

DRAFT



BRIDGWATER  
& TAUNTON  
COLLEGE

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 5 JULY 2018**

**MEETING COMMENCED:** 5.10pm  
**MEETING ENDED:** 7.40 pm

**PRESENT:** Derek Randall (DR) (Chair), John Alvis (JA), Andy Berry (AB), Lyndon Brett (LB), Barry Brown (BB), Mervyn Brown (MB), Rebecca Coutts (RC), Josh Flagg (JF), Gordon Fraser (GF), Andre Frullo (AF), Charlie Grabham (CG), Steve Hopper (SH), Alan Hunt (AH), Salam Katby (SK), Louise Seymour (LS), Gill Slattery (GS), Andrew Smith (AS), Keith Stenning (KS), David Taylor (DT) and Faye Tippetts (FT)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Louise Rowley (LR), Mark Nettle (MN) (Clerk), Marcus Holder (MH), Mary Graves (MG) (Observer, ESFA), and Katy Hockings (note taker)

**G.04.46.18 SMT APPRAISALS**  
DR noted that SMT appraisals were currently taking place. AB has completed his probationary period successfully.

**G.04.47.18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies were received from, Matt Cox (MC), Claire Pearce (CP), and Lauren Usher (LU). DR welcomed MG to the meeting. Also welcomed FT and JF to their first meeting as student representatives.

**G.04.48.18 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**  
There were no declarations of interest relevant to the agenda of the meeting.

**G.04.49.18 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2018**  
The minutes from the meeting held on 22 March 2018 were agreed as true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chair.

**G.04.50.18 MATTERS ARISING**  
**G03.36.18** 1.1.3 GS reminded DR that he was due to share a copy of the latest report from the English and maths focus group with the Board. DR said that he would circulate this report ASAP.

**Action: DR**

**G.03.34.18** RC and GS asked about dates for Safeguarding courses which were going to be circulated following the last meeting. MN said that the last round of courses for this term have now finished, but he will provide a full list of Safeguarding course dates for next term as soon as they are published.

**Action: MN**

**G.04.51.18**

**BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

MN read out Salam Katbi's CV. She is a Regional Prevent Co-ordinator for the Southwest of England. She has worked for the Department for Education and has lots of links into Ofsted and the DfE. SK has been endorsed by the Search Committee, and there was unanimous agreement that SK join the Board with immediate effect. Nick Skyrme is another prospective Board member who has experience in finance, and worked at BTC previously as Finance Director. DR said that NS had also been approved by the Search Committee. A unanimous vote appointed NS.

The Bridgwater Campus Staff Governor vote which closed today appoints Gill Anderson as the new Bridgwater Campus Governor from 2018/19, taking over from SH whose term finishes at the end of this academic year. DR thanked SH for his contribution during his term. DR welcomed SK formally.

SK joined the meeting.

**G.04.52.18**

**ANNUAL REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS**

**a) Register of Interests**

MN circulated Register of Interest forms and requested that these be updated and returned to MN by next term.

**Action: ALL**

**G.04.53.18**

**2017/18 UPDATE**

**a) Principal's Update**

AB's update was noted. He highlighted key points, and said that recent efforts had been focused on improving achievement rates and merger consolidation. Positive results on timely completion of apprenticeships going from 65% last year to over 70% this year. AB confirmed that two years post-merger, the College has officially been signed off by the ESFA

AB reported that Dave Alexander had been appointed as maternity cover for AAPS Assistant Principal. DA is currently the Head of Department for Creative Arts.

A new Head of Funding and Information has been appointed and will commence at end of August. A new Head of Finance will be appointed over the summer period.

The Reprographics function at Bridgwater campus will close and there will be one Reprographics function at Taunton campus. Average group sizes will be pushed up via next year's Curriculum Plan, through a consolidation of the curriculum.

There has been work to reduce curriculum hours without compromising quality and provision of teaching.

AB outlined a bursary opportunity with Humphrey Cadoux-Hudson of EDF. BB asked whether we have other bursaries. MN said there is a Fashion and Textiles bursary. LR said there is the Honours Academy bursary, and a number of sports bursaries.

The CEO of Queen's Anniversary Prizes visited earlier in the term. Teaching staff at Taunton campus have had their contracts harmonised to match those at Bridgwater campus.

The Secretary of State for Education, Damian Hinds, visited during the early part of the term.

Work on the T Level pilot is commencing, following the successful bid to be part of the pilot.

DR said that the recent Star Awards were a huge success.

#### **b) Operating Plan 2017/18 Update**

AB provided an update on the current operating plan, which had been updated by SMT in June. AB explained that a number of those in amber currently were so due to the fact the current year has not yet been completed. AB explained those areas still rated as red.

1.1.3 is red because percentage attendance for Study Programmes has not yet reached the target of over 90%. This currently sits at 84.3%.

1.1.10 remain red at present as the goal of having all students settled in English and maths classes within the first three weeks and feedback positive had not yet been achieved. Changes to timetable for 2018/19 have been made to address this.

1.2.6 remains red as there are areas of the College where staffing in classes remains a challenge due to sickness or vacancies. RC asked what percentage of students might be affected by this. LR said that some data on this would be available, but it depends on whether the cover for classes provided is a specialist or not, as this can also have an impact. RC suggested a measurable KPI on this could be helpful. LR agreed to talk to NS about how this might be taken forward to make it a meaningful KPI which can effect change for students.

#### **Action: LR**

1.5.1 refers to My BTC Advantage, and remains red because, whilst good engagement took place at the beginning of the academic year, it has faltered. LS said that we need to refresh the training and review the ProMonitor software and how it can best serve this process.

2.2.4 The Levy has not been spent. This is a priority for the coming year.

3.4.3 Intranet has not been as well developed as was hoped by this point.

3.5.2 There is an issue with not getting information.

MB asked about 1.1.6 where only 66% of students felt their 1:1 tutorials were helpful. LR said that there has been recent focus on this whilst developing the programme for 2018/19. LR agreed there is more work to be done and it is on the agenda. MN said that the percentage of students is a sample and indicative of a small number of problem areas, rather than a general issue with tutorials.

### **c) Management Accounts 30 April 2018**

MH reported on the current position. He advised on HPC delays causing an adverse variance on apprenticeship income of £364k. Pay costs are likely to come in at £142k adverse compared to budget, due to the inclusion of provisions for final claims for teachers, although these may not be required. Favourable variance of £200k in net depreciation (including release of capital grants) and interest expected, due to revision of calculations. KS asked about Apprenticeship Funding. KS asked about the budget against actuals and whether we had been too optimistic last year. MH said that actual results were 15% better than last year. This was despite the fact that there was a delay in the HPC progress. AB said that next year's apprenticeship growth is budgeted at 10%, while the Curriculum Plan suggests significantly more.

### **d) ESFA**

MH provided for information a letter where the funding body confirmed the College's 2016/17 financial health grade is good in 2016/17 and projection of satisfactory in 2017/18.

## **G.04.54.18**

### **A LEVEL STRATEGY**

LR reported on the A Level Strategy which has been put into place. She reviewed the actions which have been taken, including a further increase on monitoring and support to raise value added scores. There has been revision to the subject offer to ensure that subjects taken by students are complementary to encourage successful study. All A Level students will be given work over the summer between year 1 and year 2. Further actions are planned for 2018/19 to further strengthen the A Level offering. Predictions for this year's outcomes is for a modest improvement on last year.

25 subjects currently looking at expected outcome, 9 looking at better results and 2 likely to be lower than expected. LR said that close scrutiny of each subject will continue.

LR reported that the International Baccalaureate results for the College have today been released, and our average is 32.5 points. Highest scoring student received 38 points. The College average is likely to exceed the world average. FT asked which A Level subjects are likely to perform less well. LR confirmed these are DT and Sports. DR thanked LR for her and colleagues' work on this area. DR pointed out that in core subjects we have been below average and he is encouraged by the action plan. He expressed concern about the possible inconsistency of marking practices. He wanted reassurance that our quality assurance systems are robust to deal with this. LR said that within the quality cycle there are set points where there is assessment of marked work. This is done at a departmental and a management level. At next week's Curriculum Planning Residential there will be a whole section about marking and standards. LR said that it has been recognised there are pockets where problems lie, and work will be done to address this. An important response to this is to use the learner voice to support assessment of practices within the teaching staff.

