

**DRAFT**



**BRIDGWATER  
& TAUNTON  
COLLEGE**

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
HELD ON THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER 2021**

**MEETING COMMENCED: 5.00 pm**  
**MEETING ENDED: 7.20 pm**

**PRESENT:** Derek Randall (Chair), John Alvis (JA), Andy Berry (AB), Adam Collett (AC), David Taylor (DT) (left the meeting at 7 pm), Hannah Lenthall (HL), Mike Westlake, Grace Briffitt (GB) (joined at 5.28 pm)

**VIA ZOOM:** Alan Hunt (AH), Denys Rayner (DRay) (left the meeting at 7 pm), Nick Skyrme (NS), David Selway (DS), Beverly Hawkins (BH), Lyndon Brett (LB) (joined at 5.45 pm)

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

**G.02.16.22 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies had been received from Claire Pearce and Salam Katbi

DR reported that AF has resigned from the Board since the last meeting. DR gave details of the letter of resignation which had been received via the Clerk to Governors.

GB had been appointed as the new FE Student Governor.

**G.02.17.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**  
There were no declarations of interest relevant to the meeting.

**G.02.18.22 MINUTES OF THE SELF ASSESSMENT MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2021**  
The minutes from the self-assessment meeting held on 7 October 2021 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and were duly approved.

**G.02.19.22 MATTERS ARISING**  
Strategy and Governance – MN confirmed a meeting of Governors had been held earlier in the day as agreed at the self-assessment meeting on 7 October.

**G.02.20.22 PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE**  
AB had provided a written summary of the current term. He highlighted key points. He highlighted the commitment and hard work of all staff

during what has been a challenging period. The College continues to support safe working for staff and students during the pandemic, including encouraging regular home testing, face coverings in communal areas, and adhering to risk assessments.

AB thanked the Governors who had been involved with the recent Strategic Planning meetings with SMT, Chaired by DRay. These were followed up by SMT Planning Days and will be brought together as the basis of the Strategic Planning session for Governors on 13 and 14 January 2022 at Taunton Conference Centre.

AB highlighted the recent assessment visit by the Beacon Awards panel, focusing on Construction Live which had been shortlisted as a finalist. We await the outcome of the visit and the winner of this Beacon Award.

AB reported that he had a Teams meeting with Alex Berghart, and is looking to invite Nadhim Zahawi, Secretary of State for Education, to the College.

Recent Open Evenings at Taunton and Bridgwater and morning at Cannington were well attended and as a result there had been lots of interest in applying for courses for September 2022. DR invited questions; there were none.

#### **G.02.21.22**

#### **CAPITAL ACQUISITION – WELLINGTON ROAD**

MH had circulated a paper prior to the meeting, proposing the purchase of the properties at Wellington Road in Taunton as discussed at the Self-Assessment meeting in October. The Buildings Projects Committee and FP&GP Committee had both reviewed the proposed purchase in detail, and recommendation by both Committees had been made that the purchase be progressed if the total purchase cost did not exceed £2m. MH confirmed that the confirmed purchase price including costs is currently at £2m, and he confirmed that the rental incomes from the property will contribute c.£50k income annually. The due diligence process is almost complete, legal due diligence showed no significant issues. The conservation report is completed, and this has also shown no significant issues. The buildings survey will now be completed, although no significant issues are expected at this point. MH sought approval from the Board for the purchase to proceed on the basis outlined above. Exchange of the property will take place early in the New Year, with completion by the end of January. MH invited questions. JA commented on the Graded status of the building and enquired as to the cost of the renovations and refurbishment. MH confirmed that a suitable amount has been set aside within the total cost to cover this. MW asked what the primary motivation for the purchase is. AB confirmed that there is very little residential accommodation available for rent within the vicinity of Taunton for students. The purpose of this purchase is to provide a centrally located property which can be rented to students. The accommodation at Canonsgrove currently owned by the College is too distant from the centre of Taunton to be suitable for many students who wish to live and study in Taunton. DT confirmed his support for the proposal. He asked what the next steps are in the process, and whether we will then consider the future of the Canonsgrove property. AB confirmed this will need to be considered in due course. DS confirmed his support for the purchase. The Board considered the proposal and reviewed the report submitted to the meeting and unanimously agreed that, subject to the above conditions, the purchase be authorised to proceed as outlined.

## G.02.22.22

### FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2020/21

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2021 – MH had circulated the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2021. He summarised key points within the document and requested Board approval for the statements. Both Audit Committee and FP&GP Committee had reviewed the financial statements in detail and recommended approval to the Board. MH invited questions. There were none. The Board approved the financial statements, and authorised DR and AB to sign these on behalf of the Board.

