

**WALSALL COLLEGE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION
HELD ON THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 1730 HRS
VENUE: HB201, HUB BUILDING**

Attendance Present: Attendees
 Dave Wheeler, Chair
 Stuart Pedley-Smith
 Graham Ward
 Sam Jarvis
 Konrad Klimczyk
 Jat Sharma, Principal and Chief Executive
 Mary Mahoney
 Charlotte Bosworth – on Teams
 Nick Tomkys – on Teams

Together with: James Norris - Assistant Principal Commercial Development
 David Turner - Assistant Principal Quality and HE
 Richard Brennan - Assistant Principal Curriculum
 Matthew Brown - Director of Finance & MIS
 John Adams - Director of Commercial Projects
 Deb Rajania - Director of Operations and Resources
 Neil Sambrook - Director of Faculty, STEAM
 Rachel Davies - Director of Faculty, Adults, Foundation and Community
 Rachael Smith - Director of Faculty, Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning
 Jo Moore - Director of Faculty, Vocational Sixth
 Mark Dawson (part) - Reporting Accountant, KPMG – on Teams

Apologies: Julie Haywood, Rani Sahota, Heather Lodge, Ray Simmonds, Jaswinder Dhillon, Tony Sadla

Absent, No Apologies: Aisling McGowan, Paul Averis

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17.23	CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. Introductions were made to all present.	
18.23	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Julie Haywood, Rani Sahota, Heather Lodge, Ray Simmonds, Jaswinder Dhillon, Tony Sadla.	
19.23	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST None.	
20.23	CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE The Director of Operations and Resources gave an update to show the progress of capital projects and to seek approvals to move to next stages. Photos and plans for the projects were shown on screen. The tender process for the Construction Skills Academy had been completed and the costs were higher than originally estimated for a variety of reasons. The	

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	<p>overall project cost had increased to £5.8m, which reflected inflation and the current construction marketplace.</p>	
	<p>The land acquisition for the Electric Vehicle Sustainability Centre was going ahead and expected to complete in January 2023.</p>	
	<p>Details of all projects had been discussed at the recent Finance and Resources Committee.</p>	
	<p>The capital funding profile was explained, including funding from the TIP project, college and LEP. It would be necessary for the Electric Vehicle Sustainability Centre project to be re-evaluated in due course. For now, Governors were asked to approve the recommendations of the Finance and Resources Committee.</p>	
	<p>A Governor asked why the Local Authority had taken £41k from the funding allocation and what the impact of this was. The Director of Operations and Resources confirmed that this was under discussion with the Local Authority and that future projects were being re-evaluated.</p>	
	<p>A Governor commented on the recommendations of the recent internal audit report in this area and the discussions at the Audit Committee earlier in the month. The Director of Operations and Resources agreed that the audit recommendation to review business cases was valid and that it would be actioned.</p>	
	<p>There was a general discussion about the TIP funding and project plans. A Governor noted the possible change of ONS classification for colleges, and that this may present a risk to future projects. It was agreed that the college should complete projects when possible.</p>	
	<p>The Chair asked the Director Operations and Resources to explain the charge over the project. This was a condition of funding. The college had previously granted charges to the pension fund for the Hub and Barclays for Wisemore. It was proposed to leave the existing charge on Portland Street in place until completion of the project. The Director of Finance & MIS commented that charges were usual business practice and that adding this did not change the risk profile for the college.</p>	
	<p>The Chair noted that the changes meant that the Green Lane project now had no contingency. It was confirmed that this was correct. This had been discussed at the Finance and Resources Committee.</p>	
	<p>The Chair commented on a paper that the Director of Finance & MIS had provided a year ago, which set out the available funds for capital investment. Of the available £3m, it appeared sensible to have used some to fund the land acquisition, CCM work and now the additional costs for Green Lane. The Director of Finance & MIS agreed that the additional expenditure needed for Green Lane was within the original capital investment envelope.</p>	
	<p>Governors considered the items that had been recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee and resolved that the following be approved:</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Additional funding of £1.5m equating to a revised total authorised sum of £5.8m for the Construction Skills Academy (Green Lane extension); ii) That the college should sign the funding agreement with the Accountable Body (Walsall Council) to secure £1.355m (This figure had been reduced to £1.314m allowing for top-slicing by Walsall Council of £41k); iii) The continuation of design work for the Electric Vehicle Sustainability Centre; iv) To continue the land acquisition as previously approved. 	
	<p>Progress on all projects would continue to be monitored by the Finance and Resources Committee with periodic updates to Corporation.</p>	
21.23	<p>COLLEGE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</p> <p>Governors were introduced to Mark Dawson, Reporting Accountant from KPMG. Updated ESFA guidance in place since last year required the external auditors to present their findings to Boards. KPMG had previously attended Audit Committee on 15 November.</p> <p>The Director of Finance & MIS presented his report, noting that the details had been considered at the Finance & Resources and Audit Committees as appropriate.</p> <p>Finance and Resources Committee had scrutinised the detail of the accounts at a meeting earlier in the week.</p> <p>Governors were reminded of their responsibilities in signing the accounts, including being comfortable with the assurances provided in the various documents, taking account of the views of the Finance and Resources Committee and Audit Committee, and being satisfied that the college was a going concern at the point of signing the accounts.</p> <p>Governors were also advised that the college had been selected for an ESFA funding audit, and that this was still in progress. KPMG did not expect any material changes to the accounts figures as a result of this audit, but this would need to be confirmed before they were able to agree their final sign off. The Chair and Principal would sign on behalf of Corporation today, if Governors approved the accounts.</p> <p>Governors' attention was drawn to the following highlights:</p> <p><u>Draft Financial Statements</u></p> <p>The financial outturn for 2021/22 was a statutory accounts surplus of £30.1m and the audit opinion was unqualified. This was after a range of accounting adjustments, including for pensions, capital grants released and the Lenartz VAT refund.</p> <p>The report cover sheet set out the reconciliation from the July management accounts to the year-end statutory accounts. The accounting adjustments were explained. The underlying trading performance had been good. Financial health at year-end was good, the ESFA had no concerns and KPMG had not raised any significant recommendations in their management letter. The internal audit annual report had a clean opinion.</p> <p>Governors were reminded of their responsibility to conclude on the going concern of the college before approving the accounts. This needed to be a</p>	

