

DRAFT



BRIDGWATER
& TAUNTON
COLLEGE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF GOVERNORS HELD ON THURSDAY 29 JUNE 2023

MEETING COMMENCED: 5.00 pm

MEETING ENDED: 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Derek Randall (Chair), Alan Hunt (AH), Andy Berry (AB), Helen Stapleton (HS) (via Teams), Nick Skyrme (NS), Andy Berry (AB), Jackson George (JG), Adam Collett (AC), Sam Harris-Roberts (SHR), (BN), Lyndon Brett (LB) (until 6 pm), David Taylor (DT), Denys Rayner (DRay) (via Teams) (from 5.20 pm) and Beverley Hawkins (BH) (from 5.23 pm)

IN ATTENDANCE: Marcus Holder (MH), Louise Rowley (LR), Mark Nettle (MN) (Governance Professional), Katy Hockings (note taker) and Simon Perryman (SP) (external reviewer and observer)

G.04.53.23

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

DR welcomed everyone to the meeting. He particularly welcomed SP as an advisor undertaking an external review of the Board. HLA had extended her apologies and would be going on maternity leave so a one-year maternity cover staff governor would be sought for the Taunton campus. This is JG's last meeting and the Board thanked him for his contribution during his time as student governor for FE. Apologies for absence had been received from David Selway, Bethan Nodwell, Claire Pearce, Mike Westlake, and Hannah Lenthall-Aung.

G.04.54.23

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest relevant to the meeting.

G.04.55.23

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2023

The minutes from the meeting held on 23 March 2023 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and were duly approved.

MATTERS ARISING

T Levels Deferred – LR confirmed that all students applying to T Levels which have been deferred have been successfully offered places on suitable alternative courses for September.

Accountability Agreement – Reviewed and approved by Governors, and uploaded by the deadline.

Marketing Discussion – AB confirmed a working group meeting had been held this month to discuss marketing further as agreed at the last

meeting with AK and MT from the Marketing team. DR confirmed this had been a useful meeting and will lead the way for further discussions and actions in this regard.

Taunton Schools- DT confirmed that he had met with the marketing and admissions team to discuss admissions and applications from schools in Taunton. DT reported that he will be looking at how we can raise awareness further within Taunton schools as to what BTC offers. AB thanked DT for this input and contribution.

LR confirmed that the IB team will be visiting schools in Taunton to raise awareness of the offering at Taunton campus.

NCfN Instruments and Articles Update – MN confirmed that advice had been sought regarding the proposed changes to the Instrument and Articles for National College for Nuclear. MN proposed that the Board approve the changes as proposed. AB confirmed that he had spoken to the Principal of Lakes College who had also confirmed that the changes would be approved by the Board of Lakes College. The Board agreed to the changes as proposed.

ACTION: MN to confirm approval by the Board to NCfN.

G.04.56.23

BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP INCLUDING CAMPUS BOARD UPDATE

MN provided an update on Board membership. HLA will be going on maternity leave imminently and MN sought permission from the Board for the election of a one-year maternity cover staff governor for Taunton campus. The Board approved this action.

ACTION: MN to instigate an election of maternity cover staff governor at Taunton campus for a period of one year.

HS has put her name forward to join the FP&GP Committee from September. MN sought ratification as proposed by the Search Committee for this appointment. The Board confirmed its ratification of this appointment to the FP&GP Committee.

ACTION: HS to be appointed to FP&GP Committee.

JG will step down as FE Student Governor from the end of this term and A Level student Aaron Greenwood will join as the elected FE Student Governor from the October Self-Assessment meeting. Storm Oatley Summers has been elected as the HE Student Governor from September.

MN highlighted that there is a vacancy for a link Governor for EDI, as well as a vacancy on the Search Committee and the Audit Committee.

New members of the Board are currently being sought.

MN highlighted and summarised work done to develop campus boards. A working party of Governors including HS, AH, DT and DRay, met to look at the structure and function of campus boards. It was agreed that the student experience of each campus, proposals for developments and review of the facilities at each campus would be included in the

remit of the Campus Boards. It was agreed that Campus Advisory Board would be the proposed title of these boards. The proposal had been made that the Taunton campus be the initial campus to have an advisory board meeting in the next academic year, followed by Bridgwater. The proposal is for a Governor to chair each of the Campus Advisory Boards. The Campus Advisory Boards would be supported by an SMT member at each campus. MN invited questions and comments.

