



HUDDERSFIELD NEW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Corporation Meeting held on Thursday 22nd April 2021 from 5.00pm via Zoom.

Confirmed Minutes

Present: Ms L Summers, Mr J Dawson, Ms T Wright, Mr K Webb, Mr A Leach, Ms M Boryslawskij, Mr A Nelson, Ms H Haigh, Ms M Dean, Ms C Bostock, Ms H Coldwell, Ms R Drury, Ms H Richards, Ms A Williams and Mr T Hosker.

In attendance: Mr M Smith-Connor and Ms K Rogerson

Clerk: Mrs C Coupland

1. Apologies for Absence/ Declaration of Interests

Apologies of absence were submitted by Ms S Johnson – due to professional commitments. Ms Summers explained that Ms Richards is expected to join the meeting late.

There was one declaration of interest recorded regarding the recommended appointment of Ms Boryslawskij as Vice Chair from September 2021 (to be addressed under agenda item 8).

Ms Summers also addressed two preliminary matters before proceeding with the meeting.

- The Corporation was advised that Ms Hollie Coldwell was the newly appointed student governor; Ms Coldwell was welcomed to her first meeting. Ms Summers explained that to support with transition arrangements Ms Bostock – the retiring student governor – had also attended the meeting. The corporation took the time to thank Ms Bostock for her support and contributions during the last 12 months; it was agreed that her insight into student experiences during the pandemic has been of particular interest to Governors.
- The Corporation was informed of Ms Needham's resignation from governor duties due to change in circumstances. Those present wished for the minutes to record their thanks to Ms Needham for her time as a governor. Her support, guidance and challenge was very much welcomed.

2. Minutes from Meetings held on 27th January 2021 and 26th February 2021

Resolved:

- **That the minutes for 27th January 2021 be accepted as a true record of the meeting**
- **That the minutes for 26th February 2021 be accepted as a true record subject to the amendment agreed to depersonalise comments captured within the minutes to reflect collective responsibility for the resolutions made.**

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising for the meeting held on 27th January 2021.

It was noted that all matters arising from the meeting held 26th February 2021 were included on this evenings agenda.

4. Strategic Plan and Mission 2021/24

Strategic Plan:

Ms Williams reminded the Corporation that the draft strategic plan for 2021-2024 was first considered at the strategy planning meeting held on 26th February 2021. The strategic plan covers the key areas of work identified for the next 3 years, and is underpinned by proposed key performance indicators for each of the strategic priorities. It had been agreed for the updated version of the strategic plan to be presented to the Corporation at this meeting for further consideration and opportunity to comment.

Ms Williams explained that the draft strategic plan had been updated in light of the feedback received from governors in addition to further debate at subsequent committee meetings regarding the proposed Key Performance Indicators.

The Corporation duly considered and agreed the revised strategy, subject to clarifying, under strategic goals for sustainability, that academisation will only take place provided that a suitable conversion route can be identified.

Mission Statement:

As raised at the strategy planning meeting, it is now timely to revisit the Mission statement for the strategic plan to ensure it accurately articulates the college's purpose for this period. Ms Williams confirmed that the feedback she had received from Governors had been reflected in her suggestion to the corporation.

The corporation agreed to the revisions proposed by SLT to the Mission Statement, subject to two changes –namely to refer to 'excellent' rather than 'outstanding' sixth form education and 'inclusive' rather than 'diverse' environment. All present agreed that, subject to these changes, the mission statement gives appropriate emphasis to the students, who are after all, the focus of the colleges endeavour and central to HNC's purpose.

Ms Williams thanked the Corporation for tasking the senior leadership team to revisit the colleges mission statement. The opportunity for reflection was not only welcomed but also timely.

It was also noted at this point that the college is to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2024 and that we need to consider, in due course, how this should be marked..

Resolved:

- **That the strategic plan and mission statement be approved, subject to agreed amendments.**
- **For Ms Williams to again present the strategic plan for final approval at the next Corporation Meeting in July 2021 for publication and implementation as of September 2021.**

Ms Richards joined the meeting.

5. Corporate Report

Ms Williams presented the Senior Leadership Team report to the Corporation. Comprehensive updates were provided on key areas of the college and its performance to date against key performance indicators, including:

COVID 19 UPDATE:

Ms Williams provided a comprehensive update to the corporation on the colleges ongoing response to the health pandemic.

