

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Governors held on
Thursday 28 January 2021 at 5pm
Conducted via Microsoft Teams**

PRESENT

Mr Mark Taylor (Chair)	Ms Nisha Rai
Mr Clarence Crosdale (Vice Chair)	Mr Mike Hastings
Ms Alison Shannon	Ms Emma Bull
Mr John Bradford	Mr Mal Cowgill
Ms Sally Slater (Staff)	Mr Ian Fegan
Mr Trevor Dutton	Mr Yankho Songwe (Student)
Mr Phil Leivers	Mrs Amanda Tomlinson

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Peter Merry	- Vice Principal Business Success
Ms Louise Fall	- Vice Principal Student Engagement
Mr Ian Browne	- Vice Principal Student Success
Mrs Elizabeth Ball	- Clerk to the Board of Governors
Mr Rob Lawson	- ETF Consultant

Mrs Amanda Tomlinson was welcomed to her first meeting of the Board of Governors.

01/21 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM 1)

There were no apologies.

Alison Shannon, Mark Taylor, Phil Leivers and Ian Fegan declared a conflict of loyalty in relation to the CLQ update.

Amanda Tomlinson declared her interest as member of the Board of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership.

Governors agreed that they should remain and take part in the relevant discussions.

02/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (ITEM 2)

It was resolved that:

- **The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2020 be approved as a correct record.**

03/21 MATTERS ARISING (ITEM 2)

The Board of Governors noted the report on outstanding actions and the implementation dates.

In relation to the updating of the College improvement plan (125/50) it was noted that the report would be provided at the mid-year point.

04/21 CORRESPONDENCE (ITEM 3)

The Board of Governors received the letter from Gillian Keegan MP dated 21 January 2021.

The Principal reported that it had not been possible to prepare a report for Governors at this meeting on the new White Paper, but that there will be an opportunity for the Board of Governors and the College to feedback as part of the consultation process.

05/21 UPDATES (ITEM 4)

(a) Campus Transformation Oversight Group (CTOG) - CLQ and CoWTechC (Confidential Report)

The Principal presented the slides that had been provided at the recent meeting of the CTOG and reported that as a result of the discussions at the meeting of the Group the risk profile had been updated.

The Chair of the CTOG confirmed that the meeting had been very comprehensive and that the minutes would be received at the next meeting of the Board.

The Board of Governors noted the report.

(b) FE Commissioner Action plan

The Principal presented the updated action plan as at January 2021.

The Chair highlighted that the College had taken action to implement all of the recommendations that had been made by the FE Commissioner following the visit in 2020 and that the RAG rating of green for each action indicated that these were being implemented and addressed.

The Independent Consultant confirmed that he would provide feedback on the review to the Chair and would then present his findings at a future meeting of the Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors noted the updated action plan.

04/21 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDIT (ITEM 5) (CONFIDENTIAL)

05/21 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (ITEM 6)

The Principal reported that the strategic focus this year is on four themes: curriculum planning; leadership succession; financial resilience and the property strategy.

It was noted that a report on the key performance indicators would be made at the half year point and that a report on leadership succession would be provided at a subsequent meeting.

Property Strategy (Confidential)

06/21 COLLEGE REPORT (ITEM 6)

1. Student Engagement **(a) College Opening and Testing update**

The Vice Principal Student Engagement provided an update on the arrangements that had been put into place following the national lockdown restrictions which were introduced on 5 January 2021.

It was noted that the College continues to provide support for students that are classified as vulnerable which include blended learning, access to the Study Hub, provision of food vouchers and the offer of provision of IT equipment to approximately 248 students.

The Vice Principal Student Engagement reported that on-site activity is limited to the Wellington Road site and that all COVID-19 protocols remain in place including the Duty Principal role.

It was also reported that selected BTEC exams had taken place and that in many cases this had been welcomed by students who wanted to be graded on their own ability. Some exams had 100% attendance, but it was noted that BTEC have cancelled all exams from February 2021.

Governors asked whether all students that require IT equipment have been identified. They were advised that 248 students had been identified either by the students themselves raising the issue or it becoming apparent when engaging with the students. It was reported that the list is added to daily and that recently an application had been made to the DfE for 420 laptops.

Governors also asked if about any issues relating to connectivity. The Vice Principal Student Engagement reported that the College is able to source support which includes vouchers offered by BT. In addition, it was noted that Vodafone have offered data cards which should be delivered soon.

A Governor also suggested that contact be made with a charity called Hubbub who are able to source access on a means tested basis.

Governors commented that they were keen to tackle digital exclusion and would be prepared to consider additional support for students within the current financial constraints.

The Vice Principal Student Engagement was asked how the decision was made about which students should receive equipment first.

Governors were advised that data had been collected from Students in September 2021 and these students were contacted first. Where resources were not required, they were removed from the list.

Governors noted the praise for the behaviour and engagement of students during the pandemic and asked whether it was possible to recognise their efforts in some way.

The Vice Principal Student Engagement responded that this could be given further consideration and that there may be an opportunity for a celebration of some form in this context.

Clarence Crosdale left the meeting.

Governors asked about the arrangements at the College for the February half term break in relation to lateral flow testing and free school meals.

The Vice Principal Student Engagement reported that the College will look to support students with vouchers during half term, but are also meeting with the City Council to discuss the potential to use the winter grant.

The Vice Principal Student Engagement confirmed that during half term there will not be any on-site activity for students. As a result the number of staff accessing the campus will be minimal.

The Board of Governors noted the efforts by staff to adapt re-opening in line with government guidance.

(b) January Adult Offer

The Vice Principal Student Engagement provided an update on the refreshed part time offer aimed at adults, running from January 2021.

