

**CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Governors held on  
Monday 13 June 2022 at 5pm  
Conducted via Microsoft Teams**

**PRESENT**

Mr Mark Taylor (Chair)	Mr Clarence Crosdale (Vice Chair)
Mr Mike Hastings (Vice Chair)	Mr Trevor Dutton
Mrs Amanda Tomlinson (to item 6 (iii))	Ms Dionne Barrett
Mr Mal Cowgill	Mr Sam Duru
Ms Sally Slater (Staff Governor)	Ms Ioana Axinte
Mrs Hshaana Knight	

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Mrs Louise Fall	-	Deputy Principal
Mr Ian Browne	-	Vice Principal Student Success
Mr Peter Merry	-	Deputy Chief Executive
Mr Mike Dixon	-	Assistant Principal Curriculum
Ms Lynn Parker	-	Assistant Principal Curriculum
Mrs Elizabeth Ball	-	Head of Governance

**46/22 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM 1)**

Apologies were received from Scott Thompson, Lyndsey Flynn, Ian Gardner, Nisha Rai and John Bradford.

Mark Taylor declared a conflict of loyalty as an employee of the City of Wolverhampton Council

**47/22 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING (ITEM 2)**

**The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2022 were approved as a correct record.**

**48/22 REPORT ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS (ITEM 3)**

The Board of Governors received an update on actions that were outstanding from previous meetings.

It was agreed that the further analysis on the reduction of achievement rates for apprentices from minority ethnic groups would be provided when available.

**49/22 CORRESPONDENCE (ITEM 4)**

There were no items of correspondence to report.

**50/22 PROPERTY (ITEM 5) CONFIDENTIAL**

**51/22 COLLEGE UPDATE (ITEM 6)**

(i) **Student Engagement**

Applications

The Deputy Principal presented the report which provided an update on 16- 19, Adult and HE applications for 2022/23.

The Board of Governors noted the increase in the College's market share of 16-19 provision within Wolverhampton and that the rate of applications has slowed as students start their exams.

It was reported that activities are taking place to maintain contact with potential students and that applications for A levels continue to be higher than the same point last year and have increased since the last report.

In relation to adult provision, it was noted that applications are showing an increase in comparison to the same point last year and that a targeted marketing plan is in place for the College's Access to HE Provision.

The Deputy Principal reported that HE provision is tracking broadly in line with last year.

**The Board of Governors noted the report and the levels of applications for both full and part time provision in comparison to the same point last year, recognising that Higher Education continues to be low but in line with last year.**

College Quality Improvement Plan update

The Board of Governors considered the Quality Improvement Plan which was appended to the report. It was highlighted that currently no actions were identified as red, some are identified as green, with the majority remaining rated as amber.

Those areas that remain of concern will be carried forward in to the Quality Improvement Plan for 2022/23.

**The Board of Governors noted progress made against areas identified as part of the College Quality Improvement Plan.**

Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance Policy

The Deputy Principal reported that the 2022/23 policy was being brought to the Board of Governors for approval.

She advised that the College is due to be re-assessed for the Matrix Standard and that an up-to-date policy was one of the requirements.

It was noted that the Link Governor for careers will meet with the Assessors.

Governors were advised that there were no major changes to the policy and that it aligns with the Matrix Standards.

**It was resolved that the Careers Education Advice and Guidance Policy be approved.**

(ii) **Student Success**

Curriculum Planning Update

The Vice Principal Student Success presented the report and provided an update in relation to the Curriculum Planning process.

He highlighted that the 2022/23 curriculum planning process has been completed ready for sign off, but that it will continue to evolve depending on how successful enrolment is and whether any additional funding becomes available.

It was reported that the Adult Education Budget has increased this year and that discussions are continuing with the West Midlands Combined Authority in relation to the programmes to be delivered under the National Skills Fund and Bootcamps.

Governors also noted the position in relation to apprentices and the need to review resources for delivery.

It was agreed that the list of courses which will be delivered using the National Skills Fund would be circulated to Governors and the Vice Principal Student Success was asked what provision was covered by the 'Bootcamps' and how they were funded.

The Vice Principal Student Success advised that the Bootcamps are funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority and are for the delivery of higher level courses (above level 3) with the intention of trying to attract level 4 and 5 students into those priority areas.

Governors commented that it was good to see the increase in adult funding but noted that this had only been verbally agreed. They asked whether this would be confirmed in writing.

The Vice Principal Student Success reported that last year a written agreement had not been forthcoming and although the additional funding had been paid, this year a written agreement would be obtained.

Governors questioned whether the strategy to build apprenticeship provision had changed in view of the reduction in the curriculum plan.

The Vice Principal Student Success reported that apprenticeships remain a priority area for the College, but until late last year there was a reluctance to take on apprentices. Despite this, the College has grown provision by 39% and there may be further opportunities during the year.

The position will remain under review and efforts will continue to be made to recruit as many apprentices as possible.

**The Board of Governors noted the continued progress year-on year- with curriculum planning.**

## Apprenticeship Progress Report

The Vice Principal Student Success presented the report which detailed the work that is taking place in the College to support the apprenticeship provision.

It was noted that the curriculum planning process is complete and that as mentioned at the last meeting, the ESFA have established new accountability measures.

It was reported that one of the measures is the overall achievement rate and that the ESFA have confirmed that this is still being impacted by the pandemic. However the national average for overall achievement is 57.5%, which includes all types of providers and all subject sector areas.

The Vice Principal Student Success updated Governors on the College's current achievement rate and the best case scenario and advised that currently enrolments are behind profile meaning that income was below budget.

Governors asked whether the College would face any penalties if the National Average was not achieved and noted that this was only one of the accountability measures, but if these are not achieved the College could be subject to a review by the ESFA. In addition, achievement rates would be challenged by Ofsted as part of their inspection.

Governors asked if other local Colleges were also struggling with apprenticeship numbers and the Vice Principal Student Success reported that it is difficult to make comparisons, but some that the College is linked with appear to be in a similar position.

### **The Board of Governors noted the report.**

#### **(iii) Business Success**

##### Management Accounts

The Board of Governors received the Management Accounts for the period to April 2022.

The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted key points in relation to the operating surplus and variances in income, pay and non-pay expenditure and reported on the cash position at 30 April 2022 and the cashflow forecast to 31 July 2022.

It was noted that the full year forecast has been updated to reflect the position to the end of April and that tolerance had been built in for a staff pay award and the repayment of the Restructuring fund debt.

The Deputy Chief Executive also highlighted the importance of resolving the position in relation to the restructuring fund debt and explained the payment profile for the Mezzanine project.

Governors asked about the overspend which was identified in relation to other partner costs and were advised that this relates to the increased Rail and EV provision which involves payments to partners.

## **The Board of Governors noted the Management Accounts to April 2022.**

### 2022/23 Budget Update, Including Capital

The Deputy Chief Executive provided an update in relation to the preparation of the College's budget for 2022/23.

He highlighted key areas of note and in particular, the increase in the level of income, the effect of inflation on non-pay costs and the proposed pay award.

In relation to pay, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that there will be a full year's impact of any pay award given to staff and that the budget is prudent, giving a small net surplus.

Governors commented that having a medium-term forecast is helpful and that they would welcome a view on budget planning beyond one year and a sensitivity analysis on costs which is higher than income increases.

### ***Amanda Tomlinson left the meeting***

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that staff have not received a cost of living award since 2018 and that they are paid at a lower level than teachers. It was noted that some Colleges are facing intense Union pressure and that some are asking for a 10% increase.

It was reported that overall there is a c7% increase in the funding tariff for 16-19 next year, but that this involves additional teaching hours. As a result there is a need to find a balance between supporting staff and the College's financial position.

