

Minutes of: CORPORATION

Date: 21st March 2024

Time: 5:30pm

Place: Hybrid

Present: Mr S Brand
Mr S Bray
Mr P Cook MBE (Principal)
Mr M Cumella
Mrs P Dyson (Chair)
Mr I Meaton
Mrs 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)



23/44 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Crick and Mr Sonecha.

It was noted that the Chair and Director of Governance had met with Student Governor prior to the meeting and questions / comments / queries for presentation had been provided.

23/45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

FOR DECISION

23/46 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting (circulated, document March 24/1) held on 1st February 2024 were considered.

It was **RESOLVED THAT**, the minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2024 be approved.

23/47 MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Matters

23/36 Strategy / Strategic Plan

It was questioned if there would be a strategy event held in the Spring Term.

It was reported that it was considered that the outcomes from the event held in the autumn term along with current initiatives supported the development of a draft strategic plan from 2024.

It was advocated that it was about the strategic issues to be included, e.g., estates / curriculum development, and it was suggested that one event was insufficient. It was further suggested that this could feed into the scope for the external governance review.

This was acknowledged, but that this would need consideration in the context of other changes that may be identified whilst considering how this can be discussed / reviewed on a continuing basis.

It was confirmed that it was anticipated that a draft strategic plan, including delivery points, would be presented a future meeting of the Board, which aligned with the external governance review process and so could be discussed, as necessary.

It was commented that it was thought positive that the scope of the external governance review could include strategic considerations. It was suggested that there was also the opportunity to consider the nature of any strategic events e.g., engaging external input / facilitation to allow greater engagement by the SLT in discussions.

Actions Report (circulated, document March 24/2)

23/38 POLICIES / DOCUMENTS FOR APPROVAL

38.1 Technical Estates and Facilities *Digital Safety & Security Policy*

The detail provided with regard to staff leaving and the removal of data (page 5) was queried.

It was confirmed that some data is retained, and that clarification would be provided on what was removed.

Update 21.03.2024: **COMPLETE**

The users local and cloud-based storage is archived on the backups. Their storage area is purged.

The detail included with regard to recording / monitoring use (page 6) was raised and if this was compliant with GDPR / Data Protection.

It was agreed that this would be confirmed.

Update 21.03.2024: **COMPLETE**

All monitoring systems are compliant with GDPR / Data Protection

The Actions Report was noted. There were no other matters arising.

23/48 CURRICULUM STRATEGY

The Deputy Principal presented the Curriculum Strategy 2024 – 2026 (circulated, document March 24/3).

It was reported that the previous Curriculum Strategy 2022 – 2024 had been reviewed with the strategy presented having had the first part comprehensively revised to meet with current policy, priorities and the College's curriculum offer.

The latter part of the document predicted the offer, estimated popularity and mapped to resource requirements to meet need.

The strategy had been subject to internal and external review.

The Quality and Standards Committee had also considered it in detail.

Discussion points included:

- The labour market analysis was useful – what was the relationship between this and the Accommodation Strategy? It was suggested that a potential focus for the Accommodation Strategy was the delivery of the digital curriculum which appeared key.

It was commented that the relationship with employers was also critical and that partnership around delivery of the digital curriculum were being progressed.

There were mechanisms for linking the Curriculum Strategy to the Accommodation Strategy, with discussions taking place concurrently.

- Impact of the planned reform to L3 qualifications and if this undermined the strategy.

It was reported that the College had a very small number of L3 learners, and the Curriculum lead for this provision was in dialogue with the awarding organisations.

Consideration was also being given to the delivery of T levels which would be challenging, with the College looking to develop employment based qualifications.

It was acknowledged that the direction with regard to L3 qualifications was not supportive of the current L3 learners.

- Funding implications associated with the L3 reforms.

It was reported that the College intended to replace these L3 qualifications with alternative qualifications / programmes of study for those studying at L3.

- It was commented that the strategy articulated what could be achieved and the direction of travel well.

An associated piece of work would be to consider where the strategy was limited and where there were unmet opportunities because of the estate. Perhaps this could be considered at a future strategy event.

- Page 16 – reference to a Resourcing Steering Group

It was reported that this was in place pre-Ofsted inspection and had not been revised. It might be refreshed in future as part of the Accommodation Strategy review.

Had this fed into Governance?

It was confirmed that the outcomes had been articulated in the Curriculum Strategy resources and in finance papers that had been presented.

Questions received in advance

- *What plans does the College have to expand our digital learning that reflects the outside world?*

It was reported that work continued to engage with employers which could support with this. This sat alongside the work to develop the digital and media curriculum. It was considered that there was a need for more flexibility in the offer for this to be a good fit for learners and employers.

- *Would there be any plans to provide Health & Social Care courses not only to Adult Ed but also to students? HSC are popular choices at secondary schools with most offering courses.*

This has been discussed by the Curriculum Managers for some time. However, the current L2 and L3 offer required a great deal of commitment with regard to work placements, and these would not always be appropriate for Hereward learners.

It was being considered as part of the development of the Preparing for Adulthood and Independence offers.

- *Business in Action and Horticulture could utilise what is already a resource – growing vegetables and using these in the College kitchen or selling to the community?*

It was reported that this was already the case. There were links between the horticulture and hospitality teachers. The 'field to fork' methodology was part of the development of the L2 offer, with new links with a local nursery being progressed.

- *Are there future plans to develop construction? Students would like to be offered L2.*

It was acknowledged that the construction offer was popular, but that it was difficult to find the required expertise in terms of the required technical skills and SEN experience.

The College was hoping to develop a L2 construction pathway as opposed to qualifications via open awards.

- *Behaviour framework developments – is this created around the student and their needs rather than a one size fits all approach?*

It was confirmed that this would be based on individual need and assessment prior to joining the College.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the Curriculum Strategy 2024 - 2026 be approved.

23/49 POLICIES

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented a report on the policies that had been reviewed, considered by the Audit Committee, and were **recommended for approval** (circulated, document March 24/4).

1. *Anti-Money Laundering Policy*

The policy had been updated to reflect that the College relinquished its Tier 4 sponsor licence in May 2021 and no longer accepts international students. The Know Your Customer section had been strengthened and a small number of other minor amendments made. There have been no significant changes to relevant legislation since the last review.

2. *Anti-Tax Evasion Policy*

Roll forward of the existing policy, noting there had been no changes to relevant legislation since the last review.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** the policies as listed be approved.

FOR INFORMATION

23/50 STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

50.1 Principal's Report

The Principal presented an update report (circulated, document March 24/5).

The report provided detail on:

- Student numbers for September 2024
- Partnership with manufacturing partner
- Partnership with Whitbread
- College attendance at the Westminster launch of the Natspec Manifesto
- FE Week article on assistance provided by employer partnerships in addressing SEND budget gaps.

Discussion points included:

Residential numbers for 2024/25 – was a small increase anticipated?

It was confirmed that this was not the case, and it was expected that numbers would remain static.

Student numbers – was there any information on the position of LA in relation to the 31st March deadline and projected student numbers?

It was reported that there were still a number of interviews to be completed and those that would convert to placements. This could result in a higher number that was currently anticipated.

Partnership with Whitbread – information on LinkedIn for a particular LA that was also involved indicated that there was dedicated resource that was very active.

There was discussion as to how the process worked.

The application process for approval to establish a subsidiary and an offer for any submission to be reviewed.

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

[ACTION]

YD

Questions received in advance

Appears to be a lot of development and networking with regards to partnerships, businesses, and other colleges – are students aware?

When will this impact on students other than the current internship offers?

The statistics regarding people with learning disabilities in paid employment (4.8%) is this shared with learners? Are there any plans to facilitate a change in the perspective of our students with regard to their own outlook?

It was confirmed that communication of the developments and initiatives was not published whilst they remained commercially sensitive.

In terms of the questions regarding employment statistics and options for learners this would be referred to the Head of Employment Services for response.

PC/
NMCE

It was suggested that consideration would be given to issuing a newsletter to learners.

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.

[ACTION]

YD

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

50.2 Student Numbers

Members considered the report on the Student Numbers (circulated, document March 24/5).

Discussion points included:

Residential learner numbers.

The anticipated numbers for 2024/25 were on a par for 2023/24. However, this was supported by a decrease in applications and an increase in returners. Concern was expressed that despite this it might result in a decrease overall.

It was recognised that the position was often a balance between returners, restarts, and new learners. It was confirmed that programmes were flexed to support the retention of residential learners.

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

50.3 QuIP 2023/24

The Deputy Principal reported on the Quality Improvement Plan (circulated, document March 24/7).

It was reported that the Quality and Standards Committee had considered this report, and updates were highlighted for ease of reference.

Points highlighted included:

Page 3:

Increase in the percentage of learners who have encounters with employers (62%) and experience of the workplace (39%). This included trips / visits / presentations.

Page 9:

A permanent appointment had been made to the dedicated post of ILS for Functional Skills.

Page 15:

Developments regarding working with on offsite manufacturing company.

Discussion points included:

Work with the offsite manufacturing company – was very supportive and understood the learners.

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

50.4 Data Dashboard 2023/24

The Data Dashboard was considered (circulated, document March 24/8).

It was highlighted that there had been an improvement in overall achievement rates for distance learning since December 2023.

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

23/51 SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT UPDATE

The Vice Principal Safeguarding and Pastoral Care presented a Safeguarding Update Report (circulated, document March 24/9).

The report provided detail on a number of aspects:

- Safeguarding Overview
- Operational MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team)
- Clinical MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team)
- Attendance at Prevent Partnership for Warwickshire presentation of strategic priorities 2024 - 26.
- Safeguarding data
- Safeguarding referrals
- Staff and Governor Training

Discussion points:

The detail provided on the Prevent Partnership for Warwickshire presentation -more detail was requested about individuals operating without raising concern.

It was confirmed that when activity took place online there was the potential to track and trace, however this was limited where activity was offline or the platforms in use had end-to end encryption. This sophisticated technology supported the avoidance of track and trace and made it difficult to profile.

College actions were questioned.

It was reported that this was a national picture, and it was about working with the learners around their online presence.

It was noted that there was standard Prevent training in place, it was queried if there would be any benefit in additional bite sized training on local issues.

It was confirmed that this had been delivered last year with the local prevent action day.

Going forward the College could work with the individual at Warwickshire to deliver anything additional.

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.

[ACTION]

JF

Complaint / referral regarding sexual behaviours outside of college
Detail was provided.

Risk of negative publicity for College?

It was reported that the circumstances around this issue were different, with explanation provided.

With regard to the discussion of the risk of adverse publicity should mitigating actions be considered now?

It was suggested that the College should wait to see if the referral(s) resulted in any action being taken by the external agencies involved.

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

23/52 FINANCE AND RESOURCES

52.1 Audit Committee Meeting – 4th March 2024

The Corporation noted the report from the Audit Committee (circulated, document March 24/10).

The report confirmed that the Committee had considered:

- Policies *see minute 23/49.*
- Internal Audit Service reviews
 - ❖ Learner Attendance, Retention, and Intervention 02.23/24
Substantial assurance; one low risk recommendation
 - ❖ Key Financial Controls 03.23/24
Substantial assurance; two medium risk recommendations
- Progress against the Annual Internal Audit Service Plan 2023/24
- Risk Management
- Progress against open recommendations
- Deep Dives
- Gifts and hospitality
- AoB: Internal Audit Tender
- Final committee meeting in June 2024 and the intention of the current Committee Chair to step down from the role afterward.

Deep Dive

The Committee had considered a deep dive on Curriculum Planning / Costs / Analysis by Pathway. This had been consistent with previous reports.

Historically financial performance had been the achievement of a breakeven position, with a close focus on this in recognition that learner numbers could have a substantial impact on the financial position.

This being a key significant risk was arguably mitigated by the repeatedly consistent financial management and governance.

Discussions had suggested the potential for considering the benefits of investing in the College MIS so as to provide increased support of the assessment.

Discussion:

Clarity regarding MIS was sought – was this operational systems / software?

It was suggested that it was about the current accounting systems and how data was extracted and combined with that available from other systems e.g., Databridge.

It was suggested that if the College were to complete an analysis of MIS this would also need to consider if such systems existed for a College of this size and / or if costs would be prohibitive.

Risk Management

It was highlighted that in discussion a member of the Audit Committee had suggested that there were a number of fundamental strategic risks that required more in depth discussion, such as LA budgets and the impact on the College. It was acknowledged that the External Governance Review (EGR) had been suggested as a way to consider this as part of the wider piece of work.

Discussion:

Consideration of the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) by the Board and how this could be managed was raised.

It was confirmed that the SRR was presented for approval by the Board at the start of the academic year and performance was then monitored by the Audit Committee.

It was suggested that the document could be included as part of the reports to the Board from the Audit Committee.

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

YD

This was agreed to be a reasonable way forward. However, it was also important to consider where else the risks were considered, e.g., financial viability – this was reported on / scrutinised via the monthly management accounts, reforecasts, financial statements, financial impact associated with CMAs etc.

Any recommendation from the EGR would need to be appropriate to the size of the College.

It was commented that any revision to the current committee structure / reporting would need to consider the capacity of the SLT to meet requirements.

This was agreed, and it was suggested that there could be the option to review / rejuggle the existing committee structure without the need to increase the number of committees.

It was commented that again in terms of the historical position the College: it had required a different governance focus to the current focus of governance. It was suggested that to be more effective and lower the burden of reporting it would be advantageous to consider investing in MIS / infrastructure to focus on added value reporting, and lead to improved governance.

This was agreed.

It was **RESOLVED THAT**

- i. report on the Audit Committee meeting, 4th March 2024 be noted and received.
- ii. that future reports to Board from the Audit Committee include the Strategic Risk Register

[ACTION]

YD

52.2 Monthly Management Accounts

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the Monthly Management Accounts for Month 6 (circulated, document March 24/11).

