

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation of West Thames College
Held on Wednesday 24 March 2021**

Members Present	Mr S Wilcox (Chair)	Ms T Aust	Ms L Weatherill
	Mr J Bolt	Mr A Luke	Ms B Sandhu
	Mr T White	Mr J Bryant	Ms C Ajit Singh
	Mr A Smith	Mr W Tyrell	Ms L Gomes
	Mr R Gallagher	Mr A Barke	Ms C Callinan
	Mr B Armstrong	Ms M Halpin	
Also present	Mr J Allen	Mr M Cooper	Ms S Davies

The meeting was held with a mixture of governors either in attendance, with social distancing arrangements in place, and via Teams for those governors who were unable to attend in person due to Covid-19 restrictions.

As agreed in the Corporation's Scheme of Delegation, the focus of all Corporation meetings is to:

- Monitor College performance against agreed headline KPIs
- Deal with strategic matters including the review of the Executive Report
- Deal with any non-delegable duties and statutory compliance duties
- Receive Committee reports (primarily for information purposes)

The meeting commenced at 18.00

1. APOLOGIES & QUORACY

There were no apologies. The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair declared an interest in agenda item 3(i) as he has worked with the candidate.

The Chair declared an interest in 3(iv) as the agenda item refers to his tenure of office.

3. GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

Governors received the report from the Governance & Search Committee covering the meeting held 16 January 2021 (Paper 1). Following the recommendations proposed by the Committee, it was **RESOLVED:**

- (i) To appoint Ms Maggie Halpin to be a member of the Corporation for the period 24 March 2021 to 23 March 2025, and for Ms Halpin to be a member of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee.
- (ii) To increase the Determination of the size of the Corporation from the current membership of 16 to 17 for the period 01 April 2021 to 31 July 2021, and to revert back to 16 with effect from 01 August 2021.
- (iii) To note the proposed timeline and process for succession planning for the Head of Governance and Chair.
- (iv) To extend the end date of the current term of office of the Chair from 14 October 2022 to 31 December 2022.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held 16 December 2020 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting (Paper 2)

5. SUMMARY ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING

The 'Summary Action List' was received (Paper 3). The following updates were made available against each outstanding action point from previous meetings:

Ref & Date	Action	Review Update
11 - 8/7/20 meeting	To task the Strategic & Business Committee, in conjunction with the Executive, to undertake further development work on the Strategic Risk Register for the Corporation to consider at a later date	Work in progress
9 - 14/10/20 meeting	Principal's PA to organise the visit schedule for governor link visits	Visits deferred to the summer term – The Principal's PA will organise the visit schedule
7(ii) - 16/12/20 meeting	To hold a governor strategic planning meeting in March (date to be confirmed) and to use this meeting to receive strategic updates from the Executive, including outcomes from the curriculum planning process, and to commence governor input on the strategic direction of the college post 2021.	To be held on 31 March 2021
7(ii) - 16/12/20 meeting	Outcomes from the strategic planning process, culminating in the Strategic Plan 2021-2024, to be put to the July 2021 Corporation meeting for approval	Corporation meeting 07/07/2021

MONITORING COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

6. Monitoring College Performance

(i) Data Dashboard Review

The Data Dashboard was presented to the Corporation and the following key points were noted from the review:

Attendance

- Currently, YTD attendance for all learners is 86%, compared with this year's target of 87% and last year's outturn of 88%.
- Attendance remains a strategic priority for the College as one of the Leadership and Management issues arising from the last two Ofsted inspections.
- In response to the coronavirus COVID-19 situation in the autumn term the College adopted a blended learning model for curriculum delivery

whereby students had some face-to-face delivery (on-site) as well as remote delivery each week.

- In the spring term the situation changed again and most students moved to remote learning with the exception of vulnerable students who were provided the opportunity to access onsite delivery. Since 08 March all 14-19 year olds had been invited to return to site for full timetable delivery with a staggered return for adults students from 22nd March onwards.
- Regardless of the form of attendance, the College's Attendance Toolkit insists on high attendance for all students from the outset of the course and includes the 'Standards for Success' initiative. This sets out an ever-increasing level of intervention by key staff in the form of texts, telephone calls, letters, student contracts and meetings with parents/carers and managers to address student non-attendance.
- Governors welcomed the continued focus on attendance and agreed that the current attendance rate of 86% must be viewed as excellent against the backdrop of the continuous disruption being imposed on students with the College closures arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Learning Walks

- Due to the College closure arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, no learner walks were undertaken this term and the data is as was presented to the December Corporation meeting.
- It was confirmed on-line teaching lessons conducted via Teams have been subject to observation and a risk-based approach was adopted on determining the observation schedule.

Deep Dives

- No Deep Dives have been conducted this term and the progress data on Deep Dives is as recorded in the minutes of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee meeting held 24 February 2021 (Paper 9).

Achievement 2019-20 Outturn

- Achievement rates for 2019-20 are very high with overall achievement at 92% compared with the 2018-19 National Achievement Rate (NAR) of 86%.

Financial Health

- Based on an overall score of 220/300, the forecast year-end ESFA financial health grade for the College at 31 July 2021 is 'Good'. This represents a decline from the 2019-20 outturn of 'Outstanding', due to a lower EBITDA score for profitability.
- Year to date performance for the six months to 31 January 2021 recorded an operating deficit of £130k compared with the budgeted surplus of £109k.
- The year-end operating surplus is forecast at £100k, £50k lower than budget. Governors agreed the College was in a strong position in being able to continue to forecast a year-end surplus of £100k, especially in the context of dealing with the impact of COVID-19. It also demonstrated the effectiveness of the Executive to respond quickly to necessary budget cutting.

Human Resources

- Human Resource KPIs are a new addition to the Data Dashboard and the development of HR KPIs are still work in progress. The Data Dashboard reported on two KPIs – staff ethnicity profile and staff turnover. Further work is required on comparing the staff profile against the student profile and to add staff utilisation and Gender Pay Gap data to the Data Dashboard.

Health & Safety

- Health & Safety KPIs are a new addition to the Data Dashboard.
- During the first term a total of 58 incidents were reported which is a significant reduction on the same period in 2019-20, where a total of 100 incidents were recorded. This level of reporting is very low and has most definitely been impacted by the current lockdown. Only one incident was required to be reported to the HSE.
- With the exception of first aid and evac-chair training, all H & S training was completed using the college's bespoke online training modules. As such, the numbers of staff trained is comparable with the corresponding term in 2019-20.
- It was confirmed the college's COVID-secure re-opening plan is supported by a detailed and comprehensive overarching risk assessment. The plan and risk assessment are regularly reviewed and updated in line with the latest Government guidance.
- Governors asked about the overseeing and monitoring of mental health and well-being. The Principal replied this comes under Goal three from the Development Plan that is monitored by the Executive and governors through the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee and at each meeting of the Corporation. At the recent meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee, the staff governor spoke positively on the range of well-being support that is made available to all staff. Operationally, mental health and well-being are overseen by the College's Health & Well-Being Committee.

(ii) Development Plan and Post Inspection Action Plan

One 'Amber' rated assessment was noted from the review of the Development Plan (Paper 4). This related to objective 2.5 - '*Grow and diversify income through increased partnership work and the development of new opportunities to improve the utilisation of the college estate*'. It was reported Covid-19 has impacted on long-term rental and short-term lettings income. In addition, the forecast income from London School of Basketball will not be met due to lower recruitment numbers than planned. Governors sought assurances on how the expected income shortfall will be mitigated against. In response it was stated these income reductions will be partly mitigated by increased income from extending Ambitious College's let of additional space in Spring Grove House to July 2021.

Governors welcomed the positive data on received external applications for next year and on the high level of internal progression rates.

Governors asked about the arrangements for the student voice, especially during the College closure. In response it was confirmed the Committee overseeing the student voice is meeting next week and both student governors will be in attendance. The Committee is working with the Student Union to create a series of videos showcasing the College. The videos will

show how the lockdown has impacted on students and the support given by the College. In addition videos are being worked on with curriculum teams showcasing the work of students. The videos will be uploaded onto the College's website and social media platforms.

It was noted the Post Inspection Action Plan (Paper 5) was covered in detail through the review of the Data Dashboard in the area of teaching, learning and assessment

7. STRATEGIC MATTERS INCLUDING THE REVIEW OF THE EXECUTIVE REPORT

(i) Executive Report

The Executive Report (Paper 6) was received. The Chair stated that there was a lot of key strategic information contained in the Executive Report and invited all governors to consider the report in detail to help inform discussions at the strategy meeting being held on 31 March 2021.

(ii) Minutes of the Strategy & Business Development Committee

The minutes of the Strategy, Business & Commercial Committee (Paper 7), that met on 25 February 2021, were received for information purposes.

(iii) Governors' Strategy meeting to be held on 31 March 2021

The Chair outlined the proposed format and structure of the strategy meeting and confirmed that pre-reading material to help inform the discussions will be issued to governors in advance of the meeting. The strategy meeting will be used to start the strategy planning process in what will be a challenging year ahead and beyond. The Chair confirmed that no decisions will be required from the meeting. Instead, the meeting will focus on discussions and group work. In terms of the next stages of the strategic planning process the following milestones were confirmed:

- The Strategy & Business Committee to meet to review outcomes from the strategy meeting.
- To hold a second governor strategic planning meeting on 15 May to continue to work on the strategic direction.
- College Management Team to hold a strategic planning meeting in May and the proposal is for members from the Strategy & Business Development Committee to attend this meeting.
- To ensure staff are engaged in the strategic planning process, to use the Staff Development Day in June/July to obtain their input. Again, the proposal is for members from the Strategy & Business Development Committee to attend this meeting.
- Outcomes from the strategic planning process, culminating in the Strategic Plan 2021-2024, to be put to the July Corporation meeting for approval.

