



## HUDDERSFIELD NEW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Corporation Meeting held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021 from 5.00pm.  
via Zoom

### Confirmed Minutes

**Present:** Ms L Summers (Chair), Mr J Dawson, Mr K Webb, Mr A Nelson, Ms M Boryslawskij, Ms A Williams, Ms C Bostock, Ms H Haigh, Ms H Richards, Mr A Leach, Ms R Drury, Ms M Dean, Ms T Wright, Mr T Hosker, Ms A Needham . (attendance : 94%)

**In attendance:** Mr M Smith-Connor, Ms J Thomas, Ms K Rogerson, Mr L Goddard

**Clerk:** Mrs C Coupland

#### 1. Apologies for Absence/ Declaration of Interest

Apologies of absence were submitted by Ms S Johnson.

There were no declarations of interest.

Mr Hosker was welcomed to his first Corporation; time was taken for introductions.

#### 2. Minutes from Meetings held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

**Resolved:**

- **That these be accepted as a true record of the meeting**

#### 3. Matters arising

*Audit Committee Annual Report 2019/2020*

The Clerk confirmed that the report has been signed and awaits submission to the ESFA by 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2021.

*External Audit Report & Representation Letters*

Ms Thomas confirmed that the final version of the Audit Findings Report has been received by the college and that the representation letters have been signed by the Chair of the Corporation and the Principal.

All documents have been uploaded onto the ESFA portal ready for final submission.

*Members Report and Financial Statements 2019/2020*

It was confirmed that the members report and financial statements have been signed by the Chair of the Corporation and the Principal and awaits submission to the ESFA.

All documents will be submitted to the ESFA by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, once the financial return has been finalised.

#### **4. SLT's update on the college's continuing response to COVID 19**

Ms Summers explained to the Corporation that it was timely for the Covid 19 Sub-Group to meet but it was determined useful and constructive for all governors to instead receive the update. The whole meeting is therefore dedicated to receiving a briefing from the Senior Leadership Team on how the college continues to respond to the health pandemic and to recent government announcements, directives and initiatives.

**The key areas addressed included the following:**

##### **- Contextual Overview**

Ms Williams advised Governors that on Wednesday 30th December 2020 mass testing in schools and Colleges was announced, alongside a remote learning week for week beginning Monday 4th January 2021, to allow schools and Colleges to prepare for mass testing.

Governors were reminded that on Monday 4th January 2020 8pm the Third National Lockdown was announced and schools and Colleges were closed to Monday 15th February 2021 except for vulnerable students or those with a critical worker parent. The Secretary of State for Education Gavin Williamson has however since promised schools and Colleges will be given two weeks notice to reopen. The review of the third lockdown will take place in the week beginning Monday 22nd February 2021 meaning it will be Monday 8th March 2021 at the earliest before any reopening process can begin

##### **- Remote Education Provision**

Mr Smith-Connor explained to the Corporation that in accordance with DfE requirements; the college has published its remote provision via a series of Q&As (based on the DfE template) on the College's website for all stakeholders.

Mr Smith-Connor advised Governors that all lessons are running as timetabled and that there are mechanisms in place to effectively track, monitor, assess and support students.

Governors were informed that during the Autumn term: 1,068 students were absent due to Covid (13,884 days absence). However, as lessons were being run 'simultaneous' at the time; 95% of students were accessing and actively engaging in learning.

Mr Smith-Connor explained that Staff CPD sessions had very much focussed on rapidly upskilling staff on the effective use of Teams in particular to support assessment for learning and in delivering tasks for engagement. Mr Smith-Connor advised that all teaching staff have completed the Microsoft Innovative Educator(MIE) training course. In addition, members of staff have been trained as MIE Expert, one as MIE Trainer and one as a MIE Master Trainer. Governors were pleased that all staff have improved their digital confidence to excel in their roles.

##### **- Ofqual Consultation & Proposal**

Mr Smith-Connor reminded Governors that it was announced that GCSE and A Level exams in Summer 2021 were to be cancelled and would be replaced by some form of teacher assessment . The two week consultation into the form of teacher assessment was launched by Ofqual on Friday 15th January 2021. Deadline for returns is 11.45pm on Friday 29th January 2021.

Governors were advised that in addition to responding directly to Ofqual, the College have produced an online survey and publicised an email address to encourage feedback from all stakeholders.

Ofqual have been tasked by the DfE to produce a methodology for teachers to calculate grades for each student. It is understood that these grades will not be subject to an algorithm and changes will only be made on the basis of exam board intervention and discussion with the provider.

It is thought that awarding organisations are to be permitted to develop an approach to awarding qualifications on the basis of incomplete assessment evidence. Whereby Awarding Organisations should consider their minimum evidential requirement to ensure sufficient validity and reliability; they should also consider where they need additional assessment evidence from teachers and what form this should take.

The Corporation was advised that Grades will be based on teachers' assessment of the standard at which a student is performing. To help teachers make objective decisions exam boards are being asked to provide guidance and training, and to make available a set of papers which teachers may be required to use with their students as part of their assessment. The consultation seeks views on whether such papers should be provided and, if so, what form they should take, when should they be made available, and whether their use should be mandated. Mr Smith-Connor explained that Teachers are continuing to assess non-exam assessments as applicable.

Mr Smith-Connor explained that Students are to continue with their education during this academic year and that Students would be assessed by their teachers, drawing on a range of broader evidence of a student's work in making their final assessment, in a period beginning in May into early June and that Teachers would submit grades to the exam boards by mid June. External quality assurance by the exam boards will be ongoing throughout June with results being issued to students once the QA process is complete, most likely in early July. Student appeals could be submitted immediately following the issue of results and would first be considered by schools and colleges.

- Ofsted

Mr Smith –Connor advised the Corporation that as of 25th January remote inspections will continue, with a particular focus on how well learners are being educated remotely. Routine inspections of providers rated 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' will also go ahead remotely as planned.

It is understood that Ofsted will follow up on complaints raised by parents in order to resolve issues and that On-site inspections will only take place if Ofsted have immediate concerns, for example about safeguarding, the leadership of a provider, or a failure to provide education.

- **January 2021 White Paper - Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth**

Mr Smith-Connor advised the Corporation that the FE White Paper has now been published; which makes clear that the government believes that too many young people are progressing to university, and that more should instead progress to Level 4 or 5 technical courses. The primary role of 'further education' is therefore to meet the needs of the local labour market.

The Senior Leaders are of the view that how the FE sector is understood by the government and now defined in the white paper feels increasingly alien to sixth form colleges; it is expected to prompt a significant increase in the number of colleges exploring academisation..

## - **curriculum offer 2022 and Beyond**

Mr Smith-Conor advised the Corporation that the DfE intent remains to replace overlapping Applied General Qualifications with T Levels, consequently the College's medium / long term curriculum planning assumptions have been updated to reflect this. Time was taken for Governors to be briefed on the Curriculum pathways being considered by SLT for academic study programmes, vocational study programmes and level two study programmes. Governors welcomed this opportunity to hear senior leaders' early thinking on how the curriculum can be reshaped to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of students (thus sustaining current numbers) and local / national priorities whilst also complying with DfE and ESFA regulations.

The Corporation also agreed it appropriate for the college to proactively engage with T Levels, as appropriate, whilst continuously reviewing the college's BTEC and A level provision.

## - **Safeguarding & Students accessing the Site**

### *Vulnerable students*

Mr Goddard advised the Corporation that the campus has been kept open for vulnerable students, - primarily those with a social worker and EHCPs. 23 of these students are regularly attending throughout the week with between 10 and 20 in College on a daily basis. Governors were assured that others are aware that they can choose to attend at any point and individual circumstances are reviewed regularly by the Safeguarding Team.

Mr Goddard advised Governors that the Student Welfare service is running during this remote learning period, with appointments being able to be made with the Student Well-being Manager via MS Teams or telephone. This offers students the opportunity to discuss any worries or concerns they may have whether this is about mental and/or physical well-being, or for wider issues such as living arrangements. The College's Student Well-being Champions also offer peer to peer support, and run various events linked to mental health and wellbeing such as a Time to Talk Day, Stress Awareness Week, Mental Health Awareness Week, Men's Health Awareness Week, Drink & Drugs Awareness events.

### *Discretionary students*

Mr Goodard further explained that Students with difficulties accessing the internet, experiencing significant mental health challenges, or who are deemed to be at risk of becoming NEET either self-identify or are identified by Progress Tutors and other staff are also being invited on-site on a case-by-case basis.

To date, 100 laptops have been loaned to students who have had technical problems. Staff and Students are invited onto campus should home circumstances preclude effective working and learning.

Mr Goddard assured the Corporation that Staff continue to log safeguarding concerns on Cedar and that the safeguarding team operate a rota to respond and take any necessary actions (as per normal). The safeguarding team continue to meet weekly to review every logged concern for that week. Ms Wright, Safeguarding Link Governor confirmed that she has remained in contact with the safeguarding Team throughout this third Lockdown and applauds the hard work and dedication from the team to ensure all vulnerable student in particular, are remaining safe on and off campus. Governors were interested to note that safeguarding concerns continue to be raised by staff predominately for student mental health and emotional wellbeing; Mr Goddard explained to the Corporation that this increase in referrals pre dates COVID 19.

## - **Additional Learning Support Services and Pastoral**

### *Additional Learning Specialist Support*

Mr Goddard advised Governors that during the first term Student Support Assistants (SSA) have been supporting both in class and increasingly remotely via Teams. This arrangement has been welcomed by parents as a significant step towards greater independence. The transition to remote support has therefore been straightforward, with SSAs in College on a bespoke, to need, basis.

### *Tutorials*

Governors were informed that the pastoral curriculum has been delivered remotely since the start of the year. The sequencing of the curriculum has been adjusted to ensure that new priorities (such as staying safe online and mental well being) have been addressed earlier than would normally be the case.

## - **Admissions for 2021 Entry**

Ms Thomas explained that this year, in response to the national situation, the whole admissions systems and processes have been redeveloped to support remote interviews and a remote enquiry / resolution process. The application window has been extended to 12th March 2021. The start of evening interview events for non-partner schools has also been postponed until next half term and is ready to be conducted remotely

Ms Thomas advised the Corporation that the Marketing and School Liaison Team are to start partner school interviews in the next few weeks. Progress Tutors are to also join the partner school interview team from week commencing 22nd February.

Ms Thomas informed Governors that schools have reported to being worried that grades they provide as predicted grades will be used in an appeal, or to support a legal challenge, against a TAG (Teacher assessed grade) awarded by the school. To support schools, the college has therefore changed the descriptor to 'reference' grade and has also issued associated guidance. Governors agreed with this initiative.

Ms Thomas went on to explain that by April, it is hoped that there will be more clarity from the DfE regarding the evidence base for Teacher Assessed Grades so it is the colleges intention to offer schools the opportunity to revisit the reference grades they have submitted. Where relevant, time will be taken to review study programmes based on these revised grades.

Ms Thomas confirmed that this information and advice has been shared with schools and C & K careers and has also been published on the website for prospective students.

## - **HEALTH & SAFETY - site access & safety and LFD Testing**

Ms Thomas took this opportunity to advise the Corporation that there continues to be strict adherence to social distancing and safety measures for those on campus. The Business continuity plan is actioned and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Categories of staff who are working on-site, if approved by their SLT lead, include:

- Staff who cannot fulfil their job working from home and have been directed by their line manager to work on-site.
- Staff who are essential to the safe and secure running of the College.
- Staff who have an identifiable welfare need which means that they would benefit from working on-site.

Ms Thomas informed the Corporation that extensive NHS training has been run for staff involved with undertaking Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing. Twice Weekly LFD testing is currently taking place for those staff and students currently attending college.

Due to a reduced numbers on site, the testing provision is currently supervised by staff within their 'normal' working patterns, When the DfE announce a return to onsite delivery and mass testing of students; plans are being finalised to upscale the current provision, including significant recruitment from volunteers and external candidates.

#### - **Student Enrichment & CEIAG**

Ms Rogerson used this opportunity to brief Governors on the extensive efforts taken by the College community to continue to provide for and deliver a comprehensive and engaging virtual student enrichment programme.

Governors noted the range of enrichment activities and opportunities made available to students to not only help them to stay focused, healthy (mentally and physically) but to also serve as an opportunity to learn new life skills such as perseverance and resilience, all welcomed by employers and universities.

Mr Webb, Careers Experience, Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) Link Governor, also advised the Corporation that he has been keeping in touch with the Careers Team and he is of the view that the college continues to successfully provide students with varied and appropriate CEIAG opportunities and support; even during these most challenging of times. Mr Webb openly recognised that the potential for disruption to CEIAG provision this year has been great, however, the team have turned adversity to advantage by creative and innovative responses to the challenges. They have shown impressive ingenuity, energy and commitment to ensure that all students have the opportunities and support they require in the current adverse circumstances.

#### - **staff wellbeing**

Ms Rogerson, informed Governors that this year, departments from across the college are being asked to contribute to the wellbeing newsletter to share their top tips for staying healthy in the work place by talking about their recommended reads and podcasts as well as lockdown recipes etc . This initiative has been welcomed by staff.

Virtual lunch and chats, fitness classes, art and cooking sessions and competitions amongst other activities also continue to be advertised daily in staff briefing as further ways for staff to stay healthy and happy whilst working from home and more importantly to stay connected with one another, albeit remotely.

Governors asked how the Senior Leadership Team was coping themselves given the current demands of their roles during these unprecedented times. Ms Williams recognised that it was incredibly challenging at this moment in time for leaders in education with efforts focusing on supporting student and staff wellbeing . The Senior Leadership Team are however meeting regularly and have touched upon how best to support one another. Ms Williams stated that she will revisit this at the next SLT meeting to ensure that all senior leaders continue to feel supported with actions taken as and when identified.

The Corporation agreed that the Senior Leadership Team's presentation this evening was insightful and comprehensive. Governors wished to record their thanks to all staff for their continued support and phenomenal efforts during these difficult times. Governors openly recognised the level of resourcefulness, dedication and resilience from staff in continuing to respond professionally to government initiatives, directives and announcements to the ongoing pandemic.

**Resolved:**

- **That the presentation be received**
- **To record thanks from the corporation to all staff for their continued support and phenomenal efforts during these difficult times.**

**5. Any other Business.**

There was no other business.

**6. 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.

- **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**
- **The corporation is committed to ensuring the effective control and due diligence takes place and that systems of delegation and accountability are in place.**
- **A high performing corporation is able to support the college to achieve its aims and objectives and secure positive outcomes for students.**

**7. Determination of confidentiality**

Presentation slides for agenda item 4 were deemed to be confidential.

**8. Date of next meeting:**

**Strategy Planning Day : 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021 from 10am – 2pm via Zoom**

**Corporation Meeting : 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 from 5pm.**