



GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held at 17.00 on Tuesday 7 December 2021

Present:

Andrew Jackson	Chair
Lindy Stacy	Vice Chair
Sean Mackney	Principal and CEO
Rob Nicholls	External Governor
Chris Williams	External Governor
Richard Bevan	External Governor
Iain Springate	External Governor
Katerina Kolyva	External Governor
Andy Champion	External Governor
Andy Willis	External Governor
Mark Rogers	External Governor
Rosanna Toleman	Student Governor
Neil Tanton	Staff Governor
Joanna Boardman	Governance Advisor and Head of Executive Office

In Attendance:

Bill Blythe	Vice Principal Finance and Resources
Sheena Murphy- Collett	Director of HR and Organisational Development
Craig Litster	Interim VP Curriculum and Quality

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies received from Lee Thommen, David Chalmers, Deborah Watson, Karen Taylor and Harrison Burke

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 KK declared that RSM is an auditor of Plymouth University which with they have a connection.

3. Confidential Items

- 3.1 No confidential items were noted

4. Items brought forward by the Chair

- 4.1 The Chair updated the Board that two governors were currently taking breaks, PD and KT. Would be reviewed at the end of January 2022.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising 20FGB83

- 5.1 Minutes and actions of the previous meeting of the Full Governing Body held on 13 July 2021 and 21 September 2021 were approved.

6. Principal and CEO

6.1 Principals Termly report 21FGB03

- 6.2 The Principal and CEO presented a paper updating the Board on key items nationally and the impact they had on the college and sector as a whole.

- 6.3 Young people in lockdown were finding it harder to adjust to being back in regular education was amongst them and a lot of work was being undertaken on behaviours. Schools are reporting rates of permanent exclusion being significantly higher. A question was raised and discussed around what support existed to support mental health issues and the increasing rate of referrals that were taking place. It was acknowledged that external agencies were at capacity, but that mental health first aid existed in the college and it would do all it could to support learners.

- 6.4 Broadly across the sector staff recruitment was proving difficult especially where salary differentials such as in the construction industry make non-education roles less attractive. All opportunities were being used in recruitment to attract applicants.

6.5 Key Performance Indicators Linked to 21AC08

The Principal and CEO reported that a full set of KPIs had been presented to Audit Committee and discussed in detail. There had been some slippage reported around curriculum content relating to the climate emergency, however that was back on track. There existed a mix of items that had been achieved as well as not which is to be expected at this stage in the year. The measures in some areas are more difficult due to the COVID impact and many external reporting no longer being available. There had been a downward shift in outcome data although it was felt that it was recoverable. It was felt that the measure could be achieved by the end of the year by the college.

- 6.6 The Board commented that COVID could be the perfect excuse for companies not to achieve, but that it was noted that the College was not using that approach. The task is how to recover from the pandemic when the government can only fund a fraction of what is needed. A discussion around the longer lasting impact on young people in education took place and what the landscape would look like ten years from now.

6.7 Mid Devon Campus 21FGB04

- 6.8 The Principal and CEO spoke to a presentation that was provided detailing the work and discussion that had been gathered so far on the potential for Mid Devon development. Issues

around the flood works and potential to offset some against the community levy were discussed. Hard to know what the community levy would involve until it is imposed.

- 6.9** Areas around changes impact on staff, re-deployment, college deficit, class sizes, income and curriculum were all talked through. A question was raised about interest from outside colleges which was thought to be unlikely. Taunton had just taken on large expansions and Exeter has taken a site near the airport and there would be a concern over letting the Tiverton campus go and encourage further competition into the area.
- 7.0** Further conversation around what an enhanced SEN provision could be and the importance to the County and those students of keeping a local provision. The option of including a social work or learning disability focus on education, placements and research was also offered from Board. Over time build to a centre of excellence.
- 7.1** It was asked that a learning walk could be scheduled in this year for Mid Devon and the Governance advisor will arrange for that. Overall the Board felt motivated that there some clear options with supporting analysis and stated that moving forward the management and discipline from the Executive would need to be a major focus. Once a decision is made there will be more work to be done.

