

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION
Held remotely on 'Teams' on Tuesday 30 June 2020
At 5.00 pm

Present	Martin Clark (Chair), Mark Lello, Harry Adam, Clive Barker, Carlton Brand, Amanda Burnside, Jon Downing, Ruth Greening, Iain Hutchison, Mags Patten, Venetia Summers, Katie Walker, Jack Wills.
In Attendance	<i>Iain Hatt (Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality), Julian Wood, (Deputy Principal Corporate Resources), Heather Cross (Clerk to the Corporation),</i>

	Minute	Action
2019-20 9/1	Apologies for absence	
	None recorded.	
2019-20 9/2	Declarations of interest	
	None	
2019-20 9/3	Chair's opening remarks	
	<p>The Chair welcomed Katie Walker to her first and commented that this was Mark Lello's last, meeting – there would be an opportunity to record a farewell to Mark later in the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair recorded with pleasure that the college had been successful in its application to run T levels, and these would be delivered starting in the 2021/22 year.</p>	
2019-20 9/4	COVID 19 briefing update	
	<p>The Principal gave a verbal update to the meeting. Government advice on handling the current situation and preparing for September remained very fluid, with the latest being the reduction of social distancing from 2m to 1m, which significantly changed the capacity of campuses from 30% to 60%, with all the attendant planning consequences. It was noted that the Prime Minister had recently promised all young people an apprenticeship if required, but this would necessitate securing an employer. Whilst the central advice was subject to regular change, the college management remained fully conversant with and responding rapidly to current guidance.</p> <p>All staff on site had received training and all students on site currently had been briefed on health and safety. 2m distancing was being observed for the rest of the summer and contingency planning was being started should there be local lockdowns. Governors would be invited to the remote staff awards ceremony on 3 July.</p> <p>Over 7000 student outcomes had been estimated by staff, which then had to be placed in rank order in each subject. This had been a particular challenge for GCSE English. HE award boards were taking place online. HE graduation had been postponed, with regret, to next academic year, but the event remained an important activity both for individuals and to show-case the</p>	

	<p>college's success. The position for apprenticeships was mixed, with those due to progress by the end of July 2020 being prioritised. There was a significant impact on hairdressing apprenticeships, with all outcomes delayed.</p> <p>In respect of planning for the coming year, blended delivery was being planned until at least Christmas, with practical activities on-site and theory online. This had been practised previously, but the balance of the activities was of course being changed. It was noted that schools had been provided with £1bn catch up funding, whereas nothing had been identified for FE students who would be badly disadvantaged.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality reported on the plans progressing with online enrolment, with significant numbers already enrolled, having started the process during April. A presentation was made concerning all the social distancing arrangements made overall.</p> <p>The working from home model for staff was being carefully considered, with a working from home strategy being prepared. Positive discussions were taking place with unions.</p> <p>Governors recorded their continued high level of confidence in the plans being made by the management team regarding re-opening and expressed their ongoing thanks for the work being undertaken.</p>	
<p>2019-20 9/5</p>	<p>Draft 20/21 Budget and Options</p>	
	<p>The Principal commented that frank and open engagement with the Education and Skills Funding Agency and Further Education Commissioner's team concerning the impact of Covid-19 on the college's financial position continued. It remained understood that the college, along with those other colleges in the similar situation caused by Covid, whose underlying finances were previously stable, would have access to financial support made available, although the arrangements for this could not as yet be confirmed.</p> <p>The draft budget 20/21 report had been circulated previously and the details of planning towards the budget were reported. It was noted that a prudent middle ground between downside risks and upside possibilities was the approach being taken, although this would still result in a significant financial deficit projected for 2020/21. The underlying curriculum plan showed a small surplus but as the college had no cash reserves, the impact of Covid-19 across various areas of income and expenditure would lead to an overdrawn position of up to £4.4m with a cash low point in April 2021, with the first cash facility forecast to be required in January 2021. Governors reviewed the figures presented in the draft budget and there followed discussion concerning the further mitigating options which could be pursued, in addition to some new apprenticeship starts, substantial use of the government furlough scheme, internal budget challenge meetings identifying savings and the recent approval by the Board through written resolution of a loan capital repayment holiday with the college bankers.</p> <p>There was considerable discussion concerning the proposed additional mitigations set out in the budget paper, especially in relation to the possible option of rescinding the planned all staff pay award considering its impact on current staff and also future recruitment. It was recognised that staff would appreciate the college's honesty in explaining the approach to be taken at this time.</p>	

