

Wakefield College Corporation

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 May 2021 (Meeting)

Present:

Yasmin Ayub, Kaitlen Blacker, Claire Corneille, Julie Craig (from minute 8), Dmitry Fedotov, Andrew McConnell (**Chair**), David Powell, Ruth Sacks, Martyn Shaw, Neil Warren, and Sam Wright (**Principal**)

In attendance:

Executive Director of Curriculum, Executive Director of Finance and Resources, Executive Director of HR and OD and the Clerk and Legal Officer (**Clerk**)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

- 1.1. The Chair noted that the Meeting was quorate and declared the Meeting open.
- 1.2. The Chair noted that Ben Porter and Joshua Poole had given their apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1. It was noted that Yasmin Ayub had an interest in Agenda Item 11vi – Staff Pay Award Update but that she would count towards the quorum of the Meeting during the Committee's discussions to which she could contribute. It was noted that no resolutions were to be made in respect of Agenda Item 11vi, in any event. No further declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021

- 3.1. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1. The Clerk noted the following outstanding matters arising noting that the others had been actioned:
 - 4.1.1. On minute 4.1.1, that he had agreed to arrange a Deep Dive Group to discuss the College's staff cost as a percentage of income following the completion of a report on the same by the College's internal auditors.

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources noted that this issue would be addressed at the budget scrutiny meeting of the Finance Deep Dive Group which would be scheduled to take place before the next Board meeting.

- 4.1.2.** On minute 13.1, that the Chair had asked for suggestions as to how the Board might evaluate its performance at the end of meetings. The Chair noted that David Powell had suggested a 'Thinking Round' at the end of each meeting during which each Governor would be asked to make a statement as to how they felt the meeting had gone. The Chair noted that he would be seeking such feedback at the end of the meeting.
- 4.2.** The Chair noted that a report outlining the key risks identified at Audit Committee meetings would be presented to Board going forwards to ensure the Board remained sighted on this.
- 4.3.** Governors asked how well prepared the College was for the delivery of T-Levels. The Executive Director of Curriculum confirmed that the College was very well prepared and outlined the steps that had been taken. Governors were content with her explanation.

5. Student Update

- 5.1.** Kaitlen Blacker noted the following:
 - 5.1.1.** *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*
 - 5.1.2.** That elections for the Students' Union were ongoing.
 - 5.1.3.** That students were creating a mental health awareness video.
 - 5.1.4.** That students had created a newsletter to keep students up to date with Students' Union business.
 - 5.1.5.** That the period poverty campaign was ongoing.

- 5.1.6. That students had been involved in consultations regarding the College refectory and student ideas had been implemented into the renovation plans.
- 5.1.7. That money had been raised for the Red Nose campaign.
- 5.1.8. That students had attended a Climate Change Summit.
- 5.1.9. That students had attended the 'Build Your Future' event hosted by the Council which looked at local and national issues such as COVID-19 and bullying.
- 5.1.10. That students had attended an Emotional Wellbeing Group run by the Council the feedback for which was that it had been useful.

5.2. Governors asked the following questions:

- 5.2.1. Whether any current Students' Union members were standing for election for the following academic year. Kaitlen Blacker replied that some Class Representatives had shown interest in standing but no current Students' Union members.
- 5.2.2. How students were finding self-administering lateral flow tests. Kaitlen Blacker noted that the College had been supporting students with this and that students had been engaging well on the whole.

5.3. Governors thanked Kaitlen Blacker who left the meeting.

6. Chair's Business

6.1. The Chair noted the following:

- 6.1.1. That preparation was underway in respect of the Governor strategy event to be held in July.
- 6.1.2. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*

7. Governance issues

7.1. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:

- 7.1.1. the draft calendar of meetings; and
- 7.1.2. the draft schedule of business (subject to necessary amendments during the academic year),
be approved.

8. Principal's business

8.1. The Principal noted the following:

- 8.1.1. The key measures of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill. The Clerk agreed to circulate a copy of the Bill to the Board.
- 8.1.2. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*
- 8.1.3. The College's COVID-19 statistics including testing and positive cases.
- 8.1.4. That attendance online was approximately 86 per cent, face to face was approximately 88 per cent and overall was down two percentage points on 2019/20 at 86 per cent.
- 8.1.5. That retention for 16-18 was two percentage points down on 2019/20 at 94 per cent while adult retention remained strong at 96 percent. She opined that many withdrawers were likely struggling due to COVID-19 but that these people were being supported by the College to return where possible.
- 8.1.6. That engagement was at approximately 88 per cent which she expected to remain steady for the remainder of the year.
- 8.1.7. That students not likely to achieve were up by approximately two percentage points against 2019/20. She again noted this was, in many cases, due to COVID-19 and these students were being supported as much as possible.

