

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on 11th February 2021 via Zoom

Governors Present: Max Hailey (Chair), David Bainton (Vice Chair), Karen Mitchell (Principal), Ian Harper, Anne-Marie McNeill, Eddie Weiss, Julie Gillespie, Nick Bevan, Bethan Waters, Andra Mirica, Josh Holdsworth

In Attendance: John McGrath (VP, Corporate Services (VPCS)), Clare Rooney (VP, Learning & Quality (VPL&Q)), Anna Smith (Clerk to Corporation), Rob Lawson (NLG Observer)

Apologies: Jackie Campbell, Amir Khaki

AGENDA ITEM	Evidence of Support & Challenge (S / C)
<p>1. INTRODUCTION AND UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Rob Lawson, NLG who was welcomed as an observer to inform the ETF funded board review. Rob Lawson briefed on his background and thanked those who had been involved in supporting the review.</p> <p>The meeting was quorate and there were no new declarations of interests.</p> <p>The Chair briefed the Corporation on the FEC recommendations and the Principal and Clerk updated on the progress to date.</p>	
<p>2. CLERK'S PAPER</p> <p>The Clerk briefed the Corporation on her paper and updated Members on the current position regarding the recruitment to fill the vacancies on the Board. Once these are filled it is reassuring to note that the College will have a strengthened Board with a solid, stable membership going forward. Feedback was welcomed on either document and NB highlighted a minor change required in the Code compliance mapping document.</p> <p>The Corporation Noted the Corporation Membership Succession Planning 2020-21 – 2022/23.</p> <p>The Corporation Noted the Code of Good Governance compliance mapping exercise.</p>	
<p>3. CONSENT AGENDA</p> <p>3.1 The Corporation Approved the minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on 10/12/20. 3.2 The Corporation Noted the rolling actions log.</p>	
<p>4. STUDENT UNION REPORT</p> <p>The Student Governors took the Corporation through the latest update from the Student Union.</p> <p>The VPL&Q noted the career coaching progression was a brand new model introduced this year and was pleased to hear the positive comments from students. She queried whether the student governors were aware of any areas for development which students would like to see as the model is adapted for next year. JH fed back that one of the subjects (robots in AI) had not been interesting/entertaining enough but that this was being relooked at for next year.</p> <p>Governors raised the following questions:</p>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q. Regarding technology support for students, BW queried how many students are still requiring laptops/Chromebooks to support their work or has everybody who has requested one now received one? A. AM noted that tutors are working with those students who need such support and Student Services are continuing to provide further equipment. In the majority of cases all students who need access to technology have been provided for. The Principal added that there has also been the opportunity for those students who don't have technology at home to come into College and access virtual learning on campus. • Q. NB queried in terms of bursary support, has this fund been sufficient to cover all the cases that it needed to cover? A. Yes, we widened our bursary limits in the last couple of years and have not had to limit it in any way at all. • Q. BW queried where does the bursary funding come from? A. The ESFA and the VPCS explained how this is allocated and recorded. • Regarding the careers programme the Vice Chair asked if there is scope for Governors to be involved in sessions around what it takes to get on in the workplace? This support was welcomed by all and from a student perspective JH and AM noted that this could really encourage students to engage more and boost confidence. (Action: VPL&Q to arrange engagement of Governors in careers sessions for students) • EW queried whether there also scope for Governors to help in advising students on how to perform in interviews? This was also welcomed and JH suggested practice interviews too. (Action: VPL&Q to arrange engagement of Governors in interview sessions for students) <p>The Chair thanked the Student Governors for their update.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">S&C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S&C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S</p>
<p>5. REVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)</p> <p>The Chair reminded Governors of the dashboard available to support their scrutiny of the management reports.</p> <p>The Vice Chair queried why some KPIs were rag rated yellow despite being quite far from the target and the VPL&Q explained this was because those mentioned related to in-year achievement and so the percentage would be lower than target but not identified as a high (red) risk at this stage in the year.</p> <p>With regards to 'Students completing work experience' IH asked if we think we are at the right percentage for this time of year and suggested this could be built into the rag rating as Governors would be right to challenge the current low percentage against target.</p> <p>IH further queried regarding attendance, is it right to think there is a trend to assume attendance would be better in the first term and get lower through the year and therefore we as Governors should be more concerned at the current position? The VPL&Q noted that the current position is similar to last year so similar blended learning attendance to last year's overall in College attendance. Governors agreed this is still too low and this would be picked up in more detail in the Learning and Quality report.</p> <p>The Vice Chair queried the yellow rag rating against the ESFA financial health rating despite the comment noting that the accounts are on the borderline. The VPCS confirmed it is very borderline and it could be green but that it still needs to be closely monitored. The VPCS and VPL&Q agreed it could be useful to include a milestone for measuring in-year.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C</p>

