

**CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Governors held on  
Monday 28 September 2020 at 5pm  
Conducted via Microsoft Teams**

**PRESENT**

Mr Mark Taylor (Chair)	Mr Mike Hastings (Vice Chair)
Mr Clarence Crosdale (Vice Chair)	Mr Ian Fegan
Ms Alison Shannon	Mr Trevor Dutton
Mr John Bradford	Mr Mal Cowgill
Ms Sally Slater (Staff) (from item 5)	Mr Phil Leivers (from item 4)
Mr Yankho Songwe	

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr Peter Merry	- Vice Principal Business Success (for part of meeting)
Ms Louise Fall	- Vice Principal Student Engagement (for part of meeting)
Mr Ian Browne	- Vice Principal Student Success (for part of meeting)
Mr Anil Sharma	- Safeguarding and Equality Manager (item 4)
Mrs Elizabeth Ball	- Clerk to the Board of Governors

**86/20 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM 1)**

Apologies were received from Ms Emma Bull.

Alison Shannon, Ian Fegan and Mark Taylor declared a conflict of loyalty in relation to the CLQ update. Governors agreed that they should remain and take part in the discussion.

**87/20 URGENT UPDATES (CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE)**

**88/20 MINUTES AND NOTES (ITEM 2)**

- The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.
- The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.
- The notes of the meeting held on 30 July 2020 were received.
- The notes of the briefing meeting held on 10 September 2020 were received.

**89/20 MATTERS ARISING (ITEM 2)**

2020/21 Financial Commentary

It was reported that the Vice Principal Business Success will provide a report on the position if ESFA funding was received by the College on a 'flat' profile as part of his next financial update.

Governors noted that in finalising the submission of the budget to the ESFA, the Vice Principal Business Success met with a group of four Governors.

#### Safeguarding report

It was noted that a presentation on the safeguarding report and policy was being made as part of the meeting.

#### Report from the Audit Committee

It was noted that the Clerk will be circulating the updated Anti-Fraud Policy and Anti-Bribery Policy to all staff together with a briefing as soon as possible.

### **90/20 CORRESPONDENCE (ITEM 3)**

The Clerk highlighted the correspondence received from the Mayor of the West Midlands and letters relating to the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold award, that had been circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting.

The Principal reported that the Gold Award is presented to employers in recognition of their work with the armed forces and is driven by the Health and Safety Manager through his connections with the military.

***The Safeguarding and Equality Manager joined the meeting.***

### **91/20 SAFEGUARDING (ITEM 4)**

The Safeguarding and Equality Manager gave a presentation covering how the College deals with safeguarding issues and the whole College approach together with the action taken in response to the COVID 19 outbreak.

It was emphasised that the College adopts an organisational approach based on the principles of creating a safe and welcoming environment for all. This includes ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate training and that there is a safeguarding Governor appointed who meets regularly with the safeguarding lead to discuss referrals and any issues that have arisen.

Governors noted that the responsibilities are also driven by legislation including the Counter Terrorism and Security Act and the requirement to comply with the 'Prevent Duty' with the College plans reflecting locally approved protocols.

Governors were advised the during the COVID 19 lockdown, the College systems were very effective with all vulnerable being identified and contacted.

It was emphasised that the importance of safeguarding is evidenced as it forms a part of every agenda for meetings of the Senior Management Team and the Safeguarding and Equality Manager reported that the College had developed a

strong network of external agencies that can be accessed depending on how serious the issue was, but is also able to provide counselling services or someone for students simply to talk to.

Governors were advised about the relevant processes and procedures that are in place for selection and recruitment of staff, the support for apprentices and employers and for those with mental health issues.

As mental health issues are increasing each year, it was reported that the College has a webpage through which students and staff can access support. Governors commented that the emotional wellbeing of young people was of increasing concern and asked how the volume of young people at the College could be supported.

The Vice Principal Student Engagement reported that a session on safeguarding forms part of the student induction and this is embedded during tutorials. All staff have mandatory training and the safeguarding team engage with staff on a regular basis to ensure that they are clear about the processes.

