

**WALSALL COLLEGE**  
**MINUTES OF CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Heather Lodge	
	Mary Mahoney	
	Stuart Pedley-Smith	
	Rani Sahota	
	Jat Sharma	Principal
	Ray Simmonds	
	Nelson Tanyanyiwa	
	Graham Ward	
	Garry Welborn	
	Dave Wheeler	Chair
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Richard Brennan	Assistant Principal Curriculum & Quality
	Matthew Brown	Director of Finance & MIS
	Linda Enow	Associate Governor (Observer)
	Edward Ng	Associate Governor (Observer)
	James Norris	Assistant Principal Commercial Development
	Deb Rajania	Director of Operations & Resources
	Wendy Stanger	External Governance Reviewer
	David Turner	Assistant Principal Quality & HE
	Lesley Venables	Head of Governance
	Aisha Khan	Beever & Struthers – External Auditor (minutes 67 to 80)
	Jason Burgess	Beever & Struthers – External Auditor (minutes 67 to 80)
	Rachael Smith	}
	Neil Sambrook	} Heads of Faculty
	Rachel Davies	}
	Geeta Bhucher	College Manager (observer)

**CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS**

67 The Chair welcomed all attendees, Governors who had been involved in the Self-Assessment Review validation process were thanked for their contributions and encouraged others to participate in the next cycle of meetings.

68 The Chair provided a brief update on his attendance at the Association of Colleges' national conference held earlier in the month.

**APOLOGIES**

69 Apologies for absence were received from Paul Averis, Charlotte Bosworth, Tony Sadla, Aysha Rahman Amani, Nick Tomkys and Barbara Van Der Eecken,

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

70 There were no declarations of interest in any specific agenda items.

**CHAIR'S ACTION**

71 The Director of Finance & MIS reported that, following discussion at the Finance & Resources Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023, Chair's Action had been used recently to approve the following items:

- a) £100K for the rebuilding of the external wall at the Portland Street entrance
- b) Submission of a funding bid to Innovate UK Ltd

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2022/2023

- 72 The Director of Finance & MIS reported that the Finance & Resources Committee had reviewed the Financial Statements and had recommended them for approval by the Corporation. The Audit Committee had also scrutinised the Management Letters for the Financial Statements and the Regularity Audit, together with the Audit Committee's Annual Report for 2022/2023.
- 73 The College was still waiting for the reconciliation statements from the ESFA. Delegated authority was sought for the Statements and the Letters of Representation to be signed by the Principal and the Chair once these had been received.
- 74 The pension fund valuation had increased for 2022/2023 with an actuarial gain of £16.7m (£36m gain in 2021/2022).
- 75 The July Management Accounts indicated a deficit of £1.096m, compared to an overall operating surplus under the Financial Reporting Standard 102 of £14.9m.
- 76 Governors also received the annual accounts for the Student Union and for Broadway Training (a subsidiary company that was currently dormant).
- 77 The External Auditor presented the Management Letter on the Financial Statements. The Corporation noted that capital grants had been recognised in the year in which they had been received rather than spread over the lifetime of the asset.
- 78 A number of minor issues needed to be resolved prior to finalising the audit opinions but this work was substantially complete and it was anticipated that these would be unqualified for both the Financial Statements and the Regularity Audit. No significant issues had been raised during the audit process, with a couple of minor adjustments to be made.
- 79 The Audit Committee's Annual Report for 2022/2023 was also presented for information, which summarised audit activities and outcomes during the year.
- 80 **Resolved:**
- 1 That the Financial Statements for the College, Broadway Training and the Student Union for 2022/2023 be approved
  - 2 That the Letters of Representation for the Financial Statements and Regularity Audits be approved and signed by the Chair on behalf of the Corporation
  - 3 That the Chair and the Principal be given delegated authority to sign the Financial Statements for 2022/2023, once the reconciliation statements had been received from the ESFA
  - 4 That copies of the above documents be forwarded to the ESFA by the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

**Aisha Khan and Jason Burgess left the meeting at this point.**

## SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2022/2023 AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023/2024

- 81 The Assistant Principal HE & Student Experience presented for approval the draft SAR for 2022/2023 and QIP for 2023/2024. The former would be uploaded to the Ofsted portal by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.
- 82 Governors received presentations from each of the heads of faculty on their respective areas, with the following points noted:
- 83 **Apprenticeships & Work-Based Learning**
- Overall Grade – Good  
Construction – Requires Improvement
- Some inconsistent delivery particularly in Construction, mainly due to different staff being responsible for Off the Job Training (OTJT)
  - Variance levels of employer engagement for curriculum design and target-setting for apprentices
  - Inconsistent formative assessment in Construction
  - Out of funding apprentices had decreased to 13% but the impact of end point assessment shortages was still being felt
  - Achievement 51.4% (compared to national average of 54%), but this had increased to 55.2% (projected) by R14 submission date
  - Timeliness of progression from pre-employment to sustained employment
  - Good standards of behaviour, attitudes and classroom attendance (87%)
  - Timeliness of submission of work is an issue on some programmes
  - Personal Development graded as Requires Improvement due to low participation rates
  - Inconsistent management and recording of CPD across all areas, together with relatively high levels of staff absence (particularly in Construction)
- 84 A governor asked whether recruiting Construction staff was problematic in the current economic climate. The Head of Faculty confirmed that the College was finding it difficult to compete with industry. Additionally, plumbing and gas qualifications were undertaken for a 4 year period, which meant that retention was critical.
- 85 It was agreed that in view of the inconsistencies highlighted in the report, the Quality Improvement Plan needed to clearly identify how this would be addressed. Governors were advised that management was still working through some long-standing performance issues with a small number of staff.
- 86 The AP(Comm) reported that the College would need to decide at a future point whether it wished to continue with delivering a total of 38 apprenticeship standards to 1500 apprentices. There was a fine balance between maintaining financial viability of such programmes and consistently high quality.

