

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held via Zoom on Tuesday 21st July at 17:00

Present: Kevin Finan (Chair), David Chalmers, Harrison Edwards, Lena Marvão, Holly Milton-Jefferies (items 1-11), Maxine Padgham, Mark Rogers, Iain Springate, Lindy Stacey, Neil Tanton (items 1-11), Lee Thommen (items 1-11), Jenny Wallace, and Chris Williams

In Attendance: Bill Blythe, Jane Hanson – from item 11 and Sheena Murphy-Collett

Governance Advisor: Jane Barton

1. Membership and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Andy Champion, Rob Nicholls, Steve Richardson and Deborah Watson.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declaration of interests.

3. Confidential Items

Agenda Item 12 was were declared as confidential and would be taken alongside an AOB matter relating to the use of the College Seal without the Student and Staff Governors present.

4. Items Brought Forward by the Chair

There were no items brought forward by the Chair.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

19FGB85

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Wednesday 17th June 2020 were agreed and approved by the Board.

6. Membership Matters

The Chair noted that this meeting was the last for retiring External Governor – Steve Richardson and for the Student Governor – Harrison Edwards. The Board wished to send their thanks to Steve who had, during his term of office, proactively supported the Governing Body as its' Safeguarding Lead playing an active part in College life championing the Safeguarding and Prevent Agenda. Thanks were

also extended to Harrison for his commitment to the Student Union and his input to the Board and wished him well in his future studies.

7. Strategic:

19FGB86

Petroc 2025 Strategy

The Principal & CEO presented the Petroc 2025 Strategy and the supporting papers describing the continuing process towards the development of the new college Strategy.

In briefing the Board the Principal and CEO explained that the 'Towards a Strategy for Petroc 2025' document included a significant amount of text that detailed the proposed structure. The new document retains the mission, strategic themes and ways of working, as well as the structure aiming to be punchier and more direct, less discursive and, in response to feedback, written in shorter sentences without extensive sub-clauses!

The Board heard how the grammatical form changes in the document: the Aims and Objectives talk about 'The College' and what 'It' will do. The 'Team Petroc' Ways of Working section, with its focus on behaviours that Petroc people will adopt, both individually and collectively, talks about 'We' to emphasise the connection with people.

Governors were advised that there are some changes to the explanatory rationales, reducing them in length, and some minor changes in language. 'Achieve outstanding learner achievement' was adapted to the less-clumsy 'Create outstanding learner achievement'; and 'Achieve Value for Money' was favoured over the term 'Maximise' to retain the centrality of this issue to achieving the mission of the College, but to avoid a word which some in the consultation felt was rather technocratic and hence less effective for engaging staff.

Once approved, the College's marketing and design team will create a presentation of the strategy that uses imagery which will distinguish between the different elements, show their inter-dependency in achieving the mission, but not number them. Similarly, the design brief will be to create a strategy document that visually embodies the mission, aims and ways of working.

The Principal & CEO described how the Five Strategic Operating Plans define the operational activities that will see the College's strategy is delivered, together with the timelines, resource requirements, and key accountable leads: Transformational Learning; Reputation, Product Development and Business Services; People and Organisational Development; Partnership and External Relations; Resources, Growth and Efficiency.

It was made clear to Governors that whilst there has been activity undertaken across all five domains, the College has not yet managed to complete these plans in time for the July 2020 meeting of the Board.

Governors sought clarity on the Values Statement in relation to EDI and were advised that as part of the strategy development process a Task and Finish Group was convened, involving staff from across the organisation including representatives from the College trade unions. The task was to review the College values that were stated in the current College Strategy 2017-2020 and see whether these represented the values that would underpin the new strategy as described in the 'Towards a strategy for Petroc 2025'. The group concluded that the current values – expressed as four words: professional, trusted, inclusive, and ambitious – did not adequately capture the values of the organisation, in its current context, with the new mission and strategic aims and objectives. The group recommended that values might be phrased in terms of a 'values statement'.

Further work over the summer will be undertaken to accept that recommendation and find a suitable expression of that values statement, ensuring there is not overlap (and the risk for confusion) with mission, ways of working and aims and objectives, and detailing how that value statement will be operationalised and more effectively nurtured and embedded.

Governors liked the 'Team Petroc' and the 'Excellence through Learning' approach and suggested that this branding be used externally. It was also suggested that feedback on the branding be sought, particularly with our local schools; commenting that it was important that Petroc's brand creates a community of people that keeps the College moving in the right direction.

Governors welcomed the papers that accompanied the Strategy; commenting that these reflected the quality of the process; the approach to Risk Management received positive endorsement.

Governors noted that the following actions will be completed before the next meeting of the Full Governing Body in November:

- a. Design and Publication of the Strategy**
- b. Communication to Staff, Learner and Stakeholders**
- c. Audit Committee Risk Management Meeting**
- d. FGB Confirmation of KPIs, Risk Register and Five-Year Strategic Operating Plans**
- e. Further work on values statement**

In addition, there will be ongoing dissemination of staff and learners engaged in strategic action throughout 2020-21 through features on the website and intranet.

The Board:

- **Approved the Petroc 2025 Strategy for adoption, design and publication**
- **Provided advice in relation to KPIs, risks and major elements for the Strategic Operating Plans**
- **Approved the new approach to risk management**
- **Noted that finalised documents in relation to KPIs, risks, and SOPs will be presented to FGB at a meeting in the first term of the new academic year**

8. Quality, Curriculum and Learners

19FGB87

The Principal & CEO provided the Board with an update on the operation of the compliments and complaints procedure in 2019-20. The report detailing the most notable areas of compliments and complaints providing the Board with a comprehensive update on the further improvements made to the procedure in the light of this last year of operation.

It was noted that the College has both an online complaints and compliments system. This process is operated in accordance with the written guidance 'Comments, Compliments and Complaints – process for customers'. Governors observed that there is a similar document for staff, providing guidance to staff who themselves may wish to raise a complaint or compliment. This policy has been rewritten in August 2019 as the 'Customer Feedback policy – Compliments, Concerns and Complaints.' This is due for review in 2022.

The Principal & CEO talked about the process and how it harnessed feedback confirming that this feedback was used to inform Quality Improvement Plans. Governors commended the report for providing clear explanations of the issues raised and the actions taken. Governors observed that many of the complaints were HE related. Governors also asked that complaints received over a period of years be analysed to see what, if any, themes emerged and encouraged the College to develop a comprehensive succession plan for single point of contact mission critical roles.

In response the Executive agreed to compare the issues raised and report back to a future Board meeting and confirmed that the College was starting a process of reviewing critical posts; this is going to be a staged approach starting with an initial meeting later in August.

The Governing Body noted this report.

Safeguarding Report 2019/2020:

19FGB88

The Principal & CEO presented the annual Safeguarding including Prevent Report to the Board for information. This robust and comprehensive report provided Governors with an update on aspects of the College's Safeguarding including Prevent work along with some tracked changes within the Safeguarding Policy. The report detailed information on the Safeguarding Team, all training undertaken across the College and outlined the work of the Safeguarding and Prevent Committee and the Safeguarding Practitioners meetings.

It was clearly demonstrated from the data collected that the academic year 2019/2020 has seen a significant increase in learners attending Petroc who are in need of being safeguarded; this follows the trend nationally, a high percentage of those are in need of immediate care and protection.

Governors noted the Annual Safeguarding, including Prevent report. The Safeguarding Policy was reviewed and the updates and amendments to the Policy were noted and approved.

9. Finance and Resources:

19FGB89

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources asked the Board to receive and to note:

- Month 10 Management Accounts
- Budget and Forecast for Approval
- Financial Regulations Review

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources took the Board through a detailed breakdown of the Month 10 Management Accounts which represented the financial position at the end of May 2020; his presentation and the associated document highlighted the key areas of income and expenditure, the cash position and expanded on the actions taken in year to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and finally, in conclusion, the Vice Principal Finance & Resources detailed the projected final outturn.

The Board noted that the College is currently forecasting an operating deficit of £584k; broadly unchanged from that forecast at month 9.

The Board noted receipt of the Month 10 Management Accounts.

Budget and Forecast for Approval

The Vice Principal provided the Board with a comprehensive set of papers which expansively described the required submission to the ESFA; the commentary reminded Governors that the Board had approved a submission to the ESFA in February and had received regular updates since then. The College is now asked to submit to the ESFA a summary of estimates, including a Financial Health Calculator and a detailed cashflow. Those documents accompanied the paper.

Governors approved the 2020/2021 budget and the 2021/2022 forecast.

Financial Regulations

The Financial Regulations have been reviewed and some minor changes suggested.

These are shown as tracked changes on the attached draft. Primarily the changes are:

- References to Senior Management Team (SMT) updated to Executive Team
- References to Head of Human Resources updated to Head of People Services
- Minor updates to 12.3 – Format of the Financial Statements and 15.4 – Collection of Debts

Governors approved the minor amendments to the Financial Regulations.

10. Our People

HR Spring Report:

19FGB90

The Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development presented the HR Spring Report to the Board; the reported purpose of this report provided a comprehensive overview of HR developments during the spring term 2019/20 noting that the impact of Covid-19 would be reported in the HE Summer Report.

Governors noted the key headlines:

1. Staff turnover levels of 2.84% within the period remained within the College target of 10-20%.
2. Staff sickness absence of 2.9% within the period was lower the College target of 3%.
3. Employee relations matters increased in volume when compared to the previous year, with managers encouraged to tackle matters in a timely and consistent manner.
4. Recruitment campaigns were lower within the period, at 16, and this was largely due to the fact that staffing budgets continue to be challenged and as a result all vacant posts are more closely scrutinised and on occasions posts are not approved for recruitment.

The Head of HR & Organisational Development advised the Board that at the next meeting Governors will receive the Staff Survey Report and Action Plan. She also briefed the Board about the current efficiency programmes; Governors heard that 40 people had been impacted and that so far no one had been made compulsory redundant and 8 members of staff had taken voluntary redundancy. The Head of HR & Organisational Development commended that hard work of the staff during these unrepresented times.

Governors noted the annual report and agreed that the actions taken in the last term have effectively supported the implementation of the People Strategy.

11. Governance

Student Governors Report

19FGB91

Governors were pleased to acknowledge the Executive Summary 2019/2020 of the activities and events outlined by the Student Governors and the challenges faced throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. It was noted that, in light of the challenges presented by Covid-19, the Student Union (SU) are considering what a Digital SU might look like; Harrison and Holly commented on the revamped newsletter, the contribution to that by all members of the SU and the commitment of the SU to engage with as many Learners as possible. Harrison also mentioned how valuable the training he had been able to access had been.

The Governors expressed their thanks to both Harrison and Holly for their dedication and their proactive support of Petroc learners. Governors reiterated their very best wishes to Harrison as he moves on to HE.

The College assured the Student Governors of their continued partnership with the Student Union

Governors noted the Student Governors Officer's Report 2019/2020.

Audit Committee Report

19FGB92

External Governor – Lindy Stacey as Chair of the Audit Committee took the Board through the minutes of the Audit Committee held on Tuesday 7th July 2020. In particular she highlighted:

Risk Management

The Chair of the Audit Committee took the Governors through the Risks as discussed at the Audit meeting highlighting the changes since the last report.

The Board were satisfied that the College has demonstrated that good and effective assurances are in place that suitably mitigate its Strategic Risks and there happy to note and approve the actions.

Internal Audit Plan 2020/2021

The Chair of the Audit Committee outlined to the Board the plan presented to the Audit Committee by the new Internal Audit firm – RSM. She confirmed that the Audit Committee believes the proposed Strategy meets the needs of the College and will provide adequate assurance to the Board.

The Board noted and approved the Audit Services Memorandum and Terms of Engagement prepared by Mazars for the audit of the College's Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2020.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 6th October 2020 at 5.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 18:20.