



**BRIDGWATER
& TAUNTON
COLLEGE**

BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 6 DECEMBER 2018

MEETING COMMENCED: 5.07pm

MEETING ENDED: 7.30pm

PRESENT: Derek Randall Mervyn Brown (MB) (Chair), John Alvis (JA), Gill Anderson (GA), Andy Berry (AB), Barry Brown (BB), Rebecca Coutts (RC), Matthew Cox (MC), Josh Flagg (JF), Gordon Fraser (GF), Andre Frullo (AF), Alan Hunt (AH), Claire Pearce (CP), Nick Skyrme (NS), Gill Slattery (GS) and David Taylor (DT)

IN ATTENDANCE: Marcus Holder, (MH), Louise Rowley (LR), Mark Nettle (MN) (Clerk) and Katy Hockings (note taker)

G.02.14.19

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Lyndon Brett (LB), Salam Katbi (SK), Andrew Smith (AS), Keith Stenning (KS) and Dylan Tippetts (DT).

It was agreed to consider another venue, should all Governors attend, as D10 would not have the capacity to seat all Governors.

ACTION: MN

G.02.15.19

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest relevant to the agenda of the meeting.

G.02.16.19

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2018

The minutes from the meeting held on 11 October 2018 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chair.

G.02.17.19

MATTERS ARISING

G.01.04.19 – Sue Burton, Executive Director of The Colleges' Partnership, will join the Governors' Residential to talk about The Colleges' Partnership, as will Peter Elliott from Bridgwater College Trust. It is possible that we could also invite a Board member from NCfN at this time, but AB and DR will discuss this. RC asked whether there will be time to ask questions of SB at that time. AB said that this would be the case.

G.01.08.19 – Regularity Audit has now been completed.

G.01.04.19 – Safeguarding training dates will be circulated in the new year for March and May. Focus will be online safeguarding.

ACTION: MN

G.01.11.19 - Apprenticeships – paper circulated in response to CP’s request at last meeting.

G.02.18.19

PRINCIPAL UPDATE

AB covered key points of the update circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. He mentioned the falling demographic and the lower recruitment from this year and the previous year. This should be the final year of falling demographic, with numbers picking up from 2019/20 intake. AB outlined a consultation process which had taken place with staff, which had resulted in 5 compulsory and 20 voluntary redundancies. The process has now concluded. AB reported that funding continues to be a challenge for the FE sector, compared to schools and universities. Results continue to show a three year improving trend, which is encouraging. Beacon Award shortlisting has resulted in one of the College’s bids making it to the final. The College has also been shortlisted for two TES FE Awards 2019. The College has been invited to apply for a Queen’s Anniversary prize, and submission will be made early in 2019. AB outlined the recent bid for the South West Institute of Technology, of which the College is a part. Work on T Levels pilot programme continues, for the 2020 start.

AB recently led a tour of campuses for Bridgwater Headteachers. This was well received and there has been a request for a further tour date for other colleagues within the schools.

BB asked about the visit by BEIS and DfE in the New Year. AB confirmed that they will be toured around NCfN and CSIC in early February. DT asked about recruiting apprenticeships, and how widely understood this is by parents. His experience of parents at a school in Taunton was that they are unsure of the pathway to apply. AB agreed that this is a challenging area, to grow applications for apprenticeships in the 16-18 age range. AB said that apprenticeship events are held, but he agreed we could always do more, and this will form part of the curriculum planning and review early in the New Year. AB recognised that, in Taunton particularly, there is more to be done to encourage more applications for apprenticeships and more vocationally led qualifications. DR said there is also a strong Government drive towards vocational qualifications at all levels. BB followed up on DT’s question and whether there are still careers advisors available to students within schools. DT said that there is still careers advice on offer, but this has shifted. There is less focus on work experience, as this is more difficult to secure at present. DT said that the careers advice and support is more structured than in the past, and starts earlier within secondary school year groups.

RC asked whether Marketing utilise Facebook targeted marketing. This is an easy way of reaching different groups of stakeholders within one forum. AB said that this would be the case. He also confirmed that the Digital Marketing Manager was starting in the New Year. Governors noted the report.

G.02.19.19

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

MN presented the safeguarding report. He outlined the key points of the report. Online safety will be the theme of this year’s College Safeguarding training. New software ‘My Concern’ has been implemented, and is used by many schools, which allows for safe transfer of safeguarding files from schools to College.

Efforts were continuing to ensure that all those on site are wearing a lanyard. This is being supported by the introduction of some doors requiring swipe card access. Governors noted the report.

G.02.20.19

STUDENT UNION REPORT

MN reported in DT's absence. He outlined the key points within the report. The Student Parliament last year had been very successful, and had led to the formation of the new Sustainability Committee. Governors noted the report.

