

Corporation Board

Approved

**Minutes of Corporation Board – Part 1
17 February 2022**

Board Members: B Kaczmarczyk (Chair) H Freeman L Harris (Student Governor)
J Battye J Hemper S Martin-Standley
P Bond L McKenzie
T Campbell L Mycroft
J Croot J Richards (Principal and CEO)
W Davies

In attendance: D Malone (Deputy Principal) K Oxspring (Finance Consultant)
C Acaster (VP – People & Culture) J Rossa (VP – Quality Improvement & Assurance)
H Taylor-Toone (VP – Finance & Corporate Services) J Shore (Head of Governance)
Mike Ward (Curriculum Manager – Sixth Form)

Apologies: T Campbell, E Pearson

CH = Challenge

- 30/2122 Declaration of Interest
Members were reminded of the need to declare an interest in any item of business to be considered at the meeting. Nothing was declared.
- 31/2122 Membership
The Chair welcomed and introduced new Board member, SMS, and Student Governor, LH, to their first Board meeting, as well as the new Vice Principal for Finance & Corporate Services, HTT.
- 32/2122 Minutes of the Previous Meeting
The minutes of the previous Corporation Board meeting held 16 December 2021 were reviewed and agreed as a true and accurate record.
The action log was reviewed and matters arising were discussed, with actions updated and either marked as complete or carried forward as appropriate. (*Refer to Corporation Action Log – 17.2.22*).
Resolution: The Board **approved** the minutes of the previous meeting held 16 December 2021.
- 33/2122 Staff & Student Focus: Student Feedback
MW joined the meeting.
Mike Ward, Curriculum Manager – Sixth Form, attended the meeting to discuss feedback and how it is used by the College as a learning and development tool for students. Results of the First Impression Survey have been used as a key driver for improvement and a meeting was held between the Sixth Form Teachers, Teaching & Learning Quality Leads (TLQLs) and Inclusion Manager to review student voice feedback and celebrate the effective best practices within the department. Due to its effectiveness, this session was subsequently shared with the wider College as part of a training day.
The Board were shown a short video of A-level students providing their feedback around their preferred methods of feedback, including written and 1:1 to further aid understanding. Students advised that the feedback received supports their study progression and grade improvement, as they have a clear understanding of the key areas they need to study further and revise. The students acknowledged some of the outstanding practices within the Sixth Form department, such as the VLE resources, including previous exam questions, specific examples for improvement provided within the feedback, and collaborative working by students within the classroom.
MW advised that the students recognise that different lessons have different methods of feedback that work best and the consistency and concept of quality over quantity is what has been really prominent from the student voice, as well as ensuring that the feedback is entirely relevant to the study programme and leads to improvement. The student voice feedback has been built on with elements of data to provide suitable targeted intervention for students in order to secure the best progression and outcomes, which is an ongoing cycle.

The outcomes have been measured through a Go Out and Learn (GOAL) by Sixth Form Staff and the TLQL. The session identified that there are clear outcomes in lessons and different methods of feedback provided to best suit individual needs. All students could talk about progress, target grades, next steps and actions required to get the best grade possible.

Following their recent Link Governor visits to the College where they met with students on separate occasions, Governors SMS and PM endorsed that students had spoken positively of the individualised feedback they receive.

Student Governor, LH, advised that he has received a lot of 1:1 feedback in class which he finds to be very helpful.

The Board expressed thanks to MW for attending and to the students who were involved in the Student Voice video.

The Deputy Principal reminded the Board that Sixth Form had been one of the key areas for improvement identified by Ofsted and commended the department for the significant improvements made and the difference to outcomes being evidenced. There are now much smaller pockets which require targeted improvement, and a variety of feedback methods are being used across all curriculum areas, which the students are seeing the benefit of through their own progress.

Resolution: The Board **noted** the Student Feedback update.

MW left the meeting.

34/2122 Performance Report

The Deputy Principal (DP) presented the Performance Report, which included a curriculum update, student data, Teaching, Learning and Assessment, QDP Student Survey, FEC feedback Ofsted preparation and Safeguarding/Prevent. The following key focus items for discussion with the Board were raised.

