



STRATEGY, GOVERNANCE AND SEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of an Extraordinary Part I Meeting
Held on Zoom on Tuesday 7 May 2024 at 5pm

Present:	Paul Britton	<u>Meeting Attendance</u>	
	Tina Coates	(5 out of 5)	
	Rob Lewis	(4 out of 5)	
	Gillian May (Group Principal & Chief Executive)	(5 out of 5)	
	Angela Wellings	(3 out of 5)	
Apologies:	Ian Thomson	(4 out of 5)	
In attendance:	Tracy Reeve	Director of Governance	(5 out of 5)

ACTION

MINUTE

No

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Ian Thomson.

2. Notification of Any Other Urgent Business

There was no other business notified.

3. Declarations of Interest

No Member declared a conflict of interest with the agenda.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 13 March 2024

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 March 2024, having been previously sent to members, were agreed as a true record and would be taken as signed by the Chair.

All Members were agreed.

5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting held on 13 March 2024

The Director of Governance presented a report which confirmed that all matters arising had been actioned or were not yet due for action but were on track for completion.

The update was NOTED.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

6. TWFCG Annual Accountability Statement 2024

The Group Principal/ CEO (GM) presented the draft College Annual Accountability Statement 2024/25 for the committees consideration.

The meeting considered the draft TWFCG Accountability Statement which had been updated to focus on local skills needs and the links with the four key LSIPs to shape curriculum strategy. GM confirmed that all of the Senior Leadership Team had been involved in drafting the Accountability Statement which was supposed to be a 'succinct document'. The draft had also been discussed with other Berkshire Principals from a regional and pan-regional perspective. GM thanked SG&S Committee member Rob Lewis (RL) for his input in editing and proof-reading the draft; some changes had been made.

The meeting was reminded of the new guidance from Department for Education (DfE) 'Meeting Skills needs: Guidance on Annual Accountability Agreements 2024/25 and the Local Needs Duty' which was published in December 2023 (considered by SG&S Committee in February 2024. This DfE guidance replaced the 'Review of education or training in

relation to the local needs' guidance published in July 2022. The meeting noted that the 'Local Needs Duty' was the statutory duty set out in Section 52B Further and Higher Education Act 1992, as amended by the Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022 which came into force on 28 June 2022. GM highlighted that DfE had removed the need for colleges to publish two separate documents and enable them to fulfil both requirements for annual Accountability Agreements and the Local Needs Duty in a single annual return. For colleges and designated institutions in scope for the Local Needs Duty, (this includes all FE and sixth form colleges), this return was also required to report on how well the education and training they provided met local needs and what actions they and other providers could take to meet those needs better, in particular to better ensure learners have the skills needed to secure suitable employment. GM confirmed that the Accountability Statement as presented covered this 'duty to review'.

The meeting was informed that two new sections had been added to this report for 2024/25. GM highlighted the first which was the table in Section 8 of the report which was a summary of the work undertaken under the 'duty to review' and outlined the work done with other FE Colleges in Oxfordshire and Berkshire. This RAG rated template had been developed by WFCG and was being used by the other FE Colleges to summarise progress; it had been approved at the Berkshire Principals meeting in the previous week. The meeting discussed the areas where there was more work to be done, e.g. Skills for the Built Environment for 19+ learners. GM informed the meeting that WFCG was aiming to take learning from the Skills Bootcamps and professionalise it through buying in up-to-date industry expert input to 19+ adults courses. This would further professionalise the adult training experience. GM informed the meeting that within the Care sector the colleges had agreed on specialisation – the recent Ofsted inspection had applauded that regional colleges were not duplicating provision. This was also true for other areas including Apprentices – WFCG were leading on Screen Industries but not delivering care apprenticeships. GM informed the meeting that this collaborative approach was working well but there was still a need to identify a solution to cohesive provision in all aspects Haulage and Logistics. The meeting was reminded that WFCG ran HGV training within Motor Vehicle for 16-18 plus apprentices but no college was providing wider haulage and logistics skills e.g. forklift certification on short courses.

GM informed the meeting that the second new addition for 2024/25 was the addition of WFCG's Skills Strategy which had been well received by the Ofsted Team in March 2024.

The meeting was reminded that the draft priorities from the following key Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) for TWFCG (Thames Valley: Berkshire and Oxfordshire, Surrey and West London) had been published in May 2023 and had fed into the draft TWFCG annual accountability statement 2023; this had been reviewed and revised for 2024. GM confirmed that the Accountability Statement 2024/25 required Corporation approval and had to be submitted to the ESFA by 30 June 2024. There was also a requirement to publish this document on the college website within three months of the start of the academic year (i.e., by 1 December 2024).

GM asked for PB to give any feedback on the Accountability Statement from his perspective as CEO of the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce. PB agreed that the use of the RAG rating was an effective way to focus on progress and to highlight areas for further work. Although he agreed with the 'mixed picture' summary he asserted that progress on the Skills agenda made by WFCG was strong; as validated by the recent Ofsted inspection. An example of this was the strong progress on Screen Skills at Windsor in a short time. PB confirmed that the ongoing national review of the LSIPs would include a review of the national picture on haulage and logistics. Current anecdotal evidence suggested that there was work to do on promoting that sector on a national basis. This would include higher qualifications around supply chain management which was an area for skills development since leaving the EU. PB suggested that this national perspective might give context to the college position. GM suggested that it would be useful to get insights into a large organisations supply chain management to share with SMEs and small warehouse operators. If the larger organisations could share learning with their own supply chain SMEs this would be a good start. PB suggested that the CEO should meet with a large local logistics company to look at areas for development.

ACTION: Facilitate a conversation between CEO of WFCG and large local logistics organisation 'W' Logistics.

PB/ GM

MINUTE
No

ACTION

AW asked the Executive Team to engage with the local FE Colleges in Milton Keynes and Bedford where there were numerous huge warehouses to understand what the colleges were doing in relation to Haulage and Logistics.

GM

After consideration, the meeting suggested the following additional amendments to the draft before presentation to the Board (on Friday 17 May 2024) for approval.

- Governors (RL) suggested that the current format of the RAG rating was not correct – as ‘red’ should be used where expected progress and provision was below optimum. ***In areas where the College did not aim to provide – for example where other Colleges within the region were providing this training – the red RAG rating should be changed to ‘grey’.***
- AW suggested that the ‘Common themes across the region’ section on page 12 was not worded very well; the tone of the text was too negative. ***The acronyms in this section should be explained and the text redrafted to reflect positive opportunities.***
- PB suggested adding in quotes from local SME’s to reflect positive examples and progress. This had been done for the Screen Industries work and Ofsted and would add to this document. ***GM agreed that she would add these quotes from employers and some of the feedback coming out of the Skills Bootcamps from employers.***
- ***PB also suggested that the College’s recent success in engaging with Heathrow Airport should be reflected.***

The meeting agreed that the Accountability Statement would need regular review to look for new opportunities and should continue to be taken to Strategy Governance & Search (SG&S) Committee on a regular basis.

The meeting APPROVED the draft version of TWFCG’s Annual Accountability Statement 2024/25 subject to the suggested amendments and noted corrections.

It would be RECOMMENDED to the Board on 17 May 2024 for final approval before submission to the ESFA to meet the 30 June 2024 deadline.

All Members were agreed.

7. **Any urgent business**

There had been no other urgent business notified.

8. **Meeting Close**

The meeting closed at 6.45pm

Chair.....

Date.....