



HOPWOOD HALL COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING HELD ON 30TH JUNE 2022

Present:

Clive Reid (Acting Chair), Julia Heap (Principal / Chief Executive), Susan Ayres, Helen Barton, Gill Banks, Julie Burns, Cathy Berry, Rob Jones, Jim Gallagher, Paul Dixon, Sarfaraz Akram, Martin Salins, Jennifer Worsdale

In Attendance:

Jo Bentley Executive Director of Finance & Estates
Andrea Murphy Deputy Principal
Fatema Hussein Clerk to the Corporation

Meeting Commenced: 5.00pm

Meeting Ended: 7.00pm

Attendance: 68%

Quorum 8

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Nazir Afzal, Greg Walsh, Vanda Hagan and Steve Taylor

2. Declarations of Interest

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

The Clerk declared an interest in Item 19.2

3. Approval of the Minutes – 12th May 2022

Agreed that: the minutes of the meeting held on 12th May 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. Safeguarding Update

The following update was provided by Tracey Marrow (Safeguarding and Welfare Manager & Designated Safeguarding Lead):

- The six risks on the Safeguarding Risk Register had been reviewed and there was one minor risk, three moderate risks and one major risk
- The Safeguarding link Governor meeting for this half term had taken place recently
- 96% of staff had completed the safeguarding training and a monthly training session was held throughout the year
- There had been some changes to the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance and these would be communicated to all staff and Governors
- The Prevent Action Plan had been reviewed and updated since the last report with team members following up all amber actions
- There were no students in the Channel process at present
- So far this academic year, 1629 safeguarding contacts and interventions had been logged, in comparison to 968 last year
- College now had a more sophisticated system for recording these
- Mental health was a significant issue and mental health support for GCSE English and Maths exams had been fully utilised
- 18 incidents of forced marriage concerns had been raised this year
- The Social Prescribing Link Worker project required 100 contacts over the 12-month period of the project
- Currently, over 148 contacts had experienced social prescribing, with 73 engaging in the service
- Reporting of sexually harmful behaviour was higher than in previous years and this was due to students being more confident to report concerns
- Students were currently being identified to take part in three College funded transition projects for delivery this summer
- The College had been fortunate in gaining one of the places to host a Safety Roadshow through the Greater Manchester VRU (Violence Reduction Unit)
- This was planned for the third week in September and would take place on both campuses

Governor Questions

- Q.** The number of interventions had almost doubled this year. How did this compare to the pre-Covid position?
- A.** This would need to be confirmed. The number of interventions had increased and additional Designated Safeguarding Officers had been appointed to support learners

ACTION:

Tracey Marrow to confirm the pre-covid data

5.1 Support for Students / Food Poverty

- It was recognised that a high proportion of the College community were living in an area of high deprivation and the current cost of living crisis was impacting significantly on many people
- College had over the years, worked hard to support members of the College community and remove financial barriers to learning through a number of ways which included;
 - Financial support:
 - 16-18 bursary

- 19+bursary
- Guaranteed bursary
- Hardship fund
- Care2Learn – Childcare for 16–19-year-olds
- 20+ childcare for those who are funded by the adult education budget and 19+ loans.
- Free college meals (for eligible students)
- Free breakfast (for all students)
- Emergency food items
- The wider College management team had met on Friday and a variety of suggestions had been put forward on how further support could be provided to students and the College community
- These suggestions would now be investigated further by the senior leadership team

Governor Questions

Q. How was College planning to fund and implement the cost-of-living crisis suggestions?

A. A member of staff had been allocated each suggestion/action to investigate further and College was hoping to have a plan in place by September

Q. Would the support for students be provided via the bursary or from the budget?

A. The use of the social value levy was being considered

Q. How would learners other than Looked After children and carers who required support be identified?

A. Any student could join the summer transition project via a referral, and College would be promoting the project widely in the community

Q. Had College engaged with community organisations regarding the cost-of-living initiatives and the provision of activities over the summer?

A. College did work with local organisations

Governors thanked Tracey for her report.

Tracey Marrow left the meeting at this point

6. Committee Minutes

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

6.1 Search & Governance Committee 16th June 2022

- The Committee had reviewed how the Board complied with the Code of Good Governance and agreed that an action plan was drawn up to address the areas where the Board was either partially complaint or non-compliant
- Board and Committee membership had been considered and a further discussion on succession planning was to be held in September
- It had been noted that an Academic Staff Governor election would be held in the Autumn term

6.2 Standards Committee 16th June 2022

- A discussion had taken place on Apprenticeship achievement rates and the challenges College was facing with some Apprentices
- An update had been received on the defunding of BTEC qualifications and the impact that this would have on the College
- It had been noted that College would be offering some further T Level courses in the next academic year

6.3 Audit Committee 16th June 2022

- 2 internal audit reports had been reviewed with both having received a Substantial Audit assurance opinion
- The internal and external audit plans for next year had been considered
- Chris Ogbekhiulu had joined the Committee as a Co-opted member

