



Minutes
Meeting of the Corporation
Wednesday 23 September 2020 at 4.30pm
Remote access via Google Meet

PART 1

Present:

Daniel Clawson	Frank Pitkin
Jo Croft	Dave Snowden
Pippa Goodwin (<i>Chair</i>)	Jeremy Spooner
Gillian May (<i>Principal</i>)	Signe Sutherland
Chris Lambert	Ian Thomson
Gareth Osborn	Andrew Try
Janet Robertson	

Apologies: Neil Dew-Gosling

In attendance:

Anne Entwistle	<i>VP Curriculum & Students</i>
Richard Munday	<i>Finance Director</i>
Tracy Reeve	<i>Director of Governance</i>

The Governors had a short pre-meeting without members of the Executive Team present which was not formally minuted.

45/20 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Neil Dew-Gosling. The Chair informed the Corporation that Daniela Shanly had resigned as a governor of BCA at the start of September; DS had taken the decision to step back from all external commitments for a period of time. PG assured the meeting that DS would stay in touch and keep up with developments on campus. The meeting thanked DS in her absence for her input to BCA over the last few years, her educationalist knowledge and challenge would be missed. The Chair informed the meeting that she had asked Signe Sutherland to take over the role of Chair of the Quality of Education Committee; there was unanimous approval from Corporation Members for this new appointment.

46/20 Notification of any other business

There was no other business notified.

47/20 Notification of Members interests

There were no interests notified.

48/20 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2020

The minutes were approved and would be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

49/20 Matters Arising from the minutes of 8 July 2020

There were no other matters arising that were not already included on the agenda.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

50/20 Governance Matters

- **Corporation Annual Schedule of Business**

The meeting considered the planned annual schedule of business for Corporation and Committee meetings during 2020/21.

The Annual Schedule of Business for 2020/21 was APPROVED as presented.

- **Governors' Attendance 2019/20**

The Director of Governance (TR) reported on attendance of Governors during 2019/20. Overall attendance rate for Corporation and all sub-committee meetings in 2019/20 was 88% (120 attendances out of 137). This exceeded the Governance KPI target for overall attendance of 70% for 2019/20 and was the same as the prior year figure. However, TR highlighted that there were less meetings in 2018/19 when the total attendance figure would have been 104 attendances compared to the 137 in 2019/20. Maintaining this strong attendance rate when making increased demands on governors' time (a 32% increase in meetings) was commended. Governors agreed that the transfer to online meetings had helped with attendance. The meeting agreed that a continuing focus during 2020/21 should be increasing Governors' Link Scheme visits which would enable the Corporation to have an increased focus on Teaching Learning and Assessment. **The Principal highlighted an error on page 25 in HE Oversight Committee attendance: the figure in the final column for KB should read 50% not 100%.** TR confirmed that this had no impact on the overall Corporation totals.

NOTED

- **Biennial review of Instrument & Articles**

The Director of Governance (TR) presented the BCA Instrument and Articles (I&A) for biennial review. The meeting noted that there had been no change to this governance document since last presented to the Corporation for approval. TR confirmed that the I&A did not need any amendment as it continued to enable the Corporation to carry out its business with no impediment; the I&A had been amended some years ago to facilitate any need for online governance.

The BCA Instrument and Articles were APPROVED as presented.

51/20 COVID-19 Update

The Principal gave the meeting a verbal update on operational changes made in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. In order to facilitate the required social distancing and creation of curriculum 'pods' (bubbles) the College was delivering a 2 day a week campus experience with a 1 day online blended learning for the delivery of English, maths, tutorials and portfolio work. All students with the exception of Foundation learners would receive their curriculum in this way from 7th September 2020; this arrangement would remain in place throughout the 2020/21 academic year. The food outlets on campus were also operating on a grab-and-go basis with learners returning to their 'bubbles' to eat food. Health and Safety Committee was continuing to meet on a regular basis and feedback from staff earlier in the day had been positive around the Covid-19 precautions put in place. One issue of ongoing concern was ensuring that learners wore facemasks as requested; this was a particular issue on the College buses. SLT were boarding all buses before they left campus in the evening to remind students of the importance of wearing masks for the whole journey.

The other issue was the current lack of availability of Covid tests; BCA had 385 staff, 1615 learners and had only been given 10 tests. Anecdotal evidence was that any staff or learners

requiring a test were having to travel long distances. The Principal highlighted that this could become an issue moving forward if there were more cases of staff needing a test before they were able to return to work. The meeting noted that there were currently 36 students not attending College due to self-isolation but there had been no positive test results to date in staff or students. The bubble system was working very well with staff and students respecting the need to maintain social distancing. HoDs had reported that student interaction was good and that they were building relationships within their 'bubbles'. Attendance was good and withdrawals were at a lower level than would be usual for this time of term. Feedback from parents had also been very positive; they felt assured about the new procedures put in place. Staff Governor (JR) outlined all the additional cleaning and domestic services input to maintain safe spaces; sanitisation stations were available in each 'bubble's' area and regularly topped up with supplies. Governors commended the additional measures put in place and for the level of compliance achieved.

- **Health & Safety Risk Assessment: opening of BCA campus**

The meeting noted the latest version of the H&S Risk Assessment (RA.HAS.121) in relation to learners and staff coming back onto site from September 2020. The meeting was reminded that an earlier iteration of this Risk Assessment had been formally approved by the Corporation on 3 June 2020. Governors were given assurance by the Principal that this document was reviewed by the Exec team on a weekly basis and updated whenever required to meet all current guidance from Public Health England and DfE.

