

DRAFT



**BRIDGWATER
& TAUNTON
COLLEGE**

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD ON THURSDAY 24 MARCH 2022**

MEETING COMMENCED: 5.00 pm

MEETING ENDED: 7.25 pm

PRESENT: Derek Randall (Chair), Alan Hunt (AH), Andy Berry (AB), Adam Collett (AC), Hannah Lenthall (HL), Mike Westlake, Claire Pearce (CP), Helen Stapleton (HS)

VIA ZOOM: John Alvis (JA) (until 6.30 pm), Denys Rayner (DRay), Nick Skyrme (NS) (until 7.15 pm), David Selway (DS), Beverly Hawkins (BH) (until 7.15 pm), Lyndon Brett (LB) (until 6.15 pm) David Taylor (DT)

IN ATTENDANCE: Marcus Holder (MH), Louise Rowley (LR), Mark Nettle (MN) (Governance Professional) and Katy Hockings (note taker) (all in person)

G.03.35.22 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

DR welcomed everyone to the meeting, no apologies for absence had been received.

DR welcomed HS to her first Full Board meeting.

G.03.36.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest relevant to the meeting.

G.03.37.22 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2021

The minutes from the self-assessment meeting held on December 2021 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and were duly approved.

G.03.38.22 MATTERS ARISING

MN noted that NS had raised the issue of what appeared to be a significant fee increase on internal audit fees compared to last year. MN confirmed the report contained an error, and the correct figure should have been £32k, which is a small increase explained by the Covid lockdown which meant there was a reduction in days in the prior year, accounting for this small increase this year. NS said he had no further queries about the matter.

G.03.39.22 REPORT ON CHAIR'S ACTION

MN summarised there are a number of Chair's actions, including:

Wellington Road Property – On 24 January DR signed the purchase contract on behalf of the Board.

Canonsgrove – DR signed the contract for new tenants at Canonsgrove in February.

Motorsports Building – DR signed contract for works to the new motorsport building, replacing the fire damaged building on the Bridgwater campus.

T Levels Capital – Cube contract for capital works to B Block in Taunton campus signed by DR on behalf of the Board.

Student Transport Contract – New contract was signed by DR on behalf of the Board.

Mama Bears Nursery at Taunton Campus – Renewed lease signed on behalf of the Board by DR in August.

The Board noted these actions taken by DR on behalf of the Board and ratified them.

G.03.40.22

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

AB gave a verbal update to the Board. He highlighted that although Covid restrictions have now been eased, the College is requesting the wearing of face coverings within communal areas, and there had been a number of new Covid cases in the recent weeks meaning there are some staff absences across the College, which is having some impact on teaching, learning and assessment. The situation is similar regionally and nationally with absence

AB highlighted some challenges with student behaviour, which is a symptom of the past two academic years having been disrupted by the Covid19 pandemic. Reinforcement of expected behaviours is taking place across the College.

The focus is on TLA at the present time, to get back to some normality following the pandemic. AB highlighted key staffing changes since the last Board meeting.

There is a drive within English and maths to improve attendance and to ensure successful GCSE examinations in the summer 2022 season.

AB highlighted newly secured contracts including MoD Abbey Wood contract for engineering. He reported on an additional contract with the submarine development agency to train apprentices to service and repair submarines.

AB reported on a recent visit to San Jose to the Apple Headquarters to attend a leadership workshop. This was a useful event and SMT have been invited to Apple HQ in London to consider further actions around digital transformation.

Health and care updates provided, HPC work continues, and commercial activity at NCfN continues to grow.

Ongoing discussions regarding education offer for workforce within the Gravity Project. Further stakeholder meeting on Monday next week. Likely that the College will need to develop a training facility solely focused on this project, given the scale of the workforce required.

Skills Accelerator Fund update was provided. The next round is due to launch in the next few weeks, and a meeting was held with the County Council and Somerset colleges this week.

South West Institute of Technology official launch event held in the House of Lords earlier this week.

AB will be attending the Association of Colleges Four Nations conference in London next week.

Principalship student focus groups held this week in each of the curriculum areas. Good feedback received, both positive and some constructive feedback.

