

**Minutes of the Corporation Strategy Day
held on Thursday 24th October 2024 at
Matthew Boulton Campus
Birmingham Metropolitan College**

Present	Apologies
Sir Dexter Hutt (DH)	Simisio Ndlovu (SN)
Prof. Prue Huddleston (PH)	Helen Miles (HM)
Peter Croom (PCR) (am)	
Angela Myers (AM)	
Alaric Rae (AR)	
Afzal Hussain (AH)	
Roy Priest (RP)	
Gary Turton (GT) (am)	
Sharon Isaacs(SI)	
Lorain Morrison (LM)	
Peter Morrison (PM)	
Simon Harris (SH)	
Pat Carvalho (PC)	
David Brooks (DB)	
Glenice Alison (GA)	
Brandon Chu (BC)	
Samir Aljaff (SA)	
In attendance	
Catherine Sezen (CS)(Association of Colleges)	
Helene Dearn (HD (West Midlands Combined Authority)	
Peter Marsh (PM) (Peter Marsh Consulting Ltd) (pm)	
Matt Elliot (ME)(Peter Marsh Consulting Ltd) (pm)	
Stephen Belling (SB)	
Anna Jackson (AJ)	
Fiona Yardley (FY)	
Alison Jones(pm)	
Kay Burton Williams (pm)	
Zoe Lee(pm)	
Suzie Branch- Haddow(pm)	
Ben Gamble (pm)	
Melanie Brittain (pm)	
Randeep Sami (RS) (pm)	
Jan Myatt (JM) (pm)	
Dan Mooney (DM) (pm)	
Kathleen Rennie (KR) (pm)	

1	Campus Visits
	Governors visited each campus to meet with students. Click here to see note of feedback from the campus visits
2	Strategic Stock Take

SBH facilitated the consideration of recent strategic developments identified by the Association of Colleges (AoC) with CS and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) with HD, following the election of a new Government.

HD explained her background and journey to being WMCA's Director for Employment Skills, Health and Services

CS explained her background and journey to being the AoC's Director of policy.

Key points made: -

- WMCA is seeking to have greater involvement in 16- 18 education provision and conversations about more devolved powers are taking place with Central Government.
- The AoC's waiting to see what roles both the Further Education Sector and Combined Authorities will have in relation to Skills England.
- WMCA is the combined authorities' representative on the cross-sector steering group led by Jaqui Smith.
- 800 people applied to be on the Board of Skills England suggesting that it is of major interest and significance.
- Curriculum reforms are expected to ensure there are qualifications available in the sectors where they are needed.
- It is hoped there will be a review of T- levels and apprenticeships that takes account of the realities and challenges of finding employers able to make the necessary commitment to these qualifications being viable and effective.
- The Rapid Review is only reviewing Level 3 qualifications and does not include T- levels.
- It is important that the 218 Further Education colleges contribute to the debate to ensure the sector's voice is heard alongside the voice of schools and Multi Academy Trusts.
- The review is expected to run beyond December 2024.
- Civil Servants can be seen adjusting to policies of the new government.
- The AoC is meeting with representatives from the FE Sector to review Special Educational Needs requirements (SEN) and ensure the focus goes beyond the requirements of schools. It has been advised by Government that the funding envelope in this area is tight.

Governors Questions and Observations

1. *Is there any thought of the Credit Framework returning? (AM)*

CS advised that it is being considered in relation to English and maths and adult provision.

2. *Is it likely that an effective link between academic and vocational requirements will be made?(PH)*

CS advised that questions are being considered about how this link can be made.

3. What is the AoC’s ask in respect of T- levels? (AR)

CS advised the AoC’s thinking is that T- levels should be part of the range of learning opportunities on offer to learners and take account of the fact they are not suitable in all areas such as construction but are needed in more areas than is the case at present.

4. Are there any policy shifts at WMCA following the election?(AH)

HD advised:

- WMCA is keen to use its devolved budget to address the blocks and barriers to securing employment and address the issue of youth employment which is the worst in the country and getting worse.
- 86% of funding from next year will come from a single settlement which will enable regional flexibility to address issues that are bespoke to geographical areas such as those relating to transport.
- WMCA wants to move away from programmes, work from the ground up, test solutions and engage with Employers more effectively. It will be looking for programmes where colleges and employers work together well.
- There is a desire to, focus on the social needs of young people and how they are met; support mentoring programmes and organisations that represent young people, and engage in realistic conversations about their future taking account of transport, addiction, debt, family influences and everything that forms part of generational unemployment.
- There is a need to build trust with local communities rather than a simple focus on qualifications.
- There is a desire to avoid duplication, become smarter and nurture collaboration on large projects, ensuring conversations are happening at community level and funding is deployed more effectively.

5. Might the college have greater flexibility to respond to strong demand in year? (AR)

HD advised that the new Settlement Agreement with Central Government might enable that. The first round of new funding from the Government was accompanied with a very restrictive guidance on how it could be deployed. The Mayor is having realistic conversations with the Government about the extent to which those guidelines restrict the intention of a single settlement giving authorities the capacity to have greater flexibility.

3 Estate Strategy Stock Take

AC introduced PM and ME from Peter Marsh Consulting who gave a presentation explaining the work they were doing for the college to help review and update its Estate Strategy.

The presentation covered:

- How the college’s 2020 strategy had been implemented.
- The factors influencing development of the new strategy including the :
 - advance of technology;
 - need for mobility with teaching and learning, and

- likelihood of Net Zero and carbon reduction being a focus of future funding opportunities
- The emerging questions for consideration.

Key points noted from discussion were :-

- The condition ,functionality and utilisation of every class room has been reviewed.
- The work done so far suggests there is an ability to rationalise usage at the James Watt and Sutton campuses.
- “Fit for purpose” is being assessed as ability to achieve the learning purpose relevant to each curriculum area (not simply to teach a class of 30)
- There will be some further refurbishment work to do at James Watt and the Erdington Skills Centre.
- An organisation called M-step has been appointed to support a review of steps needed to decarbonise the estate over a 5-year period.

In working groups, Governors reviewed an initial SWOT analysis produced by the consultants. Observations and questions from those were collected and will inform the next stage of development of the strategy.

4 Safeguarding

KBW facilitated a training and update session for Governors in relation to their Safeguarding and Prevent duties which involved: -

- a comprehensive presentation of the duties, how the college exercised its duties and responsibilities, the practicalities and realities dealt with by the college and discussion of key elements.
- A discussion and review of updates to the college’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy to comply with the new Keeping Children Safe in Education requirements and changes to college personnel and organisational structure.

Governors Observations and Questions

1. How does peer on peer reporting work? (DH)

KBW advised that this is done through the “ Speak Up “ reporting process that is widely published throughout the college.

2. Does the age split on My Concern referrals reflect the age profile of the college? (SH)

PC advised that the proportions of referrals do reflect the student profile of the college.

3. Is there a sense that issues are occurring but not being reported? (AH)

KR expressed the view that it was difficult to say but the college was alive to the fact there had been a significant increase in the number of concerns reported and an increased awareness of there being increasing needs associated with mental health, computer misuse and conflicts between students and their home environments as they look to find their independence.

4. Is the fact that most Deputy Safeguarding Leads are female an issue? (DH)

KBW expressed the view that it was not considered to be an issue because those roles are within a context of all staff having a safeguarding duty and there being a greater number of male safeguarding champions within the college.

5. How effective is the working relationship with local authorities in respect of this work? (DH)

KR advised that the college has a portfolio of connections and working relationships across a number of local authorities because of the student demography. There are no designated social workers for BMet. The working relationships are effective and work well.

6. Does the college have the right level of visibility on students that might have historically had support from the Local Authority but are not now eligible for it? (AR).

KBW confirmed that there is ongoing monitoring of all needs highlighted and brought to the college's attention.

7. How is the risk of burn out for those involved with Safeguarding managed? (RP)

KBW advised that it is treated as an ever-present risk. Mitigations include constant monitoring and offer of support for the team, the provision of external support, and monitoring the level of staffing required. The team has doubled in recent years.

8. Do staff use the external support offered? (SI)

KBW confirmed the offer of external support was used that DSLs are able to select their own support provider.

9. Were there any Prevent duty matters in 2023/24? (DH)

KBW advised that one potential matter was reported but on assessment did not meet the threshold for referral.

10. Does an inadequate safeguarding rating continue to be a limit on Ofsted Grading? (AM)

PC advised that changes are being considered but there have not yet been any changes to the current position.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT

24/25 09

The updated Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy be approved.

5 Race Equality Review

SB and PC gave a presentation summarising:

- The legal and circumstantial context within which race equality work was being done within college.
- The external initiatives with which the college was engaged.
- The internal initiatives being undertaken within the college.
- The practical impact those initiatives were having for students, staff and stakeholders.
- The current assessment of challenges and next steps.

It was noted that the college's BAME network had recommended how some of the challenges faced by the college regarding a consistent approach to tackling racism operationally could be addressed

	<p>through the Safeguarding Policy. A working group had been set up to consider how this could be done and a working definition of racism had been development for review by Governors.</p> <p>Group discussions then took place to consider the working definition of racism and the context in which it would be used i.e. the demographics of Birmingham and the UK.</p> <p>From those discussions IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>24/25/ 10 The following definition of Racism be adopted by the college to inform its response to racism and being an anti- racist college.</p> <p><i>“Explicit or implicit discrimination, prejudice or antagonism by an individual or group against a person or people marginalised in Britain on the basis of their race.”</i></p> <p>24/25/11 The definition should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it enables the college to function effectively and achieve both its organisational and legal objectives.</p> <p>24/25/12 There should be an accompanying document that explains the rationale behind the definition and includes a glossary of the terms used to assist with the operation of the Safeguarding policy and those it is linked to.</p>
6	Appointment of Chair of Governors
	<p>SB advised that following consideration of two applications for the role of Chair of Governors, the Governance and Search Committee had interviewed AH for role of Chair and wished to commend his appointment to the Corporation.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT 24/25 12 AH be appointed to the role of Chair of Governors.</p>
7	West Midlands Travel
	<p>SB referred to the 2023/24 approval of funding to West Midlands travel derived from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to support learner travel and waiver of tender requirements given the sole provider context.</p> <p>SB advised that the funding requirement for the new academic year was budgeted to be £1.3 million and approval was sought for the award of this funding and a waiver of tender requirements because of the sole provider context.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED THAT 24/25 13 Up to £1.3 million may be spent with West Midland Travel during the 2024- 25 academic year to provide student support for low-income families and that the tender regulation requirements in the Financial Regulations be waived.</p>

Signed: 

Chair: Sir Dexter Hutt