Governors commented that they believed that the safeguarding policy was very extensive, but that it was important to understand the figures and the data. They asked whether there was more risk in specific facilities and courses and what happens within the College to increase reporting and awareness.

The Safeguarding and Equality Manager advised that there are certain areas where students are at a higher level of risk e.g. the Getting Ahead programme, as these are often vulnerable students and levels of support are increased. Some courses including Health and Social Care and Childcare can attract students who have difficulties themselves and the College does monitor students from certain wards in the City who may be more vulnerable.

It was noted that it is more difficult to engage with construction students but that this is improving.

Governors were reassured by the level of communication with students and by the action that was taken not only during induction but also throughout the year. It was noted however that the level of referrals was also higher in the area of Leisure and Hospitality.

The Safeguarding Lead Governor confirmed that he meets regularly with the Safeguarding and Equality Manager and that their discussions are comprehensive.

He commented that he considered the policy to cover all relevant areas and that when he had asked what one thing had changed over the past year so far as safeguarding was concerned he was advised that it had been the Principal's commitment to safeguarding and how it had been brought into the mainstream agenda for the College, highlighting its importance to every member of staff.

In addition, of particular importance is the partnership relationship between the College, Local Authority, Police and other agencies who appear to admire the

approach taken by the College and talk positively about the action that is taken to make sure students are safe.

Governors noted that in the policy staff are advised to be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a student or apprentice with particular characteristics and makes reference to students who are privately fostered.

As it is very difficult to determine this, Governors asked how the College would be able to identify students who were privately fostered, particularly as they are often not known to the Local Authority.

The Safeguarding and Equality Manager confirmed that this is a difficulty as students may not consider themselves to be in care or want anyone to know. However if a student was identified as being privately fostered this would be shared with the Young People in Care team and the College would make a commitment to support the student.

In relation to the policy Governors proposed that where the Principal was the subject of an allegation the designated Safeguarding Governor should also be included in the process. They also suggested that the policy identify the support that was available to a member of staff that was the subject of an investigation.

They were advised that in these circumstances a member of HR would be assigned to support the member of staff and they would have access to counselling services via the 24/7 Employee Services.

The Safeguarding Governor reported that it was also a positive development that specific reference is made to apprentices in the policy and that there is a safeguarding officer post dedicated to apprentices.

He also asked if it was a concern that there has been a 59% reduction in referrals of those describing themselves as white other and whether there appeared to be any specific reason.

The Vice Principal Student Engagement reported that the figures are based on small numbers and that she did not consider that there was any trend emerging.

Governors commented that it was not clear from the report when issues had arisen internally and that whilst most appear to occur outside College it was important to understand whether there were any incidents e.g. of bullying or harassment within College that needed to be addressed.

The Safeguarding and Equality Manager confirmed that this could be analysed and Governors asked that information about safeguarding issues involving other students could be included in future reports.

**It was resolved that:**

- **The Safeguarding Policy be approved subject to the changes agreed by the Board of Governors.**

- **The Board of Governors endorse the safeguarding report.**

***The Safeguarding and Equality Manager left the meeting.***

***Sally Slater joined the meeting.***

## **92/20 CLQ AND COWTECHC UPDATE (ITEM 5)**

The Principal reported that:

- There has been a positive response to the planning application at Wellington Road and it is anticipated that planning permission will be approved in the near future.
- It is anticipated that the College will be in occupation of the new development at Wellington Road by December 2021.
- The outcome of the bid to the Towns Fund is not yet known but the bid includes funding for the whole of CLQ and how that will be spent is the subject of discussions with the CLQ Board.
- Development of the CLQ is dependent upon funding and the earliest date for completion is probably September 2023. A letter of support for the project has been sent by the Council and the Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority to the Secretary of State for Education. The FE Commissioner's Team are also very supportive of the project but had asked the College to consider contingency planning.
- The College has used an independent surveyor to review the Paget Road estate as a result of the outcome of the survey conducted on behalf of the DfE which suggested most of the site fell within category A/B. This does not reflect the actual condition of the estate and action is being taken to ensure that this is recognised.

The Principal confirmed that he anticipated that a full report would be provided to the Campus Transformation Group and/or the Board within the next two months.

**It was resolved that the report be noted.**

## **93/20 COLLEGE REPORT (ITEM 6)**

### **Student Success**

#### **2019/20 Headlines**

The Vice Principal Student Success provided an update for Governors on the latest Student Success including achievement rates and progress.

It was noted that the data is subject to a robust validation process but that the ESFA have confirmed that they will not publish an institution-level Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR's) in the National Achievement Rate Tables for the 2019/20

academic year in response to COVID 19 and will not supply 2019/20 QAR's for institutions to use internally themselves.

The College will however continue to use data taken from the College system in making comparisons to previous years.

The Vice Principal Student Success reported that since the report was written the number of 'Unknown Outcomes' has reduced significantly and that the College is able to submit data relating to outcomes and resits until 29 October 2020.

It was confirmed that the College now has four consecutive years of improving data and that based on the known outcomes the College's national achievement rate is 87.2% with a best outcome of 90%.

Governors noted that this was against a background of a reduction in delivery hours and increased student numbers and that there was confidence that the College would achieve its target of 88%.

It was reported that there was however an expectation that national averages will increase.

#### 2019/20 GCSE English and Maths Achievement Rates

The Vice Principal Student Success reported that overall achievement rates for GCSE English and Maths are both above national average and have increased since 2018/19.

There has also been an increase in achievement of grades 4-9 in both English and Maths and whilst it is not yet clear whether progress scores will be used to measure progress for 2019/20 the College has undertaken a manual check and are expecting positive scores for both demonstrating further progress from 2018/19.

#### 2019/20 A Level Achievement Rates

The Vice Principal Student Success reported that the A level pass rates for 2019/20 has improved by 5% compared to 2018/19 with a significant improvement in the achievement of high grades which was based upon a combination of Centre Assessed Grades and grades uplifted by the Algorithm.

It was noted that last year there was a focus on increasing the aspirations of the College A level students, with a particular focus on those students who were capable of achieving at least a B grade.

Despite the situation which developed due to the COVID 19 outbreak the College has continued to support students in accessing positive University destinations

#### 2019/20 Apprenticeship Achievement Rates

The Board of Governors noted the continuing impact of the COVID 19 outbreak on apprenticeship achievement rates including the increased number of withdrawals and the delay in the expected end dates for some of the furloughed apprentices.

It was reported however that the College continues to work hard to maximise overall and timely achievement rates.

Governors asked about the timeliness of completion and the delays which will impact on achievement rates and whether this would affect other Colleges.

The Vice Principal Student Success confirmed that this was a national issue and there was an expectation that national rates will reduce.

Governors considered that the College had achieved good robust and legitimate results and were pleased with the four-year trend of improvement.

In relation to students on site at the College, the Student Governors commented that currently students go outside when they are not in lessons, but there was a concern what would happen as the weather got worse.

He was advised the students should have a classroom allocated to them and that this should be discussed with the student's tutors.

**It was resolved that the draft 2019/20 achievement levels and the results for A levels, English and Maths be noted.**

### **Student Engagement**

#### **2020/21 Enrolment update**

The Principal reported that applications for full time and part time provision are positive and there is confidence that the College will meet its 16-18 funding contract target of 2,030 students.

It was also reported that in relation to adult provision enrolments are positive across the building trades and substantial courses with qualifications and that the College had exceeded its target for Advanced Learning Loans.

Governors asked whether the College would be able to apply for in-year 16-19 growth funding if the current target was exceeded. The Principal advised that whilst the ability for the College to apply for funding had been left open, it was not clear what will happen in the sector as there may be an increase of numbers across the sector.

It was noted however that this was one of the questions that the College would be discussing with the ESFA in the near future.

It was reported that the position relating to apprenticeships is harder to assess but that the College is trying to get those apprentices who are on a break in learning or furloughed back on programme.

Governors were advised that 100 vacancies for apprentices had been filled so far and that the College may receive some achievement funding this year which relates to last year's provision.

In addition, the College will receive Provider Relief funding in respect of non-levy apprentices and funding for 18/19 year olds who need to return to College. It was also reported that the College has engaged with the Chamber of Commerce in relation to the 'Kickstart' scheme.

The Vice Principal Student Success reported that some areas have seen a significant increase in enrolments including Health and Social Care and Electrical courses and that areas that are tracking lower than expected are being monitored.

It was noted that enrolments will continue over the next few weeks, particularly for adults and HE provision.

**It was resolved that the Board of Governors note the positive start to the 2020/21 enrolments against targets.**

### College Opening

The Vice Principal Student Success updated Governors on the protocols and safety measures that had been put in place at the College. It was reported that the measures are being supported by staff and students and that whilst there were some pressure points at break times students were able to get refreshments and go to classroom areas.

The Vice Principal Student Success confirmed that the processes in place are being tested and that the College has continued with temperature testing which may be a symptom of COVID 19. To date however there had only been two instances of students with raised temperatures and these had related to non COVID 19 illnesses.

One of these was at the Metro One Campus and had been reported previously to Governors. The second more recently had involved an Access to HE student with seventeen other students from the class being asked to self-isolate. The member of staff however had been able to return to work as she had not been in close contact with the student.

It was reported that there had been a reduction in the number of staff that were self isolating due to symptoms or those of a family member.

In addition, to date there were no cases of a member of staff testing positive for Coronavirus, but the College was providing tests for staff that were struggling to get appointments.

The Vice Principal Student Success confirmed that discussions with students showed that they believe the College is doing the best it can and that they feel safe and secure.

Governors commented on the concerns in schools where a significant number of pupils are being sent home despite there being only a few cases and the position at some University campuses. They asked whether there were some lessons to be learnt from the action that was being taken by the College. They also asked

whether, when staff are self-isolating, there has been any impact on the College's ability to deliver provision.

The Vice Principal Student Success reported that all students are subject to a temperature check on entry to the site and if the reading is 37.5 degrees or above they have a second check. If this reading remains high, the student is asked to go home and if further symptoms develop to take appropriate action. The student is then contacted to find out if they will be reporting as ill.

It was also reported that staff have retained equipment for working from home and as a result can continue to do so if they are required to self isolate.

***The Vice Principal Business Success joined the meeting.***

Additionally however, 'student bubbles' at the College are different and are made up of individual classes and not year groups so they can be isolated from other bubbles.

This was the case with the Access to HE Group. However, where there are larger groups, the guidance from Public Health England is that if a distance of 2m is retained between individuals there is no risk and as a result the College is reviewing the planning of classrooms and the students most likely to be at higher risk.

**It was resolved that the Board of Governors note the efforts of staff and students to deliver a safe re-opening of the College.**

**Business Success**

**July 2019/20 Management Accounts**

The Vice Principal Business Success referred the Board of Governors to the July 2019/20 Management Accounts which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

It was noted that the management accounts represented the position for the year 2019/20 from which the full financial statements will be developed following the usual year end process.

Key points which were highlighted included:

- The overall the deficit for the year was in line with the forecast when the June management accounts were produced although there had been some movements in income and costs.
- The reduction in income is primarily as a result of a reduction in apprenticeship income directly due to the impact of COVID 19, but this has been balanced through savings and lower costs in July.
- As a contingency, additional provision had been included in relation to a potential increase bad debts which could be released if these do not materialise.

- The cash position continues to be closely monitored with an improved position at the year end and ahead of forecast at the end of August 2020.
- Combined management accounts for August and September will be prepared but early indicators are positive although the position relating to apprenticeship funding needs to be monitored.