6.4 Employment & Finance Committee 23rd June 2022

- The Gender Pay Gap Report had been presented and the College's mean gender pay gap was 6.59%, which was higher than last year
- College employed more females in lower paid support roles, which had traditionally attracted women and this had resulted in both a mean and median gender pay gap
- An update had been provided on enrolment & funding, and College was forecasting growth in 16-19 learner numbers for the third consecutive year
- The Committee had reviewed and endorsed the proposed budget and financial plan for the 2022/2023 financial year

7. Principal's Report

The Principal's report to the Board was presented with the following points noted:

- An ONS Consultation into the status of Colleges had been announced on 31st May
- This was an independent review and a decision was expected by September 2022
- DfE was planning to publish performance tables for this year
- However, due to the impact of COVID-19, it was discouraging people from drawing conclusions based on comparisons with performance data from earlier years
- Hopwood Hall's performance data was below the KPI's in some areas

7.1 Exams and Teaching & Learning Update

The following update was provided by the Deputy Principal:

- An increasing number of learners at the College were required to sit exams and this was a challenge for some students
- There had been a 200% increase in the number of students who had required access arrangements
- College was anticipating a drop in achievement rates this year with an overall best-case prediction of 85%
- The Apprenticeship achievement rate was predicted to be between 58.4% and 62.7%

- The national average last year was 51.8% for standards
- College would meet 98% to 100% of the Adult education budget contract target
- 972 learners had been entered for the GCSE Maths exam and 772 for GCSE English
- Attendance was higher than in previous years and the Maths and English Paper 1 attendance was the highest ever at 90%
- Students sitting the GCSE Maths paper 1 exam at the Rochdale campus had been impacted by the strike action and the noise from the picket line outside
- There had been an increased number of complaints this year from parents and students regarding exam access arrangements

Governors agreed that there was much uncertainty around the exams this year as a result of the events of the past two years.

7.2 Presentation on Ofsted Inspection Framework

Governors received a briefing on the recent changes to the inspection framework. It was noted that:

- The scope of the inspection had been extended to include how skills needs were being met
- This would mean a larger inspection team would be required with two additional inspectors in most cases
- The initial planning call would be held 5 to 6 days before inspection, but only for the skills aspects
- College would need to demonstrate how it provided the skills that were needed locally, regionally and nationally
- The judgement on skills would be a sub judgement and not a limiting grade
- Meetings would be held with the College's stakeholders
- There would be 2 separate meetings with Governors, one on leadership and management and the other on meeting skills needs
- It would be useful to have a Governing Body statement about priorities, strategic partners or stakeholders

Governor Questions

Q. How could Governors receive assurance that College knew what the local and regional skills needs were?

A. College had access to labour market information from a variety of sources. The key skills needs were confirmed as Engineering and manufacturing, Digital, Construction and Health & Social Care

Q. Was management confident that it would have enough stakeholders available to speak with the inspectors?

A. It would have 5 days' notice to contact stakeholders and meetings could take place online

Q. Had any work been undertaken to evidence the links that College had with employers?

A. The College's destinations and progression data were positive and it could demonstrate how students gained the necessary skills to go into employment and further / higher education

8. Governance

8.1 Governor Self-Assessment Results

The Clerk reported that a Governor self-assessment survey had recently been undertaken with the following points noted:

- There were no conflicts of interest for Board members in their role
- Some members had suggested that it would be beneficial to engage in and take part in College activities or spend some time in College during the day
- It had also been suggested that tablets were made available at the meeting for members to view the meeting papers, and these could be provided

The Chair stated that the Link Governor programme was also an excellent way for Governors to become more involved with the College and to gain a better understanding of different curriculum areas.

8.2 Chair Evaluation Results

Members discussed the results of the Chair evaluation survey. The results were overwhelmingly positive, and the Clerk advised that any feedback and suggestions would be discussed with the Chair and implemented where appropriate.

A Governor stated that as meetings were now being held in person, it was important for members to fully debate key matters and provide sufficient challenge and scrutiny where appropriate.

8.3 External Review of Governance

The Clerk advised that:

- It was now a requirement to have an external review of governance
- The review needed to be undertaken between August 2021 and July 2024, and every 3 years after that
- A governance self-assessment was due every year from 2021 to 2022 onwards, except in the year of an external review
- The Search & Governance Committee was recommending that the external review was undertaken in 2023-24 academic year to allow sufficient time to develop a comprehensive brief and secure a suitable reviewer

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the recommendation to undertake the review in the 2023/24 academic year

9. Student Governor Appointment Process

The Clerk explained that:

- In order to encourage better attendance and engagement from student members at meetings, the Search & Governance Committee was proposing that Student Governors were appointed via a selection and interview process
- This was because not many students were putting themselves forward for election under the current arrangements

- It would be necessary to consult with students on the change to the process and amend the Instrument & Articles

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Student Governor appointment process

10. Strategic Plan 2022 - 2023

The Principal and CEO reported that some further work had been undertaken on the strategic plan following the Governors strategy day. A report detailing the implementation of the strategic objectives would be presented at the October Board meeting.