Audit Completion Report including Letter of Representation – MH confirmed the report had been circulated prior to the meeting. This report highlights all findings of the audit for the period ending 31 July 2021. MH confirmed that the Audit Committee has reviewed the report in detail and considered the adjustments recommended. MH confirmed these had been actioned. MH invited questions. There were none. The Board noted the report.

## G.02.23.22

### ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE TO THE CORPORATION 2020/21

MN confirmed the report had been submitted to Governors prior to the meeting, and that this had been reviewed in detail by the Audit Committee. MN noted the change of membership of the Committees during the year, and that the Committee meetings had complied with requirements in terms of regularity. MN highlighted key points of the report and confirmed that the Audit Committee was satisfied with the report. MN commented on audits planned for the current year and invited questions. NS asked how many days of internal audits the College is purchasing annually and noted a significant increase in the cost of internal audits from the previous year. MN confirmed he would investigate and respond to NS separately and report back to the Full Board at its next meeting. The Board noted the annual report of the Audit Committee to the Corporation 2020/21.

**ACTION: MN to confirm reasons for increase in internal audit fees, and number of days purchased for internal audits.**

## G.02.24.22

### KPIs 2020/21

AB presented the outcome of the KPIs for 2020/21. There had been a slight delay in the final outcomes of some of the data. AB highlighted there were four strategic aims with KPIs under each. AB summarised the key points and those areas where KPIs had not been fully achieved. Firstly, the achievement figure for 16-18 study programmes, at 86% achievement; the outcome was 80.6% and the reason for this was partly due to the fact that Functional Skills exams had to go ahead, and no Teacher Assessed Grades were permitted. This had a knock-on impact due to the disruption of the pandemic. Apprenticeship achievement was 61.2%. At the present time, we do not have the national figure on this, but early indications are that the national achievement rate has fallen for this period. Mandatory training by staff was a final outcome of 95%, which was 3% lower than predicted. Furlough had some effect on this during the period, as did the fact that some bank staff are included within the numbers but may not be required to undertake mandatory training in the period. HE income was slightly lower than predicted. Finally, AB commented that staff costs as a percentage of income were 0.6% higher than planned. AB invited questions. DT commented that

the KPIs which were achieved fully or exceeded expectations were significant and excellent. Staff absence is a particularly key indicator, at a low level. The rising trend of students coming from Taunton schools is also very positive. DT asked why the Bridgwater student numbers have fallen slightly. AB commented that this could be partly due to an increase in apprenticeship enrolments, which are rolling throughout the year and may cause the figures to show lower, and it may also be an increase in NEET students, rather than a reduction in market share. Full and further detailed analysis is required. DT suggested that schools may be able to provide a fuller picture to assist in this analysis and in addressing any issues which may be highlighted by this. AB agreed this would be helpful to investigate further with the schools. AB will report back to the Strategic Planning event in January on this issue. MW mentioned that at the Digital ARG meeting, this issue was considered and the way that data is processed and analysed going forward. The College will then be in a stronger position to analyse this data more accurately and take timely action to address any issues which are highlighted by the data reports.

**ACTION: AB to investigate further on BW market share and report to the Board at its Strategic Planning Event in January.**

#### **G.02.25.22**

#### **DRAFT COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2020/21**

LR provided an update on the SAR for 2020/21. This had been the subject of a Quality and Standards Committee meeting on Monday 6 December, where NS presented the key information, and this was scrutinised by Governors. LR noted that there were some delays to data being available this year which had made the production of the SAR more challenging than usual. LR highlighted key points within the SAR, including the format being adjusted to fully comply with the Education Inspection Framework, to ensure that the context is accurate in terms of grading our position in respect of Ofsted. LR confirmed that a robust process had been utilised in order to bring the outcomes within the SAR, with sufficient evidence to support these gradings. LR highlighted the excellent work of staff in ensuring that provision has continued to be delivered during challenging times. LR noted that the impact of the pandemic had led to high needs students not achieving at the same rate as other students, and their progression was not as it had been during the previous period. The impact of lockdowns had potentially been more severe for these students. Areas for improvement remain unchanged from the previous year, and again this is at least in part due to the impacts of the pandemic. LR noted that, due to challenges during the pandemic, some colleges have selected not to grade themselves, however NS and the team felt it was important to continue to grade at this time. LR invited questions and comments. DT commented that NS had taken the time to go through the document with him, as he couldn't make the meeting on Monday. DT asked how many Governors are familiar with the change of emphasis towards curriculum intent, and it may be useful to have a briefing for Governors around this. It was agreed to arrange this for Governors. MN and AB to take this forward. JA asked whether there are any sectors which are performing less well than others. LR confirmed that health continues to be a challenge due to the high turnover in this sector which is a national trend. Also, Butchery is another lower retention sector, again this reflects a national picture. AC commented that practical skills elements of apprenticeships have been challenging to cover during the pandemic due to apprentices being furloughed, and also that practical elements

have not been able to happen during the lockdown periods. HL commented that whilst the reasoning for the assessment is robust and correct, the messaging to staff needs to be carefully managed to continue to energise staff and motivate to continue to push forward. The Board noted the draft SAR report for 2020/21 and thanked NS for compiling this and LR for the update.

