



HUDDERSFIELD NEW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
Corporation Meeting held on Thursday 15th October 2020 from 5.00m – 7pm
via Zoom

Confirmed Minutes

Present: Ms L Summers (Chair), Mr J Dawson, Mr A Nelson, Ms T Wright, Mr K Webb, Ms M Dean, Ms M Boryslawskij, Ms H Richards, Ms A Williams, Ms C Bostock, Ms A Needham and Mr A Leach (attendance 86%)

In attendance: Mr M Smith-Connor and Mr L Goddard

Observer: Ms S Johnson (for agenda items 5-7)

Clerk: Mrs C Coupland

1. Apologies for Absence/ Declaration of Interest

Apologies for absence were submitted by Ms R Drury and Ms H Haigh.

There were no declarations of interest made. It was noted however that item 3 concerned matters linked to senior postholders but as this was associated with processes and procedures only; no declaration was deemed necessary.

Ms Summers advised the Corporation that for agenda items 5 – 7; Ms Johnson would be joining the meeting as an observer. Ms Summers explained that Ms Johnson has submitted an application to serve as an External Governor with a view to assuming role of Safeguarding Link Governor on Ms Wright's retirement from office next year.

2. Minutes from Meetings held on:

- 30th June 2020
- 1st October 2020

Resolved:

- That these be accepted as a true record of the meetings

3. Matters arising

30th June 2020:

Corporate Report:

Ms Summers confirmed that the additional safeguarding information, as required by the board, had since been shared with Governors via the Clerk.

BAF review: Poor whole college experience for students and parents/carers:

This is to be addressed under agenda item 8.

Search & Governance Committee:

The Clerk advised the board that governors have confirmed by email that they shall agree to observe this code of conduct to the best of their abilities.

Remuneration & Personnel Committee:

Ms Summers reminded the corporation that the changes proposed to the Remuneration & Personnel Committee's Practice on Senior Post Holder Remuneration had been accidentally omitted from last meeting's agenda. It has therefore been included in today's supporting papers for consideration and approval.

The Corporation noted that on recommendation from the R&P Committee, one procedural change had been required to the framework, namely to require that data on the Principal's pay as a multiple of staff median pay to be added to the considerations

informing the decision on Principal remuneration. The other updates proposed are to reflect that the corporation has adopted the AoC's Senior Staff Remuneration Code as of 1st September 2019. The Corporation agreed that the current arrangements satisfy the Codes overall principles and provides assurance that the Remuneration & Personnel Committee already demonstrates leadership and stewardship in relation to remuneration, with sound and defensible recommendations being made for fair and appropriate pay awards for SPH's.

Resolved:

- **That the changes to the Remuneration & Personnel Committee's Practice on Senior Post Holder Remuneration be approved.**

1st October 2020:

There were no matters arising.

4. Corporate Report

Ms Williams presented the Senior Leadership Team report to the Corporation.

Ms Williams advised the Corporation on the impact on college life in response to the continuous updates on guidance, regulations and expectations for COVID 19.

Ms Williams explained the impact of Covid-19 on Teaching, Learning and Assessment. Governors were informed of how staff have continued to respond positively to developing and delivering online learning. The college's recent decision to move to live-streaming lessons to better support isolating students and to minimise workload for teachers further demonstrates staff's resilience and commitment to delivering engaging lessons for all regardless of online or onsite learning. The Board recognised the benefits of the college's online Teaching and Learning strategy which will mitigate against the constant but unpredictable absence from College of both students and staff. Governors also supported the college's initiative to sign up to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provided by Health Assured as part of our Staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Governors noted that the service provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues for staff and their immediate family members.

Ms Williams reminded governors that Schools and Colleges were tasked by the Secretary of State for Education with providing a full Autumn exam series for young people who received their A Level or GCSE results in the summer and wanted to try to improve them through examination. Ms Williams advised the corporation that over 400 students (including 19 leavers) will be sitting the GCSE exams in Maths and English Language that they were not able to sit in the summer due to the pandemic. This is the largest November GCSE cohort ever and in order to accommodate these exams in the most responsible and safe way possible, senior leaders had taken the decision to close the college campus to all students not taking an exam between Monday 2nd November and Friday 6th November 2020. Staff and students are to be advised of this tomorrow. The corporation endorsed the approach to be taken by the colleges senior leaders. Ms Williams informed the Corporation that the college during this week will also be subject to a Joint Counsel Qualification (JCQ) inspection. The purpose of the inspection is to confirm that HNC is following JCQ regulations, guidance and instructions to ensure the integrity and security of the examination/assessment process. Furthermore, the college has also received notice that it will be subject to an ESFA Funding Assurance Audit regarding individualised learner record. This is a demanding audit process (college chosen at random) which adds further stress and work demands on staff during an already very busy week.

Governors were reminded that the College has implemented a full suite of Covid 19 safety measures which are fully in line with DfE guidance. These measures are detailed in a College Covid 19 Full Risk Assessment which has been agreed with the local professional associations and is reviewed by the Audit Committee. Furthermore, a Covid 19 Staff Safety Guide (drawn from the College's Covid 19 Full Risk Assessment) has been issued to staff. The College has implemented a College Covid 19 HR Sub Risk Assessment which has been agreed with the local professional associations. 51 individual risk assessments have been conducted with vulnerable staff (Clinically Extremely Vulnerable; BAME background; those who are pregnant; those over 60) and 23 are pending (casual exam invigilators). Teachers have also been protected in classrooms by a 2 metre distance from the nearest student and a perspex screen. All other staff have been protected through socially distanced workspaces, and the facility to work from home too, where possible. The daily Staff News and the weekly Staff Briefing on a Tuesday morning (via MS Teams) is used to communicate key Covid 19 updates to staff.

Ms Williams explained to the Corporation that in line with the government request to work from home, if you can: Progress Tutors and Additional Learning and Specialist Support (ALSS) staff have moved to mostly remote home working using MS Teams. The initial feedback from parents is that this move is welcomed. Particularly for ALSS students where it is fostering a greater degree of independence.

A Covid 19 Student Safety Guide (again drawn from the College's Covid 19 Full Risk Assessment) has been issued to all students. This is supported by the screens, pull-ups and signage around College. The revised college timetable for blended learning, reduces even further student numbers on buses and on site. A regular Principal's Bulletin is used to communicate key Covid 19 updates to students and their parents/carers. This is supported by the College's Social Media channels, particularly twitter, and the screens around College.

The Corporation was briefed on the number of confirmed cases from 1st September - 6th October 2020 for staff and students. Time was taken by Governors to better understand the access to testing and its implications on staff availability and student experience given imposed periods of self isolation.

Ms Williams also took this time to also update the Corporation on other key areas of the college and its performance to date against key performance indicators. The Corporation thanked the Senior Leaders for the comprehensive updates.

The Corporation also wished to formally record their thanks to all staff and senior leaders for their continued professionalism and dedication that has been shown during this stressful period. Governors also agreed that the level and quality of communications by the college to all stakeholders has been exceptionally clear, timely and informative.

Resolved:

- **That the report be received**
- **The Corporation thanks all staff and senior leaders for their continued professionalism and dedication shown during this stressful period.**

5. Student Outcomes 2020 annual review of achievement, retention and success rates

Mr Smith-Connor reminded Governors that the 2019/20 outcomes must be viewed within the context of the global pandemic crisis which led to the closure of the College on 20th March 2020 and the introduction of Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs). He went on to explain that the exam board moderated grades were scrapped and students were awarded the higher of their moderated grade or CAG. The national grade profile improved significantly as a consequence of this.

Mr Smith-Connor explained that the DfE are not publishing the 2019/20 performance tables and that Ofsted won't be using this set of outcomes during inspections. These CAG-based outcomes however do reflect the integrity and care of the staff. When calculating grades staff managed the dual pressures of working within the Ofqual guidance (specifically ensuring that CAGs bore significant resemblance to the 3-year outcomes trends for their course) whilst making sure that the CAGs were a fair reflection of each students' effort and ability, with exemplary professionalism.

Mr Smith-Connor went on to present his detailed report. Governors were advised that these outcomes are securely Outstanding; this is the sixth consecutive year in which the College has self-assessed outcomes as Outstanding. The Corporation agreed that given the context in which these grades were produced this year's outcomes are a matter of particular pride for the College.

Mr Smith-Connor explained that an important, and unique, metric for gauging the success of this year's outcomes is the extent to which they achieved the balance between national standards and individual equity. Of the College's 3,918 exam entries 64 (1.6%) were formally appealed by students. Three of these appeals (4.7% of appeals, 0.08% of total exam entries) were upheld by the College and subsequently led to a grade increase in all three cases. No student took their appeal further following the initial outcome.

Governors noted that A level value added is an area of particular strength continuing to place the college in the top 10% of providers nationally; raw pass rates and retention are also above the high sixth form college averages. BTEC outcomes at Level 2 and Level 3 maintain the College's consistently held position as one of the top providers in the country; on most measures on most qualification aims outcomes are in the top 10% of providers nationally. The College's GCSE maths and English pass rates (grades 9 – 4) remain significantly above the high sixth form college averages.

The Corporation was advised that 99.4% of students were on qualification aims which have been self-assessed as Outstanding; no qualification aim has been self-assessed as Requires Improvement or Inadequate. The quality improvement agenda for 2020/21 will however be focussed on the delivery of a recovery curriculum. Specifically, departments have been tasked to:

- **Prepare:** Staff to upskill in areas that are relevant to their role to deliver an online curriculum; adapt TLA strategies to promote the best possible student experience within the context of the applicable delivery model.
- **Identify:** Quickly identify areas of lost learning (collectively and individually).
- **Rectify:** Provide individual and collective support to quickly rectify the identified knowledge and skills gaps.
- **Complete:** Ensure that every student is in the strongest possible position to complete the year and progress to their aspirational next step (internal and external).

Mr Smith-Connor explained that senior leaders had decided to replace the usual SAR & QIP validation process with a more targeted approach (QIP reviews) to ensure that the planned activities are up to date, robust and span the required areas. Staff have been asked to ensure that Cross-College and Departmental QIP priorities are mapped against the College's curriculum recovery year strategic goals to ensure that priorities at every level support the College's overall goals and strategic plan, as recently approved by the Corporation. Mr Smith-Connor advised that Governors will be invited to join the validation panel, as per usual practice and that meetings will be held remotely via Teams. Governors asked for Mr Smith-Connor to forward the meeting schedule, once finalised, onto the Clerk for circulation to Governors. Governors also asked for the Clerk to forward on the written summary, as shared with all staff, on SLTs rationale for changing the SAR/QIP framework.

The Corporation resolved for the Chair to send a note of thanks to all staff for the College's phenomenal achievements in such turbulent times.

Resolved:

- **That the report be received**
- **For the Clerk to circulate the QIP Meeting schedule to all Governors, once finalised.**
- **For the Clerk to provide the Corporation with SLTs written rationale, as shared with all staff, for changing the self-assessment framework.**
- **For the Chair to draft a note of thanks to all staff for circulation by the Clerk.**

6. Equality and Diversity Report: Student Outcomes

Mr Smith-Connor advised that the College analyses the performance of different groups of students according to the following key criteria:

- Prior attainment
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- SEND

Governors noted that the 2019/20 outcomes data shows that there were no performance gaps in terms of gender, ethnicity or SEND. Mr Smith-Connor explained that although the 2019/20 outcomes didn't also show a performance gap by prior attainment in A level it remains a college priority to be addressed due to the uniqueness of this set of results and the previously identified differential performance of students with very high incoming attainment. Furthermore, the changing nature of the A level cohort means that the teaching and learning focus will be on converting grades at the C and B borderline.

Mr Smith-Connor explained to the Corporation that the 4-year trend at Level 3 of a decreasing proportion of students in the lowest prior attainment band, continued in 2019/20; in A level the growth has continued in the top prior attainment band whilst in Level 3 BTEC the growth has tended to be in the middle prior attainment band. This pattern is explained by the College's increasing popularity as the first choice provider for Level 3 qualifications in the region meaning that more of our students fully meet the entry criteria for their chosen study programme. The College has retained its inclusive ethos and culture and every student who applies on time, has a good attitude to learning (as evidenced by their school report and attendance record), and meets the entry criteria for their chosen courses is offered a place at the College. In addition, the profile of the College's 2019/20 student cohort closely resembles the Kirklees Council demographic.

The Corporation was satisfied that the college continues to monitor the performance of different groups of learners, according to: incoming attainment; gender; ethnicity; learning difficulty, and disability.

Resolved :

- **That the report be received.**

7. Safeguarding Annual Report 2019/20 and Safeguarding Policy Review

Mr Goddard presented his report to the Corporation providing a detailed summary of the College's approach to safeguarding in the period September 2019 to August 2020 inclusive.

The attached annual report addresses the following areas:

- Safeguarding Arrangements /Policies and Procedures
- Safeguarding Validations
- Kirklees Safeguarding Audit
- Safeguarding Reporting
- External Referrals
- Promotion of safeguarding through College Culture and Ethos
- Safeguarding through Safe Recruitment
- Safeguarding through staff Training
- Safeguarding – working with other services
- Safeguarding Future Developments

The Corporation was advised by Mr Goddard that the latest Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) audit was submitted by the college May 2020. Ms Wright (Safeguarding Link Governor) contributed to the Audit process and approved the college's submission. KSCB has since reviewed the audit process; the college was rated in the highest category for compliance.

Mr Goddard drew Governors attention to the staffing changes to the Safeguarding Team; Safeguarding posters with photographs of the senior safeguarding personnel; which are displayed around the college, have been updated.

Mr Goddard explained to the Corporation that the overall number of individual students supported has increased by 170 on last year and the level of involvement in terms of time to support the young people has certainly increased. The complexity of the cases and the increase in time needed to engage with external agencies is a key factor as it was last year. Agencies are continuing to play a greater role supporting young people, or when the agencies cannot support, finding alternatives for the young people at College. Towards the end of the academic year, greater engagement with agencies across West Yorkshire was increasing. Mr Goddard advised Governors that data within the report indicates that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of discrete incidents reported. It was explained to Governors that this is not entirely due to an absolute increase in incidents affecting young people but reflects a further increase in the rigour of reporting and the decision to increase acknowledgement responses to posts on Cedar so that all staff involved are aware that actions have been taken.

Mr Goddard reiterated to Governors that throughout the time that the College was under lockdown restrictions and students were working remotely, the safeguarding support continued as normal. Safeguarding concerns continued to be reported by College staff via the Cedar reporting systems and email alerts to the safeguarding team were monitored and responded to. All cases reported were reviewed weekly and appropriate actions taken. The Corporation welcomed the case studies within the report which clearly demonstrated the impact of the work undertaken by the Safeguarding Support Team, especially during lockdown restrictions – which has enabled vulnerable young adults to stay safe at college / home and to also continue with and succeed in their studies.

Ms Wright confirmed her agreement with the report and her satisfaction with the work done in this area.

Mr Goddard advised the Corporation that the Prevent Procedure had been reviewed and recently approved by the Senior Leadership Team for publication. Mr Goddard explained that the prevent procedure was not due for presentation to governors until autumn 2021 (alongside the formal review of the Colleges prevent strategy and risk assessment) but many of the contacts listed were outdated and therefore the Director of Safeguarding and Assistant Principal Student Support and Guidance used the lockdown period to update with the intention of replacing the current version on the College website, dated 2015.

Mr Goddard also presented the safeguarding policy which has been updated (changes highlighted) and presented for approval. The proposed changes are particularly focused on the response to the Covid 19 pandemic, reference to Child Criminal Exploitation and the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020.

Ms Wright drew governors' attention to the policy directive that every three years 10% of staff and governors will be randomly sampled for DBS clearance. The corporation welcomed this policy initiative. The Clerk confirmed that governors will continue to be required to undertake a DBS Enhanced Disclosure on appointment.

Resolved:

- **That the Safeguarding Report be received**
- **That the College's Prevent Procedure 2020 be received**
- **That the Safeguarding Policy be approved.**
- **For all governors to note that every three years 10% of governors will be randomly sampled for DBS clearance by Human Resources.**

8. BAF Assurance reviews:

- **Poor whole college experience for students/parents & carers (resubmission)**

Ms Summers reminded Governors that this specific risk was considered at the corporation's last meeting. It had been agreed at that time, after a full discussion, that the presented residual score for this risk was unduly low, especially at a time when student experience was so disrupted given COVID 19. Governors therefore asked for the risk owners to revisit the commentary and be satisfied that it fully reflects the impact of covid and all mitigating actions being taken by staff to manage students' and parents' current experience as well as manage future expectations of college life due to remote learning.

The re-presented assurance review was considered the Corporation. All present agreed that it more accurately captured the current risk level presented by the ongoing pandemic and better reflected the range of mitigations being undertaken by the college to best manage the risk. In turn Governors reported to be confident in the different levels of assurance identified within the Board Assurance Framework.

- **Impact of Covid-19 and key potential impacts; Recruitment, Internal Progression, Retention, Staff and student wellbeing, Achievement Gap, Lost learning and recovery strategy, Financial Sustainability**

Ms Williams advised the Corporation that this was a new high level strategic risk featuring on the College's risk register in response to COVID 19. The corporation agreed that the report comprehensively outlined the nature of inherent risk posed to the college in terms of impact on operation, reputation and outcomes and provided full assurance to the corporation on how the college was addressing and managing such risk.

Deliberations therefore concentrated on the assessed residual scores. It was agreed that the likelihood of the risk was still high despite all mitigations in place given the unpredictable nature of COVID 19. It was therefore agreed to increase the likelihood score from 2 to 4.

Ms Williams advised Governors that the ongoing costs associated with responding to the pandemic may more than likely exceed the current covid 19 budget allocation. All present agreed that under the circumstances it may be necessary to use reserves for ongoing costs associated with the pandemic therefore the corporation would be supportive of any additional finance requests from the Senior Leaders. Ms Williams agreed to keep the Finance and Resources Committee updated on spending.

- **Poor reputation management**

The corporation again agreed that the report comprehensively outlined the nature of inherent risk posed to the college and provided full assurance to the corporation on how the college's communication strategy, in particular, was successfully addressing and managing such risk.

Deliberations therefore again concentrated on the assessed residual scores. It was agreed that the likelihood of the risk was to be increased from 2 to 3 to reflect the unpredictable impact of COVID 19.

- **Failure to fulfil statutory duties; Safeguarding and Prevent, SEND, Health and Safety, Equality, GDPR, CEIAG**

Mr Goddard explained that the risk had been updated to include CEIAG and GDPR. Mr Goddard also took this opportunity to brief governors on the college's decision to recruit a Directors role for Careers and work experience.

After a full discussion the Corporation was satisfied that the actions being taken by the college to best mitigate against the risk were robust and effective. Governors reported to be confident in the different levels of assurance identified within the Board Assurance Framework.

The Governors thanked all staff for the comprehensive assurance reports and helpful commentaries.

Resolved:

- **For the likelihood residual score to be increased from 2 to 4 for risk: Impact of Covid-19**
- **For the likelihood residual score to be increased from 2 to 3 for risk: Poor reputation management.**
- **To assign Green overall assurance to all individual risks**
- **For the Clerk to update the Master BAF**

9. F&R Committee: meeting held on 17th September 2020

Ms Needham briefed governors on the business of the Finance Committee Meeting.

Ms Needham explained that the COVID 19 Financial Return for July 2020 had been submitted to the ESFA based on the same sensitivities and assumptions as agreed by the Corporation in February 2020.

The Corporation was informed that the campus improvements and developments undertaken during the summer to accommodate the growth in student numbers to 2,556 capacity had all been completed on time and to budget.

Ms Needham also confirmed that the management accounts for July 2020, the final month of the 2019-21 financial year, were presented to the committee – these are to form the basis of the annual financial statements. It was noted that the surplus as at July 2020 of £297,298, was significantly above the budget of £7,519. The major reasons for the above budget position were listed within the minutes.

Ms Needham advised the Corporation that the committee welcomed the revised presentation and layout of information included within the commentary for the management accounts. Future versions will however more clearly address key salient points, especially with regards to budget variances, in order to better support governors' preparation and understanding.

Resolved:

- **That the minutes be received**

10. Audit Committee : meeting held on 22nd September 2020

Mr Nelson – Chair of Audit, briefed Governors on the business of the Audit Committee.

The Corporation's attention was particularly drawn to the Internal Audit strategy for 20/21 approved by the Committee. The Corporation agreed with the Committee that the strategy for internal audit covers the colleges key risks and assurance needs.

Governors were also informed that the College's self assessment questionnaire, drafted for the Post 16 Audit Code of practice, had been considered and approved by the Committee. Ms Summers and Ms Williams have signed the finalised version which has been forwarded onto the College's External Auditors.

Mr Nelson explained that the committee's review of the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice had also prompted minor changes to the Committee's terms of reference. The Corporation duly approved the recommended changes.

Resolved:

- **That the minutes be received**
- **That the Internal Audit Strategy be received**
- **That the proposed changes to the Committee's terms of reference be approved.**

11. Any other Business.

Local Joint Council Meeting:

Ms Williams advised the Corporation that she and Mr Smith-Connor are to meet with the Local Professional Association Representatives on Wednesday 21st 2020. The Corporation agreed it necessary for the Clerk to arrange a meeting for the Covid19 Sub Group after this date to allow for Governors to be consulted on any matters raised.

Resolved:

- **For the Clerk to arrange Zoom meeting for the COVID 19 Sub-Group to meet with Ms Williams and Mr Smith-Connor.**

12. Learner Impact Reflection

The impact of discussions and scrutiny of the College's work in improving the outcomes and experience for all learners was considered and the following agreed:

- Assurance that the college continues to remain an inclusive Sixth Form College and continues to successfully offer post 16 education opportunities to a diverse range of students.
- An informed Board of Governors is effective in its scrutiny, challenge and support of the senior leadership team thus ensuring positive outcomes and progress for all students.
- Through receiving annual reports, Governors ensured compliance with legislation and assurance was also gained that the College continues to be a safe and secure place for students to attend and learn.
- Maintaining high performance in term of outcomes enables HNC to continue to support students, giving life changing opportunities to our student body.
- Scrutiny of EDI data ensures Governors' focus, challenge and support in improving teaching and learning experiences for all Students.
- Assurance received that the College continues to provide a welcoming, safe and supportive environment for all students to develop personally and emotionally.
- Assurance received that the college remains fair and objective in its principles and procedures and continues to act in accordance with all relevant legislation.
- Areas of concern / underperformance have been identified to ensure that the college is working towards improvements across all study programmes, courses and qualifications.
- The college in maintaining high performance in terms of outcomes overall continues to support students, giving life changing opportunities to our student body.
- The Internal Audit Strategy provides assurance that the college has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control. The scope of the internal audit includes an assurance audit on the quality of the students' experience; this in particular will provide additional external assurance for the Corporation on the college's approach to and delivery of student pastoral support and well-being.
- The Corporation is assured that the college is taking a realistic approach to resources in response to COVID 19

13. Determination of confidentiality

The Corporation resolved that the case studies listed within the safeguarding report are to remain confidential.

It was determined that supporting papers for agenda item 8 should also be determined as confidential.

14. Date of next meeting: Thursday 10th December 2020 from 5pm via Zoom