- **HR Update: furlough of staff**

The Principal gave the meeting a verbal update on the number of BCA staff who had been furloughed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and College closure. The 8 minibus drivers who were still furloughed in July 2020 had returned to College on 7 September.

The Covid-19 operational update was NOTED

52/20 Risk Register/ Board Assurance Framework

The meeting considered the Board Assurance Framework which clearly detailed the key strategic risks against the six agreed strategic priorities for BCA. This item was now a standing item for consideration at each Audit Committee and Corporation meeting. Governors noted that this document had been comprehensively reviewed to reflect the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic across all of the strategic priorities. The meeting was reminded that any change to the Risk Register was made after consideration at the Executive Team (the 4 SPHs), SLT, Audit Committee and then Corporation. The meeting discussed the following changes and the key risks which were currently rated as 'red' and the ongoing mitigation that was being provided against their crystallisation.

Risk 1 'Failure to address reductions in external funding results in the College being unable to remain a going concern. Failure to meet income targets. (Risk score post-mitigation reduced from 20 'red' to 15 'amber'): This risk posed an ongoing threat due to the impact of Covid-19 on commercial income and cash. The meeting noted and discussed the forecast financial impact on the College and the limited mitigation that had been put in place. The Principal highlighted the issues around the cash position which would be particularly difficult in spring 2021 as was usually the case. However, the September recruitment had been very strong and the target of 1,530 had been exceeded.

Risk 2 'Insufficient Capital investment in the listed asset, specifically Hall Place Mansion. (Risk score at 20 'red'): The meeting was reminded that the issue of securing the requisite funding for the future maintenance of the heritage assets was still uncertain as any development within 'greenbelt' land was still a contentious issue. The College was still

waiting for a response from RBWM Planners after the final planning application had been submitted in July 2020. This item was on the agenda for discussion later.

Risk 3 'Significant disruption resulting from Covid-19 pandemic' (Risk score at 16 'amber' reduced from 20 'red' after review at Audit Committee): The meeting was reminded that the issue of implementing the government guidance was very much an operational responsibility but governors should take assurance that the SLT were doing all they should to meet guidelines and all they could to secure quality ongoing learning for BCA students.

Risk 4 'Secure the full franchise agreement with the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) for all but the UoR provision. Improve the quality of the HE student academic experience as identified by the OfS' (Risk score remains at 16 'amber' after mitigation): The meeting was reminded that the HE Oversight Committee had been looking at the ongoing viability of HE provision at BCA and a decision to withdraw from non-franchised HE provision had been made earlier in 2020. The Principal informed the meeting that discussions were underway with another land-based college to take on the BSc Vet Physio programme from September 2021.

Risk 5 'IT failure with loss of data for staff and students' (Risk score at 15 'amber' after mitigation): This risk score had been kept at its heightened level since the Risk Register was last presented. The cyber-security action plan and the audit of this area that Audit Committee were keen for management to undertake as soon as possible would further mitigate the risk.

Risk 6 'Student Transport and lack of effective tracking of learners' (Risk score at 12 'amber' after mitigation): The meeting was assured that progress on the new student tracking system was being made.

Risk 7 'Quality and funding issues associated with the apprenticeship provision are not addressed' (Risk score of 12 'amber' after mitigation): The meeting was reminded that NARTS data published in March 2020 showed that BCA performance for 2018/19 was in the upper quartile nationally. The meeting was also reminded that all the BCA apprentices were still on-role with no break in learning due to Covid-19.

Risk 8 'LGPS Deficit increase was significant in 2019/20 (raised to £17.4m from £10.7m in prior year) and TPS contributions could also increase significantly. (Risk score at 12 'amber' after mitigation): The meeting was assured that the FD was networking wherever possible to ensure that BCA was in line with other Colleges. Anecdotal evidence was showing that most FE Colleges had experienced a massive jump in the LGPS deficit position for 2019/20 compared with the prior year.

The Principal informed the meeting that after seeking approval from the Audit Committee she had deleted the following low scoring risks from the Risk Register:

- Failure to maintain accurate and timely student data
- Study Programmes not meeting the requirements of the Ofsted Inspection Framework
- Inadequate Student support
- Failure to comply with GDPR requirements
- Failure to engage with local business community including the LEP.

The meeting commended this Risk Register/ Board Assurance format which underpinned the agenda for all Governing Body and sub-committee meetings.

The Board Assurance Framework/ Risk Register was NOTED and RECEIVED.

53/20 Anti Fraud Policy

The meeting considered this revised policy which was being recommended by the Audit Committee. The Finance Director informed the meeting that Audit Committee had asked that this document was clearly signposted to all staff via the HoDs.

The BCA Anti-Fraud Policy was APPROVED as presented.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

54/20 Health, Safety, Security and Wellbeing Annual Report 2019/20

The Corporation meeting noted a comprehensive report provided by the Director of Safety and Support Services which included details of H&S Management at BCA, Policy & Procedures, and details of Incident Reporting.

Management: Throughout the year The Director of Safety and Support Services (DSSS) had continued to visit departments and support them with all aspects of health and safety (H&S) requirements to embed a positive attitude to H&S. The DSSS had given regular updates via email, as well as at the Friday Leadership Team fortnightly meeting and the Tuesday Staff Briefing.

