

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF GOVERNORS HELD ON THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER 2022

MEETING COMMENCED: 5.10 pm

MEETING ENDED: 7.25 pm

PRESENT: Derek Randall (Chair), Alan Hunt (AH), Andy Berry (AB), Helen Stapleton (HS), Nick Skyrme (NS), Beverley Hawkins (BH) (via Teams) (from 5.41 pm), Andy Berry (AB), Jackson George (JG), Sam Harris-Roberts (SHR), David Selway (DS) (via Teams) (left at 6.46 pm), Adam Collett (AC), Bethan Nodwell (BN), Lyndon Brett (LB), Hannah Lenthall-Aung

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

G.02.16.23

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

DR welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies for absence had been received from Mike Westlake, Claire Pearce, David Taylor, and Denys Rayner

DR welcomed BN to her first meeting as HE Student Governor.

G.02.17.23

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest relevant to the meeting.

G.02.18.23

MINUTES OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2022

The minutes from the meeting held on 11 October 2022 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and were duly approved.

G.02.19.23

MATTERS ARISING

Instrument and Articles – work with DT and MN regarding vice chairs and chairs of committees, and this will be circulated.

Targets were also updated and will be shared by MN in January.

Safeguarding and Prevent - update will be offered to Governors prior to the March meeting DR pointed out that the AoC offers similar courses from time to time, and MN will circulate details of these as relevant.

ACTION: MN to circulate information regarding any relevant AoC courses for Governors.

G.02.20.23

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

MN highlighted that, whilst Search Committee may make recommendations, these will always be ratified by the Board. DRay has put his name forward as Chair of the Audit Committee since JA retired. MN asked for ratification of this nomination. Board approved unanimously. Furthermore, this gives a vacancy for a member of the FP&GP Committee and MW has kindly offered to take up this role. Board approved unanimously so these appointments are now made.

MN will be circulating further correspondence regarding Search Committee in due course. This was noted.

DR advised that any Governors wishing to join an additional committee, please speak to MN.

G.02.21.23

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

AB gave a verbal update on the year to date and recent developments. There have been a small number of incidents relating to student behaviour as we draw towards the end of term. There has been an increase generally in mental health needs in students, particularly in our 16-18 age group of students. These are being dealt with by staff being visible on campus and providing additional support to students where necessary and possible.

Nursing is going very well with a strong start to the year. BN confirmed the course is excellent and the tutors are creating a valuable environment for discussion and learning.

17–18-year-old student numbers are slightly down, and FP&GP Committee have reviewed the analysis on this in detail. Actions are being taken to mitigate the impact of this and seek ways to re-engage these learners where possible.

Pay Award has been made to staff, following resolution of the pay dispute with unions which has been resolved with the unions agreeing to the offer made. Further work will be undertaken in liaison with the unions on other terms and conditions including workloads.

Parking charges at Taunton campus will be removed for staff from January.

Current challenges on recruiting staff due to relatively low unemployment and some local employers offering higher pay rates.

Political update given, including currently no additional funding for FE when there has been for schools.

The Strategic Development Fund continues and is progressing well.

Regional AoC Chairs and Principals event hosted at Taunton Conference Centre today, and AB re-elected as regional representative on the AoC Board.

The Colleges' Partnership update, currently out to tender on main two contracts. Awaiting outcome.

Ofsted visit regarding T Levels will take place between January and March. Wiltshire College and Exeter College had their Ofsted Inspections in recent weeks.

Ofsted Care Standards Inspection on the residential department last month. Received Outstanding grading, excellent work by the Residential Team, and a fantastic outcome.

Government funding for FE relating to de-carbonisation has been received to support the College's work on this.

Office for National Statistics have reclassified Colleges into the Public Sector, with new and immediate implications on this. AB has shared two documents into the folder for the meeting with the outline and information about these key changes. With immediate effect borrowing will not be available commercially for colleges. However, carry forward is still possible whereas not in other parts of the Public Sector.

Subsidiary companies related to colleges also become part of the Public Sector. DR asked how private companies as subsidiaries can operate in this way. AB and MH confirmed there will be more information to come on this and this will be fed back to Governors in due course for clarity. The profile of income to the college will also change. Colleges will move to a 12-month linear profile of income. Colleges will continue to pay VAT, unlike schools. HS asked whether the growth of HE, which in other institutions is not classed as being in the public sector would affect the classification. AB commented that, whilst not confirmed, it would not change the public sector status, however this may change if HE becomes a much bigger part of our offering.

DR invited questions or further comments. There were none.

G.02.22.23

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2021/22

Final Management Accounts 2021/22 – these had been circulated prior to the meeting and MH highlighted the key points. MH invited questions. There were none. The Board noted the final management accounts for 2021/22.

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2022 – these had been circulated prior to the meeting and MH highlighted the key points. MH invited questions. NS commented on the excellent work carried out by MH and his team on improving the financial performance generally and managing the finances of the College effectively. The Board unanimously approved the financial statements as circulated and these would be signed off by DR and AB.

Audit Completion Report including Letter of Representation – this had been circulated prior to the meeting and MH highlighted the key points. MH highlighted that the Audit Committee has reviewed this report in detail. No significant items had been highlighted, other than the adjustment on the pension, which is due to a timing difference. NS highlighted that the auditors incorrectly identified the classification of funds relating to an insurance claim for the fire in the Technology building on the Bridgwater campus. This was noted. AB highlighted that the College will be taking over the finance operation of The

Colleges Partnership from the new financial year. The report was noted by Governors.

G.02.23.23

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE TO THE CORPORATION 2021/22

MN highlighted that the Audit Committee meeting scheduled to approve the report had to be cancelled due to illness and not being quorate. There will be a reconvened Audit Committee with RSM Auditors during the Strategic Planning Residential event of Governors in January. The report will be brought to the next meeting of the Board once scrutinised by the Audit Committee in January. The Board noted the position.

G.02.24.23

KPI 2021/22

AB gave an overview of the final position on the KPIs for 2021/22. He highlighted key elements and notified that timing of receipt of data on outcomes had been later than expected and the final KPIs would normally be brought to the Self-Assessment meeting of Governors. The Board noted the position. LB asked what progress has been made in the Taunton market. AB confirmed that changes have been made to the offering at Taunton to capture more of the market. Open events so far this year have been extremely well attended and have been followed by applications and interviews. LB noted that conversion in the Taunton market is less strong than in Bridgwater and asked what further actions we can take. AB outlined that there are a number of factors which are a challenge in the Taunton market, including competitors, market perception and cultural traditions within the locality, as well as the influence of the schools. DR asked whether further market research can be done to identify how best to address this. AB said that young people leaving education to seek employment is a significant factor at the current time. NS commented on work to invite a Taunton Head into the College and potentially sit on the Board. AB said that this has proved challenging to date, however consideration continues to be given to this proposal. LR confirmed that she sits on the Bridgwater Headteachers Board, which meets on a half termly basis. The College has not secured a similar position on the Taunton Head forum.

Governors noted the position and the final outcome for KPIs for 2021/22.

G.02.25.23

DRAFT COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2021/22

LR provided an overview on the Self Assessment Report for 2021/22. A special meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee was held earlier this week to go through the document in fine detail and receive scrutiny and feedback from Governors. The final outcome for the SAR has been to grade as Outstanding based on the evidence gathered. AH commented that it was helpful to have NS join the meeting earlier in the week, and he also recorded thanks to Nikki Sendell for the work she has undertaken on the SAR document and analysing the data effectively. Thanks also to the Governors who attended the meeting and added useful feedback and scrutiny. LR requested feedback and comments from Governors. There were no further comments. The Board noted the SAR.

G.02.26.23

PROGRESS UPDATE 2022/23

Operating Plan 2022/23 – The latest update on the operating plan for 2022/23 had been circulated prior to the meeting for review and consideration. AB invited comments and questions. There were none. The Board noted the current position.

KPI 2022/23 – AB presented the KPIs for 2022/23, which had been developed from the Strategic Planning Framework and the Operating Plan for 2022/23. AB invited questions and comments. NS commented that there has to be realism as well as challenge. AB agreed, and confirmed that careful consideration has been made, given the current economic climate. NS highlighted the Taunton market share as a point, and AB acknowledged this is lower for this year but higher than last year's outcome. BN commented that newer courses such as the Nursing offering is likely to increase the Taunton market share. LB asked whether the College attends school events. LR and AB confirmed this is the case and further work is being done by the Schools Liaison Team to build these relations and connections. BN reported that students could be paid to go into schools to promote the College's offering. SHR reported that staffing can have an impact on retention, and this is driven by market and economic forces, and effective strategies need to be employed to address this. JG commented on 2.3 around Destinations and Achievement. It would be useful to focus on more academic achievement and recognition and suggested the introduction of a recognition system for students. AB highlighted the Value-Added Awards that the College hosts but agreed that the more academic achievement would be good to recognise. AH asked how we are developing the trainee teacher programme within the College. LR confirmed that we have been holding an event for trainee teachers within electrical. We have programmes to encourage staff from industry who want to move into teaching. The Board noted the KPIS for 2022/23.

ACTION: Academic achievement recognition events and systems to be explored.

G.02.27.23

FINANCIAL UPDATE 2022/23

Management Accounts 3 Months to 31 October 2022 – These had been circulated prior to the meeting, and MH highlighted the key points. He invited questions and comments. NS commented on the de-carbonisation funding and MH provided clarity on this point. The Board noted the management accounts to the three months to 31 October 2022.

Revised Budget 2022/23 – This had been circulated prior to the meeting and MH highlighted key points. He invited questions and comments. MH requested approval for the revised budget, which had been reviewed in detail by the FP&GP Committee. The Board approved the revised budget for 2022/23.

G.02.28.23

POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy – MN highlighted changes to the policy from last year. Highlighted that EDI is now a cross cutting theme within the Strategic Planning Framework. MN highlighted that 5.2 states the Governors are responsible for scrutinising all activity within the College within the lens of EDI. MN invited questions and comments. The Board approved the policy. MN highlighted that there

is a vacancy for an EDI link Governor, so any Governor wishing to take this on should contact him.

Health and Safety Policy – MH highlighted the changes to the policy from last year. The Board approved the policy.

Procurement Standing Orders – MH highlighted the key points of the procedure. The Board approved the Procurement Standing Orders.

Procurement Statement – MH explained the key elements of the statement and requested Board approval. The Board approved the Procurement Statement.

Treasury Policy – MH highlighted the key changes to the policy. This will be further reviewed given the recent ONS reclassification process. The Board approved the policy.

G.02.29.23

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

MN provided an overview of the safeguarding report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. MN highlighted the inclusion of wellbeing as a separate part of this report. There had been a slight increase of safeguarding incidents from the previous year, however the previous year had shown a lower number than average and could have been linked to the Covid19 pandemic whereby fewer disclosures and reports were made during that time. MN confirmed that the wellbeing report has been based upon data gathered from students and from the services provided, thanks to our new Head of Student Engagement. He invited questions and comments. There were none. The reported was noted.

G.02.30.23

MARKETING UPDATE

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting for review. AB gave an overview of the key points within the update. AB invited questions and comments. HS asked if there is sufficient support from employers within the open events and other marketing activities, as well as supporting career pathways which are available. AB confirmed that the College has subscribed to EMSI, which provides live data for potential students on career information. AB agreed it would be beneficial to get more employers at these events and work is in place to secure this. The Board noted the update.

G.02.31.23

ESTATES UPDATE

Capital Programme Update – A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting for consideration. MH outlined the key points and invited comments and questions. This update had been scrutinised in detail by the Building Projects Committee. The Board noted the update.

Asset Disposals and Investment Opportunities – A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting for consideration. MH highlighted the key points and invited comments and questions. This update had been scrutinised in detail by the Building Projects Committee. The Board noted the update.

G.02.32.23

REPORT ON SUBSIDIARY AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

Corporate Services Ltd – Final Management Accounts for 2021/22 – These had been circulated prior to the meeting for noting by the Board.

Corporate Services Ltd – Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2022 – These had been circulated prior to the meeting for noting by the Board.

Corporate Services Ltd – Management Accounts for October 2022/23 – These had been circulated prior to the meeting for noting by the Board.

Corporate Services Ltd – Revised Budget 2022/23 – These had been circulated prior to the meeting for noting by the Board.

MH confirmed all of the above had been scrutinised in detail by the FP&GP Committee. The Board noted the reports from subsidiary and associated companies.

G.02.33.23

MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Search Committee held on 4 October 2022 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

Health and Safety Committee held on 13 October 2022 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

Quality and Standards Committee held on 1 November 2022 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

Buildings Projects Committee held on 8 November 2022 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

Finance, Personal and General Purposes Committee held on 24 November 2022 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

Corporate Services Ltd Board held on 24 November 2022 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

G.02.34.23

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

G.02.35.23

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be the Strategic Planning Residential on Thursday 12 and Friday 13 January 2023, at the Aztec West Hotel in Bristol.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.