- 8.1.8.** That there had been a lot of recruitment activity to combat the negative effects of COVID-19 on enrolment. She explained that applications were strong, showing an improvement against the previous academic year.
- 8.1.9.** That the College had established a horticulture partnership with the Council to provide real world experience to students.
- 8.1.10.** That the latest staff survey had highlighted significant improvements in staff satisfaction. She noted the areas which required improvement and explained that work was underway to address these issues where possible.
- 8.1.11.** That the College had been shortlisted as a finalist at the Apprenticeship Awards.
- 8.1.12.** *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*
- 8.1.13.** That the College had been approached by the FE Commissioner in respect of a merger which, after some consideration, it had declined.
- 8.2.** Governors asked the following questions and made the following comments:
- 8.2.1.** That the Principal pass her congratulations on to the Executive Director of Employer Engagement and Apprenticeships and her team on behalf of the Board in respect of its shortlisting for the Apprenticeship Awards.
- 8.2.2.** *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*
- 8.2.3.** Whether the earliest that the College could be Ofsted assessed as 'Outstanding' was in five years. The Principal confirmed and noted that Ofsted had declined to expedite this due to the inspection backlog caused by COVID-19. She explained that the College would seek to

continue to strengthen its position and monitor improvements via self-assessment.

8.2.4. What percentage of staff had responded to the staff survey? The Executive Director of HR and OD noted that the return rate was about 51 per cent.

8.2.5. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*

8.2.6. What impact had exam arrangements had on staff and students? The Principal noted that this had resulted in increased pressure on staff and students although this had been an improvement on 2019/20. Governors noted that the College was performing very well considering these difficulties.

8.3. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*

9. Curriculum Update

9.1. The Executive Director of Curriculum gave a presentation noting the stages of curriculum planning including:

9.1.1. The strategic planning events including Executive Team strategic planning workshops, the Governor strategic planning workshop and the strategic planning launch.

9.1.2. Analysis of local market intelligence, liaison with employers, an ongoing reiterative process between herself, employers and teachers, a range of activities which run in parallel to these processes including business cases for new courses to ensure cost viability and relevancy, USPs for each course to promote student employability, the review of plans to determine that priority sector needs are met, the submission of capital bids for necessary resources and business reviews to consolidate.

- 9.1.3.** Monitoring against the curriculum plan.
- 9.2.** The Executive Director of Curriculum noted that a Curriculum Deep Dive Group would be arranged following the meeting to offer a deeper insight into the curriculum planning process.
- 9.3.** Governors asked the following questions:
- 9.3.1.** Whether the White Paper would change the way the College engages with employers given the emphasis on employers expressing their needs. The Executive Director of Curriculum noted that the College already worked closely with employers and other key players and that this would likely enhance this process.
- 9.3.2.** How management determine workforce requirements arising from curriculum changes? The Executive Director HR and OD noted that there was a process of short- and long-term planning in relation to workforce needs after which staffing capacity was compared with curriculum needs which is, again reviewed, based on actual student numbers.
- 9.3.3.** Whether the College sufficiently provides for those students who enrol not for employment but the love of learning. The Executive Director of Curriculum noted that provisions were made for these students while providing them with transferrable skills.
- 9.4.** Ruth Sacks and Martyn Shaw, the Lead Governors for Curriculum, had met with the Executive Director of Curriculum prior to the Meeting and noted the following:
- 9.4.1.** That they were satisfied that there was a robust curriculum planning process in place, that the curriculum was well aligned to the needs of the district and that they had discussed the need to raise the aspirations of the district. The Executive Director of Curriculum noted that she had

plans to incorporate alumni success stories and employer guidance into the curriculum to help influence this. The Principal added that the College was looking at ways of measuring the way it raises aspirations. The Executive Director HR and OD noted the College's adult offer allowed returning learners to improve their lives.

- 9.5.** Governors were assured that the College had a curriculum planning process which was fit for purpose.

10. April Finance Report

This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

11. Briefing Papers

- 11.1.** The Chair asked the following questions and noted the following:

- 11.1.1.** That David Powell had raised questions about the briefing papers via email prior to the meeting which would be answered and circulated to the Board as soon as possible and saved with the minutes of the meeting.
- 11.1.2.** Whether annual Governor safeguarding training had been completed. The Clerk noted that it had not been but that he continued to chase Governors.

- 11.2.** IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the briefing papers be noted.

12. Review of effectiveness of the meeting and identification of emerging risks

- 12.1.** The Chair initiated the 'Thinking Round' as mentioned at minute 4.1.2. Governors made the following comments:

- 12.1.1.** That they had found the skills audit training helpful to understanding Board papers which enabled more effective challenge.
- 12.1.2.** That there had been good support and challenge during the Meeting.

12.1.3. That the papers had been easily accessible which allowed for smooth meetings. The Chair noted that the Clerk was looking into online Board paper systems.

12.1.4. That skills audit training sessions should be opened to all governors.

12.2. The Chair thanked Governors for their contributions and closed the Meeting.

Signed Date.....

Actions

No.	Minute	Details	Deadline	Responsibility
1.	4.1.1	It was agreed that the staff cost ratio issue would be discussed at the budget scrutiny meeting of the Finance Deep Dive Group.	Prior to the Board meeting of 6 July 2021	Executive Director of Finance and Resources
2.	8.1.1	The Clerk agreed to circulate a copy of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill to the Board.	Prior to the Board meeting of 6 July 2021	The Clerk
3.	<i>Please see the confidential minutes.</i>			
4.	9.2	It was agreed that a Curriculum Deep Dive Group would be arranged to consider the curriculum planning process.	Prior to the Board meeting of 6 July 2021	The Executive Director of Curriculum

5.	11.1.2	The Clerk agreed to chase Governors to complete their safeguarding training.	ASAP	The Clerk
6.	12.1.4	Governors asked that skills audit training sessions be opened to all governors.	ASAP	The Clerk