

**Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held in Bath City Centre,
Macaulay Building H201
11 October 2021 at 17:00**

Present

Andy Salmon (AS) Chair
Andy Furse (AF) Vice Chair
Paul Blenkinsopp (PB) Staff Governor
Jayne Davis Principal & CEO
Victoria Downing-Burn (VDB)
Erica Draisey (ED)
Lisa Ford (LF)
Mike Oram (MO)
Ian Tavener (IT) (by video)
Gary Waylen (GW)
Jenny Williams (JW)
Neil Wilson (NW)
Julian Young (JY)

In attendance

Sally Eaton (SE) Assistant Principal (to item 13)
Paul Fletton (PF) Interim Director of Finance & Corporate Services (to item
13)
Kate Hobbs (KH) Assistant Principal (to item 13)
Anne Roberts (AR) Head of Governance

Sheriyar Alamgir, Regional Prevent Coordinator (by video) and Rob Popejoy, Senior Student Welfare Officer gave the annual training on Prevent and Safeguarding for 1.5 hours at the start of the meeting.

Attendance: 100%

ITEM
1. Apologies for Absence
Welcome was given to Jenny Williams, external governor, who had returned from a leave of absence, and to Sally Eaton, Assistant Principal and Kate Hobbs, interim Deputy Principal. Sheriyar Alamgir and Rob Popejoy were also welcomed to provide the Prevent and Safeguarding training to governors.

The Chair reported that this was Andy Furse's last Board as governor and a presentation would be made before the Confidential Board business.
2. Declarations of Interest
None other than those already declared as part of the Register of interest of members.
3. Confidentiality of Items
The Board agreed that all papers marked confidential on their cover sheet were confidential.
4. Annual Prevent Training
<p>Sheriyar Alamgir provided the annual Prevent training for governors with a presentation and interactive session. He provided information on the emerging risks and focused on the areas that governors should be aware of or explore further, including an understanding of how online platforms were being monitored and content filtered. Members noted that he could be contacted on any Prevent matters.</p> <p>Members thanked Sheryiar for an extremely useful session and agreed to take forward actions in relation to what the college and governors could do (slide circulated to governors).</p> <p>Sheriyar left the meeting at this point.</p>
5. Safeguarding Update
<p>Rob Popejoy, Senior Student Welfare Officer provided a detailed safeguarding update via presentation and discussion. The monitoring and filtering of online content via the College's Smoothwall software were discussed. He explained the work of the welfare team, the increasing numbers of referrals, the campaigns and peer referral tools in place so that students and staff could be supported in a safe and secure environment. This was being evidence by feedback received from learners. A new software tool called CPOMS was being introduced and formally launched in January 2022, with the current system being used until then, alongside selected staff members who would pilot CPOMS. However, the team needed to grow in number and technical ability in order to meet the demands it faced.</p> <p>Members thanked Rob for his presentation and agreed to return to this area at the December Board to monitor how things were working and what growth was needed.</p> <p>Rob left the meeting at this point.</p>
6. Minutes
6.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2021 and any matters arising
The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2021 were considered and approved as an accurate record.
There were no matters arising.
6.2 Written Resolution outcome
AR reported that there had been unanimous approval by members of the written resolution no.0006 to approve the two contracts relating to the Theatre Royal Bath and Bray & Slaughter.
6.3 Action Register
The Action register was noted.

Bad debt provision

PF reported that the external auditors had been unable to provide any specific benchmarking for bad debt levels across their client base. A review of the ESFA financial benchmarking data however indicated that the level was below the average for FE colleges. He confirmed that the substantial bad debt written off in 2020-21 was still being actively pursued.

It was agreed that this action could now be removed from the register together with those actions that had been flagged as completed or on this agenda.

7. STRATEGY

7.1 Medium Term Business Plan KPIs and Curriculum in context

The Principal reported on the medium term business plan roadmap targets and curriculum in context to provide the Board with the end of year position for 2020/21, the current position against the 2021/22 targets and how the curriculum plan aligned to the College's structure and current priorities in terms of external bids.