	<p>After careful consideration it was agreed with reluctance that the 1.5% all staff pay award should be rescinded at this time and not included in the budget, but should circumstances improve the position would be examined again in-year. It was agreed that the Chair agree with the Principal how this message be communicated to best effect with staff.</p> <p>It was agreed that the funding for an incremental pay award be retained. It was agreed that the option to include a cash receipt for some additional land disposal at Lackham should not be included in the budget, nor a reduction to operational capital spend.</p> <p>It was agreed that further professional services service reviews be undertaken to identify any scope for further expenditure reductions and that the Board receive an update in September on the possible savings following completion of the initial review.</p> <p>It was agreed that the effect of these additional mitigations be included into the budget to be prepared for approval in July 2020.</p>	
<p>2019-20 9/6</p>	<p>Principal's report</p>	
	<p>The Principal's Report had been circulated previously and provided information on Covid-19 response, as reported and discussed earlier in the meeting. It was noted that the college had been given short notice of the opportunity to apply for the College Collaboration Fund and an application had been submitted jointly with Bridgwater and Taunton College, as agreed by the Chair. Governors welcomed hearing about this opportunity and supported the application having been made.</p> <p>It was noted that a new Chief Executive had been appointed by Wiltshire Council, Terence Herbert, who wished to develop further the active working relationship with the college. Representation by the Council on the Board was being pursued.</p> <p>The effect of delay on the LEP capital projects was currently being worked on. A report would be provided to the Board when there was certainty.</p> <p>The Board discussed the recent Black Lives Matter movement and agreed that a response to this should be made. As the local population did not have great diversity it was recognised that as a result the issue could be marginalised which could lead to further unconscious bias. A draft statement had been prepared which had been circulated and this was considered. It was agreed that the following statement be adopted and be placed on the college website.</p> <p>"As with so many people around the world, Governors at Wiltshire College & University Centre have been shocked by the death of George Floyd and other recent tragic events in America. It is quite clear that we must all think about the race discrimination issues that the Black Lives Matter movement is rightly highlighting and the actions we can take to eradicate all forms of inequality. In education we have a special responsibility to take action to ensure that there is real equality of opportunity for all our students and staff and to promote equality and inclusion and challenge racism and all forms of prejudice strongly; in this regard the College's 'safe and respectful culture' is a concept we strive to embed in everything we do.</p> <p>Through the Code of Good Governance in English Colleges the Governing</p>	

	<p>Body is already committed not only to meeting statutory requirements in this area but to exceeding them wherever we are able to. But we really need to make sure that we are doing all that we can. As a start, and in conjunction with the College's senior management, we will undertake a thorough review of the Colleges' equality and diversity policy next term and ensure that improving equality, diversity and inclusion is a clear theme in the new Strategic Plan that will be developed during next year.</p> <p>As a Governing Body we have identified inclusion as a key behavioural value for ourselves and we will be developing specific measures that we will commit to trying to deliver to improve diversity in our Board and to more regularly address inclusion matters. In this way, we at least hope to start properly trying to tackle the race discrimination issues that the Black Lives Matter movement is bringing out so clearly."</p> <p>Governors acknowledged the continued considerable work being carried out by the Management Team in the current Covid-19 situation and the strong engagement of the college with stakeholders.</p>	
2019-20 9/7	HE Student Protection Plan	
	<p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality commented on the circulated HE Student Protection Plan; it was a requirement of the Office for Students that such a plan be adopted in order to protect students engaged in prescribed HE who had taken out a student loan.</p> <p>The Plan was considered and was approved.</p>	
2019-20 9/8	AEB and 16 – 19 ESFA Sub-contracting 2020/21	
	<p>A report had been circulated setting out the policies in relation to sub-contracting and the proposed sub-contractors for the 2020/21 year. It was noted that an increase in sub-contracting to Aspire was proposed.</p> <p>Governors reviewed the policies and the proposed sub-contractors which were approved.</p> <p>It was noted that whilst there had been a slight drop in the achievement rate for subcontracted work, at 96% this was still at a very high rate.</p>	
2019-20 9/9	Management Accounts	
	<p>The management accounts for May 2020 had been circulated previously.</p> <p>It was noted that a further conversation had taken place with the college's bankers who had made it clear that in the circumstances of Covid-19 they intended to take a pragmatic approach to the fulfilment of covenants. The bank had recently appointed a new relationship Director who had knowledge of FE.</p> <p>Governors reviewed the Management Accounts which were received.</p>	

