

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATION HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 7 JULY 2021**

Present:

Dr James Sarmecanic (Chair)
Jane Dodsworth (Vice-Chair)
Jeff Alexander
Dr Roy Bowden
David Hobson
David Jones
Helen Kilpatrick CB
Shelagh Legrave CBE DL
Richard Moore
Ryan Sallows
Sophie Sargent (Student Governor)
Caroline Wood
Paul Wright

In Attendance:

Sally Challis-Manning MBE, Deputy Principal, Quality, Principal of Brinsbury College
Steve Coulthard, Chief Financial Officer
Helen Loftus, Acting Operational Principal, Chichester College
Vicki Illingworth, Principal, Crawley College
Paul Riley, Principal, Worthing College and Haywards Heath College
Catherine Vinall, Clerk to the Corporation

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

150. Apologies for absence were received from Steve Cooper, Andy Davies, Nick Fox, Nick Sutherland and Ria Voice.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

151. The Chairman drew the attention of Governors and those in attendance at the meeting to the requirement to declare any interests they might have in any of the items on the agenda, as detailed on the agenda sheet.

MINUTES

152. The Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Corporation held on Wednesday, 24 February 2021 and the Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation held on Wednesday, 31 March 2021 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S TERMLY PROGRESS REPORT - A REVIEW OF 2020/21

153. Shelagh Legrave gave a presentation to provide an update on progress against the Strategic Plan and a review of 2020/21. The Corporation also received a dashboard to provide an update on progress against the key performance indicators in the Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022.

Copy attached at APPENDIX 1.

154. Shelagh Legrave stated that the first objective related to outstanding teaching and learning, the majority of the information would be provided in the next agenda item on the performance of teaching and learning across the Colleges. The KPI measurable at this point in the year was linked to the end of year student survey and looked at whether students were satisfied with their experience at College and whether they felt they had made progress. The survey results showed that both targets had been achieved at all Colleges, with the exception of the target for student satisfaction at Haywards Heath College. In response to a question from the Corporation, Paul Riley stated that the responses reflected some issues around organisation at the start of the year. In general, the feedback from students at Haywards Heath was good. The KPIs for the second objective were not measurable at this point in the year. The third objective related to employer engagement. For the KPI linked to apprenticeship achievement, it was noted that since the pandemic the national average for apprenticeship achievement had not been measured. Based on the previous average it was predicted that the Group's achievement would be above national average.
155. The fourth objective was to develop strong commercial businesses, all targets for this objective had been impacted by the pandemic, ongoing Covid restrictions and lockdown. The information to measure the position had been drawn from the management accounts. Both First Steps and International were doing better than budget, although International could be impacted if summer school did not go ahead. Anglia was behind budget and was feeling the global effects of the pandemic. It was difficult to forecast the end of year position as it was not clear whether exams would be able to take place over the summer. The fifth objective related to staff satisfaction, the data to measure KPIs was taken from staff survey results. Although the targets had been met, positive response rates were down overall. This could be due to the fact that the 2020 survey had been undertaken

shortly after the outstanding Ofsted inspection. In 2021 the survey had taken place following savings, reorganisations and ongoing changes to the working environment due to the pandemic.