## **2018/19 PLANNING**

### **a) Strategic Plan**

At the Strategic Planning Residential in January, the Board and SMT looked at the vision, mission and values of the College. From this, SMT have worked on the wording to refine it, and then feedback has been sought from staff teams. AS said that he finds this document much more succinct and helpful.

The Board reviewed the Strategic Aims and approved it as the basis of the 2018 – 2021 Strategic Plan.

### **b) Operating Plan 18/19**

From the Strategic Plan, as well as from reviewing the 2017/2018 Operating Plan, SMT and area management teams put together an Operating Plan for 2018/19 for approval by the Board. AB said that the Operating Plan will come back to the Board at its next meeting in the autumn, and will have incorporated within it key performance indicators which will be drawn out following the results of the current year's operating plan.

### **c) Indicative Three Year Financial Forecast**

MH led straight into this item following on from a review of the Management Accounts for April 2018. MH provided an update on the indicative financial plan for 2017/18 to 2019/20.

MH reported that satisfactory financial health is predicted for 2017/18, good for 2018/19 and good for 2019/20. CG asked what EBIDTA is – MH explained it is earnings before interest, depreciation, tax and amortisation. MH circulated a brief update of the current position. He provided an update on the risks on the budget and forecasts. Vacancy control meetings ensure a strategic approach to staffing. Contribution level calculations will assess whether programmes are financially viable. RC asked when this will be ready. MH said it is now ready but is being rolled out gradually to be fully in place by next year. BB asked about the vacancy control meetings and whether these are strategic. AB said that the Vacancy Control meetings have a strategic focus and are attended by AB, MH and staff from HR who consider vacancy requests, within an overarching framework. KS asked about the £654k deficit and whether this could increase. KS asked what the range of figures provided includes. MH confirmed it includes the Colleges' Partnership reduction in income, and there is no longer a contingency provided for within the forecast. MH clarified the current figures and forecasts for the year end. MH confirmed that, even the worst case scenario figures will not affect our ESFA rating.

KS suggested the critical year is next year. MH, AB and LR agreed with this. DR commented this is not a serious financial position given the actions which are in place to address the finances. DR recorded the Board's thanks to MH for his work over the past months on ensuring that an accurate financial position is presented to the Board. MH reported that he will be putting together the final financial plan, and asked the Board to give authority to DR to sign off the plan for submission to ESFA. The Board agreed to do so. The plan will be circulated to the Board prior to DR signing it off, and MH will let the

Board know the deadline for being in touch with questions before DR signs it off. GS asked that MH's commentary is provided with the final version, as this was most helpful. MH confirmed this.

**Action: MH**

**G.04.56.18**

## **REPORTS ON SUBSIDIARY AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

### **a) Bridgwater College Trust**

The report was noted by the Board.

### **b) NCfN**

Report noted by the Board. JA was surprised that there is only one member of the BTC Board on the NCfN Board. AB said that it has been important to ensure that it is an industry-led Board, with one representative from Lakes College and one from BTC. Partly the makeup of the Board is to satisfy the requirements of the Government.

### **c) Other subsidiary and associated companies**

Report from the Colleges' Partnership was noted by the Board. AB pointed out that the financial performance will be closely monitored, following a reduction in the predicted contribution for the current year. AB reported that a contract to the value of £25m has been won by TCP. AB takes over Chairing TCP next year, along with the line management of its CEO. RC asked how rigorous the risk register for the TCP is, and should we have foreseen the reduction in the contribution. AB agreed this is an important question. The risk register is robust. It is a dynamic register which is reviewed at each Board meeting. The financial and data reporting has been very transparent and rigorous. Given this, AB had been confident of the level of the contribution. However, this has not been the case. AB pointed out that the CEO has only been in post for three months and this could have affected the results. AB confirmed that he and MT, Director of Marketing and Business Development, both serve on the Board, as does the CEO of Wiltshire College, and the FD of Wiltshire College and the CEO of TCP. RC asked for a review of what happened, along with reassurance that the risks have been reviewed and what will be done going forward to ensure this doesn't happen again, to be brought to the next Board meeting.

**Action: AB**

**G.04.57.18**

## **ESTATES UPDATE**

The report had been scrutinised by the Estates Committee and received by the Finance Committee. Key points raised for information:

- Advanced Engineering Centre at Bridgwater delivered on time and to budget.
- NCfN open and in use. Just agreed the final accounts and kitting it out with final items. Two property awards won for this building.
- Canonsgrove accommodation will be refurbished to provide additional bedrooms for students.
- A Level study space planned for Bridgwater.

**G.04.58.18**

## **NCfN ACCOMMODATION BLOCK**

The Board noted a report on the accommodation proposals for Cannington for the NCfN which will need to be ready for August 2019

for students to start using in September 2019. Due to budget constraints and cost increases including the levy on Steel, it has been necessary to make some design changes. MH apologised for the late timing of the paper being submitted to the Board. The planning permission deadline is such that a decision is required today to give sufficient time for the project to be completed on time. Buildings Committee and the Finance Committee have reviewed the project's overall concept. However, MH pointed that there are some design changes due to the aforementioned budget constraints. MH said that he has been negotiating with Sedgemoor District Council for a favourable loan over a 20 year period, at a rate of 4.5%, which is much more favourable than from a bank. DR iterated that the Buildings Committee and FP and GP Committee has seen and approved the proposal, but opened to questions. SH said that he understood this is phase one of a possible further development. MH said that there is possibility of further development, which would be able to link in with this phase. AS asked whether 73 beds is enough. AB said that at this stage it is what is required, based on current numbers of enrolled students and projections. AS asked further about numbers of students. AB said that, as the courses are not full time, there is flexibility and 73 should be sufficient. AS asked whether local students will live at home. AB said they would, but the national apprenticeship scheme is unlikely to attract a large number of local students, and they are likely to be coming to the College from further afield. BB asked for clarity on VAT. MH confirmed all costs have been accounted for within the loan amount. DR asked the Board for approval. There was a unanimous vote in favour of this project going ahead.

**G.04.59.18**

#### **MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING SUB-COMMITTEES**

##### **a) Building Projects Committee – 15 MAY 2018**

The minutes were noted by the Board.

##### **b) Health and Safety Committee – 27 JUNE 2018**

The minutes were noted by the Board. MB pointed out there is an error within the H&S minutes which were circulated prior to the meeting. MN noted that the minutes have now been updated to reflect this and circulated a corrected copy.

##### **c) Standards Committee – 18 JUNE 2018**

The minutes were noted by the Board.

##### **d) Audit Committee – 13 JUNE 2018**

The minutes were noted by the Board. JA asked about Board members and Committees. DR confirmed the next Search Committee will be dealing with this.

JA raised the issue of the cyber attack at West Somerset College which resulted in the Bridgwater College Trust paying £8,000 via Bitcoin to get students' data released. The School could not function without this data being released. The CEO of the BCT spoke to the police and to the IT specialists at the College, and unfortunately the only way to secure the data back was to pay the ransom. This payment was reported to the ESFA, once the payment was made. As a result of this, and having not informed the ESFA in advance of making the payment, the ESFA have fined the Multi Academy Trust the same amount as the Bitcoin payment, as it does not comply with its policy on not paying ransoms. In response

to this, BCT are appealing this decision, as ESFA funds were not used to pay the ransom.

AB reported that West Somerset College has now revised its IT systems in order to safeguard this from happening again.

AB said that IT systems at BTC have also been reviewed and tightened up also in light of this incident. DR asked for a response of this appeal, and how the ESFA responds to the letter which has been sent.

**Action: AB**

**e) Finance, Personnel & General Purposes Committee – 21 JUNE 2018**

The minutes were noted by the Board.

**G.04.60.18**

**MEETINGS CALENDAR FOR 2018/19**

Dates for 2018/2019 were circulated to the Board.

**G.04.61.18**

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

GS reported she was invited to talk at the ESFA Skills Training day in the South West, about the merger process.

GS raised the point of what the Board has done to look at the differences between the operation of the Boards at Somerset College and Bridgwater College, to ensure the best processes and functions of each have been incorporated into the current Board. DR suggested that we should raise this at the self-assessment session early next term.

**Action: DR/AB**

The meeting was followed by an evening meal in the Green Room in the Cannington restaurant at 7.30 pm.