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<p>NB queried whether some KPIs are strategically more important or a bigger risk to the College and should these be linked to the risk register. The Principal acknowledged this and explained that the KPI dashboard is separate to the risk register which already exists to serve such purpose and all KPIs are categorised under the 5 strategic objectives of the Big Bucks Ambition Strategic Plan to support progress against this.</p>	C
<p>6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</p> <p>The Principal briefed the Corporation on her report which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID National Lockdown Restrictions and the impact on teaching and learning and operations which are still running positively and safely. Included an update on remote working; campus openings; exams; apprentices practical assessments; and asymptomatic testing. BW queried the wellbeing of staff and students given the current 'lockdown fatigue' and whether this could also impact on attendance. The Principal and the Staff Governor (Human Resources) briefed on the support mechanisms available and the Student Governors briefed on their perspective and the support available for their fellow students. AM noted some students have anxiety around zoom lessons and that tutors are supportive. The Principal added that the safeguarding team and learning support team are picking up individual cases to ensure all students are well supported. • FE Commissioner Diagnostic Assessment report and recommendations as discussed at the beginning of the meeting. • Buckinghamshire Growth and Recovery Deal being led by Buckinghamshire Council and the impact the College could have as part of the unitary leadership of the county. • FE White Paper 'Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth' summarising the key decisions and how it aligns closely with the College's mission and strategic plan. Governors were encouraged to consider the implications for governance in the paper. The Principal has been asked by the DfE to be involved in the consultation on the design of the strategic development funds around the College Business Centres and views from Governors to take forward are welcomed. • Student Numbers 16-18 2020/21. These have increased again since the report was written and now shows an increase of 112% total funding from previous year. The Vice Chair queried whether this is demographical or whether people are now reconsidering the university option given the pandemic. The Principal reflected on various reasons and the VPCS agreed there were demographic elements associated to the increase. The Vice Chair added whether it is worth considering any long term implications around student aspirations. The Principal agreed it would be worth considering to look at trends in growth areas. The VPCS added that nationally colleges are seeing an increase in recruitment. • Student Recruitment 2021/21. This is very positive and above last year's position which shows a good reflection of the virtual open evenings required this year which have been well attended and well received. Interest is also increasing in T Levels and overall applications are strong and the Staff Governor (curriculum) added her perspective on the growth, particularly across digital. • Communications around the estates strategy with external stakeholders which are all positive. • Health and Safety Report. The Vice Chair queried the number of outstanding training on the COVID 19 Awareness course and the Principal explained this is an online module and the number includes new staff. The College runs a number of other awareness and safety training for staff and students and there should be no reason for concern around this. <p>Referring to the VPCS' report, EW queried the benefits for the College with regards to the Bucks Health & Social Care Academy and the VPCS confirmed that overall it should be of benefit to the</p>	<p>S&C</p> <p>S&C</p> <p>S&C</p> <p>C</p> <p>C</p>