Hinds Community College visited last week from Mississippi in the USA. This exchange has been taking place for over 25 years. We have a group of T Levels students going to Hinds next month.

Thanks to Governors who supported selection of winners for the Apprenticeship Awards, and the Star Awards will take place again this year as a staff celebration, on Friday 10 June in the evening at Well Springs in Taunton. Governors will be asked to form a panel to select finalists and winners in the awards categories for Star Awards.

Cornwall College is visiting this week, Newcastle and Stafford Group visiting in early April, and we had a visit from DfE to view the traineeships.

The Colleges Partnership and Notebook Assessment Services are continuing to operate well.

AB highlighted the pressure on the College and on staff and the wider public generally in terms of the squeeze on family budgets as energy prices rise as well as other essentials such as food.

The College has been able to provide a pay award this year, which Governors noted.

DR highlighted the difference between staff pay within sixth forms within schools and similar roles within colleges.

AB invited questions. DR thanked AB on behalf of the Board for a clear update.

G.03.41.22

FINANCE

Finance Report and Management Accounts for the Six Months Ended 31 January 2022 – MH confirmed the management accounts for the first six months of the financial year, as well as the forecast for the remaining six month period which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He

confirmed the FP&GP Committee had considered these papers in detail. He highlighted the key points within management accounts and forecast. He invited questions. The Board noted the management accounts.

Indicative Budgets 2022/23 – MH confirmed the indicative budget had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. He highlighted key points and invited questions. He confirmed that the FP&GP Committee had scrutinised the indicative budget for 2022/23 in detail during its recent meeting. MH invited questions. The Board noted the indicative budget for 2022/23.

Corporate Services Limited Management Accounts – MH confirmed the management accounts for BTC Corporate Services Ltd had been circulated prior to the meeting. He confirmed that AB and DR as well as himself (MH) as Directors of this company had also reviewed the management accounts at the recent Board meeting of BTC CS Ltd. MH reported the cleaning services within College, which had transferred from KGB Cleaning Services, was operating effectively to date, having transferred at the beginning of this academic year. MH invited questions. The Board noted the management accounts for BTC Corporate Services Ltd.

Corporate Services Limited Indicative Budget 2022/23 - MH highlighted the key points within the indicative budget for 2022/23 for BTC Corporate Services Ltd, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He invited questions. The Board noted the indicative budget for 2022/23 for Corporate Services Ltd.

G.03.42.22

ESTATES AND BUILDINGS UPDATE

MH highlighted a comprehensive report on Estates and Buildings which had been circulated to and reviewed in detail by the Building Projects Committee. MH highlighted the key projects including capital bids for the T Level Wave 4. We have submitted five bids for this and should know the outcome in July, and if successful this will include work on all three campuses across a range of curriculum areas. There are a number of active capital projects ongoing at present, including the building to B Block at Taunton campus, and refurbishment of the Derek Gibson wing at Bridgwater campus, rebuild of the Arts and Technology building at Bridgwater which was burned down in a fire last February, and the Mechanical Centre of Excellence at CSIC. MH also highlighted capital works relating to funding received from the Office for Students. AB highlighted the appointment of Jo Taylor as Head of Estates, David Harper is taking on some project work for the rest of the academic year, and a new Estates Project manager has been appointed for both large and small projects (two appointments), to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to manage the projects across all three campuses.

NS thanked JT for an excellent report and asked whether there will be increased capacity within Canonsgrove as YMCA vacates. March 2023 is confirmed as the date when the YMCA will have fully vacated. ABP tenants are keen to get more space, so we might be able to cover off any rooms vacated by YMCA with further ABP staff. NS also asked whether there may be consideration given to Ukrainian refugees. MH confirmed investigations are ongoing into whether this is possible. The Board noted the update.

OPERATING PLAN 2021/22 – UPDATE

LR confirmed the operating plan update had been circulated prior to the meeting. She highlighted key points within the update.

Strategic Aim 1 – LR highlighted the launch event for T Levels next round in London this week. AB reported on the success of the College's T Level programmes, and he thanked LR for her work on these programmes, as it has meant that other colleges have turned to the College for advice, guidance and information on how we have operated them. LR reported that the College had recently had a Thematic Review by Ofsted in relation to our T Levels. We will get an interim report on this later in the summer and it had appeared to have gone well.

LR highlighted that there remained challenges around English and maths, ongoing from the pandemic and lockdown and where students have missed significant amounts of learning and have been transitioning back to on campus attendance over the past months. The position is reflected regionally and nationally. Work is going on to monitor and address this, including interventions, communication with parents and incentives to improve attendance.

Strategic Aim 2 – work ongoing on the appraisal process to ensure that this is as robust and effective as possible. A new appraisal system will be introduced in the summer term.

The College is introducing a formal College apprenticeship programme to ensure that there is consistency and that the benefits to being employed by the College as an apprentice are clear and well marketed.

Strategic Aim 3 – Discussion on this at strategic planning session last week. Level 4 applications have increased. £2m allocation from Office for Students for capital funding. Will provide significant additional digital resources for our HE students. Preparation for BDAP continues and launch of faculties on track for summer term.

Strategic Aim 4 – Partnership work planned has in part been interrupted due to Covid19 and transition from pandemic, now re-establishing some of these links and partnerships.

Strategic Aim 5 – no areas requiring particular focus at present, all aspects moving forward as planned, except for the HE Admissions process which has been slightly delayed.

LR invited questions. AH commented that he is pleased to learn of increase in L4 applications. AH requested further information on the review of HE Admissions process. LR confirmed that, with MN and Nikki Sendell, there have been discussions around the HE Admissions staffing. Confirmed that this is moving towards amber now, rather than fully red. AH thanked for the clarification. The Board noted the update.

KPI 2021/22 Update – AB highlighted the update to the KPIs for 2021/22. In general KPIs are on track to be achieved. Currently the only KPI which is not on track is the growth of non distance learning AEB. AB invited questions. The Board noted the report.

Update from Strategic Planning Process 22/23 – AB provided an overview and summary of the strategic planning event held at Bridgwater campus on 17 and 18 March.

AB invited questions and comments. AH said that transforming life and our communities is a very strong focus. CP commented that 'community' can mean social or business, or other interpretations so this will need to be well communicated to ensure that it is not lost in translation or interpretation. NS commented that he agreed with the importance of community as a focus, however, it is a wide and ambitious vision and we need to be clear on how we can measure achievement of our vision. AB thanked NS for his comments and he will give it further consideration outside of the meeting. DRay supported the vision and confirmed the importance of a bold vision statement, to challenge and push the College to make transformational change. LR commented that the rationale around the vision is to demonstrate transformational change and focusing in on the individual stories of those whose lives have been changed for the better will help to drive this through the College's culture at all levels.

MN thanked BH for her input on strategy. DS commented on the use of the word 'transformational' within the business sector and whether another word could be used, perhaps something more fundamental and capturing attention. BH suggested using 'changing' instead of 'transformational' as a possible alternative. AH commented on the stories of our students, and maximising these as case studies and examples of success to inspire others. HS commented on measuring the achievement of our vision and its impact on individuals and communities and that there could be research or evidence gathering on this to demonstrate and monitor success.

AB highlighted there are four strategic priorities proposed going forward. There will be an ambition statement for each of our provision types. AH commented on the diverse and rich nature of Somerset which provides an opportunity to look at how the College speaks for and supports the whole county.

AB thanked the Board for their input last week at the sessions and for their comments during the meeting. Next steps will be for AB to draw together a coherent and concise summary for feedback to the Board.

ACTION: AB to provide written summary of strategic planning discussions. Final recommendation to be made at June Board meeting.

G.03.44.22

MARKETING UPDATE

A written report had been received from the Head of Marketing prior to the meeting. AB highlighted key points within the report. He invited comments and questions. DRay asked how much of a market share we get from private schools and how much time we devote to focus on this group. AB to raise with Marketing. CP highlighted the strength of training for work skills such as provided by BTC. Options other than generic degrees are key for the private school market. NS asked about the cohort numbers table within the report which does not appear to reflect the demographic within the county. MN commented that he had raised this and LR confirmed we have this data which will be incorporated within the report going forward. NS asked whether we are

reaching the target market share that we are aiming for as the data within the report does not appear to support that applications and enrolments are reaching the level required. AB commented that we are aware that this could be an issue, but there is no intelligence to confirm this as yet, although work is ongoing to ensure the conversion rate reflects the current position with applications and offers of places. AB highlighted that the demographic data may need to be adjusted to focus in on Bridgwater and Taunton in order for it to be accurate and relevant for our purposes.

DT commented that the data within the report does not reflect the actual position with regard to demographics, and it would be helpful to investigate this further. AB agreed to do this. DT commented it would be helpful to split the Taunton school data out so that Court Fields and Castle for example are separated so that more detail will be available for more effective utilisation of data. DT asked how we are targeting our marketing to our target markets in an effective way to ensure that we are advertising the right courses to the right students.

MW asked for a funnel view to be incorporated within future reports, and also an industry comparison norm for comparison with our actual, so that we know where we have the most work to do. MW requested whether we track where the leads are obtained including MQLs so that we can more accurately assess the most useful and effective methods of marketing. MW highlighted the table on page 4 and why we get such a low enrolment from Castle School given they are right next to our campus. Secondly the non feeder school data is higher than the feeder schools, which is somewhat unexpected. AB to investigate this. AB commented that there is a deep-seated cultural perspective and assumptions about the Taunton campus from students at Castle School. We have been taking action to address these issues. AB suggested an additional marketing session for Governors to discuss this in more detail. MW commented that strategically there is huge value in the data we already hold and this can be utilised to focus targeted campaigns to support government initiatives in the skills and upskilling agendas. HL commented on the potential divide between what are viewed as academic and non-academic qualifications. AB confirmed that a rebranding could support the view and approach that all the qualifications are valid and viewed as highly positive. HS commented on T Levels and the strength of this offer in Taunton. There is a lack of marketing and knowledge around the T Level programme and what it means for students. LR agreed that there is a better understanding this year compared to last year from both parents and students, but there is more to be done at a national level. There is a new campaign which launched next week. The College has been asked to be involved in a national T Levels initiative, and we are working with Gatsby Foundation regarding testimonies and case studies on success of students who are studying T Levels, to improve and increase awareness of this programme of study. It was agreed that a focused discussion around Marketing would be useful for the Board. It was agreed that Matt Tudor will join prior to June meeting for a fuller discussion around marketing. The Board noted the marketing update.

ACTION: AB to ensure actions listed within the above item are moved forward, and to arrange for Matt Tudor to join the start of the June Board meeting to have a focused discussion on Marketing.

G.03.45.22 POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

Fees Policy 2022/23 – The updated Fees Policy for 2022/23 had been reviewed in detail by MH and recommended for approval by the FP&GP Committee to the Board. MH highlighted the changes within the policy, including the addition of free courses available for Level 3 qualifications; there were no other major changes made. MH requested the Board approve the policy. The Board unanimously approved the policy.

G.03.46.22 PROPOSED DATES FOR 2022/23 MEETINGS

MN presented the proposed dates for Full Board and Committee meetings dates for 2022/23. He requested any issues with these dates be communicated to him as soon as possible and by Easter, and the final dates will be confirmed at the Full Board meeting in June. The Board noted the proposed dates for next year's meetings.

ACTION: Feedback any issues with dates for 2022/23 to MN by Easter.

G.03.47.22 REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

MN highlighted that Search minutes were now shared with Full Board and asked Governors also to note the minutes of the first meeting of BTC Corporate Services.

Building Projects Committee held on 8 February 2022 – The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

Health and Safety Committee held on 10 February 2022 - The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

Quality and Standards Committee held on 1 March 2022 - The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

Audit Committee held on 8 March 2022 - The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

FP&GP Committee held on 10 March 2022 - The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

BTC Corporate Services Ltd held on 14 March 2022 - The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

G.03.48.22 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governance Review - DT asked about the governance review and the timeline for this being progressed. He expressed concern that this is not being moved forward on the previously agreed timeline. DR highlighted that the strategic planning process had been delayed from January to March, and therefore this had pushed the timeline further back. JA will Chair a further meeting of a sub committee to develop campus boards. Once a final proposal has been drawn together, an EGM will be held to agree these structural changes of the Board. The Board noted the position.

G.03.49.22 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 30 June at 5 pm.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.