Members were pleased to see Appendix C which set out the college curriculum areas in the funding context. Noting that this was the first report on the business plan KPIs, members asked questions around:

- the scale of importance of the targets and which were mission critical/highest risk
- How these were cascaded to staff
- The areas of growth and whether the college was on target to meet those

JD responded to each of these points and agreed to condense the targets to make it clearer which were mission critical and highest risk. **ACTION: JD**

7.2 Colleges Futures Group

The Chair reported on follow up from his 1:1s with individual governors and discussions at the Governance & Search Committee. The Committee recommended the establishment of a College Futures Group to maximise the capacity of governors to support the College's ability to horizon scan, anticipate and innovate.

Governors expressed interest in contributing to the Group and using their expertise and suggested topics for further exploration. The Board agreed to the proposal to establish a College Futures Group in line with the mechanism proposed in the paper. Members were asked to email the Chair as soon as possible with areas to look at in the coming months. **ACTION: All**

7.3 Principal's Update

JD provided a written report on recent key activity and confirmed that student and sector news would be standing items in these Board updates. The update also included information about bids and submissions and a Covid-19 update. JD reported on measures to mitigate against transmission in cases.

Members asked about communication to staff and JD confirmed that all staff received a weekly SMT news briefing. She reported that the graduation date

originally planned for October would now take place on 27 January 2022 for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 cohorts. All governors were invited to attend.

Confidential minute.

Members thanked the Principal for the new format of the Board update.

8. SCRUTINY

8.1 Strategic Dashboard

The Board considered the latest Strategic Dashboard report on financial and HR targets for 2020/21 and learner targets and Health and Safety metrics. It was noted that the Curriculum & Quality Working Group would analyse the learner data and the Finance & Estates Working Group the impact of recruitment on the 2021/22 budget after re-forecasting in November 2021. Health & Safety data would be reviewed by the Health & Safety Committee.

Members asked for FE benchmarks on retention to be added to the data (the latest benchmark data was 2018/19). JD reported that the retention rates were not the final figures and would change. Members asked about enrolment as numbers were down in some areas. JD reported that data analysis and monitoring was being done daily to gauge any impact on the budget. Open events were taking place this week. Enrolments to date for 16-19 year olds stood at 1995.

The high staff turnover compared to the previous year was discussed. This was of concern and JD reported on her discussions with other colleges and the AoC. She reported that vacancies were difficult to fill in some areas e.g. digital and that this was consistent with what was happening at other colleges.

Members asked that safeguarding information be added to the dashboard and that the targets were RAG rated. **ACTION: JD**

The next dashboard would be available in November and put on the Board portal.

8.2 Strategic Risk Register

PF presented the Strategic Risk Register and the assumptions behind the proposed strategic risks identified by SMT. All of these had risk owners and actions identified to mitigate the risks.

Members considered the Register in detail and considered that it aligned to the agreed Strategic Priorities and reflected the key strategic risks that the College needs to mitigate during the year. Discussion took place about capacity to respond to the many bids which were being issued by different funding sources. This was a general problem in the sector and JD reported that she had fed this back to the DfE.

It was reported that the Board's committees/groups would scrutinise the risks for their areas to provide further assurance and the Audit Committee would provide general oversight at its termly meetings. The Board approved the 18 proposed strategic risks for detailed monitoring during the year.

8.3 Finance

8.3.1 Draft 2020/21 Statutory Accounts

Members considered the draft 2020/21 Statutory Accounts, including the July management accounts. It was reported that the accounts had been produced earlier than normal and the external auditors had completed their audit. PF highlighted key points from the exit meeting with the external auditors. There were no adjustments as a result of the audit despite a new emphasis this year on audit of the funding aspect. There were two areas where further evidence was being gathered and it was reported that the auditors were content with the process. Members noted this positive result which was subject to confirmation.

The Board noted the July management accounts and the £80k surplus outturn. The difference between that and the deficit in the statutory accounts was due to the impact of the Local Government pension scheme adjustment which was out of the College's control. The members report and statutory accounts would be presented to the Audit Committee in November before sign off at the December Board. The Chair of the Board would attend the Audit Committee for the statutory accounts to comply with the new requirement of the Audit Code of Practice.

The Board noted the July accounts and thanked PF and his team for the work on the statutory accounts.

8.3.2 Debt write-off

The Board considered a request for approval of the write off of an outstanding debt. The escalation and offsetting of the issue was noted and members were assured that the College would continue to pursue the debt. Members suggested that analysis around key metrics and uncertainties could be a topic for discussion by the Futures Group.

The Board approved the recommendation to write off the outstanding debt as part of the completion of the 2020/21 statutory accounts on the understanding that the debt would continue to be pursued.

8.4 Draft Going Concern Assessment

The Board considered the draft 2020/21 Going Concern Assessment and the accompanying income and expenditure account, balance sheet, cash flow forecast and financial health scores. It was noted that the overall financial position continued to be positive for the College.

The Board endorsed the draft Going Concern Assessment for submission to the December Board.

8.5 Estates Strategy update

The Board considered the Estates Strategy update which had been reviewed by the Finance & Estates Working Group. It was noted that an Estates Strategy and Space Utilisation Survey would be commissioned and the College would continue to proactively submit bids for estates development consistent with its wider strategy. Members of the Finance & Estates Working Group reported on discussions about energy use and benchmarks.

8.6 Health & Safety Annual Report 2020/21

The Board considered the Health & Safety Annual Report 2020/21. It was noted that the ongoing Covid pandemic had resulted in further requirements

<p>for students to be taught remotely and for staff to continue to work from home. Changes to staffing arrangements and the positive internal audit outcome were noted. A link governor (IT) had joined the Health & Safety Committee during 2020/21.</p>
<p>9.0 GOVERNANCE</p>
<p>9.1 Governance Report</p>
<p>The Head of Governance presented a report from the Governance & Search Committee. Members were asked to promote the search for two external governors. The process for appointment of the staff and student governors was noted. Discussion took place about the dissolution of the Corporation Governance Group now that other mechanisms were in place. Members were asked to provide comments to the Principal or Head of Governance on the new Board template.</p> <p>The College had subscribed to the ETF governance modules for governor's training and development and members were encouraged to use the site and report back. The letter to Accounting Officers from the Interim Chief Executive of the ESFA was noted.</p> <p>Following discussion, the Board APPROVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A change to the membership of the Senior Staff Performance & Remuneration Committee to no longer include the Quality Stewardship governor. Information about performance on quality would be discussed by the Chair with the Quality Stewardship governor prior to the committee. • A change to the Governance & Search Committee membership so that there were now five members (four external governors plus Principal). This would allow both Vice Chairs to be members. • The dissolving of the Corporation Governance Group with immediate effect. Where urgent decisions were needed (via Chair's action or written resolution), discussion between the Chair, Vice Chairs and Principal should take place (timescales allowing)
<p>10. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL</p>
<p>10.1 Safeguarding Policy</p>
<p>The Designated Safeguarding Lead reported on the changes to the Safeguarding Policy which took account of the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 statutory guidance. Members noted the changes to the names and contact details of the College's DSL and DDSL. Members asked about the process for serious threats of harm and asked for this to be made clearer as part of a flow chart. ACTION: SE</p> <p>The Board APPROVED the Safeguarding Policy 2021/22.</p>
<p>10.2 Policies for Treasury Management and Value for Money</p>
<p>The Interim Director of Finance & Corporate Services reported on the updates in the two policies. The Board APPROVED the updated Treasury Management and Value for Money Policies.</p>
<p>11. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</p>
<p>11.1 Curriculum & Quality Working Group – 1 July 2021</p>
<p>The draft notes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021 were received.</p>

11.2 Governance & Search Committee– 8 September 2021
The minutes of the meeting held in June had been previously circulated. The draft minutes of the meeting held on 8 September were received.
11.3 Finance & Estates Working Group – 29 September 2021
The notes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021 had been previously circulated and the draft notes of the meeting held on 29 September 2021 were received.
12. Any Other Business
Thanks were given by the Chair on behalf of the Governing Body to Andy Furse for his 8 years of service as governor, most of which he had been Vice Chair. He had made a huge contribution to the College, assisting the merger process and serving under three Principals and would be greatly missed. The Chair presented him with a gift made by the College.
13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING
20 December 2021 at 17:00. An evening social would be planned, Covid-19 rules permitting.
14. CONFIDENTIAL BOARD (External Members only)
14.1 Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021 and matters arising
The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021 were approved as an accurate record. John Newton, Director of Curriculum at Waltham Forest College had been appointed as Deputy Principal and would join the College on 1 November 2021.
14.2 Senior Staff Performance & Remuneration Committee – 8 September 2021
The draft confidential minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2021 were noted.
14.3 Finance & Estates Working Group – 29 September 2021
The draft confidential notes of the meeting held on 29 September 2021 were noted.
14.4 Senior Postholder recruitment
Confidential minute