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<p>College and strategically good for growth going forward with Health and Social Care being such a high priority.</p> <p>The Principal's Report was Noted and the Chair thanked her for her update.</p>	
<p>7. LEARNING AND QUALITY REPORT</p> <p>The VPL&Q presented her report focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student performance and progress against the KPIs as reported. As a key focus for improvement highlighted in the self-assessment report, IH queried whether we know the in-year retention for apprenticeships for this time last year and reflected that apprenticeships are continuing more than last year when they were quite badly affected and is this why we think we will reach our target which seems a big leap away? The VPL&Q identified the risks and the focus of support to reach achievement. <p>IH further queried whether the cohort for predicted achievement is the same cohort as the in-year retention being looked at and the VPL&Q confirmed this was the case and the focus is on the number of apprentices due to complete this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance. This continues to be lower than target but there is a relentless focus across staff to deliver the attendance strategy. The Staff Governor (curriculum) shared some examples of tutors delivering resources to students' homes in order for them to engage in lessons. The VPL&Q thanked Governors for their continued support, particularly IH who put his name to the letter sent out to all students encouraging attendance. <p>The Chair queried the current system for monitoring attendance and the VPL&Q briefed on the comprehensive MIS reporting, registers, communications to parents and escalation of cases as required.</p> <p>BW asked whether English and maths attendance is ever split out to see if either is higher? The VPL&Q noted that these are very similar and with the lower levels there is a lot of challenge around functional skills attendance but actions are in place to support this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English and Maths. EW queried the percentage of resits to the total number of students and the VPL&Q confirmed that at this point approximately one third of the total cohort are resitting and this is probably the highest this year. • Apprenticeships (discussed in the development session prior to the meeting) • Teaching Learning and Assessment. The VPL&Q thanked Governors for their engagement in the online lesson observations they attended during Impact Week. • Student Satisfaction Survey which received the most responses to date. • Safeguarding and Prevent • Subcontractor Strategy 2020-21. NB noted that the safeguarding procedures refer to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and this needs updating to the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (Action: VPL&Q to amend). Subject to this amendment, the Corporation Approved the Subcontracting Strategy 2020-21. <p>The Chair thanked the VPL&Q for her comprehensive reporting.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S&C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S</p>
<p>8. FINANCE AND RESOURCES REPORT</p> <p>The VPCS took Governors through his report which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020-21 Financial Update noting the January management accounts and highlighting the key changes as reported. • Hampden Fields. Buckinghamshire Council's special planning committee meeting is an open meeting scheduled for 10am on 24th February online so Governors are welcome to attend. The VPCS briefed on the background of the s106 agreement for the benefit of those members not previously involved and it was noted that an additional Corporation meeting may be 	

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<p>required prior to the next Board meeting to sign this off and also to potentially review the Taylor Wimpey offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bucks Health and Social Care Academy (BHSCA). The VPCS requested Governors approval to enter into the working arrangements agreement appended to his report. There were no comments and the Corporation Approved the College's agreement. • Financial Regulations. The VPCS briefed on the key amendments to the document since last approved and requested formal approval. The Corporation Approved the Financial Regulations 2020-22. <p>The Chair asked Members if they had any comments and subsequently thanked the VPCS for his report.</p>	<p>S</p> <p>S</p>
<p>9. GOVERNOR LINKS AND ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>The Chair thanked Governors who participated in the online lesson observations during Impact Week and asked for any feedback to be shared with Members. Governors gave very positive feedback from their experiences noting a good balance of work and engagement for all students.</p> <p>The Vice Chair noted that he had raised with the VPL&Q that there had been a poor internet connection for one student in his lesson observation and queried whether this had been addressed. The VPL&Q confirmed she had followed it up and it had been an isolated incident and has now been actioned.</p> <p>IH queried whether there would be more opportunities to observe lessons, even if recorded if all happy to do this. The Chair and the VPL&Q welcomed this and confirmed this could indeed be the case and would support this (Action: VPL&Q to arrange further online lesson observations for Governors to join).</p> <p>EW noted that it would have been good to have the opportunity to feedback directly to the tutor after the observations.</p> <p>The Clerk expressed her thanks to all Governors for their continued engagement which has been very strong particularly given lockdown restrictions. Many had participated in AoC masterclasses and Student Governors had engaged in national student governor events.</p>	<p>C</p> <p>S</p>
<p>10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>None</p>	
<p>11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>29th April 2021</p>	
<p>12. CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA ITEM</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Student Governors for their attendance and support and the Student Governors left the meeting.</p> <p><i>This item is recorded in the confidential minutes.</i></p>	

Approved as an accurate record of discussions: 29th April 2021