G.02.21.19

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2017/18

Management Accounts for Year Ended 31 July 2018 – MH presented the paper. FP&GP Committee had scrutinised this document in detail prior to this meeting. MH outlined the key figures (see paper for detail), including outturn, assets and liabilities at the year end. The EBITDA for the year was rated satisfactory. Governors noted the management accounts for the year ended 31 July 2018. RC asked about covenants and MH explained the position. Going forward there will be a monthly update on treasury, so that monitoring takes place more regularly. Governors agreed this action was welcome. NS asked whether the NCfN residential accommodation new build has commenced. MH confirmed that the work has commenced this week. The Board approved the management accounts.

MC joined the meeting.

Draft Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 July 2018 – MH presented the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2018, and outlined key points. MH said that Governors need to approve the financial statements, which would then be signed off by the Chair following the meeting. MH invited questions on the financial statements. DR pointed out that this document has been scrutinised carefully by the FP&GP Committee. Governors approved the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2018.

Audit Completion Report – This document had been produced by the Auditors, noting actions which are required to ensure compliance and good practice. MH invited questions from the Board. AF asked about page 27, on the right hand side, the risk raised around payroll, and that different people should be processing payments. AF noted this remains unresolved 18 months after this was raised originally by auditors. MH responded that he would look into this and respond back to the next Audit Committee to provide assurance to the Board. **ACTION: MH**

AB confirmed that there will be a number of meetings held to ensure that the actions noted have been or are being resolved. The Board accepted the audit completion report.

Letter of Representation to External Auditor – The Board noted the letter.

G.02.22.19

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2018/19

Revised Budget for 2018/19 – MH explained that the revised budget had been revised based on the outturn for 2017/18. The Board noted

the change to the budget, which did not show a change to the bottom line for the year, but had amendments to expenditure to balance the expected income.

Management Accounts for two months ended 30 September 2018 – The Board noted the position, but looked in more detail at the management accounts for the three months ended 31 October 2018.

Management Accounts for three months ended 31 October 2018 – MH outlined the position for the three months to 31 October and confirmed that we are on track to deliver the budget. Governors noted the position. RC asked how the College's financial health compares with other colleges within the sector. DR said that he felt that we are in line with others.

G.02.23.19

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE TO THE CORPORATION 2017/18

The Board had received the annual report of the Audit Committee, and MH outlined the key points, and invited questions from the Board. MH said that the current external auditors, Francis Clarke, are contracted until 31 December 2019. The internal auditors, RSM, are contracted until 31 August 2019. The appointment of a new Head of Funding and Information has assisted in improving procedures and systems to ensure compliance. JA said that the internal auditing process has been very useful in highlighting areas for improvement, and providing constructive recommendations to assist in ensuring compliance.

GA asked re 3.3, what evidence the Audit Committee saw that the Senior Management team is satisfied that the recommendations are being completed. MH said that the audit report will be brought on a monthly basis to SMT for action, and where there are gaps, further action will be taken. AB confirmed that the audit report has been included within the recent SMT Planning Days to ensure that actions are being followed up to ensure compliance. GA asked what support RSM is giving. MH said that he felt that some of the timescales put in place were unrealistic, and he had addressed this. Finally at 2.3, GA asked why student and staff members cannot be members of the Audit Committee. MN said that it follows AoC guidelines which state that staff Governors and the Principal cannot be members of the Audit committee due to potential conflicts of interest. RC asked whether the audit report comes to the Audit Committee. MH confirmed that it has been reviewed and RAG rated so that it can be monitored. GA asked whether this includes the Business Continuity Plan. MH confirmed this is the case. Governors noted the annual report of the Audit Committee

G.02.24.19

PERFORMANCE AGAINST KPIs FOR 2017/18

AB presented the KPIs for 2017/18 and the outcome for the year. He went through achievement against target for the year. Governors noted the outcome, with the majority of KPIs being reached or exceeded. AB said that although the TEF Silver award was a good achievement, the ambition is to achieve the Gold award. The Adult Education budget was exceeded, and confirmation has been received that this will be funded which is positive. Employer satisfaction was not as high as target, but there was an increase from 78% to 85% which is a move in the right direction. More work is needed on staff surveys, and work is ongoing with the HR team to develop this. MB asked what proportion of staff do not complete it. AF said that 47% of staff had responded. RC said that

similarly the employers' response rate to survey was around 46%. AB said that, as the surveys are anonymised, it is difficult to target staff who do not answer. MB agreed that work needs to be done to ensure a high response to surveys. MC said that it is likely that more methods of communication need to be utilised to ensure that we reach all staff. AB said that it will be useful to feed this back via FP&GP Committee to ensure this is captured. LR mentioned a new element of Ofsted Inspections – a staff survey in addition to student and parent surveys. It was launched this month. Governors noted the performance against KPIs for 2017/18 and were satisfied with the outcome.

G.02.25.19

DRAFT COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2017/18

LR presented the draft SAR, which had been compiled by Nikki Sendell, Director of Staff and Quality Services. Standards Committee had an additional meeting this week to consider the SAR. SMT validated the report at its planning days this week. Assessment of the College based on Ofsted framework standards for 2017/18 was rated as 'good'. In terms of overall effectiveness and outcomes for students, these are being rated as good. There are areas which have significantly and rapidly improved. LR said that in year data indicates further improvements on last year. Leadership and management is graded as a 1, reflective of the improvements which have been measured, as well as the positive impact of the merger, which is something which is unusual across the sector. Personal development opportunities for students in addition to the core programme they are studying is outstanding, demonstrated by the BTC Advantage programme on offer. Study programmes are assessed as good. There are two areas where improvement is required, English and maths, and value added. These are likely to improve in year, but are flagged as potentially limiting factors which require attention. AH said that he felt the document is very clear, with a good use of visual data analysis. He said that those who met at the Standards Committee felt that this was a good and accurate reflection of the College, and also something which Governors could be confident about speaking about with accuracy. AH also said that it was positive that areas for improvements have been identified, with clear action plans in place. AH said that it would be good to have this process earlier in the year next year. AB said that LR and particularly N Sendell had put a lot of work into producing an accurate document which is helpful and fair. NS asked for clarity on the 88% pass rate. LR confirmed that it includes all learners enrolled on the course. LR said that the national performance data is awaited, due at the end of January, and it will be interesting to benchmark against others. Governors noted the draft SAR.

G.02.26.19

STRATEGIC PLAN – FINAL VERSION

The final version of the Strategic Plan for 2018-21 had been circulated to the Board. The Board noted the final version, and discussion will commence in January at the Governors' Planning Days for the next year's plan. AB said that the vision and aims had been overhauled last year, and are unlikely to be changed very much in the coming year. The KPIs for 2018/19 were also highlighted by AB. NS asked why TLA, efficiency and growth, are not clearly defined within this document. AB agreed that reflecting this within the strategic plan is important and a narrative might be required to emphasise this. AF said that he agreed that the first part of the document is much clearer and focused. AF said that he did not recall seeing the progress against the strategic

objectives. AB said these had been circulated in July. Thirdly, AF asked for clarity about where the Risk Register is scrutinised by Governors. MH clarified that it is via Audit Committee.

G.02.27.19

PROGRESS UPDATE ON OPERATING PLAN 2018/19

AB presented the operating plan for the current year. He said that there are many items which are in progress. AF raised a point about Strategic Aim 3 – 3.14 and 3.15 refer to staff survey. AF asked for reassurance that these questions are included within the survey. AF also raised the point that the objectives need to be SMART eg. 4.1.1 is a useful measure, however 3.3.3 is less focused and not as helpful in providing a benchmark for achievement for the year. AB agreed that some of the objectives need to be tighter and more focused, and more measurable. RC said that a useful measurement is from where to where, and what will it look like. Governors noted progress against the Operating Plan, but agreed that updates will be more regular and comprehensive later in the year, when more progress has been made in line with the deadlines set.

G.02.28.19

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Governors had received the Equality and Diversity Policy. Very few changes had been made from the previous year's policy, due to the robustness of the current legislation. MN outlined the changes - 1.4 to match the values within the strategic framework; 3.1 to incorporate work based learners; 4.10 a small change to encapsulate widening awareness; 10.2 the process of review to this policy, which is that the Director of Student Services and Head of HR make revisions, the Equality and Diversity committee review it, SMT approve it, before it comes to the Board for final ratification. Governors noted these changes and approved the policy.

G.02.29.19

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY 2018/19

The policy document had been circulated to the Board. MB confirmed the policy has been reviewed. Changes appear marked in red in the circulated document. MN reported that changes relate to the utilisation of the 'run, hide, tell' policy which is the best practice approach recommended to organisations such as this. A stronger section on GDPR also appears. The Board noted the changes and approved the policy.

G.02.30.19

MARKETING UPDATE

A report had been circulated from the Head of Marketing. The report was noted by Governors. It was agreed there should be a section within the report which shows reflects on the competition. AB will speak to the Head of Marketing to incorporate this. **ACTION: AB**

G.02.31.19

ESTATES UPDATE

MH had provided a written update, which had been submitted to the FP&GP Committee and the Buildings Project Committee earlier in the term. The Board noted the report and had no further questions.

G.02.32.19

PROPOSED SALE OF 20 PARK LANE, CANNINGTON

MH reported this proposal had been approved by the FP&GP Committee earlier in the term. The Board considered the proposal, and agreed that the property will be disposed of as per the recommendation of the FP&GP Committee.

G.02.33.19

MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The minutes of all sub-committee meetings – Health and Safety Committee, Standards Committee, Buildings Project Committee, Finance Personnel and General Purposes Committee, and Audit Committee which had taken place during this term, were received and noted by the Board.

G.02.34.19

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

G.02.35.19

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting will be the Strategic Planning event, on Thursday 17 and Friday 18 January 2019 at the Aztec Hotel, Bristol.

The following meetings will be on Thursday 21 March and Thursday 4 July 2019.