Coronavirus Covid-19 Risk Assessment and Action Plan: The meeting was reminded that the college had been closed to students from the 19th of March and most staff had worked from home from the 23rd of March. Essential workers for animals, livestock, equine, domestic services, and facilities had continued to access site on a rota basis with reduced hours. Risk assessment RA.HAS.120 was produced to outline the College closure process.

As previously discussed by the meeting, Risk assessment RA.HAS.121 had also been produced – in line with Government guidance - to enable a phased return to site. Additional controls which had been identified formed a Site Reopening Action Plan as part of the ongoing risk management. The risk assessment was being reviewed weekly by the Executive Team with the DSSS; when any significant change was made the new version was released to staff as an ongoing 'draft' working document.

Coronavirus Covid-19 Monitoring: The meeting was reminded that monitoring of all site users was essential to have traceable knowledge of any potential hot spots of Covid-19 infection in the local area. The College had a duty to report to Public Health England if two or more persons reported symptoms from the same group. In addition to this BCA staff and students could suffer challenge to their safety from other site users. For this reason, the College was using three self-declarations to gain assurance that people accessing the campus were not suffering symptoms of Covid-19: Staff Return to Work Self Declaration, Visitor/Contractors Self Declaration and Parent/Guardian's Self declaration.

Incident Reporting and investigation: The meeting was pleased to note that the H&S paperwork continued to be completed in a timely manner. The accident form had been relaunched in the autumn term 2019 with additional guidance for Heads of Departments to complete the corrective actions section. The total number of accidents during 2019/20 was 49 (compared with 65 in 2018/29, 83 in 2017/18, 173 in 2016/17, and 215 in 2015/16). The reason for the significant drop during this time period was mainly because the College no longer recorded equestrian falls and animal bites as a workplace accident, although this information was still noted departmentally.

There had been 1 RIDDOR reportable incident during the year, on 15 June 2020, when a member of staff accidentally tipped coffee on a colleague's foot when shaking a lidded flask. The hot liquid went inside the safety boot causing a burn to the ankle; the injured person was away from work, unable to perform normal duties for more than 7 days. The meeting was reminded that there had been 2 RIDDOR reportable incidents in the prior year.

Ten ('near miss') dangerous occurrences were investigated during 2019/20; the meeting was assured that these were not RIDDOR reportable. The details of the incidents were noted, and Governors were assured that the increase in numbers compared with the prior year figure (2) demonstrated that Staff were now more aware of H&S and better at incident reporting. This heightened reporting allowed the DSSS to investigate the near misses and for remedial action to be put in place by management after thorough investigation of the incidences. Data on types of accidents and types of injuries showing current year and the five-year trend was noted by the meeting.

Policy and Procedure: The meeting was assured that the DSSS would continue to review policy and procedures on a planned basis, or after an incident. Policies reviewed in the last quarter were Lockdown for Security Breaches, The Dog and Animal Policy, Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR), Noise, Vibration and Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER). In addition, a new policy covering Safe Use of Mobile Phones had been added for September 2020.

The link Governor for H&S (GO) commended the work undertaken by the DSSS over the last few years; this had served to embed the importance of H&S with all levels of BCA staff. The Principal informed the meeting that H&S on the campus had just been subject to an internal audit review; the report from this review would be taken to Audit Committee in November and Corporation in December 2020.

The Health and Safety Report 2019/20 was NOTED and RECEIVED.

55/20 Marketing Report 2019/20

The meeting received an update report written by BCA's Marketing Manager (LH) which summarised work undertaken as well as ongoing priorities.

Due to the restrictions imposed by Covid-19 the College's annual summer campaign 2020 had predominantly centered around digital activity but all the while ensuring targeted information was reaching the correct target group. The focus of the activities had been a 4-week Facebook and Instagram digital campaign working alongside local agency and digital specialists. At the midpoint of the campaign the College was seeing some very encouraging figures, including a number of last-minute online applications for 2020 and registrations for future open events. Governors commended the really strong presence of BCA on social media platforms; numerous governors received the regular posts and updates on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. Governors were impressed by the quality and content of these posts which served to show all aspects of studying at BCA or working with the College for employers.

The meeting noted that during the Autumn term the Marketing department would be working on the College's new full-time course guide; this had been redesigned into a handier A6 mini guide in hard copy. The digital prospectus and the greatly enhanced functional website, would allow the College to reduce printed literature and navigate people online to learn more about courses and apprenticeships. Governors commended this move towards a paper-free position. ***The Director of Governance would share the Digital prospectus with Governors as soon as it was finalised (early November 2020).***

In addition to the above, there were numerous ongoing projects including the College's forthcoming open days and taster days. Governors were given assurance that the Marketing Team were monitoring government guidance and would organise BCA events appropriately. Current plans were to use digital technology to support the October Open Day in a similar manner to the successful August Virtual Open Day. This had been the College's first attempt at a fully on-line experience for potential students and the Principal confirmed that feedback had been positive. Current plans for the October Open Day were a combination of online

resources and pre-booked on-site appointments to meet curriculum teams and have a tailored campus tour. The Chair informed the meeting that she had seen some of the video presentations from staff and students that would be used for the open day and to enhance the website; PG assured the meeting that they were excellent and shone a strong light on BCA learners and curriculum offer. The meeting noted that the calendar of curriculum Taster Days had been scheduled to start from January 2021, when ordinarily these would run from October each year. Governors sought, and were given, assurance that any early applicants for 2022 entry would be 'kept-warm' during any extended period of 'lockdown'. The Marketing Team were confident that the delayed start would give BCA time to plan accordingly for any eventuality surrounding the pandemic and the ongoing effect on events. Current plans for BCA representation at external events during 2020/21 were not yet certain. A number of the country shows that the College would ordinarily exhibit at had been postponed or cancelled and the Marketing Team were yet to hear from RBWM local schools about their careers fairs. The Principal took questions on this report from the meeting and **confirmed that she would invite the Marketing Manager to present to the Corporation during the first half of 2021.**