T-Levels

The DP provided the Board with an update on the College's current position with T-Levels. The College will be delivering 4 pathways from 2023 and plans are already underway due to the large size and intensity of the programme, including the significant element of work experience/industry placements. The College is currently speaking to the awarding bodies who are awarding the qualifications and planning the initial centre visits. The DP has also made contact with 2 other colleges who are currently piloting T-Levels, and they have agreed to buddy up with the College's Curriculum Managers in each of the 4 pathways; Onsite Construction, Digital, Education and Childcare, and Healthcare Science, which will serve to benefit the College and help to avoid the pitfalls experienced as part of the pilot phase. This will then lead in to training for the delivery staff, supported by colleges and external training events. The Curriculum Directors are also attending strategic sessions about developing and implementing the T-Levels and will attend a future Standards Committee to provide a further update once more information has been obtained.

Alongside, there is a good opportunity for the T-Level Capacity Fund to upgrade current facilities so that they are fit for purpose for the new T-Level delivery. The College has chosen the Health and Social Care pathway to target and is looking to create a replica of a hospital ward on the 2nd Floor of South Block, which will be a multi-purpose space for Health & Social Care, Childcare and Adult Access (Midwifery/Nursing) students. The bid is currently being written with a 4-week turnaround and Bond Bryan have been commissioned to support with the architectural design. Due to the deadline being prior to the next meeting, the Board were asked to provide delegated authority to the Chair and Chair of Finance Committee to approve submission of the bid. Once the bid is written, the appropriate level of matched funding will be considered and agreed, which will come from either the College's own cash or bank loan.

In summary, the DP reported that T-Level plans are going well and is confident that the College will be in a great position to offer the 4 pathways. The Onsite Construction pathway will link in fantastically with the Staveley Towns Board deal as the qualification will be delivered on a live site with employers, with students building new houses.

Information will be added to website to start promoting the courses available next year and the Board will be provided with further information over the coming months. **Action: DM to share more detail about T-Levels at a future meeting, particularly for governors who are new to education.**

Resolution: The Board **approved** delegated authority for BK/JC to approve submission of the T-Level Capacity Fund bid.

Ofsted Priorities

The DP provided the board with an overview of the preparation which has taken place and underway for the upcoming inspection, including conversations with other colleges who have gone through recent inspection, and it was reported that the College is in a good position in terms of its own preparation.

The College's Strategic Quality Improvement Group meets on a monthly basis and has continued to focus on the key inspection judgements and Ofsted Preparation. The group has recently co-ordinated 35 staff to go out across College unannounced to speak to students regarding the Ofsted key themes, which showed promising improvements across College and identified the small pockets of areas which required targeted improvements.

The recent Teaching and Learning Festival also focused on one of the key areas for improvement identified by Ofsted, Spelling and Grammar, which was still a theme within the monitoring visit. A vast amount of resource was used to target this area and the Quality Team developed and delivered an array of training throughout the day. The previously used acronym of SPAG has been replaced with GPS for targeted support with Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling across College.

The training was well received by staff and the initial feedback and impression is that this is being implemented effectively across College.

Staff Governor, LN, obtained feedback from several areas across College and reported that the overall feedback from staff's perspective was positive. Staff appreciated the format and style of the training, active participation, time allowed for information digest and break-out discussion topics, which enabled sharing of best practice. LN's Teaching Triangle created a presentation from the information received and fed this back to the curriculum area.

LM commended the College for its training and staff development approach, noting the importance of reflective learning and providing autonomy to the teaching role, which reflects national practice.

Key Outcomes/Updates from Standards & Performance Committee

The Performance Report was presented to and scrutinized by the Standards & Performance Committee (SPC) on 1/2/22.

The DP and Chair of SPC advised that there was robust challenge received from governors and the Committee now has three further education specialists, including the new co-opted governor who is the Assistant Principal at Dudley College which was the College's outstanding partner as part of the Strategic College Improvement Fund (SCIF project).

The Committee discussed the curriculum developments being made across the College, including examples of best practice from within individual directorates. There was a key focus on the outstanding key areas for development and the Committee scrutinised the College's Ofsted priorities and how it is ensuring the required improvements.