## **The Board of Governors noted the report.**

### Partnership update

The Deputy Chief Executive provided an update in relation to the College's subcontracting arrangements and emphasised that in line with the Subcontractor policy, partners are selected because they are able to contribute to the skills development of learners or have skill sets that enhance the curriculum offer.

Governors noted the summary of the planned income, actual income and payments for 2021/22 together with data relating to enrolments, retention and overall achievement.

They also noted the arrangements in place to ensure the compliance and quality of the provision and that a new ESFA Subcontracting standard has been introduced.

The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted the ESFA and the WMCA subcontracting plans and update for 2022/23 together with the indicative values and that activity will cease with some of the smaller providers where delivery is not in line with the College's partnership model.

It was also highlighted that the College's provision is subject to an annual audit.

## **The Board of Governors noted the report**

### Mechanical and Electrical Contract Award

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report which detailed the background to the contract, the route to market, tender evaluation and recommendation.

It was noted that whilst the proposed contractor is located outside the Wolverhampton area, they scored highest in the tender evaluation and can deliver significant savings over the three-year contract period.

Governors commented that whilst they would prefer to have a local provider, they were cognisant of their duty to deliver value for money.

**It was resolved that the Mechanical and Electrical Contract award to Briggs and Forrester be approved.**

#### (iv) People Engagement

##### Staff Survey

The Deputy Principal reported that the staff online survey was now live and can be completed by staff until the end of the academic year.

Once completed the result will be shared and York College combines results with other Colleges to provide benchmark information for the sector.

Governors noted the questions which were included as an appendix to the report.

**The Board of Governors noted the questions for the Staff Survey 2022.**

##### Pay Award

The Principal presented the report which outlined the background to the cost of living pay claim being made by the Unions and the position of the AoC.

He highlighted, however, that discussions at the College had been ongoing since January 2022, and that the recommendation is for a 3.1% cost of living award to be made to staff, backdated to February 2022.

The Principal emphasised that the major issue had been the timing of the award in addition to affordability, particularly in view of the ongoing discussions in relation to the Restructuring Fund debt. As a result there has been some caution about the position, but there is a need to also invest in our staff, not only as a result of the current economic climate, but also the need to retain and support them.

Governors considered that it was imperative to show that the College was investing in its staff as well as in its buildings and noted that the intention had always been to reward staff once the College was in the financial position to do so.

The Principal advised that there are other things that will be considered e.g. additional teaching hours and that these will form part of the Workforce Development Strategy.

Governors stated that the staff had supported the College through the pandemic and that having quality staff was as important as having the new build. They considered

that the increase would help the retention and recruitment of staff to deliver high quality education and was therefore the right thing to do.

It was acknowledged, however, that the College may come under some pressure from the external agencies.

Governors asked how this increase would compare with the College's competitors. The Principal advised that it was based on affordability and the College's individual position, but that the AoC recommendation currently was 2.5%. The College may therefore be above average, but the last increase of 1.25% had been made in 2018.

**It was resolved that all staff (excluding the Principal) be awarded a cost of living increase of 3.1%, backdated to February 2022.**

The Principal went on to outline other areas that the College needs to address including new contracts, low pay and the living wage. He also advised that discussions are continuing with the Unions in relation to the starting salary and incremental progression for lecturing staff.

It was also noted that there was some expectations of savings as the College will employ less Agency staff next year.

**52/22 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 MAY 2022 (ITEM 7)**

**It was resolved that the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2022 be approved.**

**53/22 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (ITEM 8)**

There was no other business.

**54/22 CONFIDENTIALITY (ITEM 9)**

**It was resolved that the following reports and minutes remain confidential and not be made available for public access:**

- **Item 5 – CTOG update and Confidential minutes from the Campus Transformation Oversight Group held on 23 May 2022**
- **Item 7 – Confidential minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 9 May 2022**

**55/22 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING (ITEM 10)**

**25 July 2022 at 5pm – Via Teams**