NON-DELEGABLE DUTIES (ARTICLE 3.1) AND STATUTORY AND OR COMPLIANCE DUTIES

8. ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING 2019/20

The 'Annual Safeguarding Report 2019/20' was received for review (Paper 8).

The report outlined the progress made on the Safeguarding agenda at the College during the academic year 2019-20 and highlighted the features of the College's safeguarding work that will be evaluated by an OFSTED inspection.

The report demonstrated that the College continues to meet its legal requirements with regards to safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults and demonstrated the College's ongoing commitment to safeguarding as an organisational priority. The report provided broader background information as to how safeguarding is organised at the College and also reported on trend information regarding the incidences. The report outlined the safeguarding policies and procedures, the links with external agencies and the training undertaken by staff also.

It was noted and welcomed that safeguarding covered a wide variety of actions undertaken by the College to ensure that students can learn in a safe and supportive environment.

In response to the series of national lockdowns arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, the College had to change and adapt quickly to different ways of working and using new systems and tools such as Microsoft Teams. Throughout this period, the safeguarding team continued to operate fully and put in place a series of procedures and protocols to ensure that a high-quality service was maintained. The College website was also updated with a dedicated safeguarding page to provide key information and clear guidance on how to contact the safeguarding team.

The report provided an analysis on the number of referrals made and, their categories, along with a trend analysis compared against previous years. It was reported there has been a steady rise of Mental Health, Neglect and Emotional Abuse cases, which remain the most common reasons for referral. This is accompanied by an increasing demand on Safeguarding Leads to share information and attend external agency review meetings. Many referrals have become increasingly complex with one case in particular requiring the involvement of several external agencies.

Governors welcomed the detail contained in the report and the assurances given that the College was meeting its statutory responsibilities. Governors placed on record thanks to all members of the College's safeguarding team for how they have dealt with, and responded quickly, to the challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Following review, it was **AGREED** to bring forward the annual review of safeguarding to the autumn term meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTING

9. **Report from the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee**
The report and minutes from the Committee covering the meeting held 24 February 2021 (Paper 9) were received and **NOTED**.
10. **Report from the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee**
The report and minutes from the Committee covering the meeting held 03 March 2021 (Paper 10) were received and **NOTED**.

Also received for information purposes was the 'Health & Safety Annual Report 2019/20' (Paper 11) that was subject to review by the Committee. It was **AGREED** to bring forward the review of the annual H&S report to the autumn term meeting.

It was noted the Committee agreed for Mr Alex Luke to be the Chair of the Committee with effect from 01 August 2021.

11. Report from the Audit Committee

It was noted the spring term meeting of the Audit Committee was cancelled as the internal auditors were unable to attend the College to carry out the scheduled audits that were to be reported on to the Committee. It was confirmed the scheduled agenda items for this meeting are to be considered at the Summer term meeting of the Committee

12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no other urgent business previously notified to either the Chair or Clerk.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- (i) Corporation meeting: Strategy Meeting Wednesday 31 March 2021 at 1pm.
- (ii) Corporation meeting: Strategy Meeting Wednesday 15 May 2021 at 1pm.
- (iii) Corporation meeting: Wednesday 07 July 2021 at 6pm
- (iv) Meeting dates 2021-22 were confirmed (Paper 12).

CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA ITEMS

Through agreed resolution, the staff and student governors were not in attendance for this part of the meeting.

13. INCIDENT AT THE SKILLS + LOGISTICS CENTRE

It was confirmed the investigation into the incident remains on-going and, because of this, no further updates were made available.

14. CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FROM THE FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CAPITAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE

The confidential report and minutes from the Committee covering the meeting held 03 March 2021 (Paper 13) were received and **NOTED**.

Following review of the report it was **RESOLVED** to delegate to the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee authority to finalise the Bank Loan Agreement between the College and Barclays Bank, and to report on any use of the delegated authority to the Corporation.

Signed: _____

Date: _____ -

SUMMARY ACTION LIST

Ref & Date	Action	Review
11 - 8/7/20 meeting	To task the Strategic & Business Committee, in conjunction with the Executive, to undertake further development work on the Strategic Risk Register for the Corporation to consider at a later date	Work in progress
9 - 14/10/20 meeting	Principal's PA to organise the visit schedule for governor link visits	Visits deferred to the summer term – The Principal's PA will organise the visit schedule
7(ii) - 16/12/20 meeting	Outcomes from the strategic planning process, culminating in the Strategic Plan 2021-2024, to be put to the July 2021 Corporation meeting for approval	07/07/2021
8	To bring forward the review of the annual Safeguarding report to the autumn term meeting.	Autumn Term 2021
10	To bring forward the review of the annual H&S report to the autumn term meeting.	Autumn Term 2021
14 – 24/03/21 meeting	To delegate to the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee authority to finalise the Bank Loan Agreement between the College and Barclays Bank, and to report on any use of the delegated authority to the Corporation.	07/07/2021