

Minutes of the Full Governing Board meeting held on 27 March 2024

Present:

Karen Buchanan - Principal
David Brown – Chair of the Board
Gillian Bardin – Vice Chair of the Board
Curtis Wilson – Staff Governor
Fiona Lugiano – Chair of Curriculum & Standards
Abigail Geary – Student Governor
Guy Thomas - Chair of Finance
Philip Turner - Chair of HR
Paul Henderson – Independent Governor
David Tomlinson – Independent Governor
Richard Robinson – Vice Chair of Audit
Steve Wilkinson – Vice Chair of Curriculum & Standards
David Easton – Staff Governor
Paul Ragnall – Independent Governor

In Attendance:

Sarah Crossley – Assistant Principal – Sixth Form
Simone Lomas - Clerk
Stuart Arnfield – Finance Director
Nina Parkin – Assistant Principal – Adult and University
Craig Waddington – Business Intelligence Manager
Philip Glass – Software Development Manager
Shannon Hadfield – Quality Manager
Josh Sanderson – Software Development Officer

Contributed:

Richard Thorley – Vice Chair of Finance
Jim Sutcliffe – Chair of Audit
Sam Sheard – Student Governor

Apologies

Annette Weekes – Independent Governor
Anita Wright – Independent Governor
Neil Burrows – Director of Skills, Innovation and Employer Engagement

Digital Rollout Presentation

- 1 Shannon Hadfield introduced, Craig Waddington, Philip Glass and Josh Sanderson to the meeting. They began by explaining the digital setup in the context of tracking the learner's progression through an internally, custom built system called Markbook.
- 2 They provided the detail of how the system integrated with dashboards for curriculum teams to measure progress and how the assessment results in the systems synchronised with the requirements from the Awarding Bodies when uploading results. They provided example; of how the associated platforms gave learners the ability to view their own progress through the Learner Portal, the enrichment activities, events and the available student support options. A new updated version of the Parent Portal is under development to give parents an enhanced and more intuitive view of their child's progression and opportunities.
- 3 David Brown asked whether there was anything for Governors similar to this. Simone explained that conversations had recently taken place with the Business Intelligence team to pull data together and present in dashboards for Governors to view and consider.
- 4 David Brown asked how live is the data that is being presented. Craig Waddington explained that the data was refreshed every hour. David asked Abigail Geary whether she had used the portal. Abigail explained that the portal had been introduced to her at the Student Council meeting, where learners were asked their opinions on its effectiveness. Abigail believed it be a really useful tool and understood it was being introduced to learners across College in their tutorials.
- 5 David Easton noted that he was a user of the system and had found the implementation program successful along with its effectiveness in creating efficiencies, visibility and reduction in duplication of data.
- 6 Gillian Bardin asked how parents will be informed in terms of its existence, navigation and the level and kind of information available. Sarah Crossley explained that communication will be sent to all 'Next of Kins' held on the student record system. The communication will include guidance on how to use the portal. It will also be reinforced at parents' evenings.

Action: Assistant Principal Sixth Form Studies

- 7 David Tomlinson asked whether there had been consideration to develop portals for University and Adult students, he also asked how secure the data is. Philip Glass provided assurance on the process to ensure security when requesting access to the portal and confirmed that they continue to work with the cyber team. Philip also explained that any learner at College will have access to the learner hub and that university and adult learner portals will be refreshed in line with the 16-18 learner portal developments.
- 8 David Tomlinson advised that penetration testing should be conducted prior to the system going live. Philip confirmed that he had planned for this to happen.

Action: Software Development Manager via the Director of Finance

- 9 Curtis Wilson asked whether there would be anything similar for apprentices. Shannon Hadfield explained how it will work for parents of apprentices by using data that is held in the 'Onefile' portal, although this was still in the development stage.
- 10 Richard Robinson asked whether 'Wisepay' the online payment facility would be included in the portal so that everything is in one place. Craig and Phillip agreed that Richard's suggestion was a good idea and will investigate how to include it in the portals.

**Action: Business Intelligence Manager and
Software Development Manager Via the Director of Finance**

- 11 David Brown thanked Shannon, Phillip, Craig and Josh for their very informative presentation and Governors for their contributions and suggestions.
- 12 David Brown welcomed Paul Ragnall, Abigail Geary and David Easton to their first Full Board meeting and introduced Carole Drury who was observing the meeting as the reviewing officer for the External Review of Governance.

Declaration of Interest

- 13 There were no declarations of interest noted.

Draft Minutes of the Board meeting held on 6 December 2023

- 14 The minutes of the Board meeting on the 6 December 2023 were accepted as an accurate record, proposed by Gillian Bardin and seconded by Richard Robinson.

Matters arising from the minutes

- 15 Paragraph 31 – Karen Buchanan confirmed that the minutes of the Quality Committee do now include more in-depth information and detail and will remain so going forward.
- 16 Paragraph 48 – Simone Lomas confirmed that the approved minutes had been published on the College's website.
- 17 Paragraph 57 – Karen Buchannan confirmed that the subject of devolution was presented and discussed at the Governors Strategic Residential in January 2024.
- 18 Paragraph 62 – Karen Buchannan confirmed the Quality Improvement Plan associated to the Colleges Self-Assessment Report will be presented at the Curriculum and Standards Committee in June 2024 once both 'Deep Dive' processes have concluded.

Student Council Minutes – 15 January 2024

- 19 Sarah Crossley advised Governors of the topics that were discussed, Sarah Condon, Staff Development and Student Experience Manager had introduced the Brit Challenge 2024; the aim being to help young people and adults improve their mental health through exercise. Learners had been asked to discuss and feedback on their experiences at College since half term, their feedback included what had gone well and what would make their experiences even better.

Quality Committee – 9 February 2024

- 20 Sarah Crossley advised Governors of the items that were considered at the meeting, referring to the Review of the 'MY BC site', requesting feedback on the thoughts of the new site for learners. Following this a discussion on the use of Artificial Intelligence and the impact of it on staff and learners had taken place, with actions that included further training for both staff and learners on the subject.

Academic Board – 21 February 2024

- 21 Karen Buchanan advised that four reports were considered by staff; the Health and Safety culture of the College, Public Value and Human Trafficking and Slavery Statement, Work Experience and The College Self-Assessment Report 2022/23. All four reports were well received by staff and points were raised for consideration.

Draft Accommodation Working Group – 21 February 2024 and 25 March 2024

- 22 David Brown advised Governors that there had been good progress made on the building projects. The North Campus is now glazed, the cladding is currently being erected and is on track for its target completion of August 2024. The University building is also progressing well with first fix mechanical and electrical work currently being undertaken. The majority of the additional strengthening work has also been completed, with just the final point of extra work to finish following final inspections.

Draft Human Resources Committee – 28 February 2024

- 23 Philip Turner reported that they had received a presentation about the considerations that were taking place prior to procuring a new HR system, they had been made aware of the shortcomings of the existing system and had been introduced to the capabilities of the preferred supplier. Philip confirmed that the Gender Pay report had been discussed in detail and the data had been compared and contrasted to similar size colleges. The Committee approved and agreed the Policy would be published on the website.

Draft Curriculum and Standards Committee – 6 March 2024

- 24 Fiona Lugiano advised members of the presentation the Committee had received from Cheryl Grabarz, David Lord and Humera Khan relating to the Curriculum Planning Process; they presented the key priorities, the impact and criticality of curriculum planning, providing examples of how these played out in the College.
- 25 Fiona referred to the 30% increase of school leaver applications; that retention has also increased but that attendance was currently below target, although the Committee had been given assurances on actions taking place to address the issue.
- 26 Gillian Bardin asked about the position with Bucks New University and how it would impact existing students and the University offer going forward. Nina explained that there would be no impact to existing learners as their programmes will continue until completion. In relation to any new students, programmes will continue to be delivered but with another awarding university, which is likely to be UCLan and Edge Hill.