**It was resolved that the Board of Governors note the July 2020 financial results.**

#### Capital Grants and Proposed Capital Programme

The Vice Principal Business Success reported that following the Government Announcement of £200m of Capital funding being brought forward to 2020/21, the College had been informed of its allocation of £977,134.44 the allocations having been based on size of College.

The grant is to carry out immediate remedial work to upgrade the condition of the estate and IT infrastructure and must be spent by 31 March 2021.

The programme identifying the use of the allocation must be submitted by 16 October 2020 and was provided as an appendix to the report.

It was noted that the programme takes into account the longer-term estate strategy for the College and is intended to maximise efficiencies and best value in the use of the estate.

As a result the majority of the grant has been allocated to the Wellington Road Campus with works at Paget Road allowing for Hair and Beauty and Hospitality to be temporarily relocated from the Metro One Campus and for improvement to the IT network.

As previously discussed, it was noted that the College continues to challenge the survey undertaken on behalf of the DfE in relation to the Paget Road site.

Governors noted that Colleges are requested to contribute up to 25% in match funding if possible and asked whether there was any risk to the College if this was not provided.

The Vice Principal Business Success confirmed that the College would not be able to make such a contribution and he was asked to try and obtain confirmation in writing that there would not be any potential for claw back of funding.

**It was resolved:**

- **That the Board of Governors note the acceptance of the FE Capital Allocation grant.**
- **Note the receipt of the FE Condition Data Collection report and findings.**
- **Approve the programme of capital works.**

## Waste Tender Services

The Vice Principal Business Success presented the detailed report on the procurement of the Waste Tender Services which included the evaluation of the tender submissions.

It was reported that the outcome of the tender evaluation process is the appointment of Veolia who are the current supplier of these services and Governors noted the potential savings over the three-year contractual period.

### **It was resolved:**

- **That Veolia be appointed as the suppliers of Waste Tender Services for a contract period of three years with an option to extend for a further two years (one year at a time) with the contract commencing on 1 October 2020.**

## People Engagement

### People Engagement Report 2019/20

The Principal presented the detailed report which included changes made to the HR Team during the year, the Human Resources and Payroll Strategic Measures - 2019/2020 and information relating to staff absence and turnover.

The Principal reported that staff had responded well to the changes in the structure of HR and that EMT agreed that the new structure should remain in place.

In relation to staff absence, the Principal advised that whilst the figures show that the College has a low level of absence, the Executive Management Team are collectively taking responsibility for the culture and wellbeing of staff and will be moving the discussion from consideration of the detail to 'what does that mean'.

Governors confirmed that they were pleased to see that there will be a report on Gender Pay at the meeting in October but asked whether a report would be published on the Ethnicity pay gap. This would help the Board to understand the position of staff and the Principal confirmed that this would be given further consideration.

**Governors thanked the College staff for their efforts in very challenging circumstances and noted the developments in HR.**

### Annual Health and Safety Report 2019/20

The Principal presented the report which outlined activity in relation to Health and Safety at the College in 2019/20.

It was noted that the College had not been subject to any statutory enforcement action between August 2019 and July 2020.

The Governors considered that the report was very comprehensive and in particular noted the role of the Health and Safety lead at the College.

They emphasised that the safety of students and staff was of paramount importance and recognised the significant contribution of those involved with ensuring their Health and Safety and the Principal advised that there may be an opportunity to meet with the Health and Safety Lead at the Governors' strategy session.

The Board of Governors were requested to approve the Health and Safety Policy – Statement of Intent by Principal and Chief Executive for signature.

**It was resolved that:**

- **The Board of Governors note the Health and Safety report and approve the Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent 2020/21 for signature by the Principal and Chair.**

**94/20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (ITEM 7) CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE**

**95/20 CONFIDENTIALITY**

**It was resolved that the following items would remain confidential:**

- **Urgent updates**
- **Confidential Minutes 20 July 2020 (Item 2)**
- **College report (Item 6) – Procurement of Waste Services Tender**
- **Minutes relating to Any other Business**
- **Report on EMT Structure**

**96/20 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

**19 October 2020 at 5pm**