

## Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held remotely on Monday 25 January 2021

**Present: -**

- Mervyn Jones (Chair)
- Abigail Appleton (Principal)
- Ellie Arbuthnott
- Jennette Arnold OBE
- Stevie Callender
- Peta Darnley
- Daniel Fox
- Dr Mia Gordon
- Joe Hedges
- Clive Hodgeman
- Hannah Jones
- Jordan Knight
- Tim Newsholme
- John Nicol
- Scott Rolfe
- Mike Rookes
- Kay Sandford-Beal
- Katie Seekings

**In attendance: -**

- Justin Gregory (Head of HE)
- Xaviere Hughes (Acting Head of FE)
- Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
- Tim Williams (Finance Director)

The meeting was quorate as eighteen Governors were present during the meeting which was held remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic

### **1. Process of the Meeting**

- I. Apologies for absence were received from Professor Robin Baker OBE.
- II. The Chair remarked that this meeting had originally been planned as a strategy meeting. Its focus had changed as a result of the pandemic which had significantly refocused SLT's priorities and operational management.
- III. There were no new declarations of interests.

### **2. Minutes of the Last Meetings**

- I. The Board agreed the Chair should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2020 as a true record.
- II. Progress of matters arising was noted with some to be actioned later in the year.

#### The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

### **3. Principal's Report**

- I. The Principal drew Governors' attention to the encouraging student achievements during lockdown. 2021 applications had been affected by

COVID-19 which UCAS has acknowledged by extending the application deadline.

The College's sustainability working group gave a presentation to SLT to discuss developing a sustainability and climate action roadmap including the proposed timescale for the College to prepare to be zero carbon by 2030; this target will be made meaningful.

Station Approach opening has been deferred to mid-March. A Governor asked about students in temporary accommodation as they understood some tenancy agreements would end before Easter. The Principal confirmed that CityHeart would be required to extend tenancy agreements for students. There was a further question if the College had received a copy of the independent report following the fire at Station Approach; this had been followed up but had not been received to date. The ESFA capital grant allocated to install a new boiler is on track with the tender completed and a contractor appointed. The recently published White Paper included additional ESFA capital funding which is being investigated further including the option to collaborate with another college. Criteria would only support investment in FE at the Folly Lane Campus.

Sector consultations were summarised in the report. The FE White Paper had been published with the AoC's summary provided and a brief presentation from the Principal. The White Paper offers a lifelong learning entitlement from 2025, realigns systems around employers, rolls out new Higher Technical Qualifications (from 2022) and Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). Board vision statements should be aligned to local needs.

There was discussion about the White Paper, particularly that college-led provision should serve employers in the area as there are predominantly small and medium sized businesses in Herefordshire. T-Levels could be challenging to deliver outside of large cities. There was a general consensus that the White Paper is tailored to areas with larger employers and institutions as opposed to rural-based colleges. The apprenticeship policy had not embraced the creative industries sector. It is encouraging that Government has acknowledged the impact on creative industries and lack of technology. Governors commented that students at HCA achieve valuable transferable skills. It is important that the College engages with the creative industries sector to establish a common voice.

- II. The Principal stated that 'lockdown 3' had a cumulative impact on staff and students. The College continues to support students as widely as possible to achieve their learning outcomes which was reiterated by Student Governors. All staff have embraced the challenges created by lockdown to support students and provide innovative teaching and learning delivered remotely. Some initiatives will continue after lockdown including use of digital platforms and some blended learning. Lateral flow testing is being offered to staff and students attending College. There have been regular meetings with the Student Council to identify issues affecting students, an example being printing whilst students work remotely. It was recognised that lockdown is mentally challenging for students who are working remotely. Staff are supporting students in different ways to support their wellbeing whilst keeping them motivated and engaged in learning. Scenario planning is under way for reopening the College. There was a question how the Board could assist noting that many issues are operational with a significant workload for management and all staff. Governors recorded their appreciation and support to management and staff.

- III. The Principal gave a presentation on the Stronger Towns Partnership bid for Herefordshire which dovetailed to the Principal's report and F&GP Committee minutes. The bid mirrored the College's vision which was outlined in the strategic plan published in 2018. A headline financial model was also provided which would be progressed with further detailed analysis, subject to the bid being successful. There was a brief summary of income and costs to 2025/26 to deliver two new courses which had been proposed as part of the digital development. A Governor asked about the accuracy and certainty of income assumptions noting that scenarios would need to be tested further; however, this proposal matched the College's strategy. There was a further question about the scale, number of towns involved and date of notification of the outcome. Funding has been earmarked for Herefordshire as regeneration funding; however, Government would need to be convinced of the investment plan. Notification of the bid is anticipated by Easter.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the reports
- The Stronger Towns Partnership paper was informative and provided an excellent opportunity for the College and Herefordshire. The Board agreed to support the Stronger Towns Partnership bid

**4. Confidential Minutes (draft) from the Finance and General Purposes Committee: 18 January 2021**

The minutes were noted.

**5. Any Other Business**

- I. A Governor commented that some emails from their personal email account go into HCA junk mail. The College would verify Governors' email addresses. **ACTION: CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS**
- II. The Principal updated Governors regarding arrangements for the graduation in March 2021. The Principal would consult with students to consider deferring a ceremony to the summer. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**
- III. The Chair referred to governance raised in the White Paper noting that there is expected to be further debate in the sector.
- IV. A Staff Governor invited Governors to the FE music performance clinics held on Teams each Thursday. **ACTION CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS**

**6. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be on Monday 26 April 2021 commencing at 4.30 pm.

**Signed as a true record of proceedings**

**Chair:** ..... **Date:** .....