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Governor decision based on all information presented and wider knowledge of the college. The Director of Finance & MIS had provided KPMG's report relating to going concern considerations as part of the information pack.

Mark Dawson was invited to comment on the work of KPMG and Governors noted the following:

- Reports had previously been presented at Audit Committee;
- The audit was complete and clean opinions had been given in all respects. No substantive issues had arisen from the audit;
- The final outstanding point was to review the outcome of the ESFA funding audit work being carried out by PWC;
- The LGPS liability calculations had been reviewed, as discussed at the Audit Committee;
- The significant audit risks identified at the planning stage were explained. There were no concerns from these;
- One minor control recommendation had been made this year.

The Chair noted the information provided and asked the Director of Finance & MIS to explain the college's financial health score. The Director of Finance & MIS commented on the process. It was expected that the score would be in the outstanding range based on the statutory accounts figures, but ESFA would confirm this next year.

Governors discussed the going concern status of the college and did not have any issues to raise on the appropriateness of agreeing this.

The Chair commented that the financial result for the year was exceptional and congratulated staff.

Letter of Representation

This was the standard letter required under auditing standards. The contents were generic, with no college specific representations required.

Governors **resolved to approve** the statutory accounts and the Letter of Representation, and agreed that the Chair should sign both on behalf of the Corporation.

Regularity Audit Self-Assessment

This had been considered at both the Finance and Resources Committee and the Audit Committee. It was being presented to Corporation as the Chair was required to sign, in addition to the Principal. KPMG had used this when undertaking work to inform their Regularity opinion.

Broadway Training Limited and Student Union Accounts

These were provided for completeness and information.

Internal Audit Annual Report

The paper was included for information as the detail had been considered at the November Audit Committee. A clean audit opinion, based on the work undertaken in the year, had been provided.

Audit Committee Annual Report to Corporation

The report had been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice in place for the year, with the overall conclusion on page 9. This stated that the Audit Committee was satisfied as to the adequacy

