

Minutes of the Full Governing Board meeting held on 24 March 2021 – held remotely



Present: Karen Buchanan
David Brown
Keeley Seamans
David Meakin
Gillian Bardin
Humera Khan
Fiona Lugiano
Jim Sutcliffe
Paul Ragnall
Guy Thomas
Philip Turner
Richard Thorley
Richard Robinson
Kate Quinn
Oscar Whittaker
Jessica Holt

In Attendance:

Simon Jordan
Angela Donovan
Simone Lomas
Stuart Arnfield
Neil Burrows

Contributed by email:

Louise Robinson

1 Apologies

Gerald Griggs
Paul Henderson

Declaration of Interest

2 There were no declarations of interest noted.

Draft Minutes of the Board meeting held on 9 December 2020

3 The minutes of the Board meeting on the 9 December were accepted as an accurate record, proposed by Richard Robinson and seconded by Richard Thorley.

Matters arising from the minutes

- 4 Paragraph 27 – Karen Buchanan advised that the virtual visit from the permanent Secretary of State for Education had been extremely successful.
- 5 Paragraph 39 – Simone Lomas confirmed that the approved minutes had been published on the Colleges website.
- 6 Paragraph 41 – Simone Lomas confirmed that the Search and Governance Standing Orders had been changed to reflect the extension in the Term of Office of the Independent Governor.

- 7 Paragraph 38 – Simone Lomas noted that the minutes were being considered in Agenda Item 9.
- 8 Paragraph 42 – Simone Lomas confirmed that Oscar Whittaker and Jessica Holt had been formally informed of their appointment to the Governing Board.
- 9 Paragraph 57 – The Governors Strategic event has taken place virtually on Friday 22 January 2021.

Student Council Minutes – 18 January 2021

- 10 Angela Donovan advised that Louise Robinson attended the Council. Angela updated the meeting on the current situation in terms of remote learning and that all lessons were currently being conducted live albeit remotely. A focus on Health and Wellbeing was made, with many options, support techniques, platforms, external and internal contacts given out to the members, along with sessions that were being promoted for students to engage with. Comments at the meeting were productive, with actions taken away for further consideration.

Quality Committee – 27 January 2021

- 11 Angela Donovan advised Governors of the items that were considered at the meeting, referring to Centre Assessed Grades and any learning that can be taken from last years activity. Discussions relating to the Ofqual Consultations took place and feedback from members was collated with further clarity from the consultation requested.

Accommodation Working Group – 28 January 2021

- 12 David Meakin advised Governors of the items discussed at the meeting with the cost saving exercise of the New build Teaching Block and Sports Centre Extension being a key feature of the considerations that were discussed. The appointment of John Turners for the main contractor for the project was approved.

Draft Academic Board – 24 February 2021

- 13 Karen Buchanan advised that four papers were considered by staff; Mental Health and Wellbeing, Public Value and Human Trafficking and Slavery Statement, The College Self-Assessment Report 2019/20 and a Digital Learning and Digital Technology report. All four reports were well received by staff and points raised for consideration.

Draft Human Resources Committee – 24 February 2021

- 14 Philip Turner referred to the presentation to the Committee relating to the Mental Health Support that staff had received during the pandemic, demonstrating the individualised support and the different concepts that were being introduced. Philip had requested for the presentation to be presented to the full board.

Draft Curriculum and Standards – 3 March 2021

- 15 Paul Ragnall advised members of the extremely positive position the College was in. The reports presented at the meeting confirmed the position of the college as improving by a further 1%, although as a result of the pandemic the results were not being formalised. School leaver applications were close to the final figure received last year with interviews being conducted remotely using the virtual platforms. Paul noted the valuable contribution that Oscar and Jessica had made at the meeting.

Draft Audit Committee – 10 March 2021

- 16 Jim Sutcliffe advised of the Cyber Security Training the Committee had received, explaining that the training would be useful for the full board.

Jim gave an update on the position in relation to the internal auditors, that they would be appointed to conduct the audits on an individual and specialism basis, confirming that SMT choose which areas of the College to be audited, considering pertinent and topical areas along with those that are high value in terms of income and records.

