



WMCC Board 14 July 2021: Minutes

			All via MS Teams	14 July 2021
	Appointed Governors			
1	Barbara	Byrne	Vice Chair	Y
2	Susan	Corby		Y
3	Fran	Fahey		Y
4	Neil	Garner		Y
5	June	Jarrett		N
6	Samata	Khatoon		Y
7	Alexi	Marmot		Y
8	Guy	Shackle	Chair of Governors	Y
9	Jon	Sibson	Vice Chair	Y
10	Max	Silver		Y
11	Paul	Smith		Y
	Nominated Governors			
	Helen	Hammond	Principal: ex officio	Y
	Staff Governors			
	Amanda	Blinkhorn	Teaching Staff	Y
	Monica	Kinasiwicz	Support Staff	Y
	Student Governors			
	Khaly	Fall		Y
	Vacancy			
	Officers Attending			
	Martin	Jones	Vice Principal	Y
	Maria	Rosenthal	Deputy Principal	Y
	Bill	Barker	Clerk	Y

1	<p><u>Chair's Welcome</u></p> <p>Guy Shackle (GS, Chair of the Board) welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>	
1.1	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>There were none. June Jarrett was able to connect briefly, but was subsequently unable to get a stable connection.</p>	
1.2	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were none. GS reminded governors were invited to update their entry on the Register of Interests at least once a year.</p>	
2	<p><u>Membership:</u> New members: nominated governor elections GS welcomed Amanda Blinkhorn as Teacher Governor for a second term. He also welcomed Khaly Fall the recently nominated student governor. There remained a further vacancy for a second student governor. The Clerk advised that he would invite nominations for this position early in the autumn term.</p>	
3	<p>Minutes of Board meeting – March 2021</p> <p>These were agreed as a correct record.</p> <p>Matters arising: There were no matters arising that did not form part of the agenda for this meeting.</p>	
4	<p>Strategy</p>	
4.1	<p>Chair's Introduction:</p> <p>GS introduced this section with reference to the themes of financial and environmental sustainability and diversity that he had identified as priorities for the Board and which had been expressed for the College in the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>He welcomed that the College was planning for a return to “normal” operational arrangements for 2021/22. He also recognised that the College had made excellent advances in digital delivery so that even if there were further restrictions advised in the next year learners would still be able to continue their chosen course of study. Covid related restrictions reimposed in 2021/22 would impact on practical classes and the College’s ability to perform to budget.</p> <p>He wished to comment on the success of the recent Open Day – thanking governors and staff for their work to make the day so interesting and welcoming. The occasion was an indicator of what could be achieved at London Open in early September.</p>	

	<p>He thanked Barbara Byrne (BB, Chair of the FPDC) and Fran Fahey (FF, Vice-Chair of the FPDC) for their work with Martin Jones (Vice Principal) which involved the monitoring of monthly management accounts as an additional safeguard against adverse financial outcomes between meetings of the FPDC</p> <p>He commented that although in the longer term the College would want to consider technologies that would decrease reliance on gas as a source of energy these were in their infancy and the College’s investment in a new heating system provided a cushion for a number of years whilst the technologies matured. The MMHV project had improved the learning environment without recourse to air conditioning. He welcomed the addition of courses on the concepts and discourse around the environment / climate change and sustainability to the range of provision for learners</p> <p>When the Search Committee considered further governor recruitment it would re-consider measures to improve the diversity of the Board alongside any skills gaps revealed by the survey.</p> <p>He looked forward to the October session with governors as an opportunity to meet face to face and to revisit these themes.</p> <p>Post meeting: The event will be on October 20 with Mary Vine-Morris, AoC Area Director for London, as speaker.</p>	
4.2	<p>Principal’s Report and Strategic Outlook.</p> <p>Helen Hammond (HH, Principal) introduced this item advising that quite apart from developments and initiatives at WM College, there were a whole range of consultations, policy and legislative developments at London and national level that would need to be considered and understood by governors in the coming months.</p> <p><u>College Matters – Update and Outlook</u></p> <p>The College has achieved 90% delivery against its funding agreement which means that there will be no clawback of funding. The current level of 90% will rise as the element of funding associated with outcomes /”results” is added before the final ILR submission and the ESFA’s / GLA’s confirmation. This puts the College in a good position for the 2021/22 year.</p> <p>The Open Day was very successful with 110 visitors to the College and 50 enrolments. HH thanked governors who attended commenting that their presence gives a real boost to learners and to tutors.</p> <p>The film of the Learner Success Event will be posted to the website over the next few days.</p> <p>The Summer School is running over the remaining weeks in July – there have been 350 enrolments but the figure may rise as learners enrol at the start of their chosen course.</p> <p>Enrolments for 2021/22 now stood at 1,148 (an increase of c600 since the paper for the Board was prepared). There will be learner services staff at the College over the summer to</p>	1

maintain the service before a major impetus in early September with the London Open House activities and advertising.

The ESFA had visited recently for an annual “strategic conversation”.

This occasion presented an opportunity to explain how the College had responded to the pandemic. The ESFA had provided feedback which was included in the paper. The ESFA is not directly a major funder of the College (c110k for 16-19 learners and c£50k for out of London learners): the majority of the College’s funding is received from the GLA.

The “conversation” with the ESFA was useful and presented an opportunity to explain the benefits of basic provision as a first step (not an immediate fix) towards employability and the wider benefits of life-long learning (wellbeing, and enjoyment). The College also pointed out the lack of alignment between the ESFA (DfE) and the DWP and Careers Advisory Service which resulted in adult learning either not being available to some learners without the forfeit of benefit payments or learners enrolling on provision that was unsuitable.

London Matters – GLA AEB Recovery Roadmap

The GLA had recently launched its Roadmap. This is now subject to a period of consultation with final outcomes in early 2022.

The aims of the Roadmap are:

- The Roadmap will build on best practice of skills provision to make adult education in London even more **accessible, impactful and locally relevant**.
- In the short term the Roadmap will look to set out how the GLA will continue to **support London’s response and recovery to the COVID-19 Pandemic**.
- In the longer term the Roadmap will be focussed on how we can **deliver skills for jobs from a starting point of addressing inequalities** through interaction with learning.
- This includes setting the action needed to better **integrate adult education with London’s other services and anchor institutions.**”

“.....to ensure adult education continues to provide the much-needed lifeline and support to the many Londoners who face multiple barriers to entering work and who have experienced isolation and significant challenges to their wellbeing throughout the pandemic. We will ensure that no Londoner is left behind and all can access the power of learning throughout their lives.”

“..... we need to create the conditions for a stable and financially resilient London skills and employment system that can adapt and deliver on employer training needs now and in the future. This must be balanced with ensuring that the most disadvantaged Londoners are not left behind and are able to participate and benefit from learning to support broader health, wellbeing and inclusion.”

HH commented that the IALs had directed a great deal of work into this Roadmap and that many elements reflected their collective contribution (wider benefits of adult education, no

abrupt end at age 24, and integration with employers and the DWP to ensure accessibility - "no wrong doors" /cul-de-sacs)

The outcomes of the consultation and their implications for adult education (skills and ACL) at WM College and across London will be discussed at the Governors' Strategy Session in February.

HH cautioned that the ambition of the Roadmap was matched by the intensity of arguments about AEB funding on at least 3 counts: the level of funding, funding for London vs funding for other areas, and the hostility of some politicians and civil servants to the whole concept of AEB devolution.

National Matters - Skills and Post 16 Education Bill

HH advised that this was being debated in the House of Lords before its return to the Commons and subsequent enactment. There will then be further guidance on the implementation of provisions and dates for compliance. HH hoped that further detail will have become clearer in time for the Strategy Session in February.

HH identified two dangers:

- The emphasis of adult education is solely focused on those learners aged 18-24 nearest to employment by offering "a fast route to a job" with no intermediate steps.
- A proposal that LSIPs (Local Skills and Improvement Partnerships) should not be chaired by mayors of CMAs or the GLA.

Many other concerns related to matters raised with the ESFA in the course of the "Strategic Conversation" (above).

Governors thanked HH for this full overview.

Governors asked that if the LSIPs were not to be chaired by mayors then what was the proposal. HH advised that this was currently the Chamber of Commerce. Governors suggested that attempts IALs to influence this body should continue building on the success of their impact on the GLA Roadmap.

Governors also asked about whether the DfE /ESFA understood the current offer from IALs and whether their understanding had moved on from a post war "night school" / cake decorating perspective. HH advised that the view had changed, but that in some circumstances a caricature "underwater knitting" was used to marginalise the commitment of resources.

Governors also pointed to the testimonials of learners taking part in the Learner Success Event as powerful anecdotal evidence of how learners' confidence and skills have been built up through participation in courses at level 2 or below.

GS thanked HH and governors for their contributions to this section of the agenda. In so doing he reminded governors of the rapidly changing physical and social environment in which the College operated - citing HS2 and the move of Moorfields to the old St Pancras Hospital site as examples of structural change and opportunity for the College.

5	<p>Finance:</p> <p>GS introduced this item commenting that the FPDC had looked at the budget in great detail at its most recent (30 June) meeting. He also advised governors that the Spending Review and or the Treasury Budget were unlikely to deliver additional (“genuinely new”) overall funding for the FE (adult education) sector.</p> <p>GS invited Barbara Byrne (BB, Chair of the FPDC) to comment on the discussions at the FPDC. BB reminded governors that she and Fran Fahey (FF, Vice-Chair of FPDC) had initiated a series of monthly budget monitoring meetings with Marin Jones (MJ, Vice Principal): these had proved to be useful offering the opportunity to monitor current in year performance and also to gain insight into some of the assumptions and modelling around fee income and staff costs for the 2021/22 budget.</p>	
5.1	<p><u>Management Accounts Q3 2020/21 (April 2021)</u></p> <p>MJ advised that the position at the end of April after 9 months was £108k less favourable than anticipated. The main reason for this was the shortfall in fee income (£267k) as a consequence of pandemic related closure /cancellation of practical classes and restricted socially distanced learner numbers in classes that have been able to meet onsite in the summer term. This year to date (9 months) shortfall was mitigated in part by savings on staff costs and non staff costs. The College had taken advantage of the furlough arrangements to pay staff for whom there was no work at 80% of their pay, and had been able to recover approximately 55% of the payments through the Job Retention Scheme. (furlough payments c£135k, JRS income c£77k)</p> <p>MJ advised that the College hoped to recover to a position much closer to the budgeted level at the end of the year. This would be achieved through an increase in summer school fee income (c£50k) and the receipt of London Recovery funding (c£50k). Also, the full year effect of non-staff cost savings is expected to rise. The forecast outturn was for a deficit of £181k vs the budget of £188k.</p> <p>The investment portfolio had recovered all of the losses of 2019/20 of £598k rising by £726k in the year to date.</p> <p>GS thanked MJ and other College managers for their efforts to control staff and non-staff expenditure.</p>	
5.2	<p><u>Budget 2021/22 and forecast 2022/23</u></p> <p>BB advised that the FPDC was unanimous in its view that this budget should be recommended to the Board. FF added that the monthly meetings with MJ had provided opportunities to interrogate the integrity of the assumptions around fee income and staff costs. She commented that the underpinning modelling was based on trends from prior years and on credible assumptions for 2021/22.</p>	

MJ then introduced the budget 2021/22 to the Board advising that the budget was set to generate an operational surplus of £94k. He advised that there were key increases to the rate of funding for provision up to and including Level 2 and also separate additional monies associated with the London Recovery Fund. In summary the grant income would rise to £5263K - an increase of c£200k when compared to the 2020/21 forecast outturn.

Learner fee income was budgeted at £650k (just £20k in addition to the 2018/19 outturn) and £300K in excess of the 2020/21 forecast outturn. MJ advised that the income envelope set the parameters within which expenditure budgets are set and controlled. Total income for 2021/22 is set at £6,156k exceeding £6 million for the first time.

Teaching staff costs are restored to more normal levels and so a comparison with the 2020/21 outturn has to be read with caution. There is a “base year” of 2018/19 included as illustrative of a more normal comparator once wage inflation and volumes are factored in. The staff cost of Corporate and Business Services remains the same as the 2020/21 forecast outturn.

Staff Costs	2018/19 Outturn	2020/21 Forecast Outturn	2021/22 Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Learning and Life Skills	1180	1230	1345
Arts and Vocational	1059	1030	1195
Corporate and Business	1366	1542	1549

The costs for 2021/22 included provision for annual incremental progression and a 1% pay increase for salaried and sessional staff. MJ reminded governors that In 2020/21 the College had not implemented the AoC’s recommended increase of 1%.

