

MINUTES



BOLTON COLLEGE BOARD

Minutes for the meeting held on Tuesday 9 November 2021 – (PART A)

Time: 5.00pm

Venue: Boardroom / Video Conference

Members present:

Dr Andrew Roberts (Chair)
Mr Andrew Fawcett (Vice Chair)
Dr Chris Ball
Mrs Gulnaz Brennan
Dr Adrian Brooks
Ms Rebecca Davison
Mr Fardean Farooq
Mrs Kate Flood
Professor George Holmes DL
Dr Sue Lomax
Mr Tom Martin
Ms Stephanie Nixon
Mr Tony Unsworth
Mr Bill Webster (Principal)

In Attendance:

Mr Mark Burgoyne (Deputy Principal)
Miss Deborah Bradburn (Clerk)
Mr Garry Westwater (Executive Director of Finance)
Ms Jane Marsh (Executive Director of HR)
Mrs Karen Westsmith (Director of Curriculum and Quality)
Mrs Kate Wallace (Director of Curriculum, Employer and Student Services)
Mr Tim Openshaw (Assistant Vice Chancellor (Planning & Student Experience) (UOB))
Miss Jill Hebden (Secretary)
Mr Gary Devlin (Azets)

1. SECTION A - BUSINESS MATTERS

1.1 WELCOME TO MEMBERS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which commenced at 5.00pm. He confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Mr Tom Martin was welcomed to his first meeting as a Staff Governor.

1.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Baroness Sayeeda Warsi and Dr Gill Waugh.

1.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. Standing declarations were noted particularly in relation to the University of Bolton reciprocal governance arrangements and also paid positions.

Interests were noted from Dr Adrian Brooks (Item 4.1 of the agenda – Membership) and from staff members, Mr Bill Webster, Mr Mark Burgoyne and Ms Deborah Bradburn (Item 4.4 of the agenda – Senior Post Holder Performance Appraisals).

1.4 REQUEST FOR AN ITEM TO BE UNSTARRED

Members were reminded that starred items on the Agenda would be taken as read rather than being presented. However, Members could ask questions of the report author, or ask for any item to be unstarred for full discussion.

There were no requests for items to be unstarred for discussion.

1.5* MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Minutes of the Meeting held 29 June 2021 - general publication

The minutes of the meeting held 29 June 2021 had been previously circulated to members for consideration.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record and authorised for publication (Part A).

1.6 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Members had received a summary of actions arising/outstanding from previous meetings, noting that all actions had been completed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the matters arising be noted.

1.7 MINUTES (SUB-COMMITTEES):

1.7 (i) Search & Governance Committee of 22 September 2021

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held 22 September 2021.

The Chair noted that there was a good cross section of skills and expertise on the Board. There was a vacancy on the Board that was discussed at the Search and Governance Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be received as detailed.

1.7 (ii) Remuneration Committee of 22 September 2021

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held 22 September 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be received as detailed.

1.7 (iii) Resources Committee of 28 September 2021

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held 28 September 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be received as detailed.

2. SECTION B - COLLEGE MATTERS

2.1 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal presented the fourteenth report under the 'Designated Institution' Bolton College, which provided an overview of key issues. He highlighted the following points:-

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Impact

- The College COVID-19 case rate had continued, up until half term, to be relatively low and stable with the majority of cases being students with no evidence of any 'in College' transmission.
- There had been an increase in positive COVID-19 cases with some local schools re-introducing measures to minimise transmission. The College continued to be cautious and continued to support good hygiene, temperature checks, regular testing and the use of face coverings. The situation continued to be monitored internally and in the wider Bolton context; the College would reintroduce measures if the circumstances warranted it or guidance required it.

Bolton College of Medical Sciences (BCMS)

- The BCMS project had been successful in its 'Levelling Up' fund bid and had secured £20 million. This Group project aligned the College and University with the health provision agenda in Bolton and secured the sustained growth of the Group's healthcare education and training offer.

Road to Outstanding

- The 'Road to Outstanding' was the central focus for the College this academic year with the intent to drive improvements for College learners. This had been further communicated at two 'all staff' events at the College Staff Development Day on 22 October. Feedback had been very positive and the College looked to maintain the momentum.
- The College had volunteered to be part of a pilot where colleges were inspected on how they addressed local skills needs.

Chartered Institute of Further Education (CIFE)

- The College had been successful in its application to become a Chartered Institute of Further Education that was an important step to enable further professionalism of College staff. CPD opportunities for staff and routes to apply for Fellowships would be pursued.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Principal's Report be noted.

2.2 ACHIEVEMENT RATES 2020/21 & PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2021/22

The Deputy Principal presented the report on Performance Targets for 2021/22 which provided an overview of achievement rates for the College across different funding categories for 2020/21, with information on previous years provided for comparison. It was noted that the national rates from 2018/19 were provided as this was the latest year that national performance data had been formally published.

The following points were highlighted:-

- The overall achievement rate for 2020/21 had decreased by 2.1% compared to the previous year. This ended a period of continuous improvement in achievement rates over the previous years that had been due to the impact of the pandemic.
- Achievement for the 16-18 year old cohort decreased by over 3% and it was noted that retention had increased and was above the national rate.
- Achievement for the adult cohort had improved by 0.33% and it was noted that the achievement rates had decreased at Levels 2 and 3 but had increased for all other levels. It was proposed that the target for adult provision be increased for 2021/22.
- It was proposed that the target achievement rate for 2021/22 for 16-18 year-olds and adult learners be set at 89%.
- Apprenticeships had an achievement rate of 62% compared to 72% in the previous year, and it was noted that this was below the national rate of achievