

## Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation Held on 28 January 2019

at H102a, City Centre Campus at 4.45 pm

Carole Stott  
Andy Furse  
Laurel Penrose  
Paul Blenkinsopp  
Victor da Cunha  
Erica Draisey  
Mike Oram  
Andy Parker  
Jane Shaw  
Gary Waylen  
Jenny Williams  
Neil Wilson  
Julian Young

Apologies  
Apologies  
Principal  
Apologies

**Chair for the meeting**

### **In attendance**

Heather Cross  
Jayne Davis  
Barbara Owen  
Jonathan Creed

Anne Roberts

Clerk to the Corporation  
Deputy Principal  
HR Director  
Interim Finance Director,  
ICCA  
Head of Governance  
designate

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Carole Stott, Andy Furse and Paul Blenkinsopp

### **ACTION**

It was noted that neither the Chair nor Vice-Chair was present, and it was agreed that Julian Young be appointed chair for the meeting.

Julian Young took the chair.

Anne Roberts was welcomed to the meeting as an observer. It was noted that she started work as Head of Governance on 18 March 2019.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

None

### **3. Confidentiality of Items**

There were no items noted on the agenda which were confidential

**4. Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 17 December 2018 and any matters arising**

The minutes which had been circulated previously were approved as a true record.

It was noted as a matter arising that work was progressing on the detailed preparation of Option 9 for the Estates Strategy as discussed at the last meeting. The Principal commented that a project manager had been appointed to assist with the task. The detailed proposal would be brought to the Board meeting on 29 March as intended.

**5. Principal's update**

The Principal gave a verbal report on several current key matters. She commented that there was further industrial action by the UCU on the following two days of the week. This followed a further 26 colleges being balloted, of which 10 were to go on strike as a result. The College had made careful arrangements to minimize disruption as had worked effectively last time. Classes were covered and managers were taking a proactive stance. There were further strike days possible in March, although negotiations had been started with the union representatives.

The Principal spoke about the recent debate that had taken place in Westminster as a result of a petition concerning FE funding. Bath College had been mentioned and the Bath MP had spoken as part of the debate, and it was understood that she had raised further questions in the House that day. Laurel would circulate the quotations to governors. Gary Waylen commented that he had been invited to a lunch in Bristol with the Skills Minister, Anne Milton, through the CBI and would welcome further information on the funding situation so that he might raise points at that event.

The College recently had submitted an expression of interest to be part of a talent institute that was being pursued by WECA. This would be a collaboration with Bath and North East Somerset Council, and both universities in the City.

The Principal thanked Andy Parker for organising a meeting with a group of his colleagues at BurroHappold with students to consider designs for the temporary catering facilities. The results were to be passed onto the project management team.

Laurel spoke with pride about a recent performing arts student performance of Dracula, which demonstrated an excellent collaboration with the Theatre Royal. The Rotary Club of Bath recently had donated a sum for disadvantaged college students; this was welcome, and it was hoped that this would now be an annual donation. Governors welcomed hearing about students in this agenda item and encouraged this further at future meetings.

The College's recent open day had attracted good numbers (170 attendees compared to 150 the previous year). The Principal was thanked for her report.

**6. HR Annual Report**

The report had been circulated previously.

Barbara Owen, HR Director, spoke to the report. She commented about the reducing staffing profile of the College following several redundancies in the past year with turnover higher than others in the South-West as a result. She talked about some of the recruitment challenges experienced. Governors asked to see the evaluation of the higher-than-expected turnover and aggregate trend information available from exit interviews, and asked about which areas of the college were proving the most difficult to recruit to. Governors who could offer support on recruitment strategies were asked to get in touch with Barbara.

The contribution the team had made to the Ofsted inspection in the year was noted. The Payroll function had been incorporated within the HR team and the HR software system SelectHR had been launched. Training overall for college staff provided in the year was discussed including some of particular value to managers.

In the future more emphasis was to be given to the development of HR Strategy, including professional development and recruitment.

It was **agreed** that there should be an allocation of time in the Away Day programme in March to consider strategic HR considerations and what targets might appropriately be set in this area. Barbara was thanked for her report.

#### **7. Gender Pay Gap report**

The latest gender pay gap report to be published on the College's website by 31 March had been circulated previously. It was noted that the mean pay gap had reduced from 5.1 to 2.9 per cent. Other colleges in the region had yet to report and an update would be provided once their performance was known and better comparisons could be made.

The actions taken to assist gender neutral recruitment were noted. In answer to a question, it was noted that the lowest staff quartile was still 70% women and this was the area that needed more focus. Governors made suggestions concerning the presentation of the report to be published on the College website in terms of labelling of the pay quartiles. They also asked for further clarification on the composition of the quartiles. Barbara was thanked for her report and left the meeting.

#### **8. 2017-18 Annual Report**

The draft Annual Report intended to be placed on the College website had been circulated previously. The Report could not be provided earlier as it had to await the approval of the accounts, the Self-Assessment Report and student results before it could be completed. It was suggested that this be explained on the website when the Report was published on the website. Governors made several comments about the information the Report contained, including suggestions that the total number of students be included; some explanation of the reasons for performance reductions where these applied; the financial information and the reasons for the current financial position could be better presented; where pie charts had been used the descriptors were in the wrong place; and it was recommended that the document be assessed for accessibility to those with a visual impairment.

Governors were thanked for their suggestions. It was noted that the report represented the College's story well and was generally a pleasing document including good use of 'infographics'.

#### **9. Quality Improvement Plan**

The Quality Improvement Plan had been circulated previously and the aspects identified as key issues in the self-assessment report had been picked up.

It was noted that the area of apprenticeships was receiving a lot of attention. A new business coordinator role was to be a central part of the related processes. Whilst the funding audit in the Autumn had been time-consuming, the issues needing future attention were clear. Governors asked about the confidence the College had in its data and it was commented that college staff had improved considerably in setting targets and predicting outcomes, although more work on this was still needed. A question was asked about the different score of the Apprenticeships grade compared to Ofsted. Jayne Davis, Deputy Principal explained the change and assured the Governors that the Senior Management Team were confident in the other self assessed grades. National benchmark data recently had been published and this was about to be analysed carefully to assess performance against it. Account would be taken of the newly published inspection framework. It was suggested that the front of the report should flag where improvements overall had been made and what the key areas were for continuous improvement.

It was noted that the new Internal Auditors had been commissioned to identify relevant quality audit actions, which were deemed still appropriate to be taken forward.

#### **10. Quality Dashboard**

The latest summary quality dashboard had been circulated previously. It was noted that attendance had improved slightly on the same time in the previous year. There was discussion about the attendance issues of apprentices for English and Maths classes. Retention was key and college staff were watchful about withdrawal rates. Further breakdown of the statistics was planned where students were self-reporting absence. Governors asked questions about the stretch targets, in particular the attendance target. Governors accepted these were ambitious targets that should still be worked towards. It was agreed that the Quality Working Group would review the targets and performance in more detail.

#### **11. Management Accounts**

The December management accounts had been circulated previously. Jonathan Creed introduced them to the meeting. It was noted this was the first time that a forecast to year-end had been computed by this time of the year; there was also better information concerning cashflow and there was a section in the report about performance against covenants.

Governors discussed income which was shown to be £775k behind target, of which around £100k was caused by a reporting timing difference in the 16-18 lagged funding. The Adult Education budget was down by £270k caused by delays from franchised partners, although this

was expected to recover. Government-funding for apprentices was almost £400k down, though this was expected to be adjusted. There was a shortfall in tuition fees caused mainly by the under-recruitment of some 30 HE learners. Pay was £120k better than budget and already included the recent pay award. Non-pay showed about £116k savings overall. Once the timing amendments had been taken into consideration, the overall risk-adjusted position was about £301k shortfall on the budget position.

Governors discussed various steps that would be needed to address this position and address/recover the forecast loss. It was considered that adult education additional income was secure. The loss of HE numbers was not recoverable in the current year and was thought to stem from more universities offering unconditional places, of which the Office for Students was aware though this would not address the situation in the short term.

Governors requested that at their next meeting and at the Away Day they be advised about all the actions being taken to mitigate the shortfall, but noted that the latest figures reported were unmitigated and should improve. It was **agreed** that the business model and options to address the position would be presented. Management commented that the position could be addressed in-year.

Current covenants were examined and it was noted that even with the unmitigated deficit position reported, both covenants would still be met.

The December management accounts were **received**.

## **12. Risk Register**

The latest Risk Register had been circulated. It was noted that the Emergency Response risk had moved from Amber to Red. Overall several mitigating actions had been addressed. Governors suggested that links should be made more effectively between the improvement plan, the Risk Register and the management accounts and opined that the Internal Auditors might assist with this task.

The latest Risk Register was **received**.

## **13. Minutes of the Audit Committee held 26 November 2018 and 17 December 2018**

These minutes were laid on the table for information and were received.

## **Any Other Business**

- 14.** Grateful thanks to Heather Cross were recorded for her excellent work as Clerk to the Corporation since June 2013. This was her last meeting at the College as she had decided to take partial retirement. Heather thanked governors for their good wishes and the gift which they had given her and wished Anne Roberts well in her new post and every success to the college for the future.

## **15. Date of next meeting**

This was noted as 29 March 2019 when there would be an Away Day to be held at Somer Valley campus.