MJ commented that non-staff costs remained very similar to the budgeted amounts for 2020/21. The learner financial support fund remains at £80k. MJ drew attention to the budget lines that varied from the 2020/21 budget:

Non Staff Costs	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22
	£000	£000
Marketing	150	130
Exams	120	65
Cleaning	145	160

The reduction in the exams budget is based on analysis of the actual expenditure over past years. The budget for 2021/22 reflects actual prior years’ outturns.

Governors asked about the TP grant. MJ confirmed that this was guaranteed to continue until at least July 2022. He assumed that it would be continued for 2022/23 either as a

	<p>separate grant or through consolidation into base funding. Its discontinuation would introduce significant instability to the financial health of colleges.</p> <p>In response to a question MJ advised that “unused” funding from one year could not be rolled forward to the next year. The accounting framework prescribed that provided colleges achieved a certain threshold of their contracted provision any unused funding formed part of that year’s surplus and was transferred to the general reserve. In the event that a college did not achieve the threshold “unused” funds would be clawed back, with the consequence that the accounts for the year would record a lower level of grant income than budgeted.</p> <p><u>ESFA Finance /Budget Return.</u></p> <p>MJ advised that the ESFA had issued new software for the return of financial information, which although an improvement on the now abandoned Integrated Financial Return for Colleges, still required a significant degree of manual entry. Never the less he was able to advise that the 2020/21 year end balance sheet produced a financial health rating points score of 170 which was at the top of the range for “requires improvement”. The points score for the 2021/22 returns the College to “good” financial health, and when rolled forward to 2022/23 replicates the 2021/22 rating.</p> <p>BB reminded governors that the budget was prepared on the basis that 2021/22 would mark a return to normal uninterrupted levels of activity. She reminded governors the monthly meeting with MJ would provide the opportunity to identify any adverse variances and to take the appropriate action to contain costs so as to secure a year end surplus.</p> <p>BB proposed that governors approve the budget 2021/22 and the roll forward to the budget of 2022/23. This was endorsed by the Chair. This was agreed by the Board with no dissenting opinions.</p> <p>Governors also authorised MJ to return the information (2 year budget, balance sheets, cashflows and financial health grade assessment) to the ESFA in the prescribed format.</p> <p>Governors expressed their thanks to MJ and to everyone else who had contributed to the timely preparation of the Budget.</p>	
6	<p>Reports and Minutes from Committees (the minutes of each of the Committee meetings had been included with the papers). The Chair of each Committee highlighted the main points.</p>	
6.1	<p><u>Audit Committee</u></p> <p>Paul Smith (PS, Chair of the AC) introduced this item. He commented on three areas:</p> <p><u>Internal Audit:</u> Many of 2021 scheduled assignments were now to take place in the second half of the summer term, accordingly the Committee had made arrangements for an additional meeting of the AC in the early autumn. The IAS 2021/22 Plan was agreed: this would be supplemented by specialist advice in non-financial areas (IT, Curriculum and Quality, Learner Services)</p>	