- 87 Governors noted that the focus of the January 2024 staff development day would be standards and expectations of staff.
- 88 The SAR needed to separate out any elements on which the College had full control and those that were driven by external factors (such as the lack of end point assessments).

## STEAM

**Overall grade – Good** (towards the upper end)

- 89
- Planning was not always sufficiently robust and CPD did not align with the College's strategic priorities
  - Staffing (particularly in Engineering) was difficult and tutors had a high workload
  - Some staff found it difficult to deal with student behaviours and felt disempowered and unsupported by management
  - Formative assessment in Science A Level
  - GCSE Functional Skills Maths was 18% below the national average
  - Outcomes on A Levels were poor
  - Attendance in some areas (Construction, Plumbing) was below the target
  - Maturity and resilience levels of students were less than anticipated and mental health issues were increasing each year
  - Lack of industrial placements (non-T Level)
  - Personal Development in plumbing was poor due to staff sickness and shortages
  - Volume and complexity of safeguarding cases
  - Limited community activities
- 90 A governor asked how the department shared good practice with peers and was advised that staff worked together on particular projects. The faculty's teaching practice had been scrutinised and was felt to be ground-breaking in some cases. The community practice of teachers at Green Lane had been transformational and had been used as a model for courses in Creative Arts.
- 91 It was noted that a recurrent theme in the SARs was staff shortages. The Head of Faculty was asked whether his team had thought about different types of delivery to address this issue, such as fewer modules and automating some sections of knowledge. The Corporation was advised that the department had moved away from online learning post COVID-19 as students had not responded well to this method of teaching. This was being reviewed across the faculty to achieve a more standardised approach.
- 92 A governor questioned how successful the College had been in enabling individuals to transition from industry into teaching roles. Management responded that the College held specific recruitment days to attract such staff and emphasised the benefits of the FE sector. The Government had introduced a "Golden Hello" scheme to improve the attractiveness of teaching as a career.
- 93 In response to comments about how to move the department from Good to Outstanding the Head of Faculty suggested that the focus needed to be on Plumbing and Engineering, together with greater consistency of provision and delivery across all areas.

**V6 (Early Years, Health & Social Care, Business & Law, Protected Services, 14-16, Sport, Hospitality & Catering, Hair & Beauty)**

**Overall Grade – Good with some Outstanding features**

94

- Project-based learning
- Better links with Maths & English
- Good external relationships

**Adults, Foundation & Community Learning**

**Overall Grade – Outstanding (curriculum & High Needs)  
Skills Judgement – mostly ‘Reasonable’**

95

**Strengths:**

- curriculum design, holistic delivery
- More programmes offered at Level 2 for adults
- Diverse range of students whose needs are addressed by the curriculum eg asylum seekers
- Adventurous, engaging teaching
- Outcomes have improved, with the exception of Access to HE, where retention has been an issue due to external factors
- Leadership and management is graded as outstanding, following significant changes and reductions in workload and stress levels for staff
- Staff are held to account well, but there is still a need for further work in this area
- Strong community links but challenging relationship with local authority (partly due to their high staff turnover rates)
- Over 400 learners with Educational Health & Care Plans and 5% of students diagnosed with additional learning support needs

**Areas for Improvement:**

- Some inconsistency in behaviours and attitudes, but students have positive relationships with their tutors and learning impacts on their life chances
- Supported internships have increased but students are often offered jobs during their programme and leave the College
- Inconsistency on personal development courses

96

A governor asked whether there was any link between teaching and learning and the 4% reduction in outcomes for the Access to HE programme. The Head of Faculty responded that the data had been analysed by student and each withdrawal had been due to external factors.

97

Management had considered whether it was appropriate to group provision together according to sector skills areas rather than the current arrangements. There had been some minor changes in the qualifications offered by particular faculties as a result of this exercise.

98

Nelson Tanyanyiwa left the meeting at this point and the Head of Governance advised that this meant the remainder of the meeting would be inquorate. Consequently, notes (rather than minutes) would be taken from this point forward. It was agreed that approval of the SAR and QIP would be obtained through a written resolution.

DW/LV

99           Governors were advised that it was likely that the College would be inspected by Ofsted between February 2024 and June 2025. The Corporation was encouraged to read the Education Inspection Framework to familiarise themselves with the requirements.

100          Overall effectiveness had been graded as 'Good' in the SAR. The position within this grade had increased from the lower quartile in 2021/2022 to the upper quartile for 2022/2023). High Needs provision was assessed as 'Outstanding' and safeguarding as 'Effective'. The distance travelled by the College post-pandemic was considerable.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

25<sup>th</sup> January 2024