Governors were informed that the College re-opened on Monday 8th March and that another new time-table was introduced to make this a safer return for staff and for students, given the high infection Covid 19 rates in Kirklees (higher than the national average) and the new, more contagious variants of Covid 19 circulating at the time of re-opening. Ms Williams explained that the college has moved to a 3 hour blocked lesson per subject on site, with a 1.5 hour lesson per subject remote. No common break. No common lunch. No on-site catering. No indoor mixing outside classrooms. Ms Williams reported that this timetable is working really well but went onto to explain that the college will be moving this model on further this term, and by Monday 7th June the 4.5 hours of learning per subject will be fully on site. This is in line with the trajectory expected by the DfE and will re-introduce the common lunch and potentially indoor mixing outside classrooms.

Ms Williams explained that staff and students were being asked to wear face masks in classrooms, as another additional safety measure. This remains a strongly recommended but voluntary measure but there has been a high level of compliance for students with this measure. The DfE recommend this additional safety measure remains in place at least until Step 3 of the roadmap out of lockdown is initiated, scheduled for May 17th.

Ms Williams confirmed that Clinically Extremely Vulnerable staff and students have continued to work and to learn fully from home from Monday 8th March until shielding ended on Friday 1st April. A small number of students however were also allowed to continue learning fully from home from Monday 8th March to Easter, mostly related to mental health concerns, and anxiety about returning to learning on the College site. As of Monday 12th April, all staff and all students have been informed that they are expected to be on site when required to be on site.

Mrs Williams advised the corporation that mass testing was a significant undertaking for the College, and a large team of 30/40 people were required to enable it. The team were trained fully using NHS training programmes, as well as a HNC training programme that complimented this. The team had to pass all modules before they could commence their roles. The College Risk Assessment was updated to include mass testing mitigations. Mass testing commenced on Wednesday 3rd March and continued through to Friday 26th March. During this period, 7673 tests were carried out on students and only 11 students received a positive test result. The college has now moved to LFD home testing, and since Saturday 27th March, 16 students have reported a positive test result. These 16 students have also taken a confirmatory PCR test. A reduced testing facility is still available daily in the Sports building for students and staff who prefer to take their test in a controlled environment.

The Corporation openly recognised the efforts and achievements of all staff and therefore wish to record their ongoing thanks to everyone for their hard work and commitment to supporting the college community through the pandemic.

Performance update:

Key Stage 5 Performance Tables

Mr Smith-Connor explained that the performance tables are not being published for 2019-20, given the awarding of Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) in Summer 2020.

Progress Point 3 Summary

Mr Smith-Connor explained that Teachers have inputted Progress Grades for the Progress Point 3 data period during 1st – 4th March 2021. Governors were advised that the overall outcomes for academic and vocational qualifications are on-track to exceed national averages.

The corporation were informed that although A level value added remains very strong (within the top 25%) it has declined relative to previous years. The negative impact of the pandemic on student progress is evident at course level; 14 out of 29 A levels are predicting that their value added performance will decrease in 2020/21. However, the recently released JCQ guidance on the calculation of Teacher Assessed Grades is expected to off-set the disruption to student progress and value added performance caused by the pandemic. This means that the 2020/21 Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGS) outcomes (and thereby value added performance) are likely to match those achieved by students in 2018/19 (the last year in which exams ran as normal).

Mr Smith-Connor explained that the Vocational outcomes look set to match previous year's performance. The impact of the pandemic on this cohort of students has been mitigated by the capacity to 'bank' all first year grades. Governors were however asked to note that the impact of the pandemic on the national benchmark data for raw and value added performance is currently unknown; therefore, all comparative data in the accompanying report is based on 2018/19 outcomes.

Teaching and Learning Quality Reviews

Ms Williams advised the corporation that the Teaching and Learning Quality Reviews have been suspended for 2020-21, for the same reasons that full Ofsted Inspections have been suspended.

Student Numbers

Ms Williams confirmed that funded student numbers remain at 2779, with a current retention rate of 96.7%, which compared to this point last year is slightly down, by 0.7%. Ms Williams explained that this is actually extremely positive though, as the college had projected a dip of over 1% in retention, due to the challenge of ensuring at enrolment the right student was on the right programme of study, given the very positive GCSE CAGs in Summer 2020 (14% higher than Summer 2019), and the challenge of ensuring students remained engaged with learning through two periods of full lockdown and associated restrictions.

The Corporation was advised that application numbers remain strong compared to last year, with exactly the same number of student applications received (3957). Again, this is extremely positive, as next year's intake has experienced two years of dislocated learning in years 10 and 11, cancelled year 10 taster days, and virtual year 11 Open Events. They are also having their admissions interview over the phone.

Ms Williams advised Governors that enrolment numbers are projected to be at least consistent with last year, with possible growth due to the awarding of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) in Summer 2021.

Destination of college leavers 2020

Mr Smith-Connor explained that the College has collated progression data for the 2019/20 cohort and the Destinations Report has been updated as far as possible. Some elements of the Destinations Report however depend upon data released by the DfE, which as a consequence of the COVID 19 pandemic has not been published therefore it has not been possible to produce a national comparison.

Mr Smith-Conor confirmed to the Board that internal progression remains a key strength of the college. The level 2 to level 3 progression rate is particularly noteworthy as most of these students applied to HNC to study a level 3 programme but didn't achieve the necessary GCSE grade profile. As such, they tend to be reluctant learners with low levels of confidence. To transform these students into learners ready for level 3 in one academic year is an outstanding achievement. The particularly high percentage of Level 2 to 3 progression for 2019/20 does reflect the CAGs awarding, resulting in a higher number of students achieving the entry requirements.

Staffing structure:

Ms Williams informed the corporation that she had conducted a further SLT reshuffle. Revised roles and responsibilities, to take effect from Monday 23rd August 2021, were shared with governors via an Organisational Chart.

College events and initiatives.

Ms Williams summarised the wealth of events and initiatives currently being undertaken by the college, particular attention was drawn to the Staff and students Well-being Calendar of Activities and the students E-Enrichment programmes. The corporation congratulated the college on the richness of opportunities being made available to staff and students in particular to support good mental health and wellbeing.

Equality & Diversity Policy

Ms Rogerson reminded the Corporation that the policy shows HNC's commitment to promoting Equality and Diversity which is at the heart of the College's Vision, Mission and Values.

Ms Rogerson explained to governors that the proposed policy sets out how the college has and continues to work to fulfil its vision and mission and meet the statutory duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and PSED. Governors were informed that the E&D policy also amalgamates The Single Equality Scheme as it recognises the college's legal responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the protected characteristics.

As strategic lead for Equality and Diversity, Ms Rogerson informed the corporation that the Equality and Diversity Committee consists of all senior leaders and directors who have a strategic responsibility to ensure that equality and diversity is embedded and promoted in the areas that they lead. This committee meets termly to review and work towards the 3 Year Equality Objectives (2020-2023) which were agreed by the Governors in December 2020. Progress towards the Equality Objectives is monitored, reviewed and updated on the Equality Objectives Quality Improvement Plan with timely reports being presented to the corporation and relevant committees as required throughout the academic year.

The Corporation approved the policy, subject to the titles being changed for the members of the E&D committee since a further reshuffle of roles and responsibilities within SLT.

National and Local developments:

TAG guidance

Mr Smith-Connor explained to Governors that at the end of March 2021 JCQ released full guidance for the calculation of Teacher Assessed Grades. The College released its full guidance to staff on Tuesday 20th April and will be briefing students and parents / carers on Friday 23rd April. The published TAG documentation was submitted to governors for information.

Mr Smith-Connor asked the corporation to be mindful that with Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) being awarded in Summer 2021, the college's student enrolment numbers for next year are not going to be easy to control, with more students than ever potentially achieving the entry criteria for their chosen programme of study, and so there could be further growth in our student numbers.

Academy Update – confidential

Resolved:

- **That the report be received.**
- **To record the corporations thanks to all staff and students for their hard work and commitment in supporting the college community through the pandemic.**

- **That the E&D policy be approved for immediate implementation, subject to agreed amendments.**

Ms Rogerson left the meeting.

6. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP): Mid-Year Review.

Mr Smith-Connor presented the updated College Quality Improvement Plan to inform Governors understanding of the progress made to date drawing attention to the priority actions being taken.

The corporation agreed that the evaluation of the progress being made on planned improvement activities and timelines were accurate and demonstrated that the college was on track to achieve goals as set out in the autumn term.