Draft Accommodation Working Group and Project Board – 9 March 2021

- 17 David Meakin updated on the approach that was being taken, reflecting on similar practices when building the College, with members of the Board meeting with the Project Team to offer a third-party influence on the current issues and considerations.

Draft Finance Committee – 17 March 2021

- 18 Richard Thorley referred to the presentation that had been received by Ashley Alderson and Paul Sharples relating to the North West Business Training and the associated activity. Richard requested that the full board received the presentation.

The half-year position at the end of January indicated that the College had posted a positive position at an operating level. The forecast for the full year also indicates that the budget will be achieved and that the College continues to report Outstanding Financial Health. A word of caution in relation to the Pension Liabilities was noted with a detailed report with the options available being presented at the meeting.

16-18 Academic Results 2020/21

- 19 Karen Buchanan advised Governors that the Secretary of State for Education had announced that in 2021 students will receive grades awarded and determined by teachers. Karen explained the process this would take. More recently, an announcement to bring the results days forward for both GCSE's and A-levels by 2 weeks was made, allowing students to appeal to the College if they disagree with their resulting grade. A plan to allow students to enrol at this time is being developed.

David Brown referred to paragraph 10, recalling a conversation about exam fees and possible rebates for exams that were not taken last year.

Governors' Calendar of meetings 2021/2022

- 20 Simone Lomas introduced the report which advised Governors of the suggested dates for formal Board and Committee meetings in the 2021/22 Academic Year. A request to consider moving one of the dates was made in advance of the meeting and would be changed if feasible. An updated calendar would be sent out reflecting the changes and would include the Awards and Celebration events.

Action: Simone Lomas

It was agreed that the Committee and Board meetings would be conducted remotely for the rest of this Academic year.

Health & Safety Update

- 21 Neil Burrows informed Governors of the latest position identifying key statistics in relation to accidents and near misses. He explained that the Health and Safety Committee has undertaken a review in terms of their structure and protocol as a result of the retirement of the Facilities Manager. The appointment process to recruit a Health and Safety Officer is currently being drafted with the new Facilities Manager who is Nebosh qualified taking up the role in an advisory capacity.

- 22 The Health and Safety Policy was presented for Governors to consider and approve. Members were advised that this policy sets the tone and expectations of the College.

Oscar Whittaker asked whether the College had paid for the lateral flow tests that were being distributed to staff and students. Neil explained that these had been donated by the Department for Education.

- 23 The Board noted the progress during 2020/21 and unanimously approved the Health and Safety, and Wellbeing Policy, proposed by Jim Sutcliffe and seconded by David Brown.

- 24 The policy to be displayed on the Colleges website.

Action: Simone Lomas

Single Equality Policy 2020/21

- 25 Stuart Arnfield confirmed that most Governors have seen the policy previously as it is an annual report. This has been reviewed with no changes requested. The policy has been consulted through the Academic Board process and feedback obtained. During the teaching observations of staff the opportunities where equality and diversity were observed as outstanding practice are recorded and shared and this also forms part of the Divisional and Support area review processes undertaken by the Senior Management Team.

- 26 Kate Quinn shared her views on the newly established Equality and Diversity Group, asking whether the College were picking up on any unrest in terms of race as a result of the 'Black lives matter' movement. Karen explained that the Equality and Diversity group had been formed as a result of a student speaking openly about his views and how the College could address Equality and Diversity in a more inclusive way.

- 27 Jessica Holt asked whether the issue of 'violence against women' that currently has a high media profile is an area of College focus. Angela Donovan explained some of the considerations that were being discussed under the 'safeguarding' umbrella and how they would be introduced across College.
- 28 Governors unanimously approved the Single Equality Policy, proposed by Gillian Bardin and seconded by Kate Quinn.

Governors' Strategic Event January 2021

- 29 Simone Lomas introduced the report which summarised the content of the Governors Strategic event that had been held remotely in January. Governors were hosted in break out rooms by the Senior Management team to discuss the data in terms of success of the College and an analysis of student achievements and results for 2019/20. Karen Buchanan, Simon Jordan, Stuart Arnfield and Angela Donovan provided an overview of the national and local developments in the sector.
- 30 Governors were introduced to the Colleges future accommodation developments at the campus, along with a virtual tour of the areas that had undergone a significant revamp over the summer period.
- 31 Governors had received an updated version of their Self-Assessment Report, Action Plan and time-line for their consideration. A request to include the Accommodation Working Group to the Corporate Governance Structure was made.
- Action: Simone Lomas**
- 32 Governors were keen to return to the Coniston Hotel for the residential in January 2022.
- Action: Simone Lomas**
- 33 The Board approved the Governance SAR for 2019/20 subject to the change noted in paragraph 30, proposed by Guy Thomas and seconded by David Brown.