8.0 Curriculum and Quality

8.1 To note the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 20/21

21FGB05

- 8.2** The Interim Vice Principal reported that overall the intention had been to be in the top 25 colleges, however with the lack of external data and reporting it was hard to make a judgement on this. Board asked where items had gotten worse and why?

- 8.3** Apprenticeships were reported as having struggled last year due to lockdowns and apprenticeships not being able to continue through furlough or redundancy. End point Assessments were not able to be completed and the overall achievement rate was at 43%.

8.4 To Approve the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

21FGB06

- 8.5** The Interim Vice Principal reported that the college was mid-way through a series of meetings with all Faculties and at this stage the results were mixed. Some areas of excellent practice and others that needed improvement. It was asked what methodology is used within the college and it was described as a set of Ofsted criteria. A comment from board was that culturally it can be difficult for staff if there isn't a set methodology with objective setting and improving practice.

- 8.6** Board also suggested that the college take into account stakeholder management, employers and other connections and not just data sets when looking at apprenticeships.

8.7 To approve the Safeguarding policy

21FGB07

- 8.8** The new policy was presented to the Board detailing the extensive changes and the bringing together of disparate areas.

- 8.9** Board commented that they wished to see included a more specific item on active racism especially with it being an issue in North Devon. Board approved the policy on condition that the amendment was made and delegated final approval to the Principal and CEO.

8.10	To approve the Curriculum Strategy	21FGB08
8.11	The Interim Vice Principal presented the updated document for approval to Board following detailed discussion of the strategy at Executive, the Board Strategy Day and the Curriculum and Quality committee.	
8.12	The policy was approved by Board with a suggestion that TED style talks from employers could take place across the year to share experiences.	
9.0	Audit and Finance and General Purposes	
9.1	Audit Committee Minutes	21AC01
9.2	Minutes were accepted	
9.3	Recommendations from Audit Committee	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the Regularity Self-Assessment Report* 21AC03+i • To approve the Annual Internal Audit Service Report (RSM) 21AC03+i • To approve the Annual Completion Report (Mazars)* 21AC02+1 • To approve the Annual Report of Audit Committee* 21AC05 	
	<i>As starred papers the above documents were approved as read</i>	
9.4	To approve Petroc Financial Accounts 20/21	21ACFGP07
9.5	The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the annual accounts which had previously been discussed at the joint meeting of Audit and Finance and General Purposes committees. From those comments it was confirmed that the month 3 accounts had now been sent to Mazars and there was no issue on going concern. Board was asked to approve the accounts for signature by the Board Chair and the Principal and CEO and these would be sent to Lloyds.	
9.6	Board approved the financial accounts for signature.	
9.7	To approve the Key Performance Indicator Report (June 2021)*	21AC08i-viii
	<i>As starred papers the above documents were approved as read</i>	
9.8	To approve the Risk Policy	21AC07+i
9.9	Policy was approved	
9.10	To approve the Risk Management/Board Assurance Report	21FGB09
9.11	It was felt that twenty nine strategic risks were too high a number and some were not of a strategic level, however there was good clarity and progression through the year. It was noted the development of the new processes were still ongoing.	
9.12	Board approved the report	
9.13	Risk Management appendices from Audit Committee*	21AC06+i
	<i>As starred papers the above documents were approved as read</i>	

10. Finance and General Purposes Committee

10.1 Recommendations from Financial and General Purposes Committee

- To note the HR annual report for 2020/21* **21FGP04**
 - To note the Month 12 Management Accounts for 2020/2021* **21FGP01+i**
 - To note Month 3 Management Accounts for 2021/22 **21FGP03+i**
- As starred papers the above documents were approved as read*

10.2 To receive the Indicative Enrolments for 2021/22 **21FGP02**

10.3 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the indicative enrolment report where there critical date was the first week of December and the 4th financial report of the year (RO4). RO4 shows the lagged funding for the following year and at this stage it was reported that the numbers were too close to the line to fully predict. Following months 4 and 5 it will be clearer what in year action may be needed. Current assumptions show that income on catch up and level up courses is unlikely to match targets, whereas apprenticeships are increasingly more likely to do so.

10.4 Other areas of pressure will be the Health and Care levy, minimum wage and inflationary forecasts.

10.5 Modelling further out if no action is taken forecasts a £1.825m deficit which would risk the college relationship with the bank and the FE Commissioner. The decline in numbers will already prompt questions in the annual conversation around managing the cost base. The college is working hard with the curriculum, business planning and estates management. The Estates Strategy and Digital Strategy will be presented to Board in March after the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

10.6 The college reported that restructuring had come to feel like an annual event putting huge pressure on staff and that this could not continue. The current analysis of the college as a whole would need to be a significant, but meaningful one and fit for the future. The Board acknowledged the strain on staff and that the college should try to do it once, but do it well.

10.7 To note the Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) Report **1FGB10**

10.8 The Director of HR and Organisational Development presented the annual EDI report stating that the census data would not be available until next year, however the college has a very proactive approach to EDI which represents the community.

10.9 There is strong committee representation within the EDI group which focuses on key actions, with this year including wellbeing and the menopause. It was noted that there are a higher number of responses to sexuality questions rather than religion and it was thought that many people do not believe they have a religion and ignore the question.

10.10 To note the Insurance Cover: summary report* **21FGP05+i**
To note the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Financial Assessment* **21FGP06+i**
To note letter from the ESFA Accounting Officer and Chief Executive* **21FGB11**
As starred papers the above documents were approved as read

- 11 Governance**
- 11.1 Minutes from previous meeting 3 November 2021** **21SG01**
- 11.2** Minutes were received
- 11.3** To approve Governance Improvement Action and Training Plan 2021/22* **21SG04i**
 To approve the governors allowances and expenses* **21SG02i**
 To approve the appointment and re-appointment of governors policy* **21SG02ii**
 To approve the Whistleblowing Policy **21SG02iii**
 To approve the Freedom of Information Policy **21SG02iv**
 To approve the updated Public Value Statement **21SG03i**
- 11.4** Board approved all documents in 11.3 and commended the Governance Advisor for the work undertaken across the year.
- 11.5 To receive the Termly Student Governor Report** **21FGB12**
- 11.6** The student governor spoke to the report in place of the president. It was explained that the president wanted a more proactive and inclusive Student Union with a bigger presence. More people are likely to complain rather than praise and moving forward more engagement from all students will be promoted.
- 11.7** Charities will still be a focus for the Student Union, however a roadmap is being developed to allow more students to benefit from the Union. Wellbeing Café each week providing a safe and supportive environment as well as working with the Director of HR on wellbeing support in general. Gender neutral spaces and the red box project bringing sanitary products to those in financial hardship.
- 11.8** A ball for what would be Year 13 in 2022 is being aimed for to provide some celebration for students.
- 11.9** Board and the Executive agreed that the report was the best they had seen including other colleges. It sets a basis for engagement and a manifesto that the college can work with to support.
- 12 AOB**
- 12.1** The Chair reminded the Executive and Board to bring forward any AOB items in advance of the meetings.
- 12.2** The Board discussed adding an earlier start at the beginning of in person meetings as a social time for the Board to chat and engage with each other as well excusing the Executive members at the end of the meetings allowing Board to openly discuss anything amongst themselves. This was agreed and the Governance Advisor shall allow for that moving forward.

Date of Next Meeting – 30 March 2022

Note: * items – These are items which the board were asked to note, but would not be normally discussed at the meeting, marked with an asterisk on the agenda. Such items will not be discussed at a meeting unless the chair is informed by 9am on the day before the meeting that the member of board wished to discuss a particular item.

Date of Next Meeting – 30 March 2022