The meeting NOTED and RECEIVED the Marketing Update report

56/20 Annual Report to Transaction Unit

The Director of Finance presented a report summarising the overall progress made by the College against the outcomes agreed as part of the receipt of the Restructuring Facility (agreement dated 2 May 2018) between Berkshire College of Agriculture and the Secretary of State for Education. Corporation members were reminded that the College had been awarded a grant facility of up to £4.6m and a term loan facility of £1.3m.

Key milestones were noted under the following work-streams:

- i) Estates review: The College had submitted the estates plan and planning request to the RBWM in July 2020 and the details had been shared with the Transaction Unit.
- ii) Urgent infrastructure repair work:
Jacob Bancks Project - the roof repairs and restoration works were completed in autumn 2019 and the room had been handed back to the College; it was now used for teaching.
Residential Heating Upgrade - these works were now completed and the new heating and hot water systems were in full operation.
- iii) IT upgrades: These had been completed in full during the academic year 2018/19.
- iv) Restoration of the January 2014 pay cut: The return of salary to all staff commenced in August 2018 and had now completed a full year of payment. Governors were assured that salary levels would be maintained at this restored level going forward.
- v) Repayment of the loan to Lloyds Bank: This was repaid in full at the end of July 2018
- vi) Financial Outcome 2019/20: The meeting noted that a financial outcome update as at 31 July 2020 would be provided for the Transaction Unit once the latest version of the Integrated Financial Model for Colleges (IFMC) model had been completed.
- vii) Curriculum and quality outcomes as at 31.07.20: The TU had been informed of the positive outcome data for 2019/20 and that BCA continued to deliver year on year increases in achievement rates for all learners. Provisional data for the academic year 2019/20 indicated that achievement would again be in the upper quartile nationally.

The number of funded learners on role had been 1,488 against a target of 1,420. The College continued to earn its full ESFA contract and had received an additional £560k in ESFA funding for 2019/20 based on lagged learner funding. August enrolment was standing at 1,550 16-18-year olds at 7 September 2020; it was anticipated that BCA would earn its full

ESFA contract with the potential for some lagged funding for 2021/22. Apprenticeship provision remained in line with the agreed target, at the end of July 2020 the College had 158 apprentices on role split between levy and non-levy provision.

Estate Utilisation: The College had taken receipt of 4 portable classrooms for the academic year 2019/20 to accommodate the growing student numbers and provide the specialist resources for the continued increase in high needs learners.

Workforce: Staff utilisation as per the curriculum plan remained in line with target at 96.5%, and staff turnover at 15% was also in line with the agreed target. At the end of Quarter 4 2018/19 the college employed 374 staff with an FTE of 293.

Governors commended this very useful summary of the work that had been undertaken as a result of the College receiving the Restructuring Funds; the positive impact of the Grant Funding from the TU was clearly demonstrated. The meeting was reminded that all of the items on the post-completion checklist for the TU had been completed at the end of the 2018/19 academic year.

The annual progress report 2019/20 for the Transaction Unit was NOTED and RECEIVED.

57/20 Academic Report

- **Headline Data & Indicative Success rates 2019/20**

The meeting noted a report detailing the headline attendance and outcome data 2019/20; this data was also shown for the previous 2 years to demonstrate the three-year trend. Attendance during 2019/20 was at 91.6% for study programmes and 90.1% for English and 90.6% for Maths. The VP Curriculum and Quality (AE) confirmed that the attendance data was evidence of high engagement across all aspects of the study programme. The significantly improved attendance for both English and maths lessons reflected the improved communication and collaboration between all teaching and support staff which had been maintained during the Covid-19 lockdown. The meeting commended the largely positive picture with overall achievement continuing to improve; achievement was up by 4.7% on the previous year and was now at 95.3%. Pass rates had improved significantly with 100% of retained students gaining their qualification (96.2% in prior year). The meeting noted that retention had also improved for the 2019/20 academic year as overall retention was 0.8% above the prior year at 95.3%. Governors noted that the College target was to be firmly in the upper quartile for achievement and retention and these figures now met that criteria. Governors agreed that the 100% pass rate was a testament to the resilience and determination shown by both staff and students during this exceptional academic year. AE confirmed that the majority of courses were completed fully by the end of June 2020 so centre assessed grades (CAGs) were only required for one motor vehicle unit, one L1 land-based unit and 6 resit students. The remaining exam and alternative external assessments were completed prior to lockdown. The meeting also noted that all curriculum areas had received positive EQA reports following visits to verify standards. Detailed data by courses level for the 3 key performance indicators was also presented to the meeting. This data confirmed that all levels had exceeded the College KPI targets and there were no significant achievement gaps. ***The Chair of Quality Education Committee (SS) asked for value added data to be brought to the next meeting of Quality of Education Committee.***

- **English and maths**

The meeting noted the key headline data for GCSE English and maths for 2019/20 which showed the demonstrable improvement in outcomes over the last 3 years. The meeting was reminded that the emphasis for all learners at BCA was on making progress and on gaining

the skills required for a successful career. AE confirmed that achievement and progress within English and maths GCSE grades at BCA had followed the national trend upwards. Both teams were professional and rigorous in their approach to calculating grades; all internal assessment work and work produced in class had been considered to predict stretch and potential. Students were then ranked within grade boundaries. What could not be accounted for was how students would have responded to exam conditions. AE confirmed that further analysis and breakdown of data will be available at the next Quality of Education Committee meeting (17 November 2020) and prior to the November Quality Review Board (QRB) meetings.

- **Apprenticeships Update**

The meeting noted the update report and the current overall figure of 169 apprentices. The Principal highlighted the delay in timely completion for many of these apprentices; due to Covid-19 there have been delays with the End Point Assessments (EPA), the College was currently waiting for these to resume. There were also 53 new starts as of 14/09/20 which would allow the College to work towards maintaining and building on its WBL base post Covid-19. Governors noted that Floristry had been the worst hit industry under Covid-19 with business down as weddings had been cancelled this year. GM confirmed that BCA continued with the roll-on-roll-off programme which helped to minimise large enrolments at points in the year although students would still join in cohorts if they were classroom based. Governors noted that the new level 3 standard for green keeping had been approved in the summer; BCA started delivery in September 2020. The meeting was informed that the College had appointed a part-time compliance officer to maintain a high standard around this aspect of the work. This role would track the apprentice reviews to make sure they were happening every eight weeks.

The current course numbers, enrolment numbers by curriculum area for September 2020 were noted and governors noted details of the current business development pipeline for 2020/21 by the separate curriculum areas: agriculture (stockperson), arboriculture, floristry level 2 and 3, horticulture, landscaping operative, golf green-keeping level 2 and 3, motor vehicle and sports turf. ***Detailed tracking data by programme area was taken as read; the meeting suggested that this level of detail should be omitted from future reports to the Corporation.*** Governors spent some time discussing the difficulty in getting the Apprenticeships provision at BCA to contribute to the bottom line; it had generated £476,776 income in the year to 31 July 2020 compared with the forecast income of £487,785. The Principal confirmed that the strategy was for the provision to break-even during 2019/20 but this had proved more difficult due to the scale of the College provision which limited it to working with non-levy paying employers, many of which were SMEs who had been hit badly by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- **Landbased Training Trading Update**

The meeting noted an additional paper which had been considered in detail by the Audit Committee on 15 September 2020. This paper had been requested by Audit Committee due to the Covid-19 related underperformance on BCA's commercial income. The meeting was reminded that as a result of the pandemic Landbased Training had to suspend activity between 23rd March and 20th June 2020. Governors were pleased to note that as BCA moved out of lockdown the pipeline for course bookings was recovering with an encouraging number of September and October confirmations. During August 2020 BCA had successfully gained two large new clients, Kier and Guildford Council, they had made a number of significant bookings which had allowed Landbased Training to plan and commit to the required freelance specialist assessors. Governors suggested that the College considered developing its own home-grown assessors. The Principal confirmed that the current plan was to train two members of the Estate Grounds team – 1 horticulture and 1 arboriculture.

The SLT were also considering whether the College should employ one full-time assessor across all courses which would give the Landbased Training Team certainty on the ability to run courses to meet employer demand.

The College had invested in new (replacement) equipment to accommodate the new Covid-19 regulations. The year to date trading performance along with the variance against budget was noted as a deficit of £24,000 against the forecast surplus of £64,000. The Principal informed Governors that an active marketing campaign was in place to ensure maximum take-up of the new one-day courses. GM also confirmed that the new staffing structure with a dedicated manager and administrator was also working well. A new CRM system was enabling the College to generate good repeat business for the pipeline.

The update on Landbased Training was NOTED.

- **Higher Education Update**

September 2020 Enrolment: Despite the closure of several of BCA's Higher Education courses current HE enrolment for the BSc Vet Physiotherapy and the University of Reading FdEd Children's Development and Learning was above target – see enrolment below against target figure in brackets. Current HE student numbers were confirmed as follows.

	FdSc Animal Beh'vr & Welfare	BSc Animal Beh'vr & Welfare	FD Children's Dev & Learning	BSc(Hons) Vet Physio	Total
Year 1	0	0	18 (15)	30 (24)	48
Year 2	12	N/A	12	13	37
Year 3	N/A	9	N/A	11	19
				TOTAL	104

Detailed award outcome data was also considered by the meeting.

Transition Plan for BSc Vet Physio programme: The meeting was assured that HE Oversight Committee were continuing to monitor the plan for the transition of this remaining HE programme to another provider from September 2021. More detail would be brought to the Corporation once agreement had been secured from a potential partner. GM informed the meeting that the Director of HE had sought a reduced registration fee from the Office for Students as a 'micro-provider' in light of the small HE offering at BCA; no response had been received yet.

National Student Survey (NSS) Data: The meeting noted the results from the NSS 2020 which covered all HE Institutions. The Principal highlighted BCA's strong position with 100% positive satisfaction rating compared to a national benchmark figure of 82.65%. Governors commended this very positive result which would put BCA in the top 10 nationally. The meeting asserted the need for the College to publicise this excellent result on the website and on social media.

The Academic Report was RECEIVED.

58/20 Enrolment Report

The Corporation meeting noted a paper which provided detail on applications, enrolments, and conversion rates by curriculum area for the September 2020 enrolment. Conversion rates ranged from 97% (Performing Arts) to 55% (Science). The lower performance in Science was attributed to the impact of grade inflation during the pandemic year and more students staying on at school sixth forms to do A levels than usual. Conversion rates for the two biggest areas of provision were 85% (Animal Management) and 85% (Sport); both

showing a 12% increase on the prior year conversion rate. The overall conversion rate was noted as 83% (prior year figure was 74%). The Principal informed the meeting that current enrolment for 16-18 learners was standing at 1555 against the college target of 1530; this compared with a funded figure of 1375 in the prior year. Depending on the final figure at the 6-week census point, this would generate an additional £250/£300,000 growth in funding for 2021/22 which was not currently included in the financial plan. College Agency income would now be above £16 million.

The enrolment report was NOTED

59/20 Finance Director's Report

The meeting noted the report from the Finance Director (RM) which summarised progress in all areas under his control and highlighted the main areas for focus going forward.

- **Management Accounts July 2020**

The meeting took the Management Accounts to 31 July 2020 as read; Governors noted that the end-year operating deficit of £57,000 was a better result than the forecast deficit of £115,000 reported at the last Corporation meeting. The management accounts and the accompanying dashboard of HR data had been circulated earlier in September via email to all Governors. RM highlighted the impact of Covid-19 on the outcome 2019/20. Governors were reminded that the College financial health grade would be 'requires improvement' which was in line with the reforecast although the final ESFA 'health' points would be lower (130 compared to 150 in the reforecast). Governors were given assurance that the College had passed all bank covenant tests during the 2019/20 financial year. As a result of Covid-19 the cashflow cover test had been amended so that BCA had to report at least £250,000 in credit at year-end 2019/20; the College actually reported £450,000 in credit.

The July 2020 management accounts were RECEIVED.

- **College Budget 2020/21**

The FD reminded the meeting of the details of the College Budget 2020/21 that was approved at the last Corporation meeting. The operating surplus for 2020/21 was expected to be £194K and EBITDA is budgeted to be £1.36 million (£824,000 in 2019-20). Importantly, pay costs as a percentage of income should be close to the 65% target set by the ESFA. The college expected to report 'Requires Improvement' for financial health (150 points) with a closing cash balance of £657,000 expected. RM highlighted that as part of the monitoring process associated with the DfE grant that the college received in 2018, the budget was currently being reworked and an updated Integrated Financial Model for Colleges (IFMC) would be submitted to the Transaction Unit within the next few days. Some changes would be reflected in the submission, notably:

- Significantly higher High Needs income offset by a corresponding increase in pay costs.
- Lower student transport income (a reduction of circa £250,000 for the full year 2020/21) as a result of the decision to move to online learning for English and Maths so that learners were only on site for 2 out of 3 days. This would be offset by savings of circa £100,000.
- Inclusion of the £0.5 million capital grant (FECA) for dilapidations work that was awarded to the college in August, along with the associated spend.

Governors sought assurance on whether there were any other areas of expenditure or income that would be adversely impacted by Covid-19. RM confirmed that the biggest impact was transport but there would also be a small impact on catering which might require a small College subsidy; there was also a possible risk around the commercial income – rent for premises - from the Ardmore Language School. The Principal assured the meeting that the Exec Team were monitoring both of these potential risks very closely.

- **Cash flow**

The meeting noted detailed cash-flow information; the College would hit a pinch-point for cashflow in February through to April 2021. RM reminded the meeting that this was an annual occurrence for BCA due to the timing of grant payments from the ESFA. The meeting noted that the Finance Director was working to secure an overdraft facility of £500,000 for this 3- month period in 2021. (RM) informed the meeting that he was still in discussions with the College's Relationship Director at Lloyds Bank, but this post had just been filled by a new appointee. RM would be finalising the latest version of the Integrated Financial Model for Colleges (IFMC) and then sharing this with the new appointee at Lloyds; a meeting was planned for 6 October 2020. Management remained optimistic that the facility would be granted. The meeting noted the importance of securing a resolution for low cash-flow in spring 2021 for the Going Concern judgement in the 2019/20 Financial Statements.

- **Internal Audit**

The meeting was assured that the plans for a detailed audit of the College's IT security was progressing; this had been delayed due to Covid-19. The College's Assistant Principal Digital (DF) had presented an update to Audit Committee on 15 September; Audit Committee members informed the Corporation that they had taken strong assurance from DF's presentation. Corporation Members noted that the 2020/21 internal audit programme would cover the following: High Needs funding; a review of the college's Curriculum Plan; Support cost benchmarking (departments to be decided); Learner Records and Funding; and, a review of the January management accounts.

- **LGPS pension deficit**

The meeting noted that the College 'accounting' deficit (not the actuarial deficit) had increased from £10.8m to £17.5m in 2019/20. The change was mainly due to a change in the discount rate due to the impact of Covid-19 and decreased bond yields. Members of the Audit Committee had asked the FD to discuss challenging the assumptions with College external auditors RSM but subsequent audit advice had been that it would not be appropriate to challenge the actuarial assumptions used as they appeared reasonable and the in-year movement was in line with what had been seen at other Colleges. Governors sought confirmation on when the next Triennial Valuation of the College's LGPS scheme would take place and RM confirmed that this would be in late 2022 with results published in early 2023.