CH: The Board asked whether there were still any curriculum areas who were lagging behind or not addressing the issues as effectively as they need to. The DP advised that there is no entire area which causes concern, however, there are a few small pockets who require further support and development. Following a walk-around, there has been a new curriculum design put in place within Art and Design to better support the curriculum and the improvements required. The DP advised that there is no major theme and that the key areas for development have been identified at a granular level. In terms of staff, the DP reported that their willingness and commitment to improve is fantastic.

The Board asked how comfortable the typical 16-18 student would be to provide feedback that they are not happy with an element of their study programme or College life. The DP advised that all students are very confident in providing honest and open feedback and independent learner voice is being captured more than ever before through the GOAL activity undertaken by staff such as the LEAPs/TLQLs/Managers/Outstanding Practitioner, opposed to being captured by the student's own tutor. Feedback from a student has enabled the College to dig deeper, target intervention and drive forward the improvements required in order to raise the students' aspirations.

Students are advised of the importance of their feedback from the point of induction and are encouraged to participate with the student voice through talking directly to staff or through the student council, which is attended by the Principal. The DP advised that the students are very mature and understand that not all of their requests are feasible, however, they appreciate that the College do listen and will support wherever possible ('You said, we did').

CH: In terms of the performance data within the report, the Board noted that the November results for the English and maths re-sits were not as high as last year, and asked whether this outcome had been predicted. The DP advised that the dip had been anticipated due to a larger volume of being put into the exam. This was because the College wanted to provide students with the opportunity to sit a real exam before their main exam at the end of the year, as many had never sat an exam at school due to Covid-19 restrictions and the introduction of Teacher Assessed Grades. More students who received a lower grade were put in for the re-sit. This has allowed the College to identify where there are gaps in learning and use the results as a diagnostic tool. Students also have increased confidence and awareness of what is expected and are receiving targeted support.

CH: In terms of the 16-18 KPIs, the Board noted that attendance was slightly lower than the anticipated target, however, the retention is higher; and queried whether there was a correlation between these figures. The DP reported that sectorially, the College is doing very well with attendance and there has been a big focus on this, including the "Reset" week after half-term. There are pockets of students with low-attendance and no specific group who have not attended for several weeks. The College has engaged with these students and their parents to tackle the attendance issues, and the reasons have been identified and are being addressed with appropriate support put in place to achieve. On the contrary, the College has also celebrated the high-attenders; 250 certificates have been awarded to students whose attendance is above 97%. Vocation attendance is still above 90%, the 88.8% reported is combined with English and maths which is around the 80% mark. From speaking with other providers, DM advised that this puts the College in a strong position.

LM, Chair of SPC, assured the Board that the Quality Team are thoroughly scrutinising the pockets for improvement and identifying gaps which are difficult to find, noting that effective quality practices means that more areas for development will be uncovered. LM and the SPC as a whole is confident that the College has the tools and strategies in order to address them and that on the whole, staff are welcoming to and driven by the improvement required.

LM is also working the LEAPs and TLQLs with the "branding" of the College's wraparound 'Aspire Programme' in order to increase staff and students' awareness of its impact across College.

Safeguarding

The DP reported that all safeguarding procedures continue to be in place and there has been an increase in referrals, especially within peer on peer abuse. The Board were assured that this was deemed as a positive outcome as the referrals directly followed a session which was delivered to students, demonstrating that students have felt confident enough to flag events that have happened previously and are now coming forward, which allows the Safeguarding Team to put the appropriate support measures in place. Mandatory Safeguarding training for staff is also fully up to date.

CH: The Chair asked how effectively the safeguarding procedures were applied to apprentices. LMck, link governor for apprenticeships, advised that he was confident that the apprentices are getting the same, high level support from the College's Safeguarding Team and that they are confident in coming forward for support where required. The Vice Principal for Quality Improvement and Assurance advised that whilst apprentices can be harder to reach out to because of the nature of the apprenticeship and employer, positive feedback has been received from the dedicated LEAP Mentor for work based learning in terms of safeguarding training and referrals.