	<p><u>External Audit:</u> Buzzacott had advised that there was an expectation of increased rigour in the wake of corporate failures and audit shortcomings. In particular the ESFA now expected auditors to make their own enquiries about the integrity of the learner numbers (ILR) returns to the ESFA. In the past audit providers had relied upon the final ESFA funding reconciliation statement. In short auditors were required to undertake additional work to support the “going concern” opinion.</p> <p><u>AC Terms of Reference and the ESFA’s Post 16 Audit Code of Practice.</u> The Committee reviewed its terms of reference in the light of the information from Buzzacott and the P16 ACoP. In consequence the terms of reference had been amended and were now aligned with the provisions of the 2020/21 Audit Code of Practice. These now made explicit reference to the skills and development needs of members of the AC, and increased scrutiny on the number of meetings each year and of individual members’ attendance.</p> <p>This report was welcomed and the revisions to the terms of reference were approved.</p>	
<p>6.2</p>	<p>CQSC</p> <p>Jon Sibson (JS, Chair of CQSC) introduced this item advising that the main focus of the meeting had been on a review of 2020/21 curriculum developments, learner volumes and outcomes as the context for the planning for 2021/22. He commented that even where results had taken a Covid related dip, the strides that learners had made in the development of their digital skills would prove to be a valuable asset in the employment market.</p> <p>The Committee had also considered a Fitness to Learn Policy which provided a framework of expectations and provision that the College provided, the efforts and support available to keep learners on their programme of study, but also the limitations of the College’s provision, which might result in some rare cases of the discontinuation of a learner’s course and referral to external specialist services.</p> <p>Governors noted that June Jarrett (JJ, Safeguarding Governor) had visited the College recently and had reported favourably on safeguarding arrangements and the development of a consolidated and comprehensive Single Central Record in iWork.</p> <p>Governors commented that the work of staff and the commitment of learners during the last year was commendable. They also hoped to see a return to previous levels of success in 2021/22.</p>	
<p>6.3</p>	<p>FPDC -</p> <p>BB introduced this agenda item commenting that the main discussion had been around the 2020/21 management accounts up to 30 April, the forecast outturn and the budget for 2021/22. These had been fully discussed by the Board at an earlier stage of the agenda.</p> <p>The Committee also received an HR update from HH covering a Working from Home Policy, iWork developments and work with the other London IALs on the development of a common</p>	

	<p>set of principles that would govern each institution’s development of policy in the area of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>The Committee had received a report from MJ and SA (Sarfraz Arfan, Director of Facilities) on the three capital projects that were in progress with work continuing over the summer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed Mode Heating and Ventilation (MMHV) • Refurbishment and Redecoration (including the provision of a roof on the lift providing disabled access). This work is funded by a grant of £229k form FE Colleges Conditions Allocation with the expectation of a 25% match from the College –total £305k • IT cabling infrastructure: grant of £188k with 50% match = £376k budget. <p>The Committee discussed the re-tendering of the Cleaning Contract via the Crescent Purchasing Consortium. The arrangements for contract award need to be authorised by the Board: the contract would be for 3 years at a cost of c£150k per annum, and the award needs to be made by “Chair’s Action” in August in order to allow for mobilisation in readiness for a contract start of 01 September. The Board approved the recommendation of the FPDC that either GS, BB or JS (Chair and Vice Chairs) be authorised to approve the award of the contract on behalf of the Corporation.</p> <p>The Committee heard also that the re-tendering of College Insurers was being undertaken by the College’s brokers, Hettle Andrews. The Board endorsed the recommendation from the FPDC that the Principal be authorised to award the contract on the advice of Hettle Andrews.</p> <p>The Committee had expressed its thanks to MJ in particular and also to all other staff involved in the preparation of the budget at a time of unusual staff turnover in the Finance Team.</p>	
7	<p>Governance</p> <p>BB_CL introduced the papers for this agenda item</p>	
7.1	<p><u>Governors’ Skills Survey</u></p> <p>The outcome of the skills survey was circulated with the papers for the meeting. BB_CL thanked governors for completing this and advised that the Search Committee would consider any skill gaps in order to sharpen the focus of future recruitment to the Board.</p> <p><u>ETF GDP.</u></p> <p>BB_CL reminded governors that the College had purchased a licence for the Governors Development Programme. He reminded that the Skills and Post 16 Education Bill placed a greater responsibility on Corporations to develop governors’ skills.</p>	
7.2	<p><u>Review of Standing Orders</u></p> <p>BB_CL advised that this was the annual review of the Standing Orders of the Board. He recommended that no changes were needed at the present time, but that on enactment of the Skills and Post 16 Education Bill governors would need to review the Standing Orders</p>	

	(especially the paragraph 4.6 covering Board self review) - there is likely to be a requirement to engage an external advisor to assist and moderate every 3-5 years.	
7.3	<p><u>Dates of Meetings 2021/22</u></p> <p>BB_Cl presented the schedule of dates for 2021/22. Governors noted that there was a “Governors’ Welcome to 2021/22” event in October (20th) and a Strategy Session in February. These dates were agreed.</p> <p>BB_CL advised the Board that the College’s entry in London Open House on 04 and 05 September was an important event to launch the new academic year as a return to more normal activities following the last two interrupted years.</p>	
	GS thanked everyone for their efforts during the year, expressing the wish that face to face meetings could take place in the coming year.	

Signed: _____ Date: 15th December 2021