NOTED

- **Audit of Teachers' Pension Scheme contributions**

The meeting received a report from RSM UK Audit LLP which gave the Corporation Members independent assurance in connection with the Teachers' Pension Scheme contributions which the College had been required to make during the year ended 31 March 2020. A copy of the certificate (the 'EOYC') which detailed the Teachers' Pension Contributions for the year ended 31 March 2020 was noted. The letter and audit findings matrix from RSM were also presented to the meeting. The Finance Director highlighted that this was a timely and clean assurance from the auditors in this area where tolerances on the detail were extremely low.

The EOYC certificate 2019/20 was NOTED and RECEIVED.

The Finance Director's report was NOTED and RECEIVED.

60/20 Campus/ Estates Report

The meeting noted an update on activity across the campus in relation to Buildings, Facilities and Sustainability.

Health Science Centre: The meeting was reminded that renovation of the E & F residential block into the new Health Science Centre was now underway; works commenced on 14

September and was due to complete on 26 February 2021. The meeting was reminded that tenders had been received from four contractors in July and following a full analysis and report issued to the Corporation Members, Woodland Commercial Ltd were appointed for the construction works. The initial works involved the strip out and demolition of internal areas including removal of asbestos which was being completed by specialist contractors. Governors commended the success of gaining LEP funding for this project which would provide specialist facilities and much needed space to primarily support BCA's thriving Health and Social care curriculum.

Dilapidation Capital: The meeting was reminded that DfE had allocated £502,000 to BCA as part of the nationwide FE capital funding programme (FECA). This fund had to be spent on Estates improvement works with specific reference to the condition report carried out by Capita during November 2019. All works would have to be completed and invoices paid by 31st March 2021. The Principal informed Governors that the SLT were prioritising a range of improvements that could be undertaken within the limitations of the report. There would be a focus on replacing boiler systems, refurbishing toilets, and upgrading ancillary Sports buildings. The majority of the work would be undertaken in the outdated 20th century buildings across campus. There would be no work on the College's listed assets or works that required planning permission. The receipt of funds was anticipated, and a detailed work programme would be drawn up over the next two weeks. The meeting commended this fantastic opportunity but acknowledged the challenging timeline.

Sustainability updates: The meeting noted that a combination of lockdown, LED upgrades and thorough planning by the Facilities Team had led to consistently lower electricity costs for the campus. The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for 2019/20 was due to be published by the end of September but draft records indicated at least a 25%+ reduction in Scope 1 Emissions (emissions from use of fuels) at BCA. The meeting agreed this was very promising. The meeting noted that the deadline for submission of Sustainability Awards Projects (as discussed at the Governing Body meeting on 25 September 2019) had been extended to December 2020 in order to support teams whose projects were affected by the pandemic site lockdown. Finally, as part of the wider Energy Strategy, a potential Power Purchase Agreement with Green Nation was being investigated, as a means to secure a renewable energy source, at reduced cost, for the College's electricity requirements.

***The standing Campus and Estates Report was NOTED
Governors AGREED that a full list of expenditure under the dilapidation capital should be brought to the Corporation meeting in December 2020.***

- **BCA Estate Risks Report**

The Principal (GM) presented a new report which was for information but was aiming to highlight the potential risks associated with the size and nature of the BCA campus. This report had been written in response to the recent £50,000 fine issued to Plumpton College by the Environment Agency, due to Health and Safety breaches on the Plumpton College campus. The SLT was aiming to providing assurance to the Governing Body at BCA of the procedures and controls that BCA had in place with respect to the management of the wider agricultural estate. The report highlighted that the wide variety of land uses, high public presence and environmental considerations means that there were many integral risks that needed to be managed to ensure that no harm was caused. GM assured the meeting that the College worked to adopt best practice where possible. The meeting noted the detailed report which summarised the main risks and the mitigating actions in place at BCA with specific examples under each of the following headings: damage to property; damage to persons; damage to the environment. The meeting was assured that BCA had an experience Director of Estates and Facilities who had reviewed all the risks and managed them closely and effectively. However, the meeting agreed that the risks associated with the

BCA Estate should be added to the main BCA Risk Register/ Board Assurance Framework. GM assured the meeting that although the underlying risks would be high the post-mitigation score on the Risk Register would be lowered due to the effective management controls in place. The meeting also considered the lack of specialist agricultural knowledge within the Executive Team and the governors; this should be considered further during any governor recruitment. The Director of Governance confirmed that there was no lack of specialist H&S knowledge within the Governors.

The Estate Risk Report was NOTED

It was AGREED that:

- i) The ongoing risk associated with the size and nature of the BCA campus should be added to the College Risk Register.***
- ii) The lack of specialist agricultural knowledge within the Governing Body be considered by Search Committee during any future governor recruitment.***
- iii) The Dir of Estates and Facilities would attend the November 2020 Audit Committee to consider this report in more detail.***

- **LEP Project Update**

The Principal confirmed that capital work was progressing to meet the proposed timetable for the LEP funded Health Sciences Project as previously noted by the meeting. The meeting noted a report which detailed the current progress with BCA's applications for LEP funding for a number of other projects.

Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Centre Project: The meeting noted that the College had been asked to submit a business case to the LEP for £80,000 to fund equipment required to set up this new provision within the Motor Vehicle curriculum area. The application was due to be submitted by 2 November and a decision was expected in December 2020 with projects to be completed by December 2021 at the latest. Governors noted that the funding would be used to purchase specialist testing equipment for learners to receive training in the servicing and repair of hybrid and electric vehicles. The business case showed that the demand for this specialist skill-set in relation to hybrid and electric vehicles was growing rapidly and the College had support for this project from a number of local employers who would utilise the facilities for training existing staff. The meeting was very supportive of this proposal and the move into new technologies. Link Governor for Motor Vehicles (FP) confirmed that staff in this curriculum area was very keen to move forward with this proposal.

SEND Employability Hub: The meeting was informed that BCA had submitted an expression of interest (Eol) as the lead sponsor for a project involving the Windsor Forest Colleges Group, Newbury College and Activate Learning. The proposed project would create a space where learners would be able to search for job opportunities, practice interview and telephone skills, developing employability opportunities and helping to reduce the percentage of NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) young people in Berkshire. The total funding requested in the initial Eol was £430,000.

Agricultural Engineering: Governors also noted that the College had submitted an expression of interest for LEP funding of £80,000 to purchase one additional basic agricultural specification tractor and associated implements.

The LEP Project update was NOTED

The meeting APPROVED the submission of the business case to the LEP for funding of £80,000 to support the proposed Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Centre Project at BCA.

- **Planning Application Update**

The Principal (GM) gave the meeting a verbal update on the campus development and the planning project to realise funds for repair and ongoing maintenance of the BCA heritage assets.

The planning application for the enabling housing development at Honey Lane for 26 houses was submitted to RBWM Planning on 21 July 2020. It comprised 20 private dwellings which would generate the land value to resolve the Heritage Deficit and 6 shared ownership units in response to feedback from pre-application consultation. Since submission, the application had been undergoing the public consultation process. GM highlighted that the proposal had attracted some significant objections locally, particularly, from the residents of Honey Lane. These objections had focused on issues such as traffic and impact on the Green Belt as well as criticism of the heritage/financial justification for this. The Project Team attended a virtual meeting of the Hurley Parish Council on 20 August where the College put forward its case but, unfortunately, they objected to the scheme. However, Governors were very pleased to note that good progress had been made with the statutory and technical consultees. Two of the most important - Historic England and Highways – had raised no objection to the scheme. Governors were reminded that Historic England had objected to the previous Care Village application, so this was a major step forward and an endorsement of the approach and extensive research behind the current application. The support from RBWM Highways was also extremely helpful in light of the local objections and confirmed the validity of the technical work undertaken on this point. GM informed the meeting that the next key step would be to make progress with the planning officers on the viability case. So far this had been slower than hoped – possibly due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic - and the Project Team was seeking a meeting to understand officers' initial views on the application. This would also provide greater clarity on the likely timeline. GM informed the meeting that the College was also looking to submit an application for the change of use of the South Wing of Hall Place to office space so that it would complete the strategy for resolving the long term revenue stream which will be used for the ongoing maintenance of the Grade 1 listed building. Governors were given an estimate of the current timeline:

- Meeting with RBWM officers: September 2020 (this was now likely to slip into October)
- Submit applications for change of use and listed building consent for South Wing: October 2020.
- Response on viability position from RBWM early October 2020 and further discussion as required.
- Likely committee dates 18 November or 16 December 2020. GM highlighted that December was now more likely than November.

Governors commended the work undertaken by the Project Team and agreed that it was looking more positive than ever before that this application stood a chance of being approved.

The update on the planning application to RBWM was NOTED.

61/20 Strategic Planning

- **BCA Strategy Map 2020-23**

The Principal presented the current BCA 2020-23 Strategic Plan and the six key priorities within this:

1. To be recognised for high quality provision based on outstanding teaching, guidance, and support.
2. Secure 'good' financial health
3. Quality of Education: To be a highly regarded centre of excellence and sector leader in student satisfaction

4. Maintain resources to provide inspirational learning.
5. Develop alliances to secure the strategic profile of BCA.
6. Deliver high quality education sustainably in collaboration with our community and students.

The meeting agreed that these were still the key priorities for BCA and considerable progress had been made against the objectives within each priority. However, the Chair suggested that all Governors should review this document in advance of the planned Governors' Strategy Event in January 2021. The Corporation would need to decide whether any amendment was needed within the current life of this Strategic Plan.

It was AGREED that all Governors should give the current BCA Strategic Priorities 2020-23 document careful review in advance of the January 2021 Strategic Planning event.

- **Planning for Corporation Strategy Day 2020/21**

This was discussed in the confidential section of the meeting and is reflected in the Part 2 minutes paragraph 67/20 page 3.

NOTED

62/20 Feedback from HE Oversight Committee, 11th August 2020

The Chair informed the meeting that the committee was keeping a close watch on the transition plans for the withdrawal from HE programmes at BCA, apart from the franchised provision with the University of Reading. BCA management were still pursuing options for another college to take over the BSc Vet Physio provision from September 2021; more details would be provided as soon as a plan was confirmed.

The feedback from HE Oversight Committee was NOTED.

63/20 Feedback from Audit Committee, 15th September 2020

In the absence of the Chair of the Audit Committee, the Director of Governance gave the meeting a verbal update on what had been discussed at the recent meeting. She highlighted the following:

- Audit Committee undertook a thorough review of the Risk Register.
- An audit of cyber-security/ disaster recovery planning should be undertaken ASAP. The College was now working towards a 'cloud' back-up strategy as suggested by Audit Committee Governors (AT).
- Revision of the levels of delegated authority within the Finance Regulations was considered and supported by the Audit Committee to expedite the projects to be funded under the FECA dilapidations scheme. The 31 March 2021 deadline for completion would necessitate the removal of any delays to the execution of the work.

The feedback from Audit Committee was NOTED.

There was no other business. The meeting closed at 6.45pm.