

Minutes of the Corporation
held on Thursday 12th May 2022 at 8.00 am
By Microsoft Teams

Birmingham Metropolitan College

Present	Apologies
Sir Dexter Hutt (DH)	Sharon Isaacs (SI)
Prof. Prue Huddleston (PH)	Iqbal Mohammed (IM)
Hilary Smyth-Allen (HSA)	Kashema Wray (KW)
Helen Miles (HM)	Anjali Singh (AS)
Pat Carvalho (PC)	Leah AliHussain (LA)
Angela Myers (AM)	
Alaric Rae (AR)	
Peter Croom (PCR) (Until 9.00 am)	
Natalie Alleyne (NA)	
Gobinder Gill (GG)	
Christine Tolley (CT)	
Afzal Hussain (AH)	
In attendance	
Stephen Belling (SB)	
Simon Eaton (SE)	
Rachel Jones (RJ)	

Reference	Agenda item
	Welcome
	DH welcomed all present to the meeting
	Apologies
	Apologies were received from SI, IM, KW, LH and AS.
	Declarations of Interest
	No other declarations were received in addition to those contained in the College's Register of Interests.
Item 1.1	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17th March 2022
	The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 th March were reviewed.

Reference	Agenda item
	<p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT: C21/22: 36</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17th March 2022 be approved.</p>
Item 1.2	Matters Arising and Action Log
	<p>There were no matters arising.</p> <p>Progress of matters itemised in the Action Log was noted.</p>
Item 2	Principal's Briefing
	<p>PC referred to the Principal's Briefing in the Corporation Board Pack and emphasised the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues continued to arise from courses being offered by DWP to potential learners with only 10% attending because of the lack of mandate to compel attendance. • The West Midlands College Group is responding to a request from WMCA to recommend a base rate increase in funding to address inflation and actual costs involved in delivery. • Issues are being raised around funding for ESOL and ESOL – vocation. The Combined Authority policy is that it should be limited to ESOL delivery allocated in 21/22 only and planned delivery of ESOL vocational is to be subsumed within this allocation and not planned over and above this allocation. This is thought to be unfair and is being challenged by other colleges in the region. • Curriculum teams are being asked to support learners in whatever way possible to ensure achievements are secured. Predictive grades will be available at the end of May. • Real progress has been made in respect of Work Real, the Community Disability Games and Employers live briefs. The ambition is to achieve 90% of target. • Ongoing meetings with staff teams have been good and the focus of discussion has been the connection with students. The Student conference and feedback from Tutorial Groups is that the ability to have discussions with teaching staff is of incredible value and much appreciated by learners. The Tutorial Process will be reviewed to take account of this feedback. <p>Governors Observations and Questions</p> <p>1. What support is provided to help staff engage with the Tutorial process? (PH)</p> <p>PC advised that NA's role is to support staff and help them engage with the Tutorial process.</p> <p>2. Is the AEB position unique to BMet or is it happening with other providers as well? (AH)</p> <p>PC advised that other colleges in the region are having the same experience.</p> <p>3. How much is there a reliance on relationship with DWP regarding future targets and what will be different moving forward? (AH)</p> <p>PC advised that DWP strategy changed after Covid and focussed on getting people straight into employment and engaged in DWP programmes not those offered by FE Colleges. Budget planning will take account of this change, reduce future expectations, and therefore remove</p>

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	<p>the pressure to develop SWAPS (Sector Based Work Academy Programmes) which are not the easiest way to secure stability.</p> <p>4. Application figures to higher education at Masters Level have reduced as more graduates are going straight into employment. (AR)</p> <p>5. What are staff feeling now in relation to the Ofsted inspection DH? PC advised that staff appeared to sense that things are being done, concerns are being identified and addressed. The Apprenticeship team have asked what more needs to be done and how they might support other areas. A key issue is ensuring that all the support and resource on offer is being taken up and used. GG observed that year on year improvement can be noted but it is important to guard against immunity to the Ofsted Grading.</p> <p>6. What is the form of loss regarding the reduction in Rail provision (AR) PC advised that it was a significant loss because it attracted a higher rate of funding. To address the loss, rail is no longer being classified as a significant growth area and the strategy is to maintain current levels rather than pursue significant growth. This is significant because it is engineering and generates a higher amount of income.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>C21/22: 37</p> <p>The contents of the Principal's report be noted.</p>
Item 4	KPI Progress Report
	<p>SE presented the KPI report in the Board Pack and emphasised the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding KPI 1.1 the number of 16- 18 enrolments for 2021/2022 exceeded target. • Regarding KPI 2.1 The Ofsted inspection result means that the KPI will not change. • Regarding KPI 2.6 Student attendance is 3% below target and has been a key focus area. • Regarding KPI 3.3 Apprenticeship starts have exceeded target. A significant number of recruitments have been achieved in relation to Food and Drink, Dental and Pharmacy. This forms a good foundation for further growth next year. • Regarding KPI 4 .4 and 4.5 (Absence and Voluntary turnover) Staff turnover is 2.8 % higher than target and sickness absence is 0.4 % higher than target. Analysis indicates sickness absence relates to mental health that is not necessarily work related. <p>Governors' Questions and Observations.</p> <p>1. What initiatives are in place to support mental health provision? (CT) SE advised the college has an occupational health service provider and further initiatives are being put in place to support staff.</p> <p>2. Is there any indication of reason/ pattern for Staff Turnover? (CT)</p>

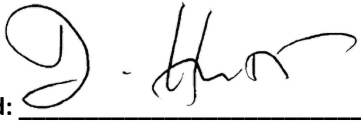
Reference	Agenda item
	<p>SE advised that turnover is believed to have been affected by staff reviewing their position in the light of Covid and because of current salary levels.</p> <p>3. What is the position with Covid now? (AM)</p> <p>SE advised that the current position appears to be easier and the number of reported infections is relatively low.</p> <p>4. What are we forecasting on pay and non- pay requirements? (PCR)</p> <p>SE advised that planning is taking seeking to take account of inflationary requirements and pay expectations. Energy prices are protected until April 2023.</p> <p>5. Is the development of Sector Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPS) cost effective? (HSA)</p> <p>PC advised that concerns around the cost effectiveness of SWAPS was being reviewed in collaboration with other regional colleges and proposals to make them viable on a sustainable basis were being developed for consideration by the WMCA.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT: C21/22:38</p> <p>The contents of the KPI report be noted.</p>
Item 4	Finance Report
	<p>SE presented the Financial Update Report in the Board Pack and emphasised the following with regard to the March Management Accounts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current challenges are around income reduction because of lower than anticipated AEB delivery and “catch up” funding for 16-18 – year old learners. • Budget control measures are being deployed to offset the reduction in income as much as possible. • An application for Covid Relief is being sought from the West Midlands Combined Authority in respect of planned and delivered ‘employment programmes’ with small numbers from September to April 2022. <p>With regard to the budget process SE advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A first draft of budget had been produced. • Additional income will be factored in to take account of the increase in 16-18 – year old enrolment figures in this academic year. • Staffing levels will need to take account of an anticipated increase in delivery needs and national staff ratios. • Discussions are being held with the ESFA to review how the loan repayment schedule might be adjusted to help the college respond to local need.

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	<p>Governors Observations and Questions</p> <p>1. Does the planning take account of anticipated demographic growth and development in respect of key strategic areas? (AR)</p> <p>SE advised that an analysis of demographic growth and key development areas was being factored into business planning and budgeting.</p> <p>2. What sort of budget will be proposed to Corporation? (AH)</p> <p>SE confirmed that a surplus budget would be presented to Corporation for approval.</p> <p>3. What are the key risks and assumptions/stress tests being used to inform the budget? (AH)</p> <p>SE advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels informing the Bank Covenants were set at too high a level. • Historically the college has provided learning to a higher number of 16- 18-year-old learners. Demographic growth and increase in likely number of 16- 18-year-old learners over the next 3- 5 years was a reasonable assumption. • There is no cap on allocations in respect of apprenticeships and so this is another area where development is viable. • Future staff recruitment can be postponed until student enrolment is complete and there is further clarity on levels of demand. <p>4. On what basis is the rescheduling of the ESFA loan repayments being made? (HSA)</p> <p>PC advised that the cost of living was the main driver for requesting the repayment.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>C21/27:39</p> <p>The content of the Management Accounts and progress in respect of budgeting planning be noted.</p>
Item 8	Link Governor Updates
	<p>AM advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent work is being done with the college’s learning coaches and learning Conversation training is going well. • Update conversations had taken place with the Director of Student Experience and Designated Safeguarding Lead. • The Student Conference had been a good development, involved good presentations from the Charlie Waller Trust and other activities. It would be good to increase attendance at future conferences. <p>HM advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours of James Watt and Sutton had been impressive, energising and delightful.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities were impressive, comprehensive and in good working order; the general environment including public spaces and corridors felt good. • Students interacted well and were able to share their experiences of the college and fact that some travelled from as far away as Devon for their vocational training. • Student appeared engaged with their learning, students felt engaged and there was a nice feel to the environment in corridors: lots of visual engagement. • Staff were fully engaged in their work and demonstrated a real care for their students. <p>AR advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilities at James Watt and Sutton were first class. • It is important that the college is optimising its promotion of the good work that is being done; particularly on its website as much innovative work is being done such as the construction ground works in engineering. • Teaching staff were impressive, and learners appeared fully engaged. • The importance of well- being was a recurring theme for staff and students and likely to have an impact on attendance rates and student experience. There is clearly a distinction between clinical need which the college cannot address and matters which do not require professional assistance. • The catering provision at James Watt is particularly important as there are no local facilities close to campus. <p>DH advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings were held on a fortnightly basis with the Principal to review general progress. • Regular email communication took place with members of the Executive Team. • A meeting had been attended with the Education and Skills Funding Agency and members of the Executive Team. • A meeting had taken place with Barclays Bank to review the college’s financial position and the importance of setting a surplus budget for 2022- 2023 and having the flexibility to cut costs if necessary. • A follow up meeting with the Education and Training Foundation had taken place to review the impact of the External Governance Review conducted by Robin Newton Syms. • 3 Equal- Tea and Talk sessions had been attended where students had the opportunity to talk about race, why they had chosen BMet and their aspirations for the future. The sessions. It was an opportunity to hear direct, teaching staff being praised for their work and stories of how students were getting genuine support and felt the college made a positive impact on their lives.

Reference	Agenda item
Item 6	Digital Strategy
	<p>RJ gave a presentation to the Corporation which supplemented the Digital Strategy Review report in the Board Pack and summarised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rationale for developing the strategy and research which had informed it. • The technological relevance to curriculum areas and high-level skills. • The use of projects to develop capacity and skills needed by the college and learners. • The Importance of resilience and adaptability and dealing with uncertainty. • The direction of travel for learners. • The connectivity between programmes to optimise functionality and experience. <p>Governors’ Observations and Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Good to see this being brought to the forefront: How does the college address the historic reluctance to use time on something that is deemed valuable but not necessarily contributing toward academic results; how is the digital strategy embedded with the requisite degree of urgency? (HSA)</i> <p>RJ advised the need to use digital skills has to be embedded in curriculum content and not feel like an additional option. That will be a challenge and take time to implement. The model being adopted by the college is one used by Grimsby College working in collaboration with JISC and took three years to secure the requisite degree of engagement. There is a need to ensure digital skills development is embedded in curriculum and isn’t perceived as an optional addition.</p> 2. Digital is a base requirement and gate way to a whole range of jobs: Digital poverty is very real; how we address it for students is key (AH) 3. It is important that the pace of change is factored into the strategy. Business as usual is not an acceptable pace. Good links with employers are essential and the strategy needs to be a high priority for the college to stay at the forefront of developments (AH) 4. It is important that the college continues to work with employers to ensure effective engagement with the strategy. (PH) 5. It should be noted that 1in 5 homes in the City do not have access to the internet and for many, it is cost prohibitive. (NA) <p>RJ advised that during Covid the college’s provision of lap tops went from 60 to over 1000.</p> <p>The current methodology used to make financial assessments refers to availability for anyone earning less than 30K per annum.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT: C21/22: 40</p> <p>The Digital Strategy be approved.</p>
Item 7	Birmingham Race Impact Group Race Youth Summit–FE Mini Summit

Reference	Agenda item
	<p>PC presented the Birmingham Race Impact Group (BRIG) Update report and advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRIG is a Birmingham wide initiative for the city to become an anti- racist city. • BMet is co – hosting an FE Summit on 24th May and Governors are welcome to attend. • Leaders Unlocked are assisting with the FE summit which will result in a series of invitations for organisations, including the college, to make public commitments. <p>IT WAS RESOLVED C21/22: 41 The college’s involvement in BRIG and the FE Summit be noted.</p>
Item 8	Any Other Business
	<p>19 May Strategy Day</p> <p>SB advised that a briefing paper was to be issued in advance of the day which would be based at Matthew Boulton College and involve; an assessment of a current position statement; consideration of the 2022- 30 Strategic Plan and; review of resources to ensure optimisation of effective governance.</p> <p>There being no other business the meeting concluded at 10.00 am</p>

Signed: 

Chair: Dexter Hutt