

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION
Held on Thursday 21 May 2020
Remote

Present	Martin Clark (Chair), Harry Adam, Carlton Brand, Amanda Burnside, Jon Downing, Ruth Greening, Iain Hutchison, Mags Patten, Venetia Summers, Becca Thurston, Jack Wills (apart from part of item 8/4).
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 8/1	Apologies for absence	
	Apologies were received from Mark Lello and Jack Wills (for part of the meeting)	
2019-20 8/2	Declarations of interest	
	None	
2019-20 8/3	Chair's opening remarks	
	<p>The Chair welcomed all those present to the third full Board meeting taking place fully online. It was agreed that the protocols previously established, including for debate and decision-making, of checking with each participant individually would be followed.</p> <p>It was reported that Becca Thurston had recently taken a new role at Wessex Water, leading their academy in conjunction with Weston College. Regrettably this created an ongoing conflict of interest with this college and it had been decided that this would be Becca's last meeting as she would be standing down as a governor.</p>	
2019-20 8/4	COVID 19 briefing	
	<p>The Principal and Deputy Principals gave a presentation to the meeting, expanding upon that which had been given to the staff recently, which focussed on the considerations involved in bringing students back into college. The college had carried out much analysis on a qualification-led basis of who would benefit from coming back into college before September. The advice from the DfE was rapidly changing and developing. The college was carefully considering how the social distancing arrangements would work on each campus, including one-way traffic through buildings. The Principal was a member of a national FE group involved in planning for post-lockdown and this was looking to develop an FE based checklist, but until such time as that was available, a health and safety checklist developed for primary schools was being used. Governors agreed that providing adequate health and safety arrangements were paramount.</p> <p>It was noted that all staff had been asked to complete surveys concerning their personal health circumstances, which would enable the college to plan</p>	

appropriately. A student survey showed how they were finding the experience of online learning and the results of this were shared with governors, showing that the experience was found to be overwhelmingly positive. However, it was clear that many missed college and the opportunity for interaction with others – the development of social skills was a key part of the college learning experience, which was missing in an online setting. It was likely that major components of the curriculum would continue into the future to be delivered online, planning for larger groups and the IT platform and software to do this, in addition to making sure this was accessible to all students was very important. Safeguarding and tutorial LSDS teams continued to work with vulnerable students, with plans developing for the future which were acceptable to the local authorities and to parents.

The qualifying arrangements for students were being reviewed carefully, taking Ofqual's and awarding body guidance, with the vast majority of qualifications to be assessed by calculation. The College's quality monitoring group was to play a key role in this assessment process of ranking students.

Governors asked questions concerning the skills and capacity of the health and safety review process and satisfied themselves about the adequacy of the checks being carried out, with good resources supporting these. Questions were asked about how far health and safety was a likely barrier to student return to college and governors also asked about contingency planning for second spikes in the virus. Transport for staff and students was also of key importance and what would meet social distancing requirements. Overall, risk assessments were fundamental to the college's processes. Governors asked about how absenteeism was being monitored and were informed that 87% attendance was found to be experienced. Governors noted that the considerations being given to the emotional impact on students and staff were outstanding.

There followed discussion about the financial impact on the college of the virus. The Principal was currently carrying out a round of meetings with local MPs to apprise them of the impact and to put pressure on the release of government financial support. It was noted that although the figures concerning the impact in the present year were improved on those forecast at the last meeting, with better apprenticeship figures, there was inevitably significant planning uncertainty into the following year. Curriculum planning had been completed, but it was still not certain what form and scale of re-opening would be possible in September and there were additional costs with PPE having to be provided and additional cleaning and different catering arrangements. Student numbers would be uncertain, with expected greater attrition in apprenticeship programmes and possible increases in full time courses. The likely financial impact was £4m over the current and successive year. No lending, even on the special schemes, was forthcoming from the bank. The cash position remained secure until Spring 2021, supported by receipt of LEP payments and the Council loan in advance of construction project expenditure, at which point central funding support would be required, in common with the position of a significant percentage of other colleges. College management continued to press the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for a loan and for certainty on what would be provided. The College's candour in making the situation clear to the Agency had been welcomed by the ESFA and there were further meetings planned in early June but they had already acknowledged that the college was a sustainable and fully solvent business in normal times. It was noted that the Agency had asked all colleges for a new financial return by the end of July. This would not require the specific approval of the Board but would require endorsement that it was consistent with an approved Budget.

