

**Minutes of the Corporation
held on Thursday 08 July 2021 at 8.05 am
By Microsoft Teams**

Birmingham Metropolitan College

Present	Apologies
Sir Dexter Hutt (DH)	Christine Tolley (CT)
Pat Carvalho (PC)	
Hilary Smyth-Allen (HSA)	
Prof. Prue Huddleston (PH) <i>until 9.45 am</i>	
Veronica Docherty (VD)	
Helen Miles (HM)	
Angela Myers (AM)	
Alaric Rae (AR)	
Tracey Pearce (TP)	
Iqbal Mohammed (IM)	
Asha Devi (AD)	
Natalie Alleyne (NA)	
Peter Croom (PCR)	
Naghma Nadiri (NN)	
In attendance	
Stephen Belling (SB)	
Simon Eaton (SE)	
Robin Landman (RL) <i>for Item 11</i>	
Stella Mbubaegbu (SM) <i>for Item 11</i>	
Hilary Barber (Clerk)	

Reference	Agenda item
2	Apologies
	Apologies were received from Christine Tolley.
2	Declarations of Interest
	No declarations were received in addition to those contained in the College's Register of Interests.
3 (i)	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 May 2021
	The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 May 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record subject to amending the wording in Item 6 from lawyers "suggested" to lawyers "advised". IT WAS RESOLVED THAT: C21: 29

	Subject to the amendment noted above, the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 May 2021 be approved.
3	Matters Arising and Action Log
	<p>There were no matters arising.</p> <p>Action Log SB confirmed that all items detailed are in hand.</p>
4	Principal's Report
	<p>PC presented the Principal's report highlighting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Achievement levels, especially those for the 16-18 cohort, are encouraging with good progress being made for high grades. ▪ For 19+ learners there is considerable improvement, but more work is needed to match the sector averages. The need to identify the impact of Covid on functional skills where there was no Teacher Assessment was to be noted. ▪ Great work is being undertaken by students with significant competition wins giving a great boost to morale around the college. ▪ The Director of Employer Engagement, Suzie Branch-Haddow attended the highly successful International Conference of Employer Engagement in Education recently with PH. <i>(PH noted later in the meeting that SBH made a very well-received presentation at the conference on the work of BMet showcasing that it is becoming a leader in the field.)</i> ▪ The importance of scrutinising the proposed budget in the context of the college's strategic priorities to grow income in liaison with the WMCA and BCC is to be noted. Potential provision in partnership with BCC addresses the 14-19 group of learners and particularly NEETs. PC is meeting with these groups and is also a member of the AOC SEND committee. PC is also setting up meetings with local MPs. ▪ The most significant risk to the college relates to AEB provision. There are however, real opportunities for working with the leadership of the Commonwealth Games who are starting to see BMet as a preferred provider with training being agreed around security and training the trainers. ▪ The changes to the tutorial system are designed to get to the heart of understanding learners and developing all their skills. ASQD will follow this up as part of a Deep Dive in the autumn term. ▪ It is too early to offer much comment on Teaching and Learning. However, outcomes from external audit bodies who have sampled the quality of provision are very positive with a high standard of work and achievement being noted. <p>DH thanked PC for her first report to the Board noting how quickly and deeply she had established her leadership.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT: C21: 30</p> <p>The Principal's report be noted.</p>
5	Key Performance Indicators
	<p>PC introduced the KPI report and advised:</p> <p>The KPIs remained mostly unchanged from the last report.</p> <p>The current focus is on applications and acceptances which are looking positive. Interviews are taking place with currently 230 more to be done.</p> <p>The work of the marketing, student engagement and curriculum teams is to be recognised for helping to achieve the positive number of applications.</p> <p>Most areas of recruitment are generally good but some challenges with Construction and Engineering are to be noted. Work is being done to increase the numbers in these areas.</p>