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	<p>and effectiveness of the Corporation’s assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, solvency of the institution and the safeguarding of its assets. This would be submitted with the signed accounts.</p> <p><u>Remuneration Committee Annual Report</u></p> <p>The report had been prepared to comply with the requirements of the AOC’s Senior Post Holder Remuneration Code, adopted by the college in March 2019.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Broadway Training Limited and Student Union accounts, as well as the Internal Audit Annual Report, the Audit Committee’s Annual Report and the Remuneration Committee’s Annual Report.</p> <p>There was a 15-minute break</p>	
22.23	<p>SAR VALIDATION – CLUSTER AND DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATIONS</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Quality and HE provided some opening comments and introduced the staff that would be making presentations on their areas.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Quality and HE shared his screen to show each presentation.</p> <p>Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning Rachael Smith, Faculty Director</p> <p>The Faculty Director for Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning presented the SAR for this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, provision was graded as Good; • Quality of Education was Good. Comments were made about the intent, implementation and impact. Of particular note were the high rates of achievement and positive destinations. Curriculum intent reflected the requirements of local and some national employers; • Behaviour and attitudes were Good. Attendance and punctuality were high; • Personal development Required Improvement and the reasons why were outlined. Further focus on personal development was needed for apprentices when on programme; • There were no significant E&D achievement gaps; • Leadership and management was Good, with staff having high expectations for apprentices. Managers had a good oversight of the areas of strength and areas for development. Student feedback was excellent; • There was a new Ofsted judgement for the extent to which the college contributed to meeting skills needs. The Faculty had assessed itself as making a strong contribution to this. <p>Questions and comments were invited.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the effects of Covid and the extent to which this could be disaggregated due to being outside of the Faculty’s control. Governors felt that the self-assessment aligned more closely to outstanding than good, if the pandemic factors were discounted.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Quality and HE agreed and stated that staff had taken a very robust view using the Ofsted framework. All references to Covid were being removed from the inspection framework. Staff did feel that there were still some areas within the college’s control that could be improved.</p>	

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A Governor commented that the success rates were excellent compared to national averages.

There was a discussion about meeting skills needs. Further information on this was to be provided to Governors in due course. There was a need to define local and general skills needs.

It was noted that there were many factors affecting students and that last year had seen some particular challenges that staff had needed to deal with. However, in this year to date many aspects seemed more positive.

STEAM**Neil Sambrook, Faculty Director**

- Overall, provision was graded as Good;
- Quality of education was Good;
- There were some new areas within the Faculty in 2021/22, following the re-structure;
- The impacts of Covid were clear. However, teachers had worked hard during the pandemic and there had been many challenges. Since returning it was clear that some staff had struggled to adapt their teaching back to classroom based after online lecturing. It had taken a while to adjust;
- There had been improvements and more consistency in planning this year;
- Improvements to Maths and English were being seen;
- There had been a marked effect on mental health of students and this had been seen in dis-engagement and withdrawals late in programmes;
- Destinations were positive but it had been difficult to secure work placements until later in the year due to Covid;
- Behaviour was rated as Requires Improvement and the reasons for this were explained. Staff had been unprepared for the scale of behaviour incidents in year, which was very high. Student maturity appeared lower. This year to date showed a significant improvement;
- Attendance and punctuality were poor and below college targets;
- The Personal Development grade was not yet decided as it fell between Requires Improvement and Good. The reason for this was differences between areas that had previously been in Construction, Engineering and Science were fairly strong but those areas added to the Faculty in the re-structure were less so. A more consistent approach was in place for the current year;
- Feedback on careers guidance had been good;
- Progression was strong but a full EDI analysis was to be completed;
- Leadership and management was good;
- There had been challenges with staff absence but all classes had been covered;
- Student voice had generally been positive;
- Safeguarding was proactive and effective;
- For the new Ofsted judgement on the extent to which the college contributed to meeting skills needs, the Faculty had assessed itself as making a reasonable contribution to this. It was expected that this would improve for this year.

The Chair suggested that questions be held until the end of all presentations.

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Vocational Sixth Form

Jo Moore, Faculty Director

- V6 provision overall was Good;
- Quality of Education was Good;
- Intent was strong and delivery was well planned. Sequencing was strong and the content better linked to employment;
- There had been some recruitment challenges, particularly in health and social care;
- There had been a move back towards more student and project led learning;
- Improvements had been made to teaching practice, including maths and English delivery. There had been 91% attendance at November re-sits. New cross college approaches to maths and English included matrix timetabling and streaming;
- T Level results had been excellent so the Faculty was building on this;
- 88.9% of destinations were positive;
- The Director was responsible for the National Tutor Fund this year and there had been a more targeted approach which was working well.
- Behaviour and Attitudes were Good but this remained a challenging area. A more standardised approach was now in place. Behaviour in classrooms was better than outside. Some students still lacked social skills;
- Attendance was poor last year but better now;
- Personal Development Required Improvement. The judgement was based on the need for a fuller evidence base, although management were confident of progress being made. There was further embedding needed in relation to EDI. The Faculty now had personal development tutors, in the same model as STEAM, with an advanced practitioner lead;
- Leadership and Management were Good and the Faculty had a positive culture;
- Student experience was good in the majority of cases; Safeguarding was well managed and effective;
- For the new Ofsted judgement on the extent to which the college contributed to meeting skills needs, the Faculty had assessed itself as making a reasonable contribution to this.

