



HOPWOOD HALL COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING HELD ON 11TH OCTOBER 2022

Present:

Nazir Afzal (Chair), Clive Reid, Julia Heap (Principal / Chief Executive), Susan Ayres, Helen Barton, Gill Banks, Steven Taylor, Greg Walsh

Meeting Commenced: 5.00pm

Meeting Ended: 6.45pm

Attendance: 57%

Quorum 7

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Julie Burns, Paul Dixon, Cathy Berry, Martin Salins and Jennifer Worsdale.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare any direct, indirect, personal, pecuniary or prejudicial interest on any item on the agenda.

There were no declarations.

3. Approval of the Minutes – 30th June 2022

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 30th June 2022 are approved as a correct record and authorised for publication

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Action Progress log was reviewed and it was noted that all actions had been completed.

5. Committee Minutes

The Board received the minutes of the Committee meetings with the following points highlighted by the Committee Chairs:

5.1 Audit Committee 21st September 2022

- The Committee had been satisfied that College was compliant with the sub-contracting rules

- This had been taken off the actions log following a review of the public procurement rules by Greg Walsh
- The Internal Audit annual report had been received and a Reasonable Assurance rating had been issued
- A Counter Fraud strategy was to be developed and presented to the Committee at the November meeting as recommended by the Audit Code of Practice

5.2 Search & Governance Committee 21st September 2022

- Governor terms of office and succession planning had been discussed and a recommendation was being made to the Board on Governor re-appointments
- The Committee had reviewed the Governor attendance data for 2021/22 and it had been noted that the attendance target of 80% had not been met due to Governor illness / impact of Covid
- A compliance check against the updated F.E. Governance guide was to be undertaken by the Clerk

5.3 Standards Committee 21st September 2022

- The provisional results for apprenticeships had been reviewed and it was noted that they would be below target but above the national benchmark
- A discussion had taken place regarding the T Level results and the Committee had expressed concerns about how this matter had been handled by the awarding bodies, the DfE and IFATE
- H.E results had been reviewed and an update on enrolment for 2022 had been received

In response to a question about T Levels, the Deputy Principal confirmed that this was a sector wide issue and not specific to the College.

5.4 Employment & Finance Committee 29th September 2022

- An update had been provided on 2022 enrolment and it was noted that the ESFA contract target would be met
- The updated Estates strategy had been reviewed and was being recommended to the Board for approval
- The pay review claim from the Union had been discussed including the College's proposals

6. Principal's Report

The Principal & Chief Executive presented her report with the following points highlighted to the Board:

- College had set an ambitious target for 16-18 recruitment and would be just below this by 20 or 30 learners at the census date
- College would continue to enroll adult learners throughout the year and there were no concerns in relation to the AEB contract
- Apprenticeship numbers were almost at target
- To further Business Development relationships, and in light of the Further Education Skills Bill, a new post of Executive Director for Business Development, Apprenticeships and Future Skills had been created and was currently being advertised

- The Deputy Principal Andrea Murphy would be taking early retirement at the end of this academic year
- There would be a need to recruit a Senior Post Holder for the curriculum side
- It would not be a like for like replacement in terms of responsibilities as the recruitment of the Executive Director for Business Development, Apprenticeships and Future Skills would take on some of the duties of the existing role

Governor Questions

Q. Had any benchmarking data been reviewed to ascertain enrolment numbers in other Colleges?

A. College would have more information about this in January

Q. Would the Director of Business Development Chair the AMPI group meetings?

A. The Principal was on the Board of AMPI and the Deputy Principal was Chair of the sub group. It was anticipated that the Director of Business Development would chair the sub group. The Atom Valley project would be chaired by the Chair of the Rochdale Development agency

Q. Did management have any concerns about recruiting to the Deputy Principal post?

A. There were no concerns at present and there could be some interest from internal candidates

Q. What was the attrition rate for enrolment?

A. It was about 10% and tended to vary between departments. The rate in construction was quite high as there were a lot of safeguarded learners in that area

Q. Could any action be taken to reduce the rate?

A. Attrition had been taken into consideration when setting the enrolment target

7. 2022 Results

The following update was provided by the Deputy Principal:

- The achievement outturn for Apprenticeships was 58% against the national rate of 51.8%
- All leavers except one had passed
- College was pleased with the overall achievement rates for H.E
- The increase in 16-18 achievement was a positive outcome for the College and reflected the further improvements that had been made in both teaching and assessment practice
- Entries at entry level, level 1 and level 3 comprised the majority of achievements
- Entry level/level 1 compared favorably to 20/21 but showed a slight decline on 2018/19
- The Level 3 achievement rate was an area for concern as this had dipped against both comparator years
- Some of this could be explained by Teacher Assessed Grades and Centre Assessed Grades
- Record numbers of learners had left School in 2019/20 and 2020/21 with inflated grades, and some had struggled with the demands of level 3

- The introduction of timed assessments was also a factor at level 3, with the vast majority of level 3 learners having to sit a timed examination for the first time
- There were curriculum areas where the preparation of learners for examinations needed to be improved and this was a major quality improvement focus for the coming academic year
- GCSE pass rates had remained broadly in line with 2018/19, with the exception of the Maths pass rate which had declined by 3%
- Although the achievement rate for basic skills Maths and English had improved slightly this year, it was still not at the accepted level
- The new Maths and English strategy would seek to address this issue
- Level 1 functional skills would continue to be offered to adults, but full-time study programme learners would now complete the appropriate GCSE
- Students without a previous GCSE grade in Maths or English would still be able to access Entry level functional skills

8. DfE Statutory Guidance – How Well the Education or Training Provider Meets Local Needs

The Clerk explained that:

- Guidance was published at the end of June 2022 for Governing Bodies on their duty to comply under a new Section 52B of the Further & Higher Education Act, to review provision in relation to local needs
- Governing Bodies were required to undertake regular reviews of how well the education or training provided by the College met local needs, in particular needs relating to local employment
- Governing Bodies were expected to collaborate with other Governing bodies also serving the area to undertake the review
- The conclusions of the review would form part of ESFA and F.E. Commissioner annual strategic conversations with Governing Bodies
- Reviews should be undertaken every 3 years

Governors considered the guidance and the following points were noted:

- College already collaborated with Rochdale Sixth Form College on provision within the Borough
- The GMCA would be able help with providing the data to inform the review
- College would need to determine the local area for the review and which Colleges it needed to work with

It was agreed that this was discussed further at the December Board meeting

ACTION:

- Management to contact GMCA
- Clerk / December Board Agenda

9. Estates Strategy Update

The Director of Finance & Estates explained that:

- The Estates Strategy had been updated to reflect significant changes within the last 2-year period
- It reflected the College's future ambitions and plans both current and where capital bids were to be submitted

- The revised version of the strategy also took into account key changes to both learner numbers and curriculum need

Governor Questions

Q. Had costs for digital infrastructure been included within the strategy?

A. The College had an IT strategy and this would inform the proposals in the Estates strategy.

Governors agreed that it was important that the College built up its reserves in order to fund future projects.

The Principal suggested that the Head of IT attended a future Board meeting to present the IT strategy to Governors.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the updated Estates strategy 2022 - 2027

ACTION:

Head of IT Services to present IT strategy at a future Board meeting

10. Memorandum of Understanding – Altus Education Trust

The Principal advised that the Memorandum was reviewed annually and no changes were being proposed. Hopwood Hall and Rochdale Sixth Form College (Part of the Altus Education Trust) were separate institutions, but the memorandum confirmed / detailed how both Colleges worked together in areas of beneficial interest.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding

11. Governor Re-Appointments

RESOLVED:

The Board considered the recommendation from the Search & Governance Committee and agreed that Martin Salins, Cathy Berry and Steven Taylor were re-appointed to the Board.

The Board also approved the appointment of Sue Ayers as the Second Vice-Chair and member of the Appraisal & Remuneration Committee when Greg Walsh's term of office ended in August 2023

12. Amendment to Instrument & Articles

The Clerk advised that:

- A consultation had taken place with the Student Representatives regarding changes to the Student Governor election process
- No comments had been received in relation to the consultation

- It was therefore proposed that the student Governor election process was changed to appointment by the Governing Body
- The Instrument & Articles would need to be amended to reflect this change

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the revisions to the Instrument & Articles

ACTION:

Clerk to amend Instrument & Articles

13. Annual Safeguarding Report

The Executive Director of Business and Student Support presented the report with the following points highlighted to Governors:

- The Single Central Record for staff safeguarding checks was fully up to date and checked on a weekly basis
- The Safeguarding Risk Register was introduced in 2021/22 as an additional assurance method, and was updated and reviewed with the link Governor for Safeguarding
- Mandatory single agency safeguarding training had taken place for all staff
- All Designated Safeguarding Officers and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers were up to date on their required training having completed the required level four and level three courses
- There were 257 safeguarded learners at the end of 2021/22 and 368 safeguarded learners throughout 2021/22
- There was an increase in both EHCP and High Needs learners during the 2021/22 academic year which had resulted in an increase in demand for Learning Support Assistants
- The introduction of the Social Prescriber has had a positive and beneficial impact on the counselling service, which had seen an increased demand, especially at the Rochdale campus
- The Social Prescriber had experienced 134 contacts from students with 39 students having had more than six contacts through the Social Prescribing programme
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy had been updated to reflect the changes to the Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance
- The Safeguarding team had been increased to further support students
- 100% of participants who had taken part in the summer transition programmes had enrolled at the College

Governor Questions

Q. Was there a reason why the number of safeguarded learners was lower at the end of the year?

A. This was because they were no longer considered to be at risk and had been taken off the register

Q. Did reputational risk to the College need to be included on the Safeguarding risk register?

ACTION:

Caroline Street to add to register

Q. How many learners had stayed on at College and achieved as a result of a positive intervention by the Safeguarding team?

