

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held via Zoom at 16:00 on 10th November 2020

Present: Kevin Finan (Chair), Jenny Wallace, Rob Nicholls, Chris Williams, David Chalmers, Sean Mackney, Lena Marvão, Maxine Padgham, Deborah Watson, Neil Tanton, Steve Richardson, Mark Rogers, Iain Springate, Lindy Stacey, Holly Milton Jefferies, Penny Adams, Bill Blythe, Jane Hanson, Sheena Murphy-Collett, and Lee Thommen

In Attendance: Helena Drawer (minutes)

Governance Advisor: Joanna Boardman

1. Membership and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Andy Champion

2. Declaration of Interests

No declaration of interests were declared.

3. Confidential Items

No confidential items were declared.

4. Items brought forward by the Chair

The use of the seal was reported and noted.

6. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

20FGB16

It was noted that Paper 20FGB09 is confidential. The paper and associated minutes were moved to Confidential Items

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Tuesday 6th October 2020 were agreed and approved by the Board.

7. Membership Matters

The new President of the Student's Union, Penny Adams, was welcomed to the Board by the Chair. The new Governance Advisor Joanna Boardman was welcomed to the Board.

8. Strategic

The Principal gave a brief update on the College's ongoing approach to Covid, keeping learners learning, staff and students safe, and keeping education stable for learners, families, and the community.

The issues associated with Covid were considered and the following points noted:

Comparable community infection rate for the college population is 16 per week; the actual infection rate is just over 3 per week.

There have been 16 positive cases to date within the college community, 10 of which required no further action. This suggests the current system and controls are working well (15 North Devon Campus; 1 Brannams).

Principles of systems and control are discussed at Exec level, with operational level work by PAG.

Attendance is lower than previous years, largely due to increased anxiety and perceived risk.

Progress is slower than previous years. The college is considering a change to the controlled environment to provide increased in-person learning.

In-person learning for core qualifications is 50%; this reduces to 41% when maths, English and tutorials are factored in.

The college is at the lower end of in-person learning when benchmarked informally against similar institutions. The Exec. is monitoring government and ESFA guidance for enforcement action for higher levels of in-person learning.

The learner induction survey showed 58% of learners are content with the current balance; 27% would like increased in-person learning.

The College anticipates disruption to the summer exams and is capturing robust evidence throughout the year to prepare for an alternative approach from awarding bodies.

Governors questioned the 100% digital delivery model for maths and English.

It was reported that the College has invested in Century AI to support personalised learning, and that students receive personal mentor support from qualified teachers.

Governors asked which remote platforms are being used by staff.

It was reported that the majority of staff have engaged well with remote learning tools, there have been ample support sessions, and these will continue through CPD days in December.

It was reported to the Board that the College has a one in four chance of receiving a supportive visit from Ofsted this term.

The Chair noted that this is a challenging time. The College is approaching it in an intelligent way, prioritising safety and learning and doing a good job.

9. Quality, Curriculum and Learners Report

The Board received comprehensive presentations from Assistant Principals, Interim Head of Learner Engagement, Head of Faculty of Progressive Studies, Head of Business Engagement and Head of Business Faculty.

The presentations summarised the key changes, developments and challenges within the curriculum departments and the EIF areas in 2019/2020, with a focus on challenges presented by Covid and the responses to that by the faculties, along with positive planning for the future.

The Board asked a number of probing questions and recognised that all the presentations celebrated achievements, recognised areas for change and development; demonstrated sound knowledge of the

curriculum, the needs of learners and the challenges faced. The commitment and passion for the learners and the drive to improve quality year-on-year was much-admired.

**To Note the Quality Improvement Plan: final progress report for previous year
To Note the Final Achievement Outcomes and QIP Update FIO 2019/20**

**Verbal
20FGB18**

It was reported that the data in the QIP is not as would normally be presented to the Board. Areas in red which have not yet been achieved are still relevant and will be carried forward to the QIP in 2021. The individual entries were considered and the following points noted:

Some programmes have been delayed due to Covid.

Lesson observations showed standards were good and improving before the cycle was interrupted.

Lesson observations will resume in 2020-21 with new digital learning observations.

Disadvantaged learners are a particular concern, with the Covid impact widening the gap. The safeguarding team are working hard to minimise this.

Praise was received from the Board for the outstanding work of the safeguarding team.

The Board agreed that the QIP was written pre-Covid, and that it is important to review the actions to establish current relevance before including them in the 2020-21 QIP.

The report was noted by the Board.

10. Finance and Resources Report

To receive the Indicative enrolments and funding for 2020-21

20FGB19

The report was received by the Board.

It was considered that HE enrolments are decreasing year on year. The Vice Principal Finance & Resources reported a number of factors influencing this: the increase in higher level apprenticeships; the strong adverse press questioning the value of fees in HE; student regard for outcomes, particularly of arts courses; uncapping of student intakes for middle-tier universities; lower offers from universities.

It was reported that apprenticeship employers are deferring decisions on recruitment, or are recruiting more experienced personnel from large scale redundancies elsewhere in the country. It was reported that the College is progressing its relationship with Harland and Wolff who are committed to an apprenticeship programme at Appledore.

Draft Month 12 Management Accounts for 2019/2020

20FGB20

The report was considered by the Board and the following points were noted.

The external audit of the College continues to take longer than expected, due to remote working with auditors and DfE requirements for increased diligence around going concern and regularity. The vice Principal Finance & Resources reported that the College may be graded as Outstanding.

It was queried by the Board how the deficit will impact staffing over the next few years. It was reported that credible growth is a more significant concern than the exceptional accounting year due to Covid. It was agreed that solutions of expenditure reduction and/or managed growth will be considered and modelled.

It was queried by the Board whether any further significant costs for Covid were expected. The Vice Principal Finance & Resources stated that this will largely depend on the Government response to Covid, but most high cost resources have been purchased or factored into the accounts. The following unknowns were reported: implications of a vaccine; agency costs to cover staff illness; government support such as redundancy support programme and Kickstart.

It was noted and agreed by the Board that the cleaners are doing an exemplary job and should be thanked.

Education and Skills Funding Agency Financial Assessment **20FGB21**

It was reported that the ESFA assessment has not yet arrived.

11. Our People

Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Report **20FGB22**

The report was received by the Board.

The issues around equality, diversity and inclusion at the college were considered and the following points noted:

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDI) convenes half-termly, with one protected characteristic being selected for in-depth review at each meeting.

The college is largely representative of the local community, but slightly low on staff with disabilities. It was reported that some staff may have a disability but may not identify with this or may choose not to declare it.

Some data (e.g. religious belief) may be influenced by staff not completing the form rather than active omission.

The college upholds zero tolerance on discrimination of any type, including banter that is non-consensual.

Staff have recently been encouraged to add a footer to emails stating their preferred pronoun.

The Board agreed the college was doing good work and thanked the director of HR & Organisational development.

David Chalmers left the meeting.

12. Governance

Review of (HE) Quality and standards from 2020-21 **20FGB23**

The report was received by the Board.

The CEO and Principal reported that the college is focusing on progression routes within the college for level 3 learners, informed by anticipated labour market demands.

The meeting concluded at 19:10.