Noted that the Area Review Groups for curriculum areas will remain as separate committees.

AH noted that the introduction of the campus Boards will be monitored closely to ensure they are meeting requirements and are a successful addition to the Board structure.

DT commented on Board membership and the importance of EDI consideration. MN confirmed that the College is looking to the National Centre for Diversity for support and advice, as well as other external organisations focusing on EDI. The College has just joined the Student Commission for Racial Justice. DT commented it would be helpful to have a clear plan on EDI and succession to the Board to ensure that we are meeting our own targets for EDI. DR confirmed there will be a Search Committee report to the Self-Assessment meeting each year which will include discussion around EDI. AB confirmed that the College operating plan for 2023-24 contains specific EDI targets for Governors.

AB asked MN to email out a note of this item to the Governors, to ensure that these actions are followed up and that those Governors not in attendance are fully informed about the next steps with campus boards and Board membership.

ACTION: MN to email Governors with the actions from this item.

G.04.57.23

REGISTER OF INTERESTS

MN distributed forms for Governors to record their register of interests. He requested all Governors complete this and return to him as soon as possible. If there is no change from last year, MN confirmed 'no change' can be written across the form and signed and dated.

ACTION: Governors to complete and return Register of Interests form to MN as soon as possible.

G.04.58.23

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

AB provided a verbal update on developments over the past term.

Taster events were held this week for Year 10 students across all campuses.

Welcome days for new students were held this week across all campuses.

Cross College FE Awards held last week, a really positive event, held in the McMillan Theatre.

A Marketing agency is doing work on rebranding for our 16-18 provision. Consultants have interviewed key staff as well as students visiting the College for taster days this week.

The Marketing consultancy is looking at UCS branding.

Duke of Edinburgh Awards were presented to students this week.

AB reported on his attendance at a Four Nations event with the Association of Colleges in Belfast.

Visit this week from Julia Kinniburgh and Kiera Harper, Director General and Deputy Director for Skills respectively for the DfE, to visit NCfN, Construction Skills and Innovation Centre as well as nursing provision at Taunton campus.

The College attended first Council of Deans meeting of Nursing this month.

NHS Somerset Board and BTC Board will hold a joint meeting in the autumn, following on from a joint SMT meeting with BTC and NHS teams earlier in the year.

Waiting on outcome of Queen's Anniversary Prize later in the year.

Gravity Project update provided.

Focus on professional expectations for the new academic year. Working on a culture of professional expectations and promoting excellence in behaviour and conduct.

Ofsted preparation work continues as there will be an inspection at some point during the next academic year.

Work continues on budget for coming year, see later in agenda.

DR invited comments and questions from Governors. DT commented that he had met with Bill Revans from the unitary authority. DT asked what role the College has in assisting with upskilling and links with the workforce within the unitary authority. AB commented that the Gravity Project will be an excellent catalyst for closer working with the unitary authority.

DT asked whether there will be a briefing for Governors for the Ofsted Inspection. DR confirmed that LR and Nikki Sendell will be leading at least one session on Ofsted for Governors next term.

Governors noted the update.

G.04.59.23

2022/23 UPDATE

Curriculum Update – A paper had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. A Curriculum Planning residential will be held in July for Heads of Department and Deputy Heads of Department which will include leadership and management training as well as Ofsted preparation. There are no significant changes to the curriculum for 2023-24, but there will be further development of BTC Advantage.

MN commented on Sways being utilised to analyse the value added of these additional elements to the curriculum. DT and NS commented on how useful these are in assisting the Board in analysing data. LR gave an overview of the paper. LR commented that IFAT has ruled that apprentices can no longer secure integral qualifications without completing their End Point Assessment. This is assisting in improving the retention and completion rate for apprentices generally already. DR invited questions and comments. NS asked what the impact is going to be on the discontinuation of level 3 qualifications and how the College is addressing this. LR said that the building of the T Level offering across the curriculum is assisting with this. There will be other options available for those with a Level 2 qualification to progress, whether this be apprenticeship, T Level, or employment. LR highlighted that there is likely to be a gap of provision from Level 3 discontinuing with the AEB provision, and this is being reviewed by the College and has been raised by the College with the DfE.

LB left the meeting.

BH asked how the curriculum is strategically reviewed to ensure that the College is providing the most relevant courses and qualifications. LR confirmed this happens annually and during Curriculum SMT meetings to review the curriculum offer, to align with the skills gap and also to ensure the offer is equitable. LR noted that the curriculum had recently been subject to an internal audit review and this had been shown to be a robust process.