Governors agreed that it was important for them to receive information on the impact of interventions on students.

ACTION:

Caroline Street to add to future reports

Governors were pleased to note the additional resource that College was putting into the Safeguarding team.

14. KCSIE Guidance September 2022 Updates

Governors were updated on the key changes to the KCSIE guidance.

The Clerk advised that it was a requirement for all Governors to have read and understood Part 1 of the KCSIE Guidance September 2022.

It was also suggested that Governors completed the Safeguarding network knowledge check to provide confirmation that they had understood the guidance.

15. Financial Update incl Capital Projects

The following update was provided by the Executive Director of Finance & Estates:

- An underlying Operating Surplus of £139k (after Covid costs prior to FRS102 & revaluation reserved) had been confirmed and was £65k better than forecast
- Outstanding Financial Health position had been maintained
- Pay as a percentage of income was 66.7%, excluding Tuition Fund & Covid staff costs
- All Corporate KPI's had been achieved for the 2021/22 financial year
- All bank loan covenant conditions had also been met
- The College was a 'going' concern
- The FRS102 report was showing a net asset rather than a net liability for the first year since reporting under this
- College was currently discussing the most appropriate accounting treatment of this with the external Auditors
- Total Income forecast for the 2022/23 budget had increased by £30k compared to the original budget
- An allocation of £100k for new posts had increased pay costs overall
- Overall the operating position remained at a Breakeven position (before FRS102)

Pay Award

Discussed under Reserved Business

Capital Projects

- The T level Science Project was now fully operational with state-of-the-art labs
- Rochdale B block development – the project was now out to tender and there was at least one interested party
- Tenders were due by the end of September, with evaluation of the tenders carried out by the DfE
- No decision had been made by DfE regarding possible charges on the property
- H.E. Floor – a report was being presented to cabinet by Rochdale Council on whether they would be providing any financial support for this
- TEC Centre Annex was progressing well and following building control approval on 21 September, sectional completion of the Annex extensions was given to the College
- College was proposing that further capital bids were submitted to Salix Energy and ESFA for post 16 capacity funding
- This had been discussed and recommended by the Employment & Finance Committee at their recent meeting

RESOLVED:

The Board:

- Approved the July 2022 management accounts
- Noted the updates to capital projects
- Approved the submission of a capital bid to Salix for Energy efficiency and bids to ESFA for Post 16 capacity funding for the Animal Management Smallbridge project and Refectory remodeling at Rochdale campus

16. Risk Register – Top 10 Risks

The Risk register was presented and it was noted that:

- The College Risk Management Group had met on 13 September to review and discuss the risk register and top 10 risks prior to the Audit committee meeting
- The following new risks had been added to the register
 - Increased safeguarding risk due to the increased volume of safeguarded learners and capacity to manage learner needs
 - Risk to recruitment due to implementation of the new website and integration of the course management system
 - Impact of the loss of carparking at Rochdale & Middleton Campus due to growth of learner numbers and new buildings

Governor Questions

Q. Had the impact of inflation and increases on expenditure been considered?

A. This had been added as a new emerging risk

A Governor stated that the College may have to pass on some of the food cost increases to learners

The Director of Finance & Estates stated that catering costs were being reviewed on an ongoing basis and there had been a small increase in food prices in the Refectory this term.

17. * College KPI's 2022 / 2023 Update

The KPI's were reviewed and noted.

18. Use of Corporation Seal

The Clerk reported that the seal had been used for the signing of the following documents:

- Collateral warranties document with Van Elle Limited, Right Ltd and Penny Hydraulics Ltd in relation to the TEC centre project
- Subcontractor Collateral Warranty Gartec Limited
- Short term lease between Creche & Co. and Hopwood Hall College (for lease of facilities at Rochdale campus following a rent increase)

All documents were signed by the Chair and Principal / CEO

RESOLVED:

The Board noted the use of the College seal

19. Items for Information

Governors were made aware of the following documents that had been placed in the Convenor document library:

- Business Development/Employer Engagement Strategic Lead Proposal
- F.E Governance Guide
- Memorandum of Understanding Between the Altus Education Partnership and Hopwood Hall College
- ESFA Annual Strategic Conversation Letter

20. Reserved Business

20.1 Appraisal & Remuneration Meeting Minutes (21st September 2022)

The minutes were received and noted.

20.2 Senior Postholder Performance Appraisal Update

Discussed under Reserved Business.

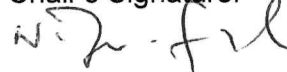
20.3 Principal & CEO Performance Appraisal Update

Discussed under Reserved Business.

21. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 8th December 2022 at 5.00pm

Chair's Signature:



Date:

8/12/2022