The action plan for the College's Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter is currently under review in order for all cross-college activity to be reflected in one central strategic plan. This will include reference to the recent mental health and wellbeing audit in relation to staff, which has been carried out as part of the Senior Mental Health Leads training programme.

Safeguarding reporting systems remain under development, which will allow for more streamlined processes and more accurate data reporting in relation to safeguarding referrals and interventions. This will inform future reports to the Safeguarding Committee and allow for a more effective overview of the safeguarding landscape across the College.

Resolution: The Board **received** and **noted** the contents of the Performance Report

35/2122

Finance & Corporate Services Report

KO presented the Finance & Corporate Services Report, highlighting the following key points in relation the management accounts.

Management Accounts – Period 5

The Period 5 (P5) Management Accounts to 31/12/21 were provided, including additional schedules for the AEB and Apprenticeship funding trackers which governors were encouraged to review. The Board were advised that further schedules will be added, which will be picked up by the new Vice Principal for Finance & Corporate Services as part the induction process.

At P5, the College has an operational deficit of -£634k (-£559k variance against budgeted deficit of -£75k). A detailed income and expenditure account was provided, detailing variances against budget for the following income streams; 16-18, Adult Education Budget (AEB), Apprenticeships, HE Tuition Fees, Advanced Learner Loans, Other Grant and Catering. The main key areas of income shortfall were flagged as follows:

- AEB – Current shortfall of £380k against budget due to timing. The funding tracker indicates that income of £1,968k will be generated in the full year which is marginally higher than the allocation of £1,964k. The full year forecast has been included at £1,964k which is £313k lower than the figure included in the budget. The budget assumed that an allocation would be received for TS2000 but this did not materialise. The budget also assumed that 103% of the allocation would be achieved. The current forecast assumes 100% achievement, although if the College were to deliver 103%, then this would result in additional income of £59k. Additional income of £246k relating to the prior year has been included.
- Apprenticeship Funding – Current shortfall of c.£300k below budget with details illustrated in the apprenticeship funding tracker. Although student recruitment numbers are on plan, the budgeted income figures for the year were overstated as a result of employer contributions being incorrectly treated as College income. The full year forecast indicates that there will be a shortfall against budget of £830k.
- HE Tuition Fees: Current shortfall of £106k, with student recruitment being 280 against the plan of 345. A recruitment drive for January 2022 is under way with a view to mitigating the position. The full year forecast is showing an anticipated shortfall of £230k.
- Catering – Current shortfall of £102k, £89k of which is due to the closure of Lilypad. The full year forecast income is currently anticipated to be £266k lower than budgeted, with £215k being as a result of the Lilypad closure.

The key risks to the income shortfall were identified as follows:

- Apprenticeship Income – Recruitment numbers are currently in line with plan but the original budget calculations were flawed with excess income of c.£600k being included. There are challenges in the Healthcare sector which could affect the ability to recruit apprentices and this is being closely monitored by management to try and mitigate the risk of under recruitment. Curriculum managers have been consulted regarding the likely outcome in their areas and although they have expressed confidence in achieving the current forecast, there is the risk that shortfalls may occur.
- AEB Income – As with Apprenticeship income, curriculum managers have been consulted regarding their forecasts and are confident of achieving them. The key risk area is activity on programmes for the unemployed (PFU) which accounts for c.50% of the planned delivery and is dependent upon Job Centres in providing relevant students.
- Pay Costs – Current pay costs are underspent by £155k as a result of support and teaching cost savings, primarily within the Senior Management Team. Savings have been enhanced as a result of careful management of recruitment,

including reviews of alternative options. Planned savings rely on close management control of recruitment and if the level of staff leavers were to fall then the opportunity to make savings would be adversely affected.

- General Non Pay Costs – General non-pay costs are currently overspent by £65k, with the key areas of impact being Exams due to timing and Consultancy Fees for the interim financial support prior to the appointment of the new Vice Principal. Significant savings are planned between now and 31 July and should these savings fail to materialise then this would adversely impact on the full year performance. The College gas supply contract is due to end on 31 March 2022. Initial quotations indicate that the annual cost will rise significantly on renewal with a potential impact in the region of £40k in the current year. This potential increase has not been factored into the current forecasts. It was noted that the original budget for general non-pay costs included a contingency of £300k.
- If all of the above risks were to materialise then the financial impact would be a total of -£585k, which would result in a financial health rating of “Requires Improvement”.
- It was also acknowledged that if a further COVID-19 outbreak were to occur then there is a risk that government policy on restrictions/lockdown could be made more severe.

Cash

A full cash flow analysis was provided to illustrate the cash movements at P5, together with a monthly forecast for the remainder of the financial year and for 2022/23 based on the anticipated financial performance which was included in the financial model submitted to the ESFA in July 2021.

The forecast cash movement at P5 was an outflow of £779k and the actual position was an inflow of £214k. The positive difference of £993k predominantly due to the receipt of Strategic Development Fund (SDF) of £567k, non-repayment of the 2020/21 AEB funding previously forecast to be £125k and higher ESFA apprenticeship receipts due to timing. The lowest point in the year for cash is in March 2022 when the closing balance is currently forecast to be at £1,303k.

In terms of capital expenditure in the year to July 2022, the forecast allows for general spend with an additional £500k being included in respect of the SDF project, the funds for which have been part received in December 2021. No additional spend in respect of the Further Education Capital Transformation Fund (FEFTC) project has been included in the period to July 2022 over and above the £60k legal and professional fees already incurred.

The current bank loan facility expires in July 2022 and discussions with the bank commenced in June 2021 regarding renewal. We have agreed to provide Barclays with an updated forecast for the current year which will form a basis for the bank covenants to be agreed. A discussion will also be held with the bank with a view to relaxing the current years’ covenants. This will minimise the risk of any breakage which would render the total borrowings to be treated as all due within 12 months and as a result adversely impact on the financial health rating.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the Period 5 Management Accounts.

Reforecast

A revised full year forecast (RF1) has been prepared and this currently indicates a full year operating surplus of £168k; £108k lower than the original budget.

The best case and minimum required to maintain a financial health rating of “Good” would be an operating surplus of £277k and £82k respectively. The Board were informed that a “Requires Improvement” financial health rating would be applied if the operating deficit were to fall below £82k, assuming no further changes to profit/losses on sale of fixed assets. Bank covenants are currently forecast to be met and would continue to do so in the case of the minimum required performance.

The full year forecast reflects an anticipated shortfall in income of £1,270k being offset by £234k through AEB income for 2020/21, plus savings of £359k on pay costs and £659k on non-pay costs:

- Pay cost savings are anticipated to continue to be made at a similar rate for the remainder of the year. These savings will be enhanced by a recent decision to reduce staffing levels in the Business Support functions by the equivalent of 9.64 FTEs. This will generate in-year savings of £100k less one-off termination costs of £51k. The maximum benefit will be seen in the 2022/23 financial year, with full year savings of £298k anticipated as a result of this exercise with a reduction in the pay to income ratio of 1.1%. The DoHR advised that the consultation process will run to 10/3/22 and a number of redeployment opportunities are being considered (approximately 50%) which would save c.£50k redundancy costs.
- General non pay costs are currently overspent by £70k and work has commenced to make significant cost reductions in order to achieve the full year savings of £623k. Meetings have been held with all budget holders and reductions in planned spend agreed. However, further work in this area is required and budget holders have been tasked with making further reductions equating to 4.2%.
- The Board were assured that work has commenced to make significant cost reductions in order to achieve the full year savings of £623k. Meetings have been held with all budget holders and reductions in planned spend agreed. However, further work in this area is required and budget holders have been tasked with making further reductions equating to 4.2%.

- In order to support this exercise, key spend areas will be monitored by SMT on a weekly basis via an expenditure tracker. In addition, the supply of stationery and office cleaning supplies is to be centralised over half term which is intended to reduce stock carried and ensure best prices on purchases is achieved.