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, including a proposed one-off non-consolidated payment to staff of £500 pro-rata in May 2024
- Reforecast reduction to year-end retained surplus.

Non-consolidated pay award

The request for a non-consolidated payment for all staff.

Approval was sought for a one-off non-consolidated payment to staff **of up to** £500 pro-rata.

The exact amount would be confirmed (after the Easter break) following a reforecast at the end of P8. This would be dealt with via email.

It was **RESOLVED THAT**

- i. the Monthly Management Accounts, Month 6, be noted and received.
- ii. the proposed non-consolidated pay award be approved in principle, with exact detail provided after the Easter break.

[ACTION]

**RB/
YD**

23/53 QUALITY AND CURRICULUM

53.1 Quality and Standards Committee Meeting – 6th March 2024

The Corporation noted the report from the Quality and Standards Committee (circulated, document March 24/12).

The report confirmed that the Committee had considered:

- Hereward Training
- Careers and Employability Strategy – Implementation Plan
- Learner Leadership (see minute 23/53.3)
- Deep Dives
- Curriculum Strategy update (see minute 23/48)
- Quality Improvement Plan (see minute 23/50.3)
- Interim Internal Quality Review Report
- Projected Achievement and Pass Rates (see minute 23/53.2)
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Objectives
- Data Dashboard (see minute 23/50.4)

It was highlighted that there had been an improvement in the overall adult achievement rate and indications were that this could improve further.

The performance against the AEB allocation was behind for the time of year, with plans in place to improve this. This would need monitoring.

The Committee had received an excellent deep dive presentation on proposed reporting on the residential provision and an example report.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** report on the Quality and Standards Committee meeting, 6th March 2024 be noted and received.

53.2 Projected Achievement and Pass Rates

The Deputy Principal presented a report on the Projected Achievement and Pass Rates (circulated, document March 24/13).

This report had been considered in detail by the Quality and Standards Committee.

Highlights included:

- The report detailed current retention and predicted pass and achievement rates by Pathway.
- Close monitoring of retention and individual student progress was a key focus for Pathway teams.
- The predicted Pass rates had been arrived at by Curriculum Managers adopting a cautious approach to success, with most predictions lower than last year's outturn. If retention remained the same and all learners pass at the end of their programme, then the achievement rate could be as high as 98%.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** report on the Projected Achievement and Pass Rates be noted and received.

53.3 Learner Leadership

The Vice Principal Safeguarding and Pastoral Care presented a report on the Learner Leadership activities that had taken place between September and February (circulated, document March 24/14).

This report had been considered in detail by the Quality and Standards Committee.

The report provided detail on activities completed by the Student Council and Peer Support Team.

LOOP 2022/23 Improvement Plan

This report had been considered in detail by the Quality and Standards Committee.

The report covered three broad themes:

- Teaching and Learning
- Aspirations and the World of Work
- Safety and well-being

It was reported that the LOOP survey process for 2023/24 had been completed and a draft report was anticipated.

Discussion points:

127 responses – what percentage was this and how did it compare to previous years?

It was confirmed that this data would need to be confirmed.

[ACTION]

JF

It was reported that 30% was believed to be the consistent level of engagement.

The processes were completed in-house.

It was suggested that it would be advantageous to capture a greater degree of engagement and could alternative means such as workshops be considered?

It was agreed that consideration would be given as how this could be improved.

It was commented that the statistics for 2023/24 would be reviewed and could be discussed at a future meeting of the Board.

Questions received in advance

Are there any plans to further develop links with the community – such as raising disability awareness, community education projects?

It was reported that the College was always considering links into the community, and this would be discussed with the Student Executive.

[ACTION]

JF

The potential of considering family hubs, parent / carer forums, was raised and if this could complement the work of the College.

It was agreed that this could be considered, having regard to compatibility and safeguarding and the delivery of structured activities.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** Learner Leadership update report be noted and received.

23/54 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

External Governance Review - Scope

Potential points for inclusion:

- Principle 4 Code of Good Governance – collaboration and stakeholder engagement - Should this be a specific question given the new structure and developments with Whitbread? It was suggested that this might not fit with the EGR timeframe as the work with Whitbread was on the basis of Whitbread's timeframe.
- Points from previous meetings – how the Board / Committees demonstrate effective financial governance, student governor engagement: an effective way forward has been developed for now.
- Acknowledge the intention to establish a subsidiary, subject to any requirement for approval.

Recruitment

It noted that a re-run campaign was been facilitated by the recruitment agency, but that there was the potential for an additional engagement to address anticipated vacancies. It was suggested that any fee for additional recruitment reflect the time and effort that had gone into the previous recruitment campaigns where appointees had subsequently withdrawn.

23/55 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 16th May 2024.