Draft Safeguarding Group – 13 March 2024

- 27 Gillian Bardin reported that referrals continue to increase, although this could be attributed to the successful awareness campaign that had been rolled out by the safeguarding team. Gillian advised that a trend analysis exercise was being undertaken, the details will be presented to Governors.
- 28 Paul Henderson was concerned to read the level of increase in the referrals and in society generally. Karen shared Pauls concerns, explaining that safeguarding referrals are increasing all over the country; that the College had adopted a trauma informed approach, are working with schools and looking at patterns and trends and enhancing the transition experience to College for school leavers. The safeguarding awareness campaign is proving successful in particular with the introduction of mental health first aiders and the early interventions as a result of staff confidence.

Draft Audit Committee – 13 March 2024

- 29 Richard Robinson advised Governors of the IT presentation that had been received; that it provided comfort and that the College is addressing Cyber Security better than most other colleges but that the threat is a continuing challenge. Further improvements have been identified and software improvements working with Microsoft should help with mitigating the threats. Cost savings have been negotiated with Microsoft by James Stott the Network Services Manager.
- 30 Internal Audit reports were positive with minor recommendations. The HR Strategy review will be undertaken after the HR process improvements have been finalised.
- 31 The Risk Register has been streamlined to facilitate better understanding and more focussing on the ten most significant risks. Formal endorsement of the new risk register is required by the Board.

Draft Finance Committee – 20 March 2024

- 32 Guy Thomas referred to the half year results; that they are all ahead of the planned target. Guy highlighted the issues that had been raised relating to the Government pension schemes; that although the increases are currently being funded by the Government, there remains no guarantee of this income. Guy acknowledged that the cashflow is currently tight but it is for all the right reasons as spending continues to secure the future of the College and ensure growth can continue.

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Annual Strategic Conversation 2023/24

- 33 Karen Buchanan introduced the paper explaining that the Ney Review and FE White Paper had actioned the ESFA to hold Annual Strategic Conversations with colleges with the aim to look holistically at colleges' strategy and plans.
- 34 On 13 March 2024 David Brown and Gillian Bardin and the Colleges Senior Management Team met with senior staff from the ESFA and FE Commission. The meeting was held at the College, culminating with a tour of the new College facilities developed since their last visit in March 2023.

- 35 Governors were informed of the need for their involvement in providing assurances on how the College provides skills for the local area. Legislation requests governors to collaborate with other local colleges and Governing Board representatives. David Brown and Gillian Bardin both felt that the meeting had been supportive, and that the tour of the campus was extremely impressive for everyone involved.
- 36 The meeting was deemed to be extremely positive, the letter from the ESFA corroborating this was attached to the report for Governors to consider.

Governors' Calendar of meetings 2024/25

- 37 Simone Lomas introduced the report advising Governors of the suggested dates for formal Board and Committee meetings in the 2024/25 Academic Year.
- 38 Governors were asked to inform Simone of any changes they would wish to make to the calendar and of any presentation they would wish to receive prior to the formal business at each governor meeting.
- 39 Governors requested for the following topics to be presented at future meetings:
- Sustainability, Corporate sustainability - linked with the money saving group
 - AI following on from the residential
 - HE Strategy
 - Employer Engagement - developments in the Gatsby benchmark and progress with the targets.

Health & Safety Update

- 40 Stuart Arnfield on behalf of Neil Burrows informed Governors of the latest position identifying key statistics in relation to accidents and near misses. Stuart provided Governors with an overview of the types of incidents and accidents reporting that there had been 93 accidents between 1 September 2023 and 29 February 2024.
- 41 Stuart advised of the key health and safety activities and developments in the period 1 December 2023 to 29 February 2024. They include that no accidents or near misses have occurred on the building developments, the Facilities Manager is undertaking a review of the Health and Safety risk register and that the College renewed its IOSH membership.
- 42 Guy Thomas and Paul Ragnall asked whether the previous accidents reported had been actioned and requested that RIDDOR accidents were reported clearly even if there was a nil return.

Action: Director of Skills, Innovation and Employer Engagement

- 43 David Brown and Jim Sutcliffe were alarmed to read about the fallen debris/stonework from the Railway Arches. Paul Henderson asked whether Network Rail inspected the viaduct. Stuart explained that he had contacted Network Rail several times, who have now completed the repair works and installed a safety fence.

Governors' Strategic Residential Event January 2024

- 44 Simone Lomas introduced the report which summarised the content of the Governors Strategic Residential event that had been held at the Coniston Hotel, Coniston Cold, Skipton in January 2024.
- 45 The Strategic Residential commenced with a presentation by Sarah Condren, Staff Development Manager, James Stott, Network Services Manager and Harry Bentley, Programme Leader. The session focussed on an introduction to AI and CHAT GPT and what that means to the landscape of the College and on skills and employment in the future.
- 46 Andy Walker, Chair of the LEP and Graham Baldwin, Pro Vice Chancellor of UCLan provided an overview of the local developments in relation to devolution in Lancashire, the current position and the implications to the College and local community.
- 47 For the remainder of the programme, Governors worked in carousels that were hosted by each member of SMT along with support managers:
- College Results Kate Wallace, Nina Parkin, Shannon Hadfield
 - Deep Dives Sarah Crossley, Sarah Condren
 - Finances Stuart Arnfield
- 48 Governors were keen to return to the Coniston Hotel for the residential in January 2025.

Update on Governance Issues for Spring term 2023/24

- 49 Simone Lomas introduced the report requesting Governor approval to publish the minutes presented in the report on the College's website. Governors unanimously approved that the minutes of the Full Governing Board meeting held on 22 March 2023 should be published on the website.

Action: Clerk

- 50 It was noted that the Corporation Seal had not been used.
- 51 Simone provided an update on the significant changes to Governors, their roles on the Board and committees and of the new governors appointed.

Governors noted the report.

Governors' Strategic Planning Overview Document

- 52 Karen Buchanan informed that items marked in blue refer to items that have changed and that the initials at the side of each paragraph refer to the Senior Manager responsible for this area of work. Governors were invited to ask any questions on the information presented.
- 53 Karen referred to the school leaver applications; that there had been a considerable increase from the same point last year. Currently the College has 46% of the school leaver cohort enrolled on courses in the College, there has been an increase in the activity taking place in the schools in Burnley and local areas which can be attributed to the increase in applications.

- 54 Abigail Geary provided her view on the current situation in schools, she explained that she went to a school in Oswaldtwistle and although didn't realise it at the time, they didn't look at the bigger picture or learner aspirations, it was more about attendance and behaviour, there were no opportunities or inclination to provide an ambitious environment. Abigail referred to Sam, who was not attending the meeting this evening due to his trip to Japan to investigate the possibility of studying there after College.
- 55 David Brown asked whether Thomas Whitham, the sixth form school that had closed down some years previously should still be included in the document. Karen explained that, in terms of the document being reference material for Governors during an Ofsted inspection, the detail about Thomas Whitham is still included to evidence that there is no longer a sixth form in its own right in Burnley.
- 56 David Tomlinson was keen to express his positive view of the document but believes that it undersells the College in terms of the practices adopted over Covid and how they have reinforced the need for continuous awareness and improvement of technology. Karen agreed to re-look at the overview document after listening to the points that had been raised, and revamp for the 2024/25 year.
- Action: Principal**
- 57 Governors noted the report.

Corporate Performance 2022 & 2023

- 58 Karen Buchanan introduced the report and informed Governors of the format adopted. The report details the performance of the College in relation to its Strategic Objectives and Goals.
- 59 Karen focussed on the measure in terms of high level grades in the Learning Visit outcomes. Sarah Crossley explained the measures currently include:
- KPIs such as achievement, progression and destinations data
 - Data from Learning, Teaching and Assessment focussed SPOC questions
 - Triangulation with data and feedback from Deep Dive activities
 - Logging and monitoring of action plans
 - Checking of self-assessment documentation.
- 60 Sarah explained that she is looking to further add to this data.
- 61 Karen also noted that Fazal Dad, Principal of Blackburn College and Ofsted Inspector had joined one of the Colleges divisional deep dives, amongst many positive comments he made, he identified one in particular, 'how the College goes over and above to keep students safe by paying for their bus passes in full'.
- 62 Governors were pleased to note the position being reported.

Funding Update 2024/25

- 63 Kate Wallace introduced the report on the four main funding streams. The overall funding allocation for 2024/25 presents an increase in income for 16-18yr old students and a reasonably steady position across other funding streams although the Adult Education Budget will be impacted by devolution. The College's curriculum and business planning process is currently underway and will provide a more detailed plan and forecast for June Governors meetings.
- 64 Gillian Bardin asked whether there had been any indication if funding will be affected if there is a change of government. Karen explained that the profile of Colleges and Further Education had recently been raised and that a status quo going forward is most likely.
- 65 Governors noted the report.

Sustainability Statement Update

- 66 Stuart Arnfield 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 supports and educates its students and staff in sustainability processes, how sustainability is integrated into working practice and how the College as an organisation works to reduce environmental impact are key priorities for the College.
- 67 Stuart provided examples of the activities being undertaken by the College including the developments in Curriculum, with sustainability awareness courses for businesses and embedding sustainability training to all of its study programmes for 16-18 year olds including apprentices.
- 68 The College has continued to invest in sustainability improvements to the campus to increase energy efficiency and reduce the Colleges carbon footprint. Over the last year the improvements have included the Installation of an additional 450 solar panels on the roof space of buildings, which means the, Continued upgrade of lighting to LED, an additional six electric vehicle charge points have been installed on the campus for staff and visitors to use, further biodiversity improvements to the campus, with additional areas of planting, a wildflower seed area, and a herb garden.
- 69 Guy Thomas was impressed with the current activities, they provided a positive picture and that although the College is on a journey the measurable targets require focus. Stuart Arnfield agreed that the key points for next year would include some baseline targets of where the College can progress to.

Action: Finance Director

- 70 David Brown asked whether the College charged for the Electric Vehicle charging points. Stuart explained that the plan was for the points to become chargeable, and that work was currently underway to install the appropriate technology to each of the existing and additional charging points.

Action: Finance Director

Guidance on Accountability Agreements 2024/25

- 71 The Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022 came into force on 28 June 2022 and placed a statutory duty every three years on further education colleges to review how well the education and training they provide meets local needs and consider what actions may be taken to better meet those needs.
- 72 The 2024/25 Accountability Statement must be submitted to the DfE by 30 June 2024 and must include how well the College meets local needs, what actions it can take to better meet those needs and how can the College better ensure learners have the skills needed to secure suitable employment.
- 73 The main changes will be to include the local needs duty and update the aims and target outcomes for the year ahead.
- 74 The Accountability Statement will be updated to factor in these changes and will be discussed with Governors at the May Strategic Planning meeting ahead of it being submitted to the Full Board in June for approval.
- 75 Gillian Bardin referred back to last year when there was no template issued by the DfE to support the format of the document, she asked whether our version had been given any form of affirmation as part of the feedback. Karen confirmed that the Accountability Statement would be an agenda item at the Strategic Planning Event on 1 May, and would include comparison statements from other colleges.

Action: Principal

Approved by Chair,

Signed: 

Date: 18 JUNE 2024

NOTE: Final approval of the minutes will be at the following Board meeting.