The Chair reiterated to the Board that the implications of falling below £82k would move the College into 'Requires Improvement' (RI) in terms of its financial health for 2021/22 but it is anticipated that this would revert back to 'Good' in 2021/22. The Board noted that this was not just a local issue for the College but a wider national challenge within the sector at present. The Principal advised that whilst there is still £1.2m income to come from new starts for AEB and Apprenticeship provision until the end of year, there is still a risk attached to recruitment; not in terms of vacancies but in the number of applicants received which is reflective of the current labour market. If the College thinks it will fall into RI financially come April/May, an advanced and transparent conversation will be held with the FEC Lead with in order to support the College. The Board acknowledged that the College has a robust budget and recovery plan, supported by an effective senior management team with the addition of the new Vice Principal for Finance. The College is starting to address the pay to income ratio, has active plans in place for 22/23 student recruitment and applications are currently ahead of this time last year. With this in mind, the Board were reassured that any intervention would likely be short-term and should be considered as a supportive measure to drive the College forward, from what would be the top-end of RI.

The Chair of Finance Committee agreed that he was confident that any risk would be short term to the measures being put in place and assured the Board that the Committee will be keeping a close on the matter.

Resolution: The Board **approved** Reforecast 1 for 2021/22.

Bad Debt Write-off

The Board were requested to approve the write-off of unrecoverable bad debt to the total value of £15,718.94. This has been provided for in the year-end bad debt provision.

The Board thanked KO for his financial services to the College throughout his interim period.

Bank

The Vice Principal for Finance & Corporate Services informed the Board that he and Rod Morris would be meeting with the bank on 23/2/22 as part of his induction preliminary but also to discuss the reforecast and refinance, as well as the matched funding required for the development fund.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the bad-debt write off request.

Resolution: The Board **received** and **noted** the contents of the Finance & Corporate Services Report.

Corporate Report

The Principal presented the Corporate Report which included an update on the National Picture (including Government Policy and Legislation), Strategic Relationships/Events, Key Performance Indicators, FE Commissioner Report and Health & Safety. A further overview and discussion was provided for the following key focus items.

The Board were provided with a summary in relation to the latest positions of the Skills White Paper, initial information regarding Levelling Up and Devolution. The AoC is currently trying to influence the government concessions prior to the White Paper becoming law. JB has shared a paper with the Board which provides an indication of what the county deal is looking like for D2N2. The Principal proposed that once the new White Paper becomes law, the Board should hold a more strategic conversation in terms of the implications for the College and areas of growth in terms of skills requirements for the local area and strategic partnerships. This will influence the strategic plan moving forward.

The Board agreed to keep this as an active discussion on its agenda in order to keep a close eye on the government mood music and to ensure that the College is engaging with the dialogue. Skills and employment will be a key element of any future county deal. JB advised that the College should have a clear view of what it would like out of the local county deal and ensure that it takes up all of the opportunities to help develop the deal, liaising closely with the LEP and Chamber of Commerce who will be acting as brokers.

A discussion was held around the importance of linking the skills agenda to the green agenda and sustainability. JB advised that renewables and sustainable growth was a core theme of all major government announcements and as a College, it needs to keep up and lead in this area working closely with employers to understand how it can support the labour market skills gap in this area. The Principal advised that the Director of Engineering & Construction had recently attended a conference around this subject and a working group will be set up after Easter to look at the environmental and sustainability agenda with JH invited in his new Link Governor capacity. There is an FE roadmap which the College will need to follow in terms of being able to navigate the agenda, and it will not just be restricted to reviewing the estate and how the College operates but also how it educates its students, in terms of their awareness and involvement with local community projects. The College has already discussed some potential new

short qualifications which City & Guilds which could be put in as additionally for 16-18s, and it is hoped that the students could then work with local D2N2 businesses to help support their own environmental agendas, as part of work experience. **Action: JR/DM to invite JH to the new sustainability agenda working group meeting.**

The Head of Governance advised that the Strategic Session scheduled for 17 June will focus on a review of the College's strategic plan, linking it to the Skills White Papers, curriculum developments and strategic partnerships.

Key Performance Indicators

The Board received the full KPI summary, noting the commentary provided for each target. As at 31/1/22, the KPI achievement was rag rated as 35% green, 30% amber and 35% red. However, the finance KPIs relate to Period 5.

The Principal advised that the student performance related KPIs were holding up well and whilst retention has dipped since November, it remains very high at 5.8% above the KPI. It was noted that some withdrawals are now starting to come which is typical for this period in the year, and any low level behaviours have been raised with the students and their parents, and will be addressed as part of the reset week.

Resolution: The Board **received** and **noted** the KPI Update as at 31/1/22.

FE Commissioner's Report

The College has now received the FE Commissioner Report following its last monitoring visit on 15/12/21.

The FEC Team interviewed senior leaders, staff, Corporation and Committee Chairs and the Head of Governance, reviewing over 30 documents and undertaking a full review of the College's quality improvement agenda and finances. They fully endorsed the approaches and developments, both in terms of quality and finance, and removed the College from early intervention. Five of the seven recommendations were signed off, however, the recommendation to address pay costs as a percentage of income was left open and the FEC Team stressed the need for this to be addressed to the senior team and Chair. The Board also needs to undertake an external governance review in 2022/23. The full report was shared with the Board.

The Board commended the College for this excellent achievement and credited the staff for their significant work and efforts to drive and deliver improvements across the College Group.

Health & Safety/COVID-19 Update

An update from the Health & Safety Committee was included within the report, including agreed actions, statutory audits and reports, and mandatory training.

COVID-19

The Vice Principal for People & Culture provided an update on COVID-19 at the College.

There have been a total of 194 (142/52 staff) reported cases of COVID-19 so far in the academic year (a further 19 cases since the report was written). The previous year's comparison at this stage was 48, although this coincided with a full lockdown when there were no students in College. There have been a total of 61 positive cases since January 2022, although the rate of reported cases has started to decline.

In line with a number of government announcements over recent weeks relating to face coverings in class, changes to self-isolation periods and lateral flow testing, the College has continued to provide regular updates to staff, students and apprentices. The College has continued to provide resources to support COVID-19 risk assessments and protocols including lateral flow test and face covering distribution, anti-bacterial "grab bags" and routine daily cleaning and infection control.

The ongoing risks have been considered as part of the Strategic Risk Register which has a dedicated risk for COVID-19. COVID-19 currently represents one third of all sickness absence and this continues to have a financial impact in terms of sick pay and cover for those staff who are on long-term sick. In light of this, the risk score has not been downgraded.

Following the government's recent proposal to remove the self-isolation requirement, the College is not not proposing to remove self-isolation within College and concerns have been raised with the AoC in order to get a steer from them and the DfE on how it should address the situation.

Resolution: The Board **received** and **noted** the contents of the Corporate Report.

37/2122

Governance Report

The Head of Governance (HoG) presented the Governance Report which, in addition to the key items highlighted below, included ratified committee minutes and an update in relation to any Chair's Action/Written resolutions or Committee-approved policies since the previous meeting.

Mandatory Training

The Board were reminded of the importance of completing the mandatory Safeguarding and Prevent training following the online training session delivered by the Director of Student Experience & Wellbeing (Designated Safeguarding Lead) on 17 November. Full details of the outstanding requirements were provided within the report and all outstanding governors were asked to complete the training as matter of urgency.

Corporation Complaints Procedure

The HoG presented the new Corporation Complaints Policy which had been reviewed by the G&S Committee and recommended for Board approval.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the new Corporation Complaints Process.

Link Governor Engagement

The Board reviewed the Link Governor Scheme engagement/activity log and positive feedback was provided by governors SMS and PB following their recent visits to College to undertake link governor activity. The written feedback forms were shared with the Board for information and the HoG advised that all feedback will be made available on the governor portal.

Action: HoG to add Link Governor Feedback to the portal.

Resolution: The Board **received** and **noted** the contents of the Governance Report.

38/2122 Statutory Reporting

The HoG advised that LM had recently reviewed and signed-off, alongside the Principal, the College's Safeguarding and Prevent Action Plan in her capacity as Safeguarding Link Governor. The full action plan has been shared with the Safeguarding Committee for information.

There were no updates reported in relation to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion or Health and Safety.

EP/LH (Staff Governors) & DM/CA/JRo (SMT) left the meeting.

39/2122 Confidential Items

Confidential items were discussed and are minuted under Part 2.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the confidential minutes of the previous meeting held 16 December 2021.

40/2122 Date of Next Meeting

7 April 2022

The meeting concluded.