11. Budget and Financial Plan 2022-2023

The Executive Director of Finance & Estates presented the budget and financial plan and explained that:

- The budget had been set on the 'Medium' case scenario
- It has been assumed that from 2022/23 onwards all COVID-19 related costs would be managed within existing departmental budgets rather than the setting of an exceptional contingency as in previous years
- Financial Health would remain 'Outstanding' throughout the period of the plan
- College had sufficient cash reserves to fund the capital projects proposed during this period without affecting the financial stability or 'going concern' status
- This had been achieved by scaling back significantly on capital investment for new projects/equipment over the next 2 years
- The plan ensured that bank loan covenants would continue to be met
- The proposed budget had been reviewed by the Employment & Finance Committee who were recommending it to the Board

A Governor suggested that College needed to be mindful that adult enrolment could be impacted by the increase in the cost of living and it may be useful to have some contingency funding available to provide support to help adult learners continue with their course.

RESOLVED:

The Board:

- Approved the 2-year financial plan and associated planning assumptions for 2022/23 – 2023/24 including the Revenue and Capital Budget for 2022/23
- Confirmed that the College was a 'Going Concern'.
- Agreed that the CFFR was submitted to the ESFA by the 31 July 2022

12. Internal Audit Plan 2022/23

The Executive Director of Finance & Estates advised that various factors including the risk register and College's strategic objectives had been taken into account as part of establishing the plan for next year. The plan had also been considered by the Audit Committee who were recommending it to the Board

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23

12.1 External Audit Engagement Letter

Governors reviewed and noted the Audit engagement letter

13. Fees Policy

The meeting was informed that minor changes were being proposed to the policy.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Fees policy

14. Approval of Commercial Fees

The Executive Director of Finance & Estates explained that:

- For the past 2 years during Covid, prices had remained unchanged in all commercial outlets of the College
- It had become apparent that prices were significantly out of sync compared to local competitors
- They had also not been adjusted to take account of inflationary increases on food, products, energy costs and labour costs
- The charges had been reviewed by the relevant departments, and increases were proposed as detailed in the report

RESOLVED:

The Board reviewed and approved the increase to the commercial fees

15. Financial Update incl Capital Projects

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

- The Income and Expenditure Account showed an Operating YTD Surplus (before FRS102) of £695k for the 10-month period, compared to a Budgeted deficit of £200k, a positive variance of £895k
- The full year forecast was showing a net surplus of £78k compared to a budgeted deficit of £218k
- College would remain in Outstanding financial health with all loan covenants being met
- The College seal would need to be applied to the following contracts:
 - a building contract with Greenmount Projects Ltd
 - Subcontractor collateral warranty for Employer: Performance Electrical Ltd, Churchmore Ltd, Raymond Wood Commercial, Reynolds Litchfield Ltd, Caldys Mechanical Services

Tec Centre Redevelopment & Refectory extension

- Due to unforeseen service removals, there had been a delay to the programme
- Costs still remained within the overall budget
- These were reported monthly via the management accounts to the Employment

Wardle Building – T Level Science Lab

- Due to a change of scope of the scheme, the overall cost had reduced to £914k
- A business case had been sent to the ESFA to retain the full £650k grant awarded given the other cost increases on the TEC centre project
- The worst-case scenario was that College would receive a 50% contribution to the total project costs equating to £458k and this had been included in the cashflows

Rochdale B Block

Discussions had been held with the Council regarding the provision of funding to support the cost of the additional H.E. floor. A letter of comfort had been received, and College was hopeful that it could receive a contribution towards some or all of the cost in the 2023/24 financial year.

College Signatories

The Executive Director of Finance & Estates requested Governor approval for one senior leadership member signatory (instead of two) for payment of invoices over the summer break as there would be limited members of the leadership team available.

RESOLVED:

The Board:

- Considered and accepted the finance and capital projects update.
- Approved an additional £80,000 to be expended on Capital <£1,000 (to meet the high number of essential items required by curriculum areas
- Approved the change in signatories from two to one over the summer break
- Noted the application of the College seal to the contracts detailed above

16. Risk Register – Top 10 Risks

The Risk register was presented and Governors informed that 2 risks had been removed from the register and 2 new risks identified and added.

Governor Questions

Q. The cyber security risk was still high and had College received the Cyber Essentials plus certification?

A. It was confirmed that it had

17. * College KPI's 2021/22 Update

The KPI update was reviewed and noted.

18. Documents in Convene Library

Governors were informed that the following documents had been added to the Convene library:

- Letter from IFATE Board
- IFS Briefing – Adult Education Past & Present

- Letter from Secretary of State for Education

19. Reserved Business

19.1 Appraisal & Remuneration Committee Meeting Minutes (15th June 2022)

The minutes were received and noted.

19.2 Clerk to the Corporation – Performance Appraisal & Remuneration

Discussed under reserved business.

20. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was noted that this was Jim Gallagher and Vanda Hagan's last meeting as Board members.

Governors thanked them for their service, contribution and support to the College

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 11th October 2022 at 5.00pm

Chair's Signature:

Date:
