Developers.

It was noted that sub-contractors are being paid the national living wage. The Corporation felt there might be some reputational benefit to reviewing whether sub-contractors should award the foundation living wage. College leaders will consider this in the future and when contracts are renewed.

The College is establishing a new alumni network to further develop its employer engagement. The College recognises the value of networking and hopes to maximise employer involvement in the design and delivery of skills and to create an effective network that will be beneficial for both the College and the students. There is a budget out of which the College has purchased a new customer relationship management system (CRM) to assist with the tracking and monitoring of employer engagement from the start of the new academic year.

The Barnfield College capital project is progressing timely towards practical completion and minutes of the CPSG Working Group are available on Convene.

The report was noted.

64/21 4 Strategic Planning and Corporate Policies - College Vision, Mission and Values

The Principal presented the Corporation with a detailed schedule for the review of the College's Strategic Plan. The final draft will be presented to Corporation during the Autumn term for approval. In line with the review schedule the College's Vision, Mission and Value Statements have been updated and reflects the new requirements for employers to be placed at the centre of the further education system.

The revised Vision, Mission and Value Statements were tracked to allow the Corporation to identify the changes easily and it has been revised in line with the new Skills Bill.

The College Vision, Mission and Values were discussed in detail, the Governors gave feedback on the content, wording and impact of the statements which included comments on the inclusion of an explicit commitment to sustainability, -;a shorter vision statement that recognises the personal skills students develop. . It was agreed that the statements should be unique to the College with some reference to the Skills for Jobs Bill

The Principal valued the input and agreed to review the statements and feedback changes at the next Corporation meeting.

The report was noted.

ACTION 1 – Principal to review Vision, Mission and Values in line with feedback from the Corporation

65/21 5 Monitoring - Further Education Applications 2022-23

The Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has set the College a target to recruit 6033 students aged 16-19 for 2022-23. To achieve this target, the College has developed a range of marketing activities, including Course Introduction Meetings (CIM's) and visits to secondary schools as part of careers education programmes provided to Year 11 pupils.

Applications received to date are higher than at the same point last year across both colleges.

Key observations were highlighted including the significant increase in applications for the New Bedford Road Campus, the continued increase in applications for the ESOL provision and a notable increase in applications for Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy.

The curriculum changes are being well received by local communities. The new A Level provision has 238 applications and 25 applications have been received for the new T Level in Education and Childcare against a first-year recruitment target of 30. Applications for the Level 3 Technical Diploma in Childcare and Education remain strong at 110. This qualification is one of the 160 qualifications that will be discontinued from 2024.

The College monitors its recruitment across each of its key strategic areas for curriculum and qualification planning. The report included an analysis of applications by postcode for each campus.

The target for applications is issued by the ESFA without negotiating with the College, it is based on last year's applications.

The applications are being closely monitored and the College has the capacity and resources to manage an increase in student numbers next year.

T-level qualifications remain a concern, specifically the lack of suitable industry placements. Despite the low transition rates plans to defund the alternative Btec level 3 qualifications continue. A-levels are being used to attract those who may not wish to apply to a T-Level.

The report was noted.

66/21 6 Quality of Education - Predicted Qualification Achievements Further Education Provision

The report outlined predicted achievements across the College's further education provision. The vast majority of students are expected to achieve their qualifications on time and those at risk are continuing to receive support.

Approximately 70% of students are making progress in English and Maths and the numbers expected to achieve GCSE grade 4 will exceed the national averages for further education colleges. Regular assessment and diagnostics highlight gaps and result in appropriate support being provided.

The achievement of formal qualifications for students aged 16-18 include additional activities to develop skills to enhance their chances of gaining their intended destinations. The College also offers a range of optional extra-curricular activities that develop knowledge across themes relevant to young people.

As part of Study Programmes, all students aged 16-18 participate in the College's Bravura Project - activities for approximately 4 hours per week that are job-specific skills which are not included within main vocational and/or occupational qualifications. In its first year, the Bravura Project has surpassed the College's expectations in terms of its impact and student engagement and satisfaction has excelled; high numbers of College certificates have been awarded to recognise skills achieved.. Data is being collated with the intention of producing automated reports next academic year.

The consistency in the retention, pass, and achievement rates across Barnfield College and West Herts College was noted, and the Corporation congratulated the College on effectively closing the gap in achievement rates between West Herts College and Barnfield College.

Predicted achievements for adult students (19+) enrolled onto further education qualifications show notable improvement compared to the previous year. It was highlighted that adult students were one of the groups most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was highlighted that some students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties continue to be impacted by Covid-19 pressures, many of these students continue to be nervous about their vulnerability to infection. The College is working closely with external agencies to implement strategies to support their return to learning.

The report was noted.

67/21 7 Governance and Governors' Reports

7.1 Learning walks; visits and events – feedback

Guy Ainsley (GA) as Chair of the CPSG (Capital Project Steering Group) gave feedback on his recent visit to the new Barnfield College building. He reported that the building with its feature-staircase in the reception, practical layout and spacious and light classrooms were impressive and striking. It was a fantastic learning space. GA recommended that everyone should take the time to visit.

7.2 Update on Corporation membership

7.2.1 End of Terms – Jason Smith (08/06/22)

7.2.1.1 Jason Smith was reappointed for another 2-year term of office.

7.2.2 End of Terms – Phil Thompson (31/07/22)

7.2.2.1 Phil Thompson's (PT) reappointment and re-election as Chair of Governors would take place at the next Corporation Meeting as his term of office did not expire until 31 July 2022.

It was noted that PT would like to stand for one more term of 2 years and therefore if re-elected a succession plan should be put in place for his replacement for July 2024.

ACTION 2 – Phil Thompson term of office ends (31/07/22)

7.2.3 End of Terms - Student Governors (16/06/22)

7.2.3.1 The Corporation formally recorded their thanks to the Student Governors for their contributions for this year. Two new student Governors would be elected for 2022-23.

7.2.4 Resignation – Sue Farnfield (17/05/22)

7.2.4.1 Sue Farnfield, Staff Governor (SF) resignation was noted. SF had left the College employment. The Staff Election process is underway.

68/21 8 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business

69/21 9 Date of next meeting – Wednesday 13 July 2022

70/21 10 Part 2

- 10.1 Finance Report
- 10.2 Budget 2022-23

Meeting closed: 18.20

Minutes approved by the Corporation on the 13 July 2022

Ref	Summary of Actions	when
61/21/4	Principal to review Vision, Mission and Values in line with feedback from the Corporation	13 July 2022
67/21/7.2.2	Phil Thompson term of office ends (31/07/22)	13 July 2022

Ref	Summary of Decisions
67/7.2.1	Jason Smith was reappointed for another 2-year term of office