It was noted that the offer had been affected by the national lockdown restrictions in January and as a result the overall number of applications was lower than anticipated.

Governors were advised that once the lockdown restrictions are lifted there will be opportunities to engage with adults in face-to-face learning and that the College continues to support the SWAP's where most students are referred by DWP.

The Board of Governors noted the report.

2. Student Success

(a) Maths and English Progress Report

The Vice Principal Student Success presented the report which detailed levels of achievement for English and maths for 2019/20.

It was noted that overall achievement grades and achievement of high grades had increased based on the College submitted grade or standardised grade if higher.

Progress Measures

The Vice Principal Student Success reported that as the DfE has not published performance measures for this year it is difficult to predict what the College's progress scores would be for 2019/20.

However, based on just students from 2019/20 progress scores have increased for both English and maths compared to 2018/19.

16-18 Curriculum 2020/21

The Vice Principal Student Success provided an update on arrangements to deliver the curriculum as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which had included each curriculum area being given two 1.5 hour slots for maths and English. This involved smaller group sizes being taught face-to-face for one session with the other being delivered online.

One Governor had attended the Quality of Education Board for English and reported that it was clear that the students and staff had preferred this approach which had resulted in improved behaviour, less stress for staff and better room utilisation.

New Innovations

The Vice Principal Student Success highlighted the changes that had been introduced to support the delivery of maths and English.

Part time functional skills – 19+ cohort

Governors noted the report on the effect of the pandemic on Functional skills success rates.

The Board of Governors noted the continued improvement in English and maths.

(b) Apprenticeship Progress Report

Impact of COVID 19

The Vice Principal Student Success presented the report which provided an update on the impact on apprentices of the COVID-19 pandemic and particularly the decline in apprenticeship starts both locally and nationally.

Apprenticeship Demand and Delivery

The Vice Principal Student Success presented the report and highlighted that whilst there have been clear benefits from changing the operating structure of the Apprenticeship Team, outcomes are being severely affected by the pandemic.

It was reported that partnership working is seen as vital to the success of apprenticeships and when lockdown is lifted, marketing and promotion will be key.

Two Governors had attended the Quality of Education Board relating to apprenticeships and reported that the change in culture was noticeable and that they were impressed with the confidence of the Sector Lead.

Sector Developments and Updates

The Board of Governors noted the report on sector developments and updates.

Subcontracting

The Board of Governors noted the report on subcontracting.

Quality and Performance

The Vice Principal Student Success presented the update which outlined the effect of the pandemic on apprenticeship starts, income and achievement.

It was noted that the impact of the pandemic and its effect on the Colleges apprenticeship provision is clearly shown in the budget and financial forecast for 2020/21.

The Board of Governors noted the impact of COVID 19 on apprenticeships and the difficulties in measuring progress.

(c) On Line Learner Engagement

Governors noted that levels of student engagement with on line learning in most areas remain high, particularly for A levels and Creative Industries.

Governors commented that they wanted to thank staff for their continuing efforts of staff to engage with and support learners.

The Board of Governors noted the report.

3. Business Success

(a) Finance Update (Confidential)

(b) Capital Plan Update

The Vice Principal Business Success provided an update on progress in relation to the Further Education Capital Allocation.

It was reported that the DfE have now confirmed that there is some flexibility around the March deadline which has been extended to September 2021 for planned works which cannot be managed within the current financial year.

Approval for Lift Replacement

The Board of Governors noted the report on the approval by the Chair for the awarding of the contract to replace the lift at the Wellington Road Campus.

The approval was given in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Regulations and the Board of Governors was requested to endorse the approval.

Works update

The Board of Governors noted the updates in relation to completed works and those that had commenced, the update on costs and the programme.

Projects Requiring Authorisation to Award Contract

The Vice Principal Business Success reported that the Board of Governors were requested to approve the awarding of the contracts for the refurbishment of toilets and reception at Wellington Road, the renewal of floor coverings, the

replacement of the Boilers and BMS system and the supply and installation of networking equipment.

The Board of Governors noted the report on the procurement process.

It was resolved that:

- **The Board of Governors endorse Chair's Action in awarding the contract to replace the lift at Wellington Road.**
- **The Board of Governors approve the awarding of contracts:**
 - **Refurbishment of toilets and reception: ECL Building Contractors Ltd**
 - **Renewal of floor coverings: Hamp Flooring.**
 - **Replacement Boilers and BMS system: RMC Mechanical Services Ltd.**
 - **Supply and Installation of Networking Equipment: Nike Computing Ltd**

4. People Engagement

The Principal updated the Board of Governors on the staff pay claim for 2020/21 and the formal response that had been made by the AoC.

He advised that currently there had not been any discussions with the Unions and that at present the College was not in a position to recommend a cost of living award.

Governors agreed that this be communicated via the appropriate channels and that EMT continue to monitor the situation and report regularly to the Board on the position.

The Board of Governors noted the report.

07/21 REPORT FROM THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Remuneration Committee presented the report. The minutes of the meeting which took place on 10 December 2020 were received.

The Board of Governors considered the Annual Report from the Committee and noted the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference.

It was resolved that the Annual Report from the Remuneration Committee and the revised Terms of Reference be approved.

08/21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (ITEM 9)

There were no items of any other business.

09/21 CONFIDENTIALITY (ITEM 10)

It was resolved that the following items would remain confidential:

- **Slides presented as part of the report from the Campus Transformation Oversight Group**
- **Minutes relating to the Financial Statements and Audit Report**

- **Report and minutes relating to the Property Strategy**
- **Presentation, report and minutes relating to the Financial update and Management Accounts**
- **Item 7 Appendix C – report on Tender evaluations**

10/21 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Special meeting to be arranged.

15 March 2021 at 5pm