156. Objective six was to create a strong College Group. The focus was on student achievement, satisfaction, staff satisfaction and student number growth across the Colleges within the Group. Progress against three of the four KPIs had been rated as amber, the staff survey results showed that there were differences between Worthing and the other Colleges within the Group. For student satisfaction, the results for Haywards Heath had previously been discussed. In terms of growth in student numbers, there had been growth at Worthing but the target had not been achieved. The final objective was to ensure that the College Group was financially viable in the long term. Progress against the first KPI would be reported when the management accounts were discussed. The second KPI, to achieve the Adult Skills budget would not be met. All other KPIs against the target would be met. Financially, it had been a tough year and costs had been tightly controlled. Through a programme of savings and organisational changes, 84 members of staff had been at risk of redundancy, of those 41 members of staff had been made redundant. In response to a question relating to the last KPI for Haywards Heath College, Shelagh confirmed that an agreement had been reached with the Department for Education to improve the outside grounds of Haywards Heath College.
157. In terms of managing the pandemic, Shelagh reported that there had been a relatively low number of cases during the summer term. Open days had been held virtually at all campuses during the year, until the last week when events had taken place on campus. A new booking system was in place for open events to manage the number of people coming on site. Transition days were also taking place in small groups. In response to a question from the Corporation, Shelagh stated that virtual open events had included presentations for curriculum area teams, interactive webinars on teaching and learning and from the Student Experience Teams. There had also been virtual tours of the Colleges.
158. Shelagh provided an update on the two incidents that had taken place in April at Crawley College. With regard to the flood, the Group had reached an agreement with insurers, the claim would be to restore rather than renew. The electricity supply at the campus was stable and hot water and heating repairs would take place over the summer. In terms of the security incident, a significant amount of work had taken place to review the Group's security alert procedures and practice scenarios would take place at each of the campuses. It was acknowledged that some staff at Crawley continued to feel unsettled and they were receiving support. Vicki Illingworth had been working closely with Sussex Police on the criminal case. A considerable repair project was ongoing, particularly to replace damaged doors, discussions with insurers were continuing. The majority of the Tower Block had been decommissioned and staff had been relocated to improved accommodation on campus. In response to a question,

Vicki confirmed that a plan was in place to accommodate growth in student numbers for those areas.

159. Finally, Shelagh provided an update on good new stories from across the Colleges. At Brinsbury, the Farm Team were delighted that a new milking parlour had been installed. The work had been supported by the FE Condition Grant and provided some excellent new technology for students. Both Brinsbury and Haywards Heath had showcased their Colleges at the South of England Show. Former Skills Minister and MP, Anne Milton, had visited Haywards Heath College. The College had also been visited by Mims Davis MP. Both Anne and Mims had been supporters of the plan to re-open Haywards Heath. Performing Arts students from Crawley, Chichester and Worthing had showcased their productions and students from Crawley College had experienced a safety day with British Airways.

CHICHESTER COLLEGE GROUP PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21

160. The Corporation received for information a presentation to provide an update on the performance of teaching and learning across the Group for 2020/21, this included attendance and retention rates for the year and the overall predicted achievement rates and apprenticeship achievement for 2020/21.

Copy attached at APPENDIX 2.

161. Sally Challis-Manning reminded the Corporation that detailed reports on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment had been provided to the College Quality & Stakeholder Board meetings. Sally reported that at the end of 2020/21, the attendance rate for Chichester College was 92 per cent, for Brinsbury it was also 92 per cent, for Crawley it was 85 per cent, for Worthing 92 per cent and for Haywards Heath attendance was 88 per cent. At Group level the overall attendance rate for the year was 90.10 per cent. It was noted that attendance at Crawley was lower than the rest of the Group. Vicki Illingworth stated that at Crawley College there was a higher proportion of Level 1 and Level 2 learners in vocational areas. Some of these learners had struggled to attend during lockdown where the focus of lessons had been on theory. They had been keen to re-engage in practical learning.

162. The overall retention rates for 2020/21 by College were as follows:

- For Chichester retention for 16 - 18 learners was 93.9 per cent, for 19+ learners it was 98.5 per cent.
- For Brinsbury for 16 - 18 learners retention was 97 per cent, for 19+ learners it was 97.6 per cent.
- For Crawley retention for 16 - 18 learners was 96.3 per cent. At 19+ retention was 96.7 per cent.