All present were of the view that the progress being made was phenomenal given the impact of the ongoing pandemic. It was agreed that the QIP reflected the genuine collective efforts of everyone at HNC to ensure that the students' experience and outcomes are not to be compromised.

Resolved:

- **That the QIP be received.**
- 7. BAF assurance review: Failure to anticipate and/or respond quickly and appropriately to local, regional or national development which could impact on the College (e.g. Post 16 funding, KS4 or KS5 curriculum change, development of competitor local 16-19 providers, preferential financial incentives for academies)**

Ms Williams presented the assurance report to the corporation. The Governors agreed that the report provided a comprehensive review of the individual risk and provided the necessary assurance that the existing controls in place are adequate and effective and in proportion to the individual risk being managed.

It was noted that there was a wealth of independent assurance sources cited within the report to support the corporation's recommendation for green assurance. It was agreed however for the DfE to be cited as additional source of external assurance given that HNC recently featured in the DfE's good practice guide which recognised the excellent work being undertaken at HNC in response to delivering remote and blended learning during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (published 2nd march 2021).

Furthermore, SLT was asked to revisit the residual scores assigned to this risk to ensure that it accurately reflects the amount of risk that remains bearing in mind the significant level and effectiveness of the risk controls currently in place.

Resolved:

- **To assign green assurance rating to the individual risk**
- **For the clerk to update the Master BAF**

Minutes of the Committee Meetings:

8. Search & Governance Committee (Meeting held on 9th February 2021)

Ms Boryslawskij – chair of S&G briefed Governors on the business of the Committee.

The Corporation's attention was particularly drawn to the committee's decision to target recruitment advertisements for one of the board vacancies to niche organisations, professional networking groups etc in an effort to rebalance elements of the corporation membership and genuinely seek to add value to the quality of board meetings and to the robustness of the board's decision making. Ms Boryslawskyj explained to the corporation that this approach to recruitment may take more time, especially in light of COVID 19, but all present agreed it necessary to run with an external governor vacancy for longer than usual with a view to progressing further on diversity. Especially given that the corporation, through its local recruitment campaigns, is currently rich in skills expertise and professional experience.

Ms Summers also explained to the Corporation that expressions of interest were sought for the pending Vice-Chair vacancy; One nomination was received from Ms M Boryslawskyj. The committee in turn supported the application and recommend to the Corporation for Ms Boryslawskyj to be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Corporation from July 2021 to July 2024. The Corporation approved her appointment as Vice-Chair.

Resolved:

- **That the minutes be received**
- **For Ms Boryslawskyj to be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Corporation from July 2021 for a period of 3 years (up to July 2024).**

9. Audit Committee (Meeting held on 16th February 2021)

Mr Nelson informed Governors on the business of the Audit Committee.

Mr Nelson confirmed that the risk management policy had been subject to a biennial review; as the policy continues to promote best practices – no proposed changes were recommended. Mr Nelson also explained that the committee had undertaken a review of the corporate risk appetite and that no additional changes were proposed to those that had already been raised at the strategy planning meeting back in February 2021. The corporation therefore approved the presented statement of risk appetite for immediate implementation.

Mr Nelson also advised the Corporation that the final report from the External ESFA Funding Assurance Review (November 2020) was now available to all Governors and co-opted members via Moodle.

Resolved:

- **That the minutes be received**
- **That the Corporate Risk Appetite Statement be approved for immediate implementation.**

10. Finance & Resources Committee (Meetings held on 18th January 2021 22nd March 2021)

Ms Summers advised the Corporation that, on the request of the Clerk, she had been asked to temporarily chair the committee as of February 2021 given the circumstances until the Search & Governance Committee were able to meet and review committee membership and recommend an appointment of a new Chair as of September 2021. She went onto brief the Governors on the business of the Finance & Resources Committee.

18th January 2021:

Ms Summers informed Governors on the business of the F&R Committee. Ms Summers confirmed that all required financial returns to date have been returned timely to the ESFA.

The latest return, signed off by the Principal, was submitted by 27th November 2020; the new finance record incorporated a financial outturn statement for the year 2019 to 2020 and a budget forecast for the year 2020 to 2021 and accompanying commentary. The commentary was to again highlight key variables, milestones or decision points as appropriate regarding potential / anticipated risks to solvency.

The Corporation was advised that the Committee had asked to note that financial health has not been formally assessed by the ESFA since college corporations submitted their finance record for the year 2018 to 2019 and as a result, ESFA has determined that a further finance record would be required as part of the financial statement collection for the year 2019 to 2020. As the July and November 2020 financial health calculator only required a minimum collection of data to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on financial health, the finance record this year will cover both the year 2019 to 2020 and the latest forecast for the year 2020 to 2021. This will enable ESFA to provide college corporations with a final financial health grade for the year 2019 to 2020 based on the audited financial statements and a financial health grade for the year 2020 to 2021. Corporations were to submit their financial statements to ESFA by 31 January 2021, again this deadline had been met.

22nd March 2021:

Ms Summers confirmed that the monthly management accounts are now up to date and in line with the College's financial regulations. This gives comfort to the committee that accurate and timely financial management will be consistently produced in future. The committee would however need to assure itself of continued timely reporting before assigning full (green) assurance to this risk. With this in mind, a further review of the relevant risk will be undertaken at the next F&R meeting in order to be satisfied that it was being managed effectively. The corporation welcomed this update.

Ms Summers confirmed, as addressed earlier in agenda item 4, that the Committee had revisited the college's financial KPIS going forward and determined it sensible to incorporate the FE Commissioner's revised benchmarks as suitable measures that can be used by Governors to assess the financial status and performance of the College.

Ms Summers also advised the corporation that the committee recommends that it is appropriate to retain the current three financial parameters to support the budget setting process for 2021/22 and to monitor these alongside the College financial KPI's. The Corporation supported the recommendation for the following financial parameters to remain

- Operating expenditure does not exceed income for each period
- Cash is maintained at a level above £2.1m; and
- Financial health is maintained at the 'Good' or 'Outstanding' category for the whole period.

The committee had agreed with the senior leadership team's recommendation for all financial benchmarks (KPIs and parameters) to be reported to Governors on a quarterly basis via the dashboard. Ms Summers advised that the presentational format is yet to be determined.

Resolved:

- **That the minutes be received**
- **That the recommended financial KPIS and parameters be approved.**

Ms Williams and Mr Smith-Connor left the meeting.

11. Remuneration Committee (meeting held on 2nd February 2021 and 25th March 2021)

2nd February 2021: (confidential)

25th March 2021:

Ms Drury briefed the corporation on the minutes for the meeting held on 25th March 2021. Particular attention was given to the Committees recommendation to support the revised pay settlement for Support Staff. Ms Drury explained that the proposed revised pay agreement, is affordable and is within the agreed 2020-21 staffing costs budget. The Corporation agreed for the college to implement a final 0.75% (3.25% overall) increase on all support staff pay points in the May 2021 payroll. This is when phase 2 of the Teacher's pay award for this year will also be implemented.

Ms Drury also explained that a review of all HR Policies has been ongoing to ensure content reflects current practices, is practical to use and is legally compliant. Ms Drury confirmed that the three policy drafts were first considered by the Committee on 23rd November 2020 and a request to seek final Professional Association feedback was agreed. Copies were sent to the Professional Associations with requests for any feedback by 18th December 2020. No feedback was received, the committee therefore reconsidered and in turn recommended for approval all of the policies. The Corporation duly considered and approved for immediate implementation.

Resolved:

- **That the minutes are received**
- **The Corporation approved the proposed revised pay agreement for Support Staff, for implementation in the May payroll.**
- **The Corporation approved the following staffing policies for immediate implementation:**
 - **Disciplinary Policy**
 - **Capability Policy**
 - **Attendance Policy**

12. Any other Business

There was no other business.

13. Learner Impact Reflection

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

- **The outcome of the QIP leads directly into the whole college SAR for 2020-21. It is the key driver for quality improvement (including maximising the student outcomes) in operation in the college.**
- **Assurance for the corporation that the college continues to have an adequate and effective framework for risk management enabling governors to fulfil its responsibility for the effectiveness and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the safeguarding of its assets.**
- **The corporation recognises its responsibility to manage internal and external risks as a key component of good corporate governance and is omitted to embedding risk management to help achieve the college's strategic objectives.**
- **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.**

14. Determination of confidentiality

The minutes and associated supporting documents for agenda item 5 (academy update) and 11 (part 1) and the executive report for agenda item 7 are all determined as confidential.

15. Date of next meeting: 1st July 2021 (meeting to take place at college)