	<p>There will be little change to proposed KPIs for the next academic year as they are very clear. PC will however meet with SLT to review how the KPIs support the college’s strategic priorities and have a clear focus on income growth. The outcomes of these discussions will be reported to the Board in September.</p> <p>Targets linked to the KPIs can be found on the final page of the report but if appropriate following the work with SLT, will be revised for the September meeting of the Corporation.</p> <p>Governors’ Questions and Observations</p> <p>1. <i>It is good to see the number of students who would recommend the college. Is there a benchmark for this percentage across other colleges? If not, has the college considered the use of the Net Promotor Score methodology?</i>” (AR)</p> <p>PC advised that the current target is college based but will investigate whether the AOC publish a sector norm and if the government still publish the National Survey.</p> <p>2. <i>“What staff ratio is deemed reasonable?” (HSA)</i></p> <p>PC advised that the FE Commission recommendation of no more than 65% is more realistic than 62% if the college is to support students properly (including disadvantaged students for whom there is no longer dedicated funding) in their journey of learning right through to their destinations. A low staff ratio would not facilitate this support.</p> <p>3. <i>“It will be important for Governors to understand the new narrative behind any revised KPI’s to determine how expectations need to be realigned” (HSA)</i></p> <p>PC advised that there will be nuanced changes which will be discussed with the Finance Committee. The key point to be noted is that the budget is in line with delivery plans.</p> <p>4. <i>It is right to monitor targets with the WMCA and important to also recognise that significant housing developments are taking place in the east part of the city and therefore potentially a greater student population which will need to be served by the college. (AD)</i></p> <p>DH thanked PC for the report.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT: C21: 31</p> <p>The KPI Progress Report be noted.</p>
6	<p>Report from ASQD Committee</p>
	<p>To complement the ASQD update report, PH provided the assurances and identified points for ongoing consideration as set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The support of Adult Learners who have been disadvantaged during Covid will need to be a priority. ▪ The importance of actively engaging new students both before, and as they start in September. ▪ Pleasing progress is to be noted regarding the focus on English and Maths within the Quality Improvement Plan across all areas. ▪ A new E-Portfolio process to track the progress of apprentices more effectively is being used. ▪ All staff are being encouraged to achieve the MIE certification. ▪ In the Student Survey 97% of respondents agreed that teaching is good. The survey shows positive increases to students’ perception of behaviour and their sense of feeling safe. This is particularly pleasing given the challenges of the pandemic. ▪ Awarding Bodies are pleased with performance forecasts. Thanks must go to the staff for all their hard work.

	<p>VD advised that AM and herself had visited the three colleges prior to the FE Commissioners' visit. Outstanding work was observed in the A level centre at Sutton Coldfield, at James Watt and Matthew Boulton. At James Watt adult students on short courses commented on the challenges of returning to learning and suggested the need for more flexibility within the timescales. This needs to be reported to the WMCA.</p> <p>AM advised that she has been very impressed with the support given to students throughout Covid and stressed the need to involve students in group activities from the start of term as part of setting the culture.</p> <p>DH thanked PH and the committee members for their very effective work throughout the year.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT: C21: 32</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report be approved. b) Following a review of the ASQD Terms of Reference they continue to be used with no amendments.
7	Report from Audit Committee
	<p>To complement the Audit Committee Update report HM advised that in addition to the regular reviews undertaken by the Committee, the internal and external audit reports had been reviewed, all of which gave positive assurances with recommendations either being completed or underway.</p> <p>HM highlighted the following key points/ issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SE has introduced a summary page to the Risk Register which would assist with the monitoring process. ▪ In the new academic year more training is needed to provide practical guidance to key personnel to identify the college's appetite to risk. ▪ Given the progress that has been made by the college during the last year, SE and SB have been tasked with assessing what level of internal audit is required moving forward. <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT: C21: 34</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Audit Update report be noted. b) Following a review of the Audit Committee Terms of Reference, they continue to be used with no amendments.
8	Report from Finance Committee
	<p>To complement the Finance Update report HSA advised that the committee had considered full reports relating to the matters noted below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Award of catering contract to Aramark following a full tender process. 2) Permitted 12-month extension of cleaning contract to Solo. 3) Permitted 12-month extension of maintenance contract to CBRE. 4) Approval of Ethnicity Pay Gap Report. 5) Approval of Supply Chain Policy. 6) Noting the proposed Partner Contracts for the next academic year and associated rationale for entering into them. 7) Transfer of CoSe Provision to Newcastle College Group in accordance with the Heads of Terms approved by Corporation on 13th May. 8) Approval of updated Terms of Reference. 9) Approval of proposed Sustainability strategy. <p>AD reported on the discussion that had taken place around the proposed Sustainability Strategy Plan which includes recommendations for future actions.</p>

	<p>Questions and Observations by Governors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It would be good to consider the sustainability strategy as part of a future planning session with the Board. (DH) 2. <i>“Should each college have electric charging points?” (AM)</i> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>C21: 35 A 5 year contract should be entered into with Aramark.</p> <p>C21: 36 The cleaning contract with Solo be extended for a further 12 months.</p> <p>C21: 37 The maintenance contract with CBRE be extended for a further 12 months.</p> <p>21: 38 The Ethnicity Pay Gap report be approved.</p> <p>C21:39 The Supply Chain Policy for 2021- 2022 be approved.</p> <p>C 21:40 The proposed partner contracts for 2021-2022 be noted and approved.</p> <p>C21 :41 The Transfer of Provision at CoSe in accordance with the Heads of terms approved on 13th be approved.</p> <p>C 21: 42 Following a review of the Terms of Reference the minimum number of Committee members be changed from 4 to 3.</p> <p>C21:43 The proposed Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan commended to Corporation be approved.</p> <p>C21:43 Corporation note a review and signing of the Deed of Amendment with Lloyds Bank by HS and DH took place in accordance with the approval provided on 13th May 2021.</p>
9	2021-2022 Budget
	<p>SE referred to the budgeting process undertaken with the Finance Committee and work to ensure compliance with the Bank Covenants.</p> <p>A working budget has been produced following 3 rounds of business planning with each college department.</p> <p>Key points to be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The working budget shows a viable EBITDA position. ▪ Income for 16-18 provision will be significantly lower this year due to lagged funding and the divestment of CoSe which had a high number of 16-18 learners. ▪ There will be a focus on increasing AEB numbers during the coming year. ▪ The cost of staffing is greater this year as during the current year there have been less costs incurred by employing Associate Lecturers.

- Pension figures are based on the latest valuations and could change.
- Non-pay costs are higher as more delivery will take place on site compared to this year.
- KPIs are based on the current proposed budget.
- The cash position in the current year is good and therefore the starting position at the start of next month will be higher. It is anticipated that the college will have at least £3.5m in cash when the bank covenants are measured at the end of next year's budget.
- Pipeline income not included in the budget:
 - Additional income from the Commonwealth Games programme for Stewarding (£150k).
 - Community Renewal Fund Bid (£60k).
 - 9 x Baxi Apprenticeships (£100k).
- 15 x Moy Park and Bakkavor Food and Drink Apprenticeships (£150k+)
- Key risks to be noted
 - Lower than desired AEB funding levels .
 - Number of 16-18 applications (current indications are however good)

Governors Questions and Observations

1. "How confident are we that the college can achieve the high targets for AEB provision?" (AR)

PC advised we are tentatively confident. Targets are higher for next year because it is anticipated delivery will be more effective than last year when two terms were affected by Covid. Additional provision is also anticipated around the Commonwealth Games.

2. "Do restructuring references relate to vacant posts?" (AR)

SE confirmed that, with the exception of two specific and small areas, this was the case.

3. It is important that the Board feel comfortable with the budget plan, particularly in the light of changes in leadership which will inevitably promote a different "roadmap". Finance Committee are requesting further delegation of authority to oversee conversion of the Working Budget into a final budget for 2021- 2022. (HSA)

4. "What resources are needed to facilitate planned improvements to the achievement of AEB targets?" (DH)

PC advised that there are genuine and definite opportunities to ensure the college meets its AEB targets. These include those relating to the Commonwealth Games and Sector Based Work Academies. (SWAPs). PC noted also the impact of changes to the way Government is funding Level 3 courses

5. Whilst it is right to pursue current initiatives, it is important to note many of them are "one offs" and do not provide a long-term strategy. The college needs to ensure it is developing the capacity for it to resource innovation and ongoing quality improvement. (HSA)


PC advised that the budget looks to retain headroom for the delivery of innovative plans and ensure there is capacity to cope with higher numbers in a sustainable way. Discussions continue with SLT around what provision the college should offer and how this meets the needs of the region. The college should pursue Health Sciences more strongly. The main aim is to develop a structure that ensures maximum funding on behalf of adults and young people in a long term, sustainable way.

The apprenticeship programme is encouraging as the college attracts new employers.

	<p>SE advised that the college had also successfully acquired the apprenticeship training programme with Moy Park in a tender exercise involving strong competition.</p> <p>DH thanked PC, SE and the team for their rigorous work.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>C21: 44 The Working Budget and the assumptions it is based on be noted.</p> <p>C 21:45 Delegated authority be given to the Finance Committee to approve the final version of the 2021-2022 budget based on the Working Budget and associated assumptions noted in resolution C21:44.</p>
11	Equality Diversity and Inclusion Development
	<p>DH welcomed Robin Landman and Stella Mbubaegbu to the meeting.</p> <p>SB referred to the Equality Diversity, Inclusion and Development report and its fit with the college’s journey to outstanding and work with the Student Commission on Racial Justice. Affiliation and work with the Black Leadership FE Group’s programme offered an opportunity to obtain practical tools to support meaningful progress and reduce the risk of simple box ticking exercises.</p> <p>RL and SM thanked the Board for the opportunity to present their work and offerings to the Corporation and explained their FE backgrounds; their current voluntary roles within the Black Leadership FE Group (“BFELG”) and explained how they were driven to make a difference both nationally and locally. RL noted that the programme was thought to be specifically appropriate to BMet as a strategic college in a strategic city.</p> <p>RM explained the benefits of BFELG’s 10-point programme to a college, i.e. the autonomy to define the start and end points; and assistance provided through the affiliation process.</p> <p>RM detailed the process of two stage questions that an organisation will ask of itself at a pace at which it is comfortable. The first stage questions are wider in scope with the second stage questions provoking a deeper and more probing interrogation of practice. These questions are linked to the four categories of Curriculum, Culture, Climate and Communication.</p> <p>RL advised that there is a compulsory professional development part of the affiliation process which involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) One day Induction training for approximately 15 delegates chosen by the college including the CEO and Chair of the Board. b) One day Train the Trainer tuition for 6 delegates. c) One of those 6 delegates being nominated to a user group to influence implementation of the plan across the sector. <p>SM advised that the rationale is to provide skills base training and build capacity. The nominee should be a senior member of staff.</p> <p>Governors’ Questions and Observations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The two stage questions process seems to help a college map its environment at its own pace and provide a slow but safe base to avoid it becoming a tick box exercise.” (DH)</i> 2. <i>This is an impressive presentation on an important topic. Could it be the subject of a full Board Deep Dive. ” (VD)</i>

	<p>3. Thanks conveyed for addressing an important issue. How do you propose to influence the curriculum when its compiled nationally?" (IM)</p> <p>SM agreed there was no quick fix. BFELG is working with Awarding Bodies at a strategic level with the aim of securing a broad, radical and ambitious review which would include technical and vocational provision. SM suggested there exists a huge understanding and willingness to bring change.</p> <p>4. "Surveys show a disheartening perspective from BAME students and should be required reading for the Board and teaching/front line staff to inform their understanding of this crucial issue." (IM)</p> <p>5. Thanks conveyed for attending the meeting and the hard work undertaken by BFELG. Feedback from students arising from the college's RRS (Ready Respectful Safe) Culture Survey suggest that some do not feel confident to challenge inappropriate attitudes. It was to be noted that BFELG suggest that a Link Governor for Equality and Diversity should be appointed (NA)</p> <p>DH thanked RL and SM warmly for attending the meeting and making the presentation. RL and SM left the meeting at 9.56 am.</p> <p>Further Observations</p> <p>6. "Should the college Affiliate to BFELG?" (DH)</p> <p>7. A Deep Dive by the Board should be planned (PC)</p> <p>8. Consideration should be given to the appointment of a link Governor as part of an overarching plan arising from any work with BFELG. (PC)</p> <p>9. It is important that SLT and the Board are seen by staff to agree about the way forward and take a lead. (PC)</p> <p>10. The diversity of Birmingham and the importance of BMet, as a pre-eminent city college, means that BMet should be playing a leading role pursuing this agenda and should be creating a fast track to ensure that is the case. (AR)</p> <p>11. Time is of the essence. (HM)</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT: C21: 46 The college should affiliate to the Black Leadership FE Group and develop a plan for taking this work forward.</p>
10	Report from Governance and Search Committee
	<p>To complement the Governance and Search Committee Report, SB referred to the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Board confirm that the Remuneration Committee will comprise the Chairs and Vice Chairs of each committee. ▪ A core membership of the Governance and Search committee from independent governors be appointed with the ability for the committee to coopt others to assist with specific tasks on an as needs basis. ▪ Governors hold two planning and strategic days in a calendar year, one in October and one in May. ▪ The quorum for the Terms of Reference for the Governance and Search committee shall be three.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A calendar of meetings for 2021- 2022 be approved with meetings becoming a blend of face to face and virtual as deemed appropriate during the year. <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>C21: 47</p> <p>The Remuneration Committee be comprised of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of each committee.</p> <p>C 21:48</p> <p>A core membership of the Governance and Search committee be formed and the committee have the ability to co-opt others to assist with specific tasks on an as needs basis.</p> <p>C 21: 49</p> <p>Governors hold two planning and strategic days in a calendar year, one in October and one in May.</p> <p>C 21: 50</p> <p>The Governance and Search Committee Terms of Reference be confirmed with the quorum being three.</p> <p>C 21:51</p> <p>The calendar of meetings for 2021- 2022 be approved with meetings becoming a blend of face to face and virtual as deemed appropriate during the year.</p>
12	Any other Business
	<p>DH noted that this would be TP’s last meeting as staff representative and thanked her for her contributions. TP replied that it had been an honour and that she would continue to support the Board in any way possible.</p> <p>DH also warmly thanked VD as the longest serving member on the Board for her amazing service to BMet over 11 years and her invaluable contributions during that time.</p> <p>VD responded that it had been a real privilege and she had felt part of a family. VD had enjoyed many visits to the colleges during which she had been inspired by students and staff, had attended many celebrations, met with Ofsted and FE Commissioners. She leaves confident that the college is in good hands and will be successful under the leadership of PC and her team.</p> <p>DH thanked everyone for their support during a strange year and wished everyone a good summer.</p> <p>There being no other business the meeting was closed at 10.18 am.</p>

Signed: 

Chair: Dexter Hutt