Update on Governance Issues for Spring term 2020/21

- 34 Simone Lomas introduced the report explaining the different categories in terms of the decisions required regarding the minutes of the meetings. Governors confirmed that the contents of the minutes of the Full Governing Board meeting held on 25 March 2020 should be published on the website subject to paragraphs 16 and 44 being redacted.
- Action: Simone Lomas**
- 35 It was noted that the Corporation Seal had not been used.
- 36 Student Governors Oscar Whittaker and Jessica Holt were unanimously approved to be appointed to the Governing Board from February 2021, both have attended their first Curriculum and Standards Committee and have made a positive contribution.
- 37 Governors noted the report.

Governors' Strategic Planning Overview Document

38 Karen Buchanan emphasised the importance of this document should an Ofsted visit take place. Karen Buchanan informed that items marked in blue refer to items that have changed and that the initials at the side of each paragraph refers to the Senior Manager responsible for this area of work. Governors were invited to ask any questions on the information presented.

39 It was noted that paragraph 2.34 should now be removed from the paper as it relates to the Accrington and Rossendale College Merger and is no longer an area of focus.

Action: Karen Buchanan

40 Governors noted the report.

Corporate Performance 2020/2021

41 Karen Buchanan introduced the report and informed Governors of the format adopted. The report notified of the performance of the College in relation to its Strategic Objectives and Goals. Governors were informed that this paper would be a reference document should Ofsted visit the College.

42 Governors were pleased to note the position being reported.

Funding Update 2021/22

43 Simon Jordan introduced the report on the four main funding streams. The overall funding allocation for 2021/22 presents an increase in income for 16-18 students but a very uncertain picture for other income streams as allocations are gradually replaced by a more competitive approach and student loans. The College has an opportunity to grow all areas in line with the College strategic goals.

44 Governors noted the report.

Sustainability Statement and Update

45 Simon Jordan referred to the report explaining that sustainability is a big agenda and how important it had become to all key stakeholders of the College and wider community. The College is involved in many projects to promote sustainability and where possible aligns its practices with the sustainability agenda. The successful projects that have been implemented include:

- Paper reduction awareness
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- Earth Week

The Colleges new apprentices will be involved in leading projects in the following areas:

- Reducing energy consumption
- Safe disposal of face masks
- Recycling and upcycling College furniture

- 46 David Brown noted how impressed he was with the high level of intervention and focus being given to sustainability, he asked whether there was any considerations being given to installing extra electrical charging points as part of the new campus developments. Stuart confirmed that the charging points have been included in the plans.

Gillian Bardin mentioned the COP26 – a United Nations Climate Change Conference that had proven to be beneficial to her in the past and would be useful for the College to be involved with.

Action: Simon Jordan

- 47 Governors unanimously approved the sustainability statement to be published on the website, proposed by David Brown and seconded by Guy Thomas.

College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2019/20

- 48 Simon Jordan advised that the SAR is a formal document that is placed on the Ofsted hub. Whilst this is no longer a legal requirement, it is recognised as good practice to do so. It was noted that the SAR summarises where we expect to be against the Education Inspection framework. The SAR is externally validated through consultants, and internally validated through divisional and support area reviews comparing performance against national averages and College targets.

David Meakin referred to the pandemic and the challenges that had brought and asked for some reference to this was included in the SAR in particular in relation to the Centre and Teacher Assessed grades.

Action: Simon Jordan

General Update - Confidential

- 49 Karen updated Governors on the confidential item in relation to the Health and Safety investigation.
- 50 Governors noted the report.

Approved by Chair, David Meakin Signed: Approved via email	Date: 7 June 2021
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NOTE: Final approval of the minutes will be at the following Board meeting.