2019-20 9/10	Risk Register	
	The latest risk register, which in particular reflected the current exceptional risks, had been circulated previously. This was discussed and received .	
2019-20 9/11	Minutes of the last meeting held 21 May 2020	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2020 which had been circulated previously were accepted as a true record.	
2019-20 9/12	Schedule of Actions	
	There were no outstanding actions to be reported upon this month.	
2019-20 9/13	Amendment to Instrument of Government concerning Student membership of the Board	
	<p>A proposed amendment to Instrument 2(1) d had been circulated previously. This was noted as having been put forward in order reflect the agreed position that one student governor position should be reserved for the Student President and one for an elected HE student. The ongoing position would be that the Student President would be expected to represent all students.</p> <p>The following amendment to the Instrument of Government was approved.</p> <p>Instrument clause 2(1) (d) – “At least one and not more than two members who are students at the institution hand have been nominated and elected by their fellow students, one of these positions reserved for the Student President and the other being the elected HE student representative.”</p>	
2019-20 9/14	Delivering Outstanding Governance – Action Plan	
	<p>A report and an action plan concerning delivering outstanding governance had been circulated previously.</p> <p>The Chair reminded governors that the actions arose from the self-assessment process which had been carried out and the longer document circulated showed the areas for improvement which the action plan was intended to address.</p> <p>Governors commented that the action plan read very well. It was noted that Covid-19 offered some opportunities for reflection on governance practice and potential change.</p> <p>Governors welcomed and approved the proposed action plan.</p>	
2019-20 9/15	Establishment of Quality Working Group and committee vacancies	
	<p>Proposed terms of reference for the Quality Working Group which had been circulated were approved. The Chair commented that he would be speaking to all governors concerning their membership of working groups and recognizing that the Audit Committee was currently low on members.</p> <p>It was agreed that quality would still remain a key focus at Board meetings, but the establishment of the Quality Working Group should enable some discussion of issues which would then more readily be referred to at main Board meetings and allow both quality and finance matters to have equal</p>	

	prominence.	
2019-20 9/16	Vote of Thanks	
	<p>The Chair spoke about the magnificent contribution that Mark Lello had made as a governor since his appointment in 2012. He had played a key role in making the necessary changes to the College in 2014 and throughout his terms of office had been a great college advocate, a strong employer link and pursued a keen interest in student progression. He had been an excellent Vice-Chair since December 2015.</p> <p>On the occasion of his retirement from the Board, the Chair led a vote of thanks to Mark Lello for his outstanding work as a governor and wished him well for his future.</p> <p>Mark responded, commenting on the strong personnel the college had to lead transformational change and how much he had enjoyed his time as a governor in making a contribution to this in various ways. He wished the college every continued success.</p>	
2019-20 9/17	Emerging Issues and Aspirations	
	<p>Governors confirmed that the pace of the meeting had been appropriate.</p> <p>A Letter from the Secretary of State for Education thanking governors for their work at this time which had been received was acknowledged.</p> <p><u>Final Further Education Commissioner team Diagnostic Assessment Report March 2020</u></p> <p>This final report, which confirmed the improved financial position of the college as identified in the visit conducted in March 2020 was received.</p> <p><u>College Financial Statements 2018-19 – confirmation of financial health from ESFA</u></p> <p>The recent report from the Education and Skills Funding Agency which confirmed the college’s financial health in the previous year as ‘good’ was received.</p>	
2019-20 9/18	Date of Next Meeting	
	The date of the next meeting had been agreed as 14 July 2020 – this was a special meeting.	