

Minutes of: HLNSC Governing Board

Date: 4pm 8th April 2025

Location: Board Room, Oswestry Campus

Present	Attending
Alan Layng (Chair) Dave Williams (Principal) Jeremy Nicholls Laura Johnston Peter Houghton Mark Roberts Joe Davey Julia Evans Tony Bramley Toby Kinnaird Ian Scott-Bell	Jo Ricketts (Deputy Principal) Clare Perez (Director of Finance) Vicki Bushell (Director of HR) Sam Tomkins (Acting Clerk to Governors) Helen Trembeth (Clerk to Governors)
Quoracy: Meeting was quorate	

1. **Apologies for Absence** - Apologies were received from Zachary Owen (Student Governor), Gillian Herbert, Ben Greenwood (Staff Governor), Krista Price (Staff Governor)
2. **Declarations of Interest** – David Williams - Board member of IOT.
3. **Minutes of last meeting**
 - a. **Minutes of meeting held 8th October 2024** - minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record
 - b. **Matters arising** – no matters arising not already on the agenda
4. **New Appointments to the Board (recommended by Search & Governance Committee)**
The Board recorded that there were no new appointments.
5. **Report from Principal**
The Principal presented his report, and highlighted key areas, including:
 - A visit from Shelagh Legrave , FE Commissioner and Fiona Wilmott, Deputy Director ESFA Midlands and Southwest on our request involving campus tours of Hereford and Holme Lacy. It has widened remit to be supportive. The student protection plan with NMITE will need to be revisited.
 - The Principal reported from the SEND Assurance Board that the recent inspection of Herefordshire Council shows some improvements. A new autism school is being built in Hereford.
 - Relations continue to remain strong with Derwen college.

The Principal gave an update of IOTs for L4/5 provision. With a change in government, support was due to be removed at the end of academic year. A review has been made, and the plan is to keep IOTs until 2028. A decision needed as to whether the College withdraws

from Black County and Marches IOT which the Principal sits on the Board. Board members asked about Wolverhampton University and their withdrawal. IOT board are looking for a new HE establishment. Board members also asked about DfE views on IOTs. This will be discussed at Annual Strategic conversation in May.

The Principal highlighted changes in funding and lift of 3.8%. The funding statement is pending. There has been a reduction of uplift for T-Levels and some funding will be issued for NI contributions which will be advised in May.

The Principal advised that the College is looking at the possibility of using the Cyber Centre in Hereford as a resource for HND/HTQ Cyber as recruitment is good. Upfront costs would be needed for JISC line and annual costs. Board members confirmed that they were happy with this development.

The Principal advised that the local authorities has approached the College about the development of housing in Holme Lacy by the school. The plan would be to develop student accommodation for blacksmithing, farriery students which would be leased to us. The School will remain in the village. Board members expressed the need to ensure that there will be no restrictions in the use of the development.

Action: The Principal to discuss plans with TB

The initial draft of the CEFFS review was shared for information. Essentially the College is very efficient. The report notes that curriculum and planning is late and that the college recruits late. Changes are already in place for the next academic year.

6. Report from Curriculum and Quality Committee

The Chair of C&Q presented a summary report to Board, highlighting that the Committee they were encouraged that applications are up. There has been a drop in attendance figures which rather than being a reduction across the board, this is focused on a smaller cohort with very poor attendance. Pastoral coaches and FSTS procedures are to be used for alternative attendance patterns.

The College is likely to be early candidate for an Ofsted visit in the new academic year. The Deputy Principal is looking for volunteers to go through SAR. JR to contact Mark Roberts regarding AoC Send.

b. College SAR – approved retrospectively by the Chair.

c. HLNSC Safeguarding Policy

This policy recommended by C&Q Committee for Board approval.

Decision: the Board agreed to approve the policy

d. Equality & Diversity policy

This policy recommended by C&Q Committee for Board approval.

Decision: the Board agreed to approve the policy

7. Report from Finance and Employment Committee

The Chair of the F&E Committee presented a summary report to the Board, highlighting the rise in uplift and changes to National Insurance which will impact the staff budget. Recruitment is still an issue for certain positions with more hourly paid staff being used. The Director of HR is looking to link in with military to bridge gaps in staff levels and work is underway to better embed HR & H&S processes down into middle management to ensure a more consistent application across the college.

Finance highlights showed that previously the FY25 budget showed a £400 deficient, it is more likely to be a deficient of £500 due to agency fees. A prudent approach had been issued and risks more likely to be on the upside. Capital projects are coming to an end. Currently running lower on cash days: ESFA say 30 and the College are in the low 30s. Predictions are better for next year.

A question was raised regarding agency staff. Areas for agency spend were H&SC, Engineering, Maths and long-term sickness. Traditionally staff have covered those in the past. Plan is to be more strategic go forward and tighten the parameters

- b. **Staff Annual Report** – this report was noted by the Board.
- c. **H&S Annual Report** - this report was noted by the Board.
- d. **Revised FY25 Sub-contract paper** – this report was noted by the Board.
- e. **Tuition Fees for 2025/26**
This policy recommended by F&E Committee for Board approval.
Decision: the Board agreed to approve the policy
- f. **Probation policy**
This policy recommended by F&E Committee for Board approval.
Decision: the Board agreed to approve the policy

8. Report from Audit Committee

Following an additional meeting in January, the Chair of Audit Committee presented a summary report to Board, reporting that there were no issues to raise regarding internal audits. It was noted that the “Assurance Review of Student Recruitment and Retention” had received ‘Substantial’ assurance and the “Assurance Review of Risk Management – Embeddedness” had received ‘Reasonable’.

The Public Procurement Act 2024 came into place in February and TIAA are offering a webinar. The Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that the Board Assurance Framework (BAF) will now be owned by each committee.

No questions were raised.

9. Report from Search and Governance Committee

- a. The Chair of the S&G Committee presented a summary report to the Board, recommending that the Board approve Peter Houghton joining the Audit Committee. Tony Bramley to continue

his term as Governor in December for another four years, and for Tony Ford and Kevin Tong to remain as co-optees on Audit Committee until August 2025. The

The Chair is to speak to Debbie Lambert with regards to continuing until August 2026 on C&Q Committee.

Decision: Board agreed to approve all the recommendations made.

Action: The Chair to speak to DL with regards to continuation on C&Q

10. Date and time of next meeting: 4pm Tuesday 8th July (following 2.30pm Board Workshop)

11. Any Other Business:

No further business was raised.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A J Layng'.

Date: 15/01/2026