JG asked about provision to minority and vulnerable groups. LR confirmed that the College has provided training to unaccompanied asylum seekers living in the local area. A bespoke programme has been set up by the College to provide some education sessions for these under 16s. ESOL students at the College take a qualification to support moving to other vocational qualifications. MN commented that further summer activities will take place on a weekly basis over the summer for the unaccompanied asylum seeker children. The Board noted the report.

Operating Plan 2022/23 Update – An update for the year to date had been circulated prior to the meeting. LR highlighted key points within the update for noting by Governors. Within the People strategy, and EDI, diversity of our staff group, positive changes around recruitment this year. A more specific role focusing on EDI, as EDI Advisor, will be appointed to assist further with this work.

The appointment of Head of Maths, which will support with further improvements within English and maths.

BDAP application work continues.

Work on ensuring all apprentices complete their end point assessment timely, as well as on progression within the College highlighted.

Monitoring of AEB status, and how we can focus on reducing use of subcontractors and implications associated with devolution.

DR invited comments and questions. There were none. The Board noted the update.

Management Accounts 30 April 2023 – the management accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting and scrutinised by FP&GP. MH highlighted key points within the management accounts as presented. The College is predicting an underlying revenue surplus of £2.4m, £0.1m below the budget. However, MH noted that a contingency of £0.5m is still being held. The College is projected to remain at “good” financial health and fulfil its loan covenants with Barclays. As well as being in line to deliver the revenue budget for the year the College is undertaking a significant capital investment programme as budgeted. Cash balances at year end are estimated to be above the College target of £5m. DR invited comments and questions. There were none. The Board approved the management accounts to 30 April 2023.

G.04.60.23

2023/24 PLANNING

Strategic Planning Framework – AB gave an overview and update on the Strategic Planning Framework which had been agreed and finalised at the residential strategic planning sessions in January 2023 with Governors.

AB confirmed that the focus of the next residential planning event with the Board will be the plans for a net zero campus at Cannington. The Board noted the position.

Operating Plan 2023/24 – AB highlighted key points within the document which had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. He noted that the final version of this document, with the addition of key KPIs following the outcome and publication of data for the current academic year, will be presented to the Self Assessment meeting of Governors in October. AB invited questions and comments. There were none. The Board approved the proposed operating plan for 2023/24.

Three-year Financial Plan – The three-year financial plan had been circulated prior to the meeting and scrutinised by FP&GP. MH highlighted the key points, focusing on the budget for 2023/24. The budget faces pressure from reduced 16-18 income, pay pressures and significantly higher utilities bills. An underlying revenue budget of £2.5m was proposed. The College strategy is to increase performance above this level but was unable to do so with the financial pressures. Cash balances are budgeted to meet the internal cash target of £5m. A financial health grade of “Good” would be generated and Barclays loan covenants would be achieved. DT asked about 16-18 funding, and it was confirmed that a full report will be given at the Self Assessment meeting in October. The Board approved the three-year financial plan as presented.

G.04.61.23

POLICIES

Financial Regulations – The draft Financial Regulations had been reviewed in detail by the FP&GP Committee and were circulated prior to the meeting. FP&GP recommended the approval of the regulations. MH highlighted key points within the changed document. These changes relate to the reclassification of FE colleges by the ONS. MH highlighted a point raised in an previous internal audit that the Principals sign off limits (£50k-£200k) were on the high side compared to the sector. The number of transactions falling within this range was only 9 invoices – larger amounts tend to relate to capital which are approved within the budget. Following a review it was proposed to retain the current limits. The Board approved the retention of the same limits for approval of expenditure. BH commented on the Mental Health Charter, and a new expectation that universities become signatories to that Charter, and a new approach to mental health within higher education. BH suggested checking on the differences between the FE and HE Mental Health Charters and looking at this within the context of the College’s HE provision, and the BDAP application. The Board approved the updated Financial Regulations as circulated.

ACTION: MN to highlight the Mental Health Charter for universities to Pauline Osborne and Nikki Sendell.

Procurement Standing Orders – The Procurement Standing Orders had been circulated prior to the meeting and the updated document had been reviewed in detail by the FP&GP Committee earlier in the month. FP&GP recommended its approval. MH highlighted the minor change relating to a change in legislation title, and the Board approved the document.

