

Minutes of: CORPORATION

Date: 16th May 2024

Time: 5:30pm

Place: Hybrid

Present: Mr S Brand
Mr S Bray
Mr P Cook MBE (Principal)
Mr S Crick
Mrs P Dyson (Chair)
Ms L Miervaldis
Ms N Paterson
Mr C Todd
Ms N Williams

In attendance: Mrs R Barnes (Vice Principal, Finance and Resources)
Ms J Ferguson (Vice Principal, Safeguarding and Pastoral Care)
Mrs R Herbert (Deputy Principal)

Mrs Y Doherty (Director of Governance)
Mrs S Collier (External Governance Review: Observation)

23/56 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr I Meaton.

23/57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

23/58 CONFIDENTIAL (without Staff Governors) see separate minutes

Ms Miervaldis left the meeting.

FOR DECISION

Ms Miervaldis rejoined the meeting.

The Chair confirmed that she and the Director of Governance had met with the Student Governor prior to the meeting and questions / comments / queries for presentation had been provided. She suggested that the approach be to provide the detail at the start of the meeting for members of the SLT to respond to against the relevant agenda item.

Copies of the questions were provided.

23/59 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting (circulated, document May 24/2) held on 21st March 2024 were considered.

It was **RESOLVED THAT**, the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2024 be approved.

23/60 MATTERS ARISING / ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**60.1 Board Actions**

Members considered the formal report of actions taken between the meetings held on 21st March 2024 and 16th May 2024 (circulated, document May 24/3).

- Non-consolidated pay award
- Reappointment of Mr S Crick for a four year term w.e.f. 15.05.2024

It was **RESOLVED THAT** report on Board Actions be noted and received.

60.2 Matters/Actions Report (circulated, document May 24/4)**23/50.1 Principal's Report**

Attendance at Westminster – issue the video of the learner to Board members.

It was reported that the Student Governor had been instrumental in the delivery of an event for learners with the purpose of widening opportunities for learners to explore their potential prospects for after leaving the College. A report had been produced for Governors. This would be issued to members by the Director of Governance.

Update 16.05.24: **COMPLETE**

Issued Friday 22nd March 2024.

23/51 Safeguarding and Prevent Update

It was highlighted that Prevent funding was provided by central government and it remained unclear at a regional level as to how this would be delivered by LAs in the future.

It was requested that an update on this be provided in future reports.

Update 16.05.24: **COMPLETE**

It has been confirmed that any Prevent support required in Coventry is to be sought from the West Midlands Prevent team. The College has extensive links with the Warwickshire Prevent team for support or training requirements. More recently the College has now got a place on the Warwickshire Prevent Steering Group, which ensures that the College maintains the ability to be very much at the heart of information.

23/52 Finance and Resources**23/52.1 Audit Committee Meeting – 4th March 2024**

It was agreed that the SRR should be presented to the Board as part of the Audit Committee reporting.

Update 16.05.24: **CARRY FORWARD**

Next meeting of Audit Committee is scheduled for 10th June 2024. SRR will be presented to the Board as part of the AC report at the meeting scheduled for 4th July 2024. **[ACTION]**

YD

23/52.2 Non-consolidated pay award

The proposed non-consolidated pay award be approved in principle, with exact detail provided after the Easter break.

Update 16.05.24: **COMPLETE**

Email issued 09 April 2024. Payment of non-consolidated pay award approved.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** update report on actions from the previous meeting be noted and received.

23/61 STRATEGY**61.1 Accountability Agreement**

The Principal presented a report on the Accountability Agreement (circulated, document May 24/5).

- The Agreement is a condition of funding by the ESFA, and reference is made to it during the yearly strategic conversation.
- In creating the Accountability Agreement due regard had been given to the needs of the local and regional community the College serves. The structure and content of the document had been based on exemplars provided by the Department of Education.
- The Agreement used the latest information contained within the Local Skills Improvement Plan and the economic strategy of the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- A review of how the College meets the skills needs of its community was completed as part of the creation of the new Curriculum Strategy which was scrutinised by Quality and Standards and approved at the last board meeting by Governors.
- The College was given the highest possible rating by Ofsted for meeting the skills needs of its community in 2023.

Discussion points included:

No reference to the automotive supply chain – was this not significant to the local area?

It was reported that the document was based on the themes identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plan. It was recognised that this could be an area for future development.

It was a well written and articulated document.

It was reassuring to see reference / links to working with other organisations.

Picking up on previous points raised by the student governor relating to expansion of the digital and adult social care provision, was there anything additional in terms of the digital subject area? Reference was made to the intention to redevelop / refurbish the current media resource over the summer to bring it up to industry standard, which would support potential sponsorship from high profile media companies.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Accountability Agreement be approved, signed by the Chair and Principal, and submitted to the ESFA by the 30 June 2024 deadline.

61.2 ESFA – Annual Strategic Conversation

The Principal presented the Annual Strategic Conversation correspondence received from the ESFA (circulated, document May 24/6).

It was noted that there had been delay in receiving this.

The meeting had taken place in February 2024 attended by the Principal, Vice Chair, Deputy Principal and Vice Principal Finance and Resources.

Discussion had included identifying the current strengths, opportunities, and challenges.

- Ofsted outcomes April 2023.
- Behaviour Management.
- Increase in learner applications.
- Growth in employer partnerships.
- Residential provision.
- Limitations presented by access to capital funding based on methodology.

Actions

- College to share Behaviour Management Policy as an example of effective practice.
- ESFA to feedback to DfE Policy Leads regarding the limited opportunities for the college to receive capital funding due to the current criteria.
- FEC Advisor to send the link for Peridot to enable the college to check the criteria for support.
- College to liaise with ESFA regarding any training subsidiary company.

Discussion points included:

Had there been any further information in relation to the capital funding position, as had been raised previously and was a potential barrier.

It was confirmed that no further clarification had been received with to any form of grant funding or borrowing.

Had the information been received regarding Peridot?

It was reported that as yet nothing had been received.

Reference was made to the AoC Funding, Finance and Pensions Briefing of 16.05.24 which provided detail of issues raised by the FE Commissioner at the annual AoC Finance Directors Conference on 14.05.24. it was advocated that the College was in a good position against the points highlighted.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** Annual Strategic Conversation correspondence be noted and received.

61.3 HTS

This report was classified as confidential – please see separate minutes.

23/62 FINANCE and RESOURCES

62.1 Policies

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented two policies that had been subject to review and required approval (circulated, document May 24/8).

62.1.1 Fees Policy

The policy had been updated to reflect the introduction of the ESFA adult skills fund (ASF) which was set to replace the ESFA adult education budget (AEB) for the funding year 2024/25 onwards. It was highlighted that ASF funding rules for 2024/25 continued to link to the 2023/24 AEB rates and formula guidance pending publication of the ASF funding rates and formula guidance (anticipated early summer 2024).

The reference in Appendix 1 would be updated upon publication of the guidance, with approval of the policy sought on that basis.

Other minor amendments.

Discussion points included:

Supported Internships – policy needed to be updated to confirm that the age of the young people at whom they were aimed.

This was acknowledged

[ACTION]

RB

It was **RESOLVED THAT**, subject to this amendment the Fees Policy 2024/25 be approved.

62.1.2 Redundancy Policy

The policy had been updated to reflect the publication of legislation regarding maternity leave, adoption leave and shared parental leave, extending redundancy protection to include additional protection during pregnancy and in the 18 months after the birth or placement of a child for adoption.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Redundancy Policy be approved.

62.2 Internal Audit Service

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented a report on the appointment of the Internal Audit Service (circulated, document May 24/20).

As of 31 July 2024, the contract for the provision of Internal Audit Services currently supplied by ICCA Education Training and Skills would cease, the contract having run the full five years permitted.

A mini tender process had been conducted under the Crescent Purchasing Consortium framework agreement, with three firms interviewed to assess their suitability.

The interviewing panel **recommended** the engagement of Wylie & Bisset as the College Internal Audit Service provider with effect from 01 August 2024.

The contract to be awarded for 3 years with the potential for a two-year extension, subject to satisfactory annual performance.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** Wylie & Bisset LLP be appointed as the Internal Audit Service for a three-year contract, with the potential for a two-year extension, subject to annual review, with effect from 01 August 2024.

[ACTION]

RB

FOR INFORMATION

23/63 FINANCE and RESOURCES

63.1 Monthly Management Accounts P8

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the Monthly Management Accounts for Month 8 (circulated, document May 24/15).

Detail of key issues included:

- The Financial health assessment
- The cash balance at the end of the period.
- Banking covenants are forecast to be met.
- Reforecast, included the one-off non-consolidated payment to staff in May 2024.
- Reforecast reduction to year-end retained surplus.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Monthly Management Accounts, Month 8, be noted and received.

63.2 GDPR Spring Term

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented a GDPR / Data Protection update report (circulated, document May 24/16).

An update on progress included:

- the work of the Data Protection Group
- two reported breaches; risk assessment and action taken
- four Data Subject Access Requests, with detail
- update of the agreed action plan
- reviewed membership of the group

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the GDPR/Data Protection update report be noted and received.

63.3 College Financial Handbook 2024

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented a report on the College Financial Handbook (circulated, document May 24/17).

Published in March 2024 and applicable from 01 August 2024 the handbook provides an overarching framework for the implementation of effective financial management and other controls, reflecting existing governance and oversight arrangements and the additional financial management requirements introduced to ensure compliance with Managing Public Money (see Part 5. Delegated authorities).

All Colleges must comply with the handbook as a condition of their accountability agreement. It sits alongside the College accounts direction, College financial planning handbook, and the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice, providing a suite of publications forming the financial governance, management, and financial and assurance framework for colleges.

An initial review of the handbook by the Vice Principal Finance and Resources has provided comfort that the College has in place appropriate governance and financial management arrangements that meet requirements. As the handbook contains some particularly detailed elements, a further review will be undertaken to provide assurance that the College is fully compliant prior to 1 August 2024.

A copy of the handbook was provided for reference.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** update on the College Financial Handbook 2024 be noted and received.

Mrs Barnes left the meeting.

23/64 STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

64.1 Principal's Report

The Principal presented an update report (circulated, document May 24/9).

The report provided detail on:

- Student numbers for September 2024
- Partnership with manufacturing partner
- Development of Skills provision beyond 'strong', upgrades to areas within the college

Questions received in advance

What has prompted the decision to make these improvements to the media and music spaces?

It was confirmed that the current spaces were below industry standard and required investment to support potential sponsorship from employers.

Will the potential partnership bring changes within the curriculum?

Details were provided on current discussions that were progressing.

What are the desired outcomes for the renovation?

It was hoped that it would attract sponsorship and other employers.

How is the new partnership hoped to improve the prospects for learners?

The intent was to increase the employability of learners, increasing confidence and opportunities.

Additional discussion points included:

Had sensory audits been completed?

This was confirmed and it was highlighted that the refurbishment of the media suite included an integrated breakout space.

How much could employers learn from this, and how it could inform reasonable adjustments?

It was reported that the College had learnt from employers particularly with regard to hierarchy of spaces.

It was commented that whilst walking about the college prior to the meeting, when comparing to other organisations, had been very positive.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Principal's update report be noted and received.

64.2 Student Numbers

The Deputy Principal presented the report on the Student Numbers (circulated, document May 24/10).

It was highlighted that the reported position for funded places was a significant increase on the same position last year (70+) as a result of LA decisions being made sooner.

It was confirmed that the College was in constant contact with the local LA, especially with regard to new learners.

Discussion points included:

Should there be concern about the low number of residential applications compared to previous years?

It was confirmed that the number of residential learners had remained largely static, and it was anticipated that this position would continue.

There was discussion of a number of issues including continued viability.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Student Numbers update report be noted and received.

64.3 QuIP 2023/24

The Deputy Principal reported on updates against the Quality Improvement Plan (circulated, document May 24/11).

The following points were highlighted:

pg. 1:

The Whitbread Thrive Programme had been awarded the prestigious national Disability Smart Inclusive Recruitment Award from the Business Disability Forum which represents 550 of the biggest companies in the UK covering 20% of the country's workforce.

pg. 2:

significant increase in the numbers of learners who had encounters with employers and experience of the workplace.

pg. 11

'Behaviour and Attitudes' – the continuing work regarding a trauma-based approach

Questions received in advance

Are there any indications of the increased focus on employability having a positive impact?

It was reported that the increased focus had delivered an increase in the numbers of learners having exposure to employers and work experience. The LOOP report (student survey) included a specific question about work experience / employability and that the results would hopefully demonstrate the impact of the increased numbers of participation. Anecdotal evidence from learners was very positive.

Additional discussion points included:

The Quality and Standards Committee had yet to have the final meeting of this academic year, with updates / discussion on the following specific points requested:

pg. 1:

Funding of an 'In Work Support Officer could be funded through Access to Work.

1.1.1 update on the action to 'Develop post-graduation support framework for Hereward leavers'.

1.3.1 Databridge / champions

1.5.1 discussion about the starting points for adult courses.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the update against the Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) 2023/24 be noted and received.

64.4 Data Dashboard 2023/24

The Data Dashboard was considered (circulated, document May 24/12).

Questions received in advance

Are there any plans to meet the targets for learner achievement (KPI 12)

This was confirmed that current indications were that the outturn for last year would be exceeded.

Are there any plans to promote the college's employability programme and opportunities to increase the number of interns (KPI 15)

It was reported that all outward facing activity was intended to support achievement.

Additional discussion points included:

It was positive to see the rates of staff turnover and sickness having reduced.

5. Hereward Training learner overall achievement rates, Distance Learning.

Colour of the RAG rating needed amendment

[ACTION]

RH

9. % of staff in support roles observed as appropriate – how had the data been calculated?

It was reported that the data was based on the number of staff to be observed divided by the three terms. The percentage was based on the number observed against the 'termly' number possible.

It was suggested that a footnote providing explanation be provided on the report. **[ACTION]**

SLT

The increase in the percentage was noted. The proportion of lessons per term that this would equate to was queried.

It was confirmed that the data was based on staff numbers rather than lessons.

10. % of observed lessons where learning support was identified as 'Good'.

On the data reported did this mean that the balance to 100% were not good and what was the number in question?

It was reported that some were not good. In this instance this equated to three observations that necessitated re-observation.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Data Dashboard 2023/24 update report be noted and received.

23/65 SAFEGUARDING and PREVENT

65.1 Safeguarding Update Report

The Vice Principal Safeguarding and Pastoral Care presented a Safeguarding Update Report (circulated, document May 24/13).

The report provided detail on a number of aspects:

- Safeguarding Overview
- Operational MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team)
- Clinical MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team)
- Warwickshire Prevent Steering Group
- Coventry 157 Safeguarding Audit
- Coventry Adult Safeguarding Board
- Safeguarding data
- External referrals
- Staff and Governor Training

It was highlighted that the data on staff face to face training was incorrect. The data was 98% (not 87%).

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Safeguarding Update Report be noted and received.

65.2 CQC Mock Inspection Report

The Vice Principal Safeguarding and Pastoral Care presented the Mock CQC Inspection Report (circulated, document May 24/14).

A mock inspection was undertaken on the 11th of March 2024 by Swift Management Services. The services were rated as **GOOD** overall with Outstanding in the area of Responsive.

It was noted that there had been some significant improvements and developments within the service since the last inspection (July 2023) that had led to an improved rating.

The report provided evidence of distance travelled by the use of coloured arrows showing the previous and current position against the possible ratings.

Four Action Points had been identified, all of which were best practice points, the majority of which had now been closed out / completed.

Discussion points included:

Where would any outstanding points be reported?

It was confirmed that these would be included in the service improvement plan and as part of the newly agreed reporting to the Quality and Standards Committee.

It was commented that the report indicated that although the assessment of whether the service was effective was Good, it was indicated that there had been little improvement / distance travelled between the two inspections. It was also unclear which of the action points were new or which covered previous points.

It was agreed that the report would be further reviewed in terms of distance travelled to provide an update. **[ACTION]**

JF

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Mock CQC Inspection Report be noted and received.

23/66 **QUALITY and CURRICULUM**

Complaints Report – Spring Term

The Deputy Principal presented a report on the Complaints Spring Term 2023/24 (circulated, document May 24/18).

The report summarised the key headline data from complaints received by the College during the Spring term 2023/24.

There were no complaints received by the College during the Spring term, which was a reduction of one compared to the Spring term of the previous three years.

Detail was provided.

Comparative data was provided.

Discussion points included:

It was queried if the cohort felt able / safe to complain.

It was confirmed that there was confidence that this was the case with the processes explained / published so as to support learners to do so. Parents and Carers were also made aware of the processes in place.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Complaints Report Spring Term 2023/24 be noted and received.

23/67 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

67.1 Further Education Commissioner Letter – Spring Term 2023/24

The Chair presented the most recent letter from the FE Commissioner (circulated, document May 24/19), for information.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Further Education Commissioner letter be noted and received.

67.2 Governor Recruitment

The Chair reported that the Search and Governance Committee had met on 07 May 2024 to consider the recommended reappointment of Mr S Crick (see minute 23/60.1) and current vacancies.

At the meeting she had reported the resignation of Mr M Cumella due to personal reasons, meaning that there were now three vacancies for independent governors.

It was confirmed that Peridot were due to start the re-run campaign for the 'co-opted' governor vacancy that had yet to be filled due to the two previous appointees not taking up the role.

Detail was provided with regard to the position, including the work Peridot was completing on behalf of the DfE and the proposal that the co-opted campaign be run over the summer with the intent to interview and appoint in the autumn term.

It was reported that at the meeting of the Search and Governance Committee there had been discussion of the engagement of Peridot to recruit to the 'independent governor' role and the cost quoted to fill one vacancy.

As the Committee did not have delegated authority re expenditure this would need Board approval.

It was further reported that there had been discussion of how the College and Governors could contribute to recruitment, separately to any work with an external agency e.g.:

- use of College PR / Marketing for advertising (similar to that used by Peridot)
- use of social networks
- use of Governors personal / professional networks
- Teams meetings / tours of the college
- open day to promote Governor opportunities, including information on the role.

It was suggested that the College should attempt to recruit concurrently to any campaign facilitated by Peridot.

Discussion points included:

- the need for a timeframe for any concurrent recruitment
- College and Governor capacity to support this
- how practical was this to achieve in what was left of the summer term
- the potential advantages of a local approach

It was **RESOLVED THAT**

- i. any additional engagement of Peridot be postponed until after the summer break;
- ii. direct recruitment via the College be attempted.

67.3 Strategy Day

It was confirmed that a half day Strategy Event was scheduled for the **afternoon of Tuesday 18th June 2024**. Please hold calendar entries had been issued.

67.4 Audit Committee Membership

The Chair of the Audit Committee highlighted the impact on the membership of the Audit Committee as a result of current Board vacancies. It was emphasised that financial / accounting / audit experience was not a pre-requisite, and members, especially with non-financial experience were encouraged to consider volunteering to serve on the Committee, if only in the short-term.

67.5 External Governance Review (EGR)

Mrs Collier confirmed that all Governors and SLT members should have received the questionnaires relating to the EGR. The deadline for submission being 21.05.2024. The responses to the questionnaire were a central part of the EGR process. All Governors and SLT members were requested to complete and submit the questionnaires by the deadline.

23/68 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of next meeting of the Board was confirmed as Thursday 4th July 2024.