Adult, Foundation and Community

Rachel Davies, Faculty Director

It was noted that the provision in the area included some young people in supported learning, but that the majority was for adults, including pre-entry for higher levels.

- Overall, the provision was rated as Good, with High Needs being Outstanding;
- Quality of Education had been rated by department, with four Outstanding, two Good and one Requires Improvement;
- Intent was very strong. The curriculum was well designed with a good balance of accredited and non-accredited courses;
- Teaching and learning in ESOL and supported learning was strong and secured high levels of progression. There were inconsistencies in some areas but these were being worked on. There was a particular focus on Professional Services;
- Behaviour and Attitudes were Good. Employability was variable across the Faculty. Attendance was improving but for adults had been low last year;

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- Personal Development was Good and Outstanding in some areas. A wide range of activities were contributing to this but employer engagement needed to be improved;
- Leadership and Management were Good. There were high expectations of students. Student Voice needed to be more consistently captured;
- High Needs provision was Outstanding, and this view had been endorsed by the recent review by Click Associates, one of whom had been a high needs specialist;
- Statutory duties were being met. There had been positive growth of supported internships but this area needed to grow further to benefit more students.
- For the new Ofsted judgement on the extent to which the college contributed to meeting skills needs, the Faculty had assessed itself as making a reasonable contribution to this. This was due to the identified need to grow supported internships;
- There continued to be challenges in dealing the SEND at the Local Authority. Their staff turnover was high.

The Chair thanked all Directors for their very informative presentations and invited questions.

A Governor commented on the similarities between the themes in the presentations but the differences in the scoring, and asked if there had been internal challenge of the information. The Assistant Principal Quality and HE responded that there was an element of subjectivity but that he had calibrated the overall Exec level document. It was also the case that there was weighting within Faculties, as the proportion of each type of provision varied.

The Chair asked if Student Governors had any comments. There were some individual questions that would be discussed with staff separately.

It was suggested that some quantifiable data be added to the analysis to aid further scrutiny at Learning and Quality Committee.

Assistant
Principal
Quality
and HE

23.23

SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2021/22 AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022/23

The Assistant Principal Quality and HE presented the report, which showed the following judgements:

Overall Effectiveness	Good
Quality of Education	Good
Behaviour and Attitudes	Good
Personal Development	Requires Improvement
Leadership and Management	Good
Young People	Good
Adults	Good
High Needs	Outstanding

The SAR would be uploaded to Ofsted in January 2023. This was not mandatory but was in line with usual practice for Walsall College.

The overall management view was that last academic year had been difficult but that the SAR reflected the current position and was positive. This had been

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	<p>endorsed by the external review carried out in November 2022 by Click Associates.</p> <p>The Exec SAR, with nine key areas, was noted.</p> <p>Governors discussed the uploading of the SAR to Ofsted when this was not a requirement. There were no risks in continuing to do this. Ofsted would expect to see the latest SAR before an inspection visit. Staff did not think a visit was likely in 2022/23, although this was not certain.</p> <p>A Governor asked how the college's experience in 2022/23 compared to others. It was agreed that the year had been challenging for the sector. Management were confident in the overall grade of Good. Ofsted had confirmed that the references to Covid were being removed from the inspection handbook.</p> <p>The Chair concluded the discussions by thanking the staff for their presentations and reiterating that the Corporation was required to approve the SAR and QIP.</p> <p>It was resolved that Governors agreed to approve the SAR and QIP.</p>	
24.23	<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING Thursday 26 January 2023 at 1730 hrs.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 2025 hrs</p>	

Item	How governors challenged management
20.23	Asked why the Local Authority had taken £41k of the allocated funding for the Construction Skills Academy.
22.23	Whether the effects of Covid should be disaggregated from the SAR and whether the SAR, or elements of it, should be considered as Outstanding.

Item	Impact of meeting on college
20.23	Approved revised funding for Construction Skills Centre, signing of the funding agreement between college and Walsall Council, continuation of design work for Electric Vehicle Sustainability Centre and continuation of land acquisition.
21.23	Approved the statutory accounts and the Letter of Representation for signature by the Chair once KPMG had finalised their audit work.
23.23	Approved SAR and QIP.