- For Worthing retention for 16 - 18 learners was 94.6 per cent. For 19+ learners the retention rate was 83.3 per cent.
 - For Haywards Heath retention for 16 - 18 learners was 96.8 per cent and for 19+ learners it was 100 per cent.
163. At Group level the overall retention rate was 94.7 per cent for 16 - 18 learners and 96.9 per cent for 19+ learners. This was in comparison to 96.5 per cent for 16 - 18 learners in 2019/20 and 95.2 per cent for 19+ learners. Sally confirmed that the data for 2020/21 included attendance during lockdown. The Corporation commented on the lower retention rates for 19+ learners at Worthing College. Paul Riley stated that the 19+ cohort at Worthing was small, this issue had been caused by the retention of learners infilling on to a 16 - 18 course. Paul confirmed that there was an action in the Quality Improvement Plan to focus on support for learners infilling on to 16 - 18 programmes.
164. Moving on to predicted achievement rates, Sally stated that in a small number of areas at Chichester, Crawley and Brinsbury some vocational students were still working to finish their qualifications. Sally also reminded the Corporation that Teacher Assessed Grades had also been in place. The overall predicted achievement rates by campus were:
- Chichester 89.1 per cent.
 - Brinsbury 93 per cent.
 - Crawley 87.4 per cent.
 - Worthing 92.3 per cent.
 - Haywards Heath 96 per cent.
 - At Group level 90 per cent.
165. With regard to the equality, diversity and inclusion data the predicted achievement rates showed the following:
- Achievement for learners aged 16 - 18 was predicted to be higher than those aged 19+.
 - Achievement for learners with a disability was predicted to be higher than non-disabled learners.
 - Achievement for learners with high needs was predicted to be lower than those without high needs.
 - Achievement for learners who received free meals was predicted to be higher than those who did not received free meals.
 - Achievement for learners from disadvantaged areas was predicted to be higher than those from non-disadvantaged areas.
 - Achievement for learners receiving additional learning support was predicted to be higher than those not receiving additional learning support.

166. For Apprenticeships, Sally provided the following predictions:
- For Chichester 73.1 per cent.
 - For Brinsbury 69.5 per cent.
 - For Crawley 63.2 per cent.
 - For Worthing 83.7 per cent.
167. The Corporation discussed predicted achievement for apprentices, one of the issues had been that the completion of end point assessments had been impacted by the pandemic. In response to a question, Helen Loftus stated that around 30 apprentices across the Group were currently on a break in learning or furloughed, this was also impacting achievement. The Sales Team had worked closely with employers and apprentices to find new roles where apprentices had been made redundant as a result of the pandemic. The Corporation noted the predicted achievement rate for Crawley College, Vicki Illingworth stated that end point assessments in Carpentry & Joinery in particular had impacted the data. There had also been a cohort of NHS learners who had struggled to complete due to the impact the pandemic had had on their role.

CCG RISK AND ASSURANCE REPORT

168. The Corporation received for consideration a report providing an update on Risk Management and Assurance, together with the revised Risk Registers for Chichester College Group.

Copy attached at APPENDIX 3.

169. Steve Coulthard reported that the overall risk environment continued to be very high. Contributing factors included increases in risk ratings in the Governance and Reputation area as a result of the change leadership at the Group and the proposed merger with GBMET. For the HR & Corporate Services area there had been an increase in health & safety risk ratings as a result of two incidents at Crawley College. The ongoing impact of the pandemic continued to produce a high risk profile across other risk areas. The only area where the environment was low to moderate was Quality & Curriculum. This was due to the Ofsted inspection in 2020 and the fact that competitive advantage was likely to be positively impacted by a further merger. Strong apprenticeship growth during the year had positively impacted the Commercial & Growth area.
170. In response to a question about the recent Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and college, Vicki Illingworth reported the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance be published. This was being reviewed by the Group and a statement, to be compliant with Office for Students requirements, would be published on College websites. In terms of working with students this would be picked up through ACES sessions on sexual harassment, violence and abuse. Work

was also taking place to review the reporting of safeguarding concerns. Vicki confirmed that work had taken place to ensure that Safeguarding Officers were aware of the signs young people might show if they had experienced sexual harassment, abuse and/or violence. Officers had seen a small number of students sharing their experiences and this had been taken up through the safeguarding process. It was

Resolved

That the Risk Registers for Chichester College Group, as set out at APPENDIX 3, be adopted.

RSM UK AUDIT LLP INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY 2021 - 2024

171. The Corporation received for consideration the Internal Audit Strategy 2021 - 2024 produced by the Corporation's Internal Auditors, RSM UK Audit LLP.

Copy attached at APPENDIX 4.

172. Helen Kilpatrick reminded the Corporation that this was the first internal audit strategy from RSM. The plan was based on discussions that had taken place during the tender process and with reference to the Group's Risk Register. Although the strategy covered three years, plans for years two and three were provisional and could be amended if necessary. In response to a question from the Corporation, Helen confirmed that RSM were slightly more expensive than the Group's previous internal auditors, there had also been an increase in the number of audit days for the year. It was noted that the number of days allocated for learner number compliance was to be confirmed. Helen stated that this would continue to be an area for focus for both internal and external audit. The scope for the audit of learner number compliance would be confirmed with the Group's external auditors as their approach to the updated Audit Code of Practice could impact the internal audit approach. It was

Resolved

That the RSM UK Audit LLP Internal Audit Strategy 2021 - 2024, as set out at APPENDIX 4, be adopted.

APPOINTMENT OF CORPORATION MEMBERS

173. Catherine Vinall reminded the Corporation that there was a vacancy for a Governor and two vacancies for Staff Governors. The Governance & Search Committee had recommended the appointment of Ellen Walsh as a new Governor. Ellen was a former partner with Grant Thornton UK LLP and had

previous experience as a Governor and Audit Committee chair. Ellen brought with her considerable financial experience and a keen interest in apprenticeships. The Governance & Search Committee felt she would be a strong addition to the Corporation and Finance & General Purposes Committee.

174. Catherine stated that there had been considerable interest in the Staff Governor roles, particularly on from business support staff. The Governance & Search Committee had met with eight people for the two vacancies and had been impressed with the calibre of the candidates. The Committee had recommended that Donna Harfield be appointed as the next Staff Governor from the business support staff and Donna Turner-Irwin as the Staff Governor from the curriculum side. Donna Harfield was the Group Head of Sales, she had experience of sales, business development and apprenticeships. Donna Turner-Irwin was Deputy Head of Learning for Service Industries at Crawley College and brought a deep knowledge of the curriculum, teaching and learning and Crawley College. The Committee had suggested that the business support candidates who had not been recommended to join the Corporation should be invited to join the Quality & Stakeholder Boards as staff members. It was

Resolved

- i) That Ellen Walsh be appointed as a Governor of Chichester College Group, for a four year term of office from 1 August 2021.**
- ii) That Donna Harfield be appointed as a Staff Governor of Chichester College Group for a four year term of office from 1 August 2021.**
- iii) That Donna Turner-Irwin be appointed as a Staff Governor of Chichester College Group for a four year term of office from 1 August 2021.**
- iv) That the Clerk contact the remaining business support candidates to invite them to join the Quality & Stakeholder Boards as staff members.**

CHICHESTER COLLEGE GROUP PARTNERSHIP POLICY 2021/22

175. The Corporation received for consideration the updated Partnership Policy for Chichester College Group.

Copy attached at APPENDIX 5.

176. Steve Coulthard reminded the Corporation that the Group's Partnership Policy was reviewed annually, minor changes were proposed for 2021/22. The policy covered what was defined by the Education & Skills Funding Agency as partnership work as well as the Group's rationale for partnership work. It was

Resolved

That Chichester College Group's Partnership Policy 2021/22, as set out at APPENDIX 5, be approved.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31 MAY 2021

177. The Corporation received the Management Accounts for the period to 31 May 2021, together with a presentation to provide a financial update.

Copy attached at APPENDIX 6.

178. Steve Coulthard reminded the Corporation that the budget set for the year 2020/21 was an operating deficit of £3.5m and EBITDA of £400,000. During the year three forecasts has been undertaken. The first showed a deterioration in the outlook for the year to an operating deficit of £4.2m and negative EBITDA of £300,000, the second forecast showed a further deterioration in the financial position. The final forecast in February 2021 showed an improvement on the January forecast, although the position remained below budget. By the end of May 2021, an improvement was showing with an operating of £2.2m which was ahead of budget. This was largely due to careful management of pay and non-pay costs. There had been significant growth in apprenticeships during the year but this had been impacted by ongoing challenges to achieve AEB targets. In terms of commercial income, First Steps was recovering well but the Sports Centre had been impacted significantly by the most recent lockdown. The forecast for Anglia was poor, although it was hoped the some exam centres would be able to operate during the summer months.

MAZARS INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

179. The Corporation received for information a summary of the internal audit reports completed during the summer term, together with the reports for Purchasing & Procurement, Follow Up, Learner Number Compliance and Health & Safety.

Copies attached at APPENDIX 7.

180. Helen Kilpatrick CB stated that the areas reviewed my Mazars LLP during the summer term completed their audit plan and their work as the Corporation's internal auditors. The review of purchasing and procurement processes found that adequate assurance could be placed on the effectiveness of internal control. There had been two priority two recommendations and one priority three recommendation. The review of health & safety had concluded the substantial assurance could be placed on the effectiveness of internal control. There had

been three priority three recommendations. It was noted that actions had been agreed for the recommendations identified during both reviews.

181. The audit of learner number compliance assessed the Group's compliance with funding rules and regulations. It had been a thorough process which had involved additional testing. This had revealed that changes made by the Compliance Team were having a positive impact. The review had concluded that the Group was partially compliant with funding rules for post-16 funding, Adult Education funding and apprenticeship funding and was compliant with adult learner loan funding rules. It was noted that no fundamental recommendations had been made by the internal auditors.
182. In terms of follow up work, it was noted that two recommendations had been superseded and removed from the audit tracker. This left eight outstanding recommendations.

ESFA FINANCIAL HEALTH AND FINANCIAL CONTROL ASSESSMENT 2019/20

183. The Corporation received and noted a letter from the ESFA to confirm their assessment of Chichester College Group's Financial Health and Financial Control in 2019/20.

Copy attached at APPENDIX 8.

184. Shelagh Legrave stated that the letter from the ESFA confirmed their assessment that the Group's financial health for the year 2019/20 had been graded as 'requires improvement'. The ESFA had confirmed that any decision on financial health and control for the year 2020/21 had been delayed until they received an update on the financial position for the current year.

OFFICE FOR STUDENTS HIGHER EDUCATION REPORTABLE EVENTS

185. The Corporation received and noted a report to provide an update on two reportable events of which the OfS had been notified.

Copy attached at APPENDIX 9.

186. Helen Loftus stated that the first reportable event related to a partnership agreement between Chichester College Group and Solent University to deliver a Level 6 BSc Top Up in Computing & IT. A mutual agreement had been reached to withdraw the course from June 2021. There was no financial impact for Chichester College Group and Solent University had formally notified the OfS of the reportable event.

187. The second event was the change in accountable officer which would take place when Andrew Green took on his new role as Group Chief Executive Officer from 1 October 2021. Helen confirmed that the OfS would be formally notified before Andrew's start date.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE BUSINESS

188. The Corporation received and noted a summary of business considered at the Corporation's Committees and Boards during the Summer Term 2020/21.

Copy attached at APPENDIX 10.

189. The Clerk thanked the Corporation for their participation in the recruitment process for the next Chief Executive. If anyone required a full copy of the minutes of the Committee and Board meetings that had taken place during the summer term these were available from the Clerk. Members of the Corporation were welcome to observe any of the Committee or Board meetings and should contact the Clerk to make arrangements if they wished to do so.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

190. It was noted that the next meeting of the Corporation would take place on Wednesday, 8 December 2021. It would be followed by Christmas Dinner in Restaurant 64 at Chichester College. The next Corporation Strategy/Development event would take place on Tuesday, 19 October 2021 at 2.00 pm. The venue was to be confirmed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governor Retirements

191. The Chair noted that it was the last Corporation meeting for Staff Governor Andy Davies and the Student Governors, Sophie Sargent and Ria Voice. The Chair thanked Andy for his eight years of service to the work of the Corporation and wished him well for the future. The Chair also thanked Sophie and Ria who had been the Student Presidents for Chichester & Brinbury and Crawley College respectively. Both Sophie and Ria had gone above and beyond in the roles and had exceeded in championing the student voice.

Shelagh Legrave CBE DL

192. The Chair stated that Shelagh Legrave would be leaving Chichester College Group at the end of September 2021 to take up her new role as FE Commissioner.

Shelagh had joined Chichester College in 2003. During her time as Chief Executive the College had been graded as outstanding by Ofsted twice and completed two mergers. Shelagh's commitment to the College Group had been unwavering. The Chair commended Shelagh for her passion and enthusiasm for the sector and Chichester College Group.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

193. It was

Resolved

That, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be dealt with, the Minutes for the remainder of the meeting be recorded on a confidential basis and remain so unless and until they become public in the ordinary course of the Corporation's business.