	<p>Governors noted the additional financial reporting requirements at year-end. Detailed planning taking cognisance of government advice was noted as taking place and Governors agreed the general direction of travel of the arrangements being made, with no face to face teaching planned in June, some potential activity in July and with priority being given to students with deferred assessment between July and September, based on the health and safety risk assessments being carried out.</p> <p>Governors commended the considerable efforts being made by senior management to secure government funding support for the impact of Covid-19 and the extensive work to plan for re-opening on a phased basis with health and safety as the prime consideration.</p>	
<p>2019-20 8/5</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion update</p>	
	<p>A presentation was given, reminding governors that it was a requirement for them to review this aspect of the college on at least an annual basis, to review performance against targets and to consider where they may need adjustment. The key aspects of the EDI group regularly meeting in college were considered, the role of which was to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote, advance and monitor the Safe and Respectful Culture agenda • Produce and publish EDI policy and objectives • Review and update EDI action plan to highlight any at-risk areas within the organisation • Share ideas and good practice • Analyse feedback from the student and staff voice and to • Recommend and support targeted training for staff and students <p>It was noted that there was good progress being made to meet EDI action plan objectives and although there was always more work which needed to be done, there was an effective NEET programme offering excellent progression opportunities into education and employment; the college supported 331 identified high needs learners; there had been no student complaints of discrimination in the current year; there had been a significant improvement in the collection and reporting of data allowing for better analysis and intervention to take place; there was a consistent strength in supporting autistic students to achieve; there was excellent learner progression with an improving trend of High Needs learners progressing on to a higher-level further education course; better Schemes of Work were in place; 90% of lessons showed that EDI was embedded effectively and the work to continue to reduce achievement gaps was progressing.</p> <p>Student and staff data was presented and discussed.</p> <p>A new approach to EDI was proposed whereby the reporting structure and EDI College Group would be revisited and refreshed and work would be carried out with governors to set the future direction and revisit key performance indicators, with a more formalised annual reporting procedure.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the work being done in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion and the direction of travel, looking forward to engaging with the process of setting future direction and revisiting the KPIs in this area.</p>	

2019-20 8/6	Principal's report	
	<p>The Principal's Report had been circulated previously and provided information on Covid-19 response, as reported and discussed earlier in the meeting, applications status, an intended government White Paper on FE reform, the plans for awarding qualifications as a result of lockdown, an online learning update, safeguarding practice, the financial impact of Covid-19, the continuation of the LEP capital projects and the position of The Colleges Partnership and the delivery of apprenticeship training which was continuing. An exceptional risk register in response to the Covid-19 crisis had been developed and this had been circulated with the report. This was reviewed, noting the reflection of the key areas discussed earlier in the meeting.</p> <p>The Principal reported that interviews for the posts of Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment and the Director of Business Development were shortly to take place.</p> <p>Governors acknowledged the considerable work being carried out by the Management Team in the current situation and the continued engagement of the college with stakeholders.</p>	
2019-20 8/7	Quality Improvement Plan (Covid-19)	
	<p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality commented on the QIP for the period April to July 2020, specifically to address Covid-19 operating conditions, which was being maintained alongside the main Quality Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Governors asked questions about the plan, including how the quality of teaching and learning was being measured given the different methods and media being used. Professional development for teachers had been amended in order to encompass more opportunities for online learning.</p> <p>The Plan was reviewed and received.</p>	
2019-20 8/8	Management Accounts	
	<p>The management accounts for April 2020 had been circulated previously.</p> <p>It was noted that the forecast impact of Covid-19 on the current year's finances had slightly improved, with a reduction from £2.2m to £2m, mainly as a result of the Job retention scheme, more favourable apprenticeship income and an educational support payment from TCP. The forecast annual deficit was £2,179K including £2,026K negative impact from Covid-19.</p> <p>Governors reviewed the Management Accounts which were received.</p>	
2019-20 8/9	Assurance Framework	
	<p>The Assurance Framework approved by the Audit Committee in Autumn 2019 which had been agreed should be shared with the whole Board had been circulated previously. The retiring Chair of the Committee, Jon Downing, commented that the intention of the document was to give clarity on both the</p>	

	<p>areas of current assurance and where further work to increase assurance might be provided through the audit programme.</p> <p>It was noted that Clive Barker was now taking over as the new Chair of the Audit Committee and that Jon Downing would chair the Finance Working Group. Clive thanked Jon for his work in chairing the committee and he considered from his induction that audit practice in the college was well positioned.</p>	
2019-20 8/10	Minutes of the last meeting	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2020 which had been circulated previously were accepted as a true record, with the amendment of the title of the Deputy Principal Corporate Resources.	
2019-20 8/11	Schedule of Actions	
	The current schedule of actions was received. There were no outstanding actions.	
2019-20 8/12	New Governor Proposal	
	<p>The Chair and Vice-Chair proposed the appointment of Katie Walker as a governor, following her recent interview. Her CV had been circulated with the agenda and her curriculum and quality experience was particularly noted.</p> <p>The appointment of Katie Walker was approved with immediate effect for a first term of office of the standard four years.</p>	
2019-20 8/13	Delivering Outstanding Governance - Interim Report	
	<p>An interim report had been circulated previously which gave an opportunity for Governors to see the outcomes from the self-assessment exercise carried out in the Spring and to have sight of a document setting out areas for governance improvement and possible actions to address these. It was the intention to present the action plan at the next Board meeting.</p> <p>One key action for the establishment of a Quality Working Group was considered immediately, which would meet alternately with the Finance Working Group. Terms of reference for the new group were agreed to be developed and presented for approval.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the report and looked forward to consideration of the full action plan in due course.</p>	
2019-20 8/14	College-related activities	
	It was acknowledged that these were limited at present, but governors continued to take part in meetings online where they were members of groups.	
2019-20 8/15	Proposed calendar of meetings 2020-21 academic year	
	A proposed calendar for the 2020-21 year had been circulated previously. The meetings calendar for the 2020-21 year was approved .	

2019-20 8/16	Emerging Issues and Aspirations	
	Governors confirmed that the pace of the meeting had been appropriate.	
2019-20 8/17	Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting	
	<p>Governors thanked Becca Thurston for her work as a governor, as this was her last meeting following resignation and wished her all the very best for the future.</p> <p>The date of the next meeting had been agreed as 30 June 2020.</p>	