**ACTION: MN and AB to organise a briefing for Governors on the Education Inspection Framework.**

## G.02.26.22

### PROGRESS UPDATE

Operating Plan 2021/22 – LR presented the progress update to the current year operating plan and highlighted key points. Good progress made in developmental observations this term. Completed first College Inspection Review this term, in order to develop support plans. Mental health among students continues to be a challenge, as it does nationally. Working with MN to purchase an online mental health tool for students called TogetherAll, 24/7 online support for all students, and extends to apprentices and HE.

English and maths, re-sits in November went smoothly, results expected in January.

Appraisal system being reviewed to seek improvements; also strengthening our own apprentice programme across the College.

Degree awarding powers moving forward; T Levels industry placements remain a challenge, but those placements in progress are extremely successful.

Apprenticeship enrolment process is being reviewed in order to ensure it is a streamlined process. Have raised this as an issue with the DfE, as it is a national issue.

Secured funding towards carbon net zero journey.

Reviewing and in-depth analysis on departmental contributions will take place in January.

AB invited comments and questions. There were none. The Board noted the updated Operating Plan for 2021/22.

Strategic Plan – AB confirmed that the Strategic Planning Framework had now been finalised and approved and will form the basis of discussions for the Strategic Planning meeting in January. The Board noted the Strategic Plan for 2021/24.

KPI 2021/22 – AB presented the KPIs for 2021/22. These had been put together following the outcome of the KPIs for 2020/21 and focused around the five strategic aims. AB sought approval of the KPIs for 2021/22 and the Board agreed these. These KPIs had been reviewed for the first term. AB invited comments and questions. MW commented on the market share for BW, and whether this is likely to be achieved in the coming year. AB confirmed it is challenging to put a figure in for this KPI, and the analysis work which was mentioned earlier in the meeting will assist in assessing the appropriateness of this KPI percentage. DT asked about the HE data and what actions will be taken to achieve this KPI. AB highlighted that the degree apprenticeships are all HE, which has not been reflected in this data previously, and therefore there is likely to be an increase in the current year. AH commented on the review of HE applications within the operating plan, which should generate useful data to address the HE recruitment KPIs. He noted this has not yet commenced and encouraged work to start on this sooner

rather than later in order to maximise recruitment for 2022 starts. AB responded to confirm that the intention is to commence this work as soon as possible. DR commented that it would be useful to review the USC website internally with DT who commented on difficulties in navigating the site effectively. MW commented on actions which can be taken effectively once there are more data reports easily available. He commented that it could be useful to incorporate longer term KPIs within the annual KPIs, in order to monitor effectively the longer-term aspirations of the College. AB agreed that this would be useful and will consider this and report back at the Strategic Planning meeting in January. The Board noted the KPIs for 2021/22 and progress to date. **ACTION: DT to assist in a review of the UCS website to improve navigation. Longer term KPIs to be incorporated, AB to report back to Strategic Planning meeting of Governors in January 2022.**

#### G.02.27.22

#### **FINANCIAL UPDATE 2021/22**

Management Accounts for three months to 31 October 2021 – MH presented the management accounts for the period to 31 October 2021, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He highlighted key points within the management accounts. MH invited questions and comments. There were none. The Board noted the management accounts for the three-month period to 31 October 2021.

Revised Budget 2021/22 – MH presented the revised budget for 2021/22, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He highlighted the key points and invited comments or questions. There were none. MH requested Board approval for the revised budget for 2021/22. The Board approved the revised budget as outlined and presented.

#### G.02.28.22

#### **POLICIES FOR APPROVAL**

Equality and Diversity Policy – MN presented the updated equality and diversity policy which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He highlighted key changes including the inclusion of sexual harassment within education which has been a focus of an Ofsted investigation and review, following high profile cases nationally within the media. The UCS access and participation plan also incorporates elements relating to EDI. Training during the year will include sexual harassment in education awareness, as well as strengthening the focus within TLA around transgender and sexual harassment. MN invited comments or questions. DT enquired what training will be made available to Governors on sexual harassment in education. MN confirmed that he is investigating suitable training provision which can be made available for Governors and will update Governors when he has identified some suitable training. AC commented that he has a module on EDI for his apprenticeship programme and could share this. MN would arrange to meet with AC to discuss. DT further enquired how we measure whether the policy is working and how we review this. MN confirmed that he is seeking a Governor who has specific equality and diversity experience and knowledge which can support the effective implementation of robust equality and diversity systems and practices, as well as outcomes for students. LR confirmed that there is scrutiny at the ED Committee. The fact that EDI is a cross cutting theme of our Strategic Plan will also support focus on measurable outcomes in this area. MN confirmed there is an ED action plan in place which the Committee reviews termly. MW asked to include the term LGBTQ+ in place of transgender, subject to MN checking this terminology is the most

appropriate. The Board approved the updated Equality and Diversity policy subject to this change.

**ACTION: Sexual harassment in education training to be provided for Governors. MN to coordinate this.**

Health and Safety Policy – MH presented the updated Health and Safety Policy for the current year. He confirmed this had been circulated prior to the meeting and highlighted key changes which were not significant this year, and were highlighted for ease of reference. He invited comments and questions. There were none. The Board approved the updated Health and Safety Policy.

#### **G.02.29.22**

#### **SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

MN presented the safeguarding report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He highlighted key points, including the impact of the Covid19 pandemic. Additional efforts were made during the period to continue contact with students during the lockdown periods and give effective support to vulnerable students during this time. It was more challenging in some cases where issues related to home and therefore students might not be able to speak freely from their home environment. Everyone's Invited website does not appear to contain any testimonials where the College is specifically named. However, the website highlights that there is a significant amount of sexual harassment within the educational environment. This led to an Ofsted inspection and review that produced a report which indicated that sexual harassment occurs often and prevalently across all education sectors, and the advice was to assume that it is happening in all establishments. The tutorial programme was utilised during the year to highlight issues relating to sexual harassment and provide support for students. RSM, the internal auditors, are being invited to audit our approach to sexual harassment and look at how we can continue to improve. The Board noted the safeguarding report.

#### **G.02.30.22**

#### **MARKETING UPDATE**

AB presented the marketing update which had been circulated prior to the meeting. NS asked about applications and offers made on page three of the report and asked for context on whether this number is in line with previous years. AB responded that there has been more analysis in relation to the data, as well as the admissions function being moved to be managed by the distance learning head of department, who is already responsible for dealing with many thousands of applications and enrolments every year. MW confirmed that time is of the essence in responding to applications and enquiries and moving these to interviews, offers and enrolments. We can also look at doing targeted marketing to ensure that we are focusing on the right people and not wasting marketing budget. LR highlighted that teaching staff undertake interviews, and this is an additional pressure on their time, and we need to ensure there is a balance in their commitments. The HE sector has additional staff and admissions tutors who take on this work, however, teaching staff within the College value being part of the interview process which ensures the most appropriate course is matched to the student requirements and strengths. HL and AC shared their experiences of the admissions and interview process. The Board noted the update.

#### **G.02.31.22**

#### **ESTATES AND PROPERTY UPDATE**

MH presented the Estates and Property update which had been previously received by the Buildings Projects Committee and reviewed in detail. The document highlights the numerous capital projects which are currently underway across the College. MH highlighted the key projects. MH invited questions and comments. JA commented on the additional costs associated with some projects, and MH confirmed that there is a supply chain issue as well as the pricing of raw materials increasing due to the Covid19 pandemic. Careful actions have been taken to monitor and control costs. AB commented that it would be useful to provide photographs of progress on projects for the Board. Agreed to incorporate for future reports. The Board noted the Estates and Property update.

**ACTION: MH to incorporate photographs within future Estates and Property update reports.**

#### **G.02.32.22**

#### **MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Search Committee 21 10 2021 – The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

Health and Safety Committee – The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

Quality and Standards Committee held on 08 11 2021 – The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

Buildings Projects Committee held on 09 11 2021 – The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

Audit Committee held on 18 11 2021 – The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

Finance, Personnel and General Purposes Committee held on 23 11 2021 – The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

BTC Corporate Services Ltd Board meeting held on 23 11 2021 - The minutes were reviewed and ratified by the Board.

#### **G.02.33.22**

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

#### **G.02.34.22**

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The next meetings will be held on Thursday 24 March and Thursday 30 June 2021. There will be a Strategic Planning meeting of the Full Board on Thursday 13 and Friday 14 January 2022, at Taunton Conference Centre.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm.