



Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 9 May 2022

Present: - Mervyn Jones (Chair)
Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Jennette Arnold OBE
Professor Robin Baker OBE
Dr Mia Gordon
Joe Hedges
Clive Hodgeman via Teams
Hannah Jones
Kate Murrie via Teams
Tim Newsholme
John Nicol

In attendance: - Xaviere Hughes (Head of FE)
Justin Gregory (Head of HE)
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Tim Williams (Finance Director)
Steve Frampton, MBE item 2 only via Teams

The meeting was quorate as a eleven Governors were present during the meeting.

1. Process of the Meeting

- I. Apologies for absence were received from Victor Barratt, Peta Darnley, Oliver Cameron-Swan and Katie Seekings. Andrew Jones did not attend.
- II. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- III. Governors whose reappointment would be considered declared interests.

2. Environmental Sustainability

- I. The Chair welcomed Steve Frampton, Climate Commissioner for UK Higher and Further Education to the meeting who gave a presentation highlighting that nationally 74% of students agree that climate change and sustainability is a crucial. HCA has recognized the necessity for cultural change evidenced in the report presented to the Board. The College is committed to sustainability, made pledges and is using the FE roadmap extremely effectively. AoC are piloting 'beyond the roadmap' which will be available in July.

Some staff have completed carbon literacy training with a commitment to provide training for all students by 2023. The options for the College to become a carbon literacy trainer was suggested. Collaborative opportunities are being explored. There was a

question regarding who owns sustainability noting that it is widely owned, evidenced by being embedded in the College's strategic plan, which will ensure that progress is measured. The distinction between print and carbon footprint was mentioned as paperless/digital is not zero carbon; JISC will issue a report imminently. It was confirmed that sustainability is being addressed both for and with students.

Discussion and questions followed. Colleges require additional funding to invest in estates to address sustainability. The DfE climate and sustainability unit will raise this with the Treasury Department on behalf of colleges. Options to address issues collaboratively, whilst considering how to develop skills for students in green areas, could potentially secure future funding.

There is a distinction between cultural and capital investment with the roadmap and trajectory showing c80% cultural with some simple, cost effective and immediate areas to address which could further embed sustainability into the curriculum.

Financial and technical resources are required to enable investment into buildings; older buildings will require more investment. The SDF process permits collaborative bids for capital investment, examples are Brighton College and Sussex Colleges. There was an option to form a partnership beyond education, e.g. supply chain. HCA is a small rural college positioning it differently to city colleges. Craven College model, Harrogate College, Kingston Maude and Dorset colleges were also suggested to explore.

GFE colleges in the area are bidding for a green construction skills project. There is a risk that a specialist arts college would not fit into the collaborative bid. It is crucial to lobby on behalf of art colleges. In contrast, similarities with other art colleges could be explored.

The Chair thanks Steve Frampton for addressing the Board before he left the meeting.

- II. HCA progress towards the FE sustainability roadmap had been provided. The Student Governor confirmed that the College works with students; the sustainability group are actively encouraging more students to get involved. There are alternative ways to gain input from students including obtaining students' views using regular student surveys. The Student Governor had completed carbon literacy training commenting that this needs to be more user friendly when rolled out to all staff and students. Governors were interested in completing carbon literacy training agreeing that Governors, staff and students could complete carbon literacy training together. Governors were also invited to join the Sustainability Group; Joe Hedges agreed to join. 'Beyond the roadmap' will be presented to the Board in July subject to its publication. **ACTION: CLERK**

There was a suggestion to hold a sustainability festival next year. The strength of collaboration has been identified with a suggestion to explore if students could collaborate with other bodies, such as the

Youth Council. Sustainability could be incorporated in wellbeing. The timescale to make decisions to implement simple changes needed to be addressed quicker, such as use of non-disposables in the café and use of colour printing. Sustainability is a life issue and needs to be widely accessible.

The Board agreed: -

- The presentation and discussion with Steve Frampton, AoC Climate Commissioner, was extremely useful agreeing sustainability is a mindset and that ideas mooted during discussion would be explored **ACTION: PRINCIPAL/CHAIR**

3. **Minutes of the Last Meetings**

- I. The Board agreed the Chair should sign the minutes, including the confidential minute, of the meeting held on 7 February 2022 as true records.
- II. There were no matters arising which were not covered on the agenda.
- III. The action list evidenced that actions are in progress.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

4. **Principal's Report**

- I. The Principal specifically drew Governors' attention to the positive CMYK event to celebrate print and illustration; the Student Governor commented that this was a positive event suggesting holding similar events in the centre of Hereford which would be attractive to a wider audience. The Principal confirmed that arrangements to host some exhibitions and events offsite in future had been agreed.

HE and FE applications and acceptances to date are positive. Internal data was reported for HE which differs slightly from the UCAS data used in the risk register. There is a delay to the timescale for the UCAS deadline for offers meaning that HE acceptances are slower across the sector. Data did not include internal applicants or deferrals from last year. The College recruits some mature students during the summer. There was a question regarding the date that firm acceptances are anticipated; this will be in July and will be incorporated into the budget.

The Head of FE expanded on the report following the recent Ofsted pilot of a specialist college. Nine inspectors visited College for four days identifying small areas for improvement. Quality assurance and safeguarding practices were commended acknowledging that students feel safe with positive attitudes to learning and inclusivity. Skills focus is evident in the curriculum to prepare students for their next steps; however, the live projects and employability focus do not replace offsite working in the work place. Appreciation was recorded to Governors who had been part of the process. The whole College need to work together to focus on becoming an outstanding college.

The Board thanked SLT and staff for their hard work, excellent outcome and confirmed that they are proud of the College. Feedback would be provided to staff with the Board's congratulations. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

OfS have introduced changes to the Access and Participation (APP) process requesting a revised APP in accordance with the guidance to be submitted in July. This will be presented to the AQ&S Committee and Board for discussion and approval July. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL/HEAD OF HE**

An update on progress of the Estates Strategy and College Road Leases with Herefordshire Council was provided. The Board agreed to work closely with the Council whilst agreeing to seek independent professional advice. The Hive and Chapel licences will be extended until the end of July 2022 which are part of negotiation for the CRC lease. Assurance was provided that teaching space would not be affected in these buildings which would continue to be available.

The College had submitted responses to the OfS consultation on the future of the Teaching Excellent Framework (TEF) and proposed regulatory measures of quality.

Progress towards the KPIs was reported. The Principal drew Governors' attention to progress regarding student internal progression. Staff development will focus on the cross-college FE and HE curriculum. Further development of Digital Futures and an internal progression route for 2023 is being developed.

- II. The risk register showed two risks had been removed by the Audit Committee.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the Principal's report and risk register

5. **Stronger Towns Bid**

Hereford Skills Foundry bid, a collaborative bid with other partners, was successful. This will provide additional opportunities for collaborative funding to embed sustainable development on the campus and future outreach. Investment to provide the correct digital infrastructure will be incorporated into the bid. The College is liaising with JISC to ensure that this is fit for purpose.

The Principal is preparing a full business case for the bid for submission to Government in June. An Estates Task and Finish Group (its membership Mervyn Jones, Clive Hodgeman, Scott Rolfe, Principal and Finance Director) will discuss the business plan in May and June before its final submission.

ACTION: PRINCIPAL

The Board agreed: -

- To note progress of the Stronger Towns Bid and formation of the Task and Finish Group to input into the business plan

6. Finance Update

The Finance Director presented the reports explaining that the ESFA dashboard format had been revised.

- I. ESFA financial dashboard 2020/21. The Chair of Audit Committee referred to the correspondence regarding the Auditor's annual report which had identified internal controls and weaknesses to reporting systems. This related to the number of outstanding audit recommendations with confirmation that the Chair of Audit Committee had arranged to meet the Finance Director to agree a timely plan to progress recommendations.
- II. Management accounts to February 2022 were noted.
- III. Budget scenarios 2022/23, key themes, assumptions and risks were presented which had been discussed in detail by the F&GP Committee. FE income was forecasted based on this year's student numbers. FE income increased by £289K to reflect the increase in enrolments in 2021/22 and an increase in funding to support an extra 40 hours per annum for 16-18 students). HE income assumed 120 Level 4 enrolments in September 2022. Costs would be balanced against income. Details of risks were outlined from the paper. The EBITDA is forecasted to improve to £320K in 2022/23. The budget will be presented at the July Board meeting for approval before being submitted to the ESFA.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the ESFA financial dashboard 2020/21, management accounts and budget scenarios 2022/23

[Joe Hedges left the meeting]

7. HE curriculum development (course revalidation)

The Head of HE gave a presentation showing how the development aims link to the OfS B3 requirements. The College is working to achieve: -

- The best possible outcomes for students
- Preparing students for professional lives
- Achieve greater
- Embed sustainability
- Financial viability

A common module delivery plan is being introduced with standardisation and collaboration across faculties. This includes the induction module and the professional practice module had been piloted this year for launch in September.

There was a question if staff had welcomed this approach; initially there had been some reluctance until staff identified the benefits. A Governor questions whether delivery methods could be considered from institutions delivering Vertically Integrated Projects (VIPs). The Student Governor commented that changes implemented to the professional practice module was a significant improvement for students. The stage of implementation was requested noting documents have been submitted to UWTSD and timetabled for delivery in September.

The Board agreed: -

- To support the direction outlined which would benefit students with an update and progress of grades, retention and attendance in December **ACTION: CLERK TO DIARY**

8. Policies and Strategies

The Principal explained that the Employer Engagement Strategy supported students' professional practice. The strategy is not a standalone document which also included employer engagement. A Governor had provided useful feedback commenting that the strategy appeared too introvert because it only considered employer engagement from an HE perspective. They proposed this should be broadened to industry and employment which would permit industry to influence the strategy as opposed to an HCA delivery mechanism. A proactive project could be undertaken to build relationships with industry by identifying companies, including building on staff and graduates contacts. It was important to measure the strategy and ascertain who would lead this.

The Board approved the following policies at the recommendation of committees: -

- Value for Money (F&GP)
- Employer Engagement Strategy (AQ&S).
- Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy (AQ&S)

9. Governance

The Board agreed: -

- I. To re-appoint Tim Newsholme as Independent Governor for a further 1-year term in office
- II. To re-appoint Judy Balderson and Kay Sandford-Beal onto the Audit Committee and Dr Joanne Horton onto the AQ&S (HE) Committee for further 3-year terms in office
- III. Peta Darnley should join the S&G Committee
- IV. To appoint Mazars, Financial Statements Auditors for 2022/25

10. Committee minutes

The Board noted minutes from the following Committees with no specific points raised by Chairs as relevant issues had been covered during the meeting: -

- I. Audit Committee: 28 March 2022
- II. Search and Governance Committee: 21 March 2022
- III. Finance and General Purposes Committee: 21 March 2022
- IV. Academic Quality and Standards Committee: 29 March 2022

11. Any Other Business

The Clerk referred to the dates issued for Board and Committee meetings next year, specifically dates arranged throughout the year for Governors to have an opportunity to visit courses; ideally no more than two to each campus at a time.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on Monday 11 July 2022 commencing at 4.30 pm.

[A confidential item followed regarding the staff pay award]

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**