

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on Monday 24 June 2019 at 16:45

at Bath City Campus, Room H102

Present

Carole Stott (CS)	Chair
Paul Blenkinsopp (PB)	Staff Governor
Victor da Cunha (VC)	
Andy Furse (AF)	
Laurel Penrose (LP)	Principal
Gary Waylen (GW)	
Jenny Williams (JW)	
Neil Wilson (NW)	

In attendance

Jayne Davis (JD)	Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality
Barbara Owen (BO)	Director, Human Resources & OD (for item 6.2.1)
Anne Roberts (AR)	Head of Governance
Jo Whistler (JSW)	Director of Finance & Corporate Services

Attendance: 62%

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Erica Draisey, Mike Oram, Andy Parker, Jane Shaw and Julian Young.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Confidentiality of items

The following papers were agreed as confidential: 5.3 Estates Strategy update, 5.4 Institute of Technology legal structure, 6.4.1 H&S update and 8.1.1 Finance & Estates working group notes.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2019 and any Actions arising

The minutes of the Board held on 20th May 2019 were approved as an accurate record and the minutes were signed by the Chair.

4.1 The Board considered the Action Register and noted that all actions had been completed or were on the agenda. Progress on the re-financing of the loan would be reported to the July meeting.

5 STRATEGY

5.1 Principal's update

LP provided the following update:

- (i) The rates for retention (92%) and achievement were holding up. The College had introduced more robust reporting systems.
- (ii) The College had been notified that it had been selected to be part of the pilot to offer three T levels from September 2021– digital, early years and health & life sciences. The introduction of T levels would provide an increase of guided learning hours for these qualifications (from 540 – 900) and Maths and English would be funded separately.
- (iii) The College staff conference had taken place on 24 May 2019 and positive feedback had been received
- (iv) The College Art Festival was taking place. This was the first time all the arts departments were showcasing students' work together.
- (v) Ethan Conlon, a Bath College stone masonry student had been selected to represent the UK at World Skills. The Chair of the Board was attending the event on 2 July at the House of Commons
- (vi) The BBC had contacted the College as they were looking to use our premises to focus on media coverage in Somerset. This link would be beneficial to our students. LP would inform WECA.
- (vii) LP thanked JD for her work on the bid for the College to be a lead in English and Maths for delivery of T level qualifications
- (viii) The Project Search students were graduating this week and 5 of the 7 had obtained employment
- (ix) The WECA allocation had been received for Adult Education Budget (1.31M) – a growth of 4.9%

5.2 Augar Review of post-18 education and funding

The Board considered the Augar report recommendations and noted the activity being undertaken by the AoC. This was a key report that was very important for the FE sector. LP reported that an open letter was being sent to the Government by Colleges. The Chair commented that the core message was that FE had been neglected for a number of years and there was an urgent need for the post 16 system to be rebalanced and resourced. The report had generated a lot of cross party support and was well written and very readable. LP reported that the report was being raised at all external meetings and she asked members to consider what local lobbying could be done.

5.3 Estates Strategy update

LP reported on the Institute of Technology (IoT) refurbishment, the catering and hospitality refurbishment and the digital and creative new build.

- (i) The **IoT** was planned to open in September 2019 but the DfE documents had not yet been received. LP reported that the college was getting as ready as possible as plans needed to be firmed up by the end of July. Current students in any of the three areas could be accepted, rather than just new students. RIBA 2 was needed by the end of July and timescales were extremely tight. The designated funding was for capital only (£2M). Members asked about the challenges of meeting RIBA 2. LP reported that she was speaking with Weston College about the plans.
- (ii) The Finance & Estates Working Group had met on 19th June 2019 to discuss **the catering and hospitality** plans and the grading of the

tenders that had been received. GW, as Chair of the Group, confirmed that a rigorous process had been undertaken, and the Group had agreed to recommend to the Board that Rigg be appointed provided that the budget was not exceeded. The Group had also asked that, in view of all the capital projects underway, modelling should take place to identify the lowest level of cash needed at any one time. JSW confirmed that she was renegotiating the covenant with Barclays Bank.

The Board **AGREED** to appoint Rigg with the proviso that the budget could not be exceeded.

- (iii) In relation to the Digital and Creative new build, thanks were given to Dine at B&NES for supporting this. The development fund had been retained and a tender for the initial surveys had been issued. LP reported that she and AR had considered the tenders; the tenders for Architecture had widely discrepant costs and further information had to be requested. A decision was made to judge on the basis of Stage 1 only, with Stage 2 being re-tendered in future. All the parties had been informed and had accepted this. RIBA 3 was needed by March 2020. LP reported that she had appointed the architects, AWW based on costs and quality for Stage 1 and that approval was within her delegated authority.

Members asked about capacity given the large number of projects. LP reported that the delay on the Digital and Creative new build had helped and the project manager appointed was managing progress. She also reported that the project manager for catering and hospitality was proactively maintaining deadlines.

5.4 Institute of Technology – Legal Structure

The Board considered the proposed legal structure for the Institute of Technology (IoT) and noted this was subject to guidelines issued by the DfE. Weston College Subsidiary was the proposed private company limited by guarantee to manage the Institute. LP confirmed that the directors all had equal status. The core partners board was still to be determined. Members asked questions in relation to Weston College being the lead partner and the name of the Institute. LP reported that the IoT would reflect all the partners and the marketing would reflect this.

The Board asked for sight of the Articles of Association so that they could understand the liabilities for the Corporation. LP confirmed that legal advice had been sought and she reported that a meeting was scheduled for 17 July 2019 at Weston College at which legal representation would be present following which a recommendation would be made to the Board on 22nd July 2019.

ACTION: LP

5.5 LGPS Consultation

The Board considered the draft response to the LGPS Consultation. In relation to question 18 regarding the proposal to remove the requirement for FE

corporations to offer new non-teaching employees access to the LGPS, the Board noted that the latest valuation and its impact was not yet known. It was reported that the Finance & Estates Working Group had considered the draft 3-year financial plan and had considered that the pensions changes would have a huge impact on the College. Work was required to model the scenarios and the Group had asked for a paper to be presented to the Group before coming to the Board.

ACTION: JSW

6. SCRUTINY

6.1 CURRICULUM AND QUALITY

6.1.1 New Ofsted Framework

JD reported that the Quality Working Group would be discussing the Framework at its meeting on 9 July 2019. The Board considered the changes to the Framework from September 2019 and the greater focus on curriculum. The importance of evidencing its intent, implementation and impact was noted. The requirements in relation to governors understanding their responsibilities was also noted.

JD highlighted the decisions being made in relation to the curriculum and the need to do more in relation to destinations and employability. Tracking of the skills required by employers would take place in the Autumn. Improved timetabling would help with retention. Members had a discussion about the need to ensure students did not have a lot of 'waiting' time between sessions and asked JD to draw up some key targets or minimum standards that could be applied for report back to the Board.

ACTION: JD

6.1.2 Curriculum Plan

JD presented the College Curriculum Plan 2019/20 and highlighted the additional courses for inclusion in 2020/21 and 2021/22. Members also received the Curriculum Planning Guidance 2019/20. Departments were undertaking Self-Assessment Reviews (SARs) in the Autumn and these would be based on the new Ofsted Framework. Members reviewed the Study Programmes and Courses tables and asked about the reasons why some courses were planned to be withdrawn. They also asked about the potential impact on existing students and communication to staff. JD provided assurance in terms of the information, advice and guidance being given to students in relation to pathways and options, and in relation to communication to any staff affected.

The Corporation Board **approved** the Curriculum Plan 2019/20.

6.1.3 Quality Improvement Plan 2018/19

JD presented the Quality Improvement Plan and highlighted areas where changes had been made to the RAG ratings since April 2019. Paul Gilmore had been appointed as the new Head of Apprenticeships, Business & Community and was taking forward actions on Apprenticeships. In relation to work experience, the final report had been submitted to the DfE and feedback was awaited. Members noted that more detailed discussion of the Plan would take place at the Quality Working Group.

6.1.4 Student Applications 2019/20

JD presented the latest forecasts of student applications. Conversion rates had improved but retention was key. JW asked whether the College was noticing any differences in its students. JD reported that there were more students with mental health needs and this was an area being looked at. NW asked why the stats showed that only half those interviewed were given an offer. JD commented that some students applied for more than one course and the data would need to be done by number of students.

Members thanked JD for the work being done in this area.

6.2 HR

6.2.1 HR Dashboard

BO presented the HR Dashboard which had been produced following a recommendation from the Internal Audit report. Key areas of note were that staffing levels had increased compared to last year, staff turnover had reduced, sickness absence levels were relatively low (although this might be due to under-reporting) and staff equality data quality was improving.

Members had a detailed discussion in which a number of queries were raised, including why the staffing levels had increased. It was reported that this was due to timing of new starters and more work in ESOL and areas being developed to grow the Adult Education Budget. LP confirmed that all staff requests were looked at by SMT.

Observations were made in relation to staff retention and particularly the issue of those leaving within two years of appointment, for which there were a variety of reasons. A comment was made that, whilst there was a lot of useful data in the report, there needed to be a strategic discussion on staff engagement levels so that remedies to address this could be considered. It was suggested that exception reports and mechanisms to test engagement of staff, culture and leadership would be useful to have. Members also commented that it would be useful to have a gap analysis of skills required compared to actual.

Members thanked BO for what was an important report and noted that the Annual Equality Report and HR report would come to the Board in November and the HR dashboard to the Corporation in January and July of each year.

6.3 FINANCE & ESTATES

6.3.1 Management Accounts and Finance Dashboard

The Accounts for the month ending May 2019 were considered. Members noted that the forecast outturn had improved to £175k deficit compared with the previous forecast of £272k deficit. JSW reported that further actions were underway to help further improve this position including close scrutiny of cash flow and expenditure. Discussions were taking place with WECA regarding reclaim of payments and with the Bank in relation to the covenant. Members asked about the cash flow, particularly as there were a number of estates projects in train and also asked the executive to look at options with other banks for borrowing in future. LP confirmed this was being looked into following the securing of an extension to the existing loan with Barclays Bank. Thanks were given to JSW for the report.

6.4 HEALTH & SAFETY

6.4.1 Health & Safety update and Dashboard

JSW presented the Health and Safety dashboard, which was a new feature. She confirmed that systems were being monitored regularly and an internal audit advisory review had been completed which would be discussed at the Audit Committee in July. The Board welcomed the dashboard and asked that it also included in the report any significant issues within the sector.

7. GOVERNANCE

7.1 Student Union Elections

JD provided an update on the elections that had taken place in relation to a number of roles, including the outcome of the Student Union President. The Corporation **approved** the appointment of Dan Ball as SU President (Staff member) from 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020. The Chair and Head of Governance would meet with Dan before the next Corporation meeting.

7.2 Calendar of Meetings 2019/20

AR provided a list of the confirmed dates of Corporation, Committee and Working Group meetings for 2019/20. The Finance & Estates Working Group September date was subject to confirmation and the 20th November meeting would start at 16:30 (not 1600). The calendar would be placed on Board Intelligence. **ACTION: AR**

7.3 Board Intelligence

AR provided a brief overview of some of the key features of Board Intelligence and recommended that members looked at the User guide on the portal for more information or asked her directly if they had any questions.

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

8.1 Committees/Working Groups

The following minutes and notes were received by members for information and no questions were raised.

8.1.1 Finance & Estates Working Group draft notes, 15 May 2019

8.1.3 Search and Governance Committee draft minutes, 4 June 2019

8.1.4 Senior Staff Employment Committee draft minutes, 4 June 2019

9. Any Other Business

None

10 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 22nd July 2019 at **16:00** at Bath City Campus
Members were asked to note the earlier start time.

The meeting closed at 19:15