Treasury Management Policy – The Treasury Management Policy had been circulated prior to the meeting. MH highlighted the key changes relating to the reclassification of the FE sector and noted that the

document had been fully scrutinised by the FP&GP Committee. FP&GP recommended its approval. The Board approved the Treasury Management Policy as presented.

G.04.62.23

BUSINESS CONTINUITY UPDATE

The update had previously been reviewed by the Audit Committee and circulated prior to the meeting. MH explained that the document detailed the mitigations in place to manage incidents and also the updates from the last 12 months. The Board noted the position.

G.04.63.23

SUBCONTRACTING

Proposed 2023-24 Subcontractor List – LR highlighted the proposed subcontractor list for the coming academic year. This list had been reviewed in detail by the Quality and Standards Committee earlier in the month. The only addition to this list from the current year is Women’s Lab and full due diligence has been undertaken on this as with the other organisations on the list.

AH highlighted the robustness of the due diligence process as outlined at the recent Quality and Standards Committee.

The Board approved the proposed subcontractor list as presented.

ESFA Subcontracting Audit – LR confirmed that the ESFA subcontracting audit has been completed and the final report is awaited. Following receipt of the audit report, this will be circulated by email for approval by the Board in the next couple of weeks. The approval of the report is required by the Board prior to submission to the ESFA by the deadline of 31 July 2023. The Board noted the position and would await receipt of the report for approval.

ACTION: Board to approve the Subcontracting Audit prior to submission to the ESFA by 31 July 2023.

G.04.64.23

REPORT ON SUBSIDIARY AND ASSOCIATE COMPANIES

BTC Corporate Services Limited Management Accounts to April 2023 – The management accounts for BTC Corporate Services to the period ended 30 April 2023 had been circulated prior to the meeting and had been scrutinised by the CSL Board. MH highlighted the key points within the management accounts. The revenue budget for the year is projected to be achieved. NS asked about the impact of the Companies difficulty in recruiting cleaners. MH confirmed this is something which has been reviewed to ensure that the terms and conditions of employment are sufficient. There have been some challenges with quality of service and absence but these are being addressed. The management accounts for BTC Corporate Services Limited were noted by the Board.

BTC Corporate Services Limited Budget 2023-24 – The budget for 2023-24 for BTC Corporate Services Limited had been circulated prior to the meeting and had been scrutinised by the CSL Board.. MH highlighted the key points within the budget. MH invited comments and questions. There were none. The Board noted the budget.

The Colleges' Partnership – An update had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting, and to the FP&GP Committee which had scrutinised the report in detail. AB gave a verbal update following the recent Board meeting of the Colleges' Partnership, including an update on the budget for 2023-24. AB invited questions. There were none. The Board noted the position in relation to the Colleges Partnership.

ONS RECLASSIFICATION OF COLLEGES

A paper on the reclassification of Colleges by the ONS had been circulated prior to the meeting. The document is a summary of changes and actions which will be taken to ensure compliance. MH highlighted the key points and key changes. It was noted that the document had been reviewed in detail by both the Audit Committee and the FP&GP Committee earlier in the month. DR invited comments or questions. There were none. The Board noted the position and would receive further updates in due course.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND ESTATES UPDATE

A summary of the capital programme and ongoing projects had been circulated prior to the meeting and reviewed in detail by the Building Projects Committee. MH highlighted the key points within the document, including Canonsgrove accommodation and work to Crockers at Cannington. MH invited questions or comments. NS commented on College Way road surface at Bridgwater. This road isn't in the ownership of the College, and ongoing correspondence is in place between the College and the Local Authority. MH reported that there may be resurfacing of this road over the summer period but this is not confirmed. The Board noted the position.

MEETING CALENDAR FOR 2023/24

Dates for 2023/24 Meetings – MN had circulated proposed dates for meetings of Governors for the 2023/24 academic year. The Board noted the dates for meetings for 2023/24.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Search Committee held on 29 March 2023 and 5 June 2023 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

Health and Safety Committee held on 25 May 2023 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

Quality and Standards Committee held on 6 June 2023 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

Buildings Projects Committee held on 16 May 2023 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

Finance, Personal and General Purposes Committee held on 15 June 2023 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

Corporate Services Ltd Board held on 15 June 2023 – The minutes were noted and ratified.

G.04.65.23

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

G.04.66.23

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be the Self Assessment meeting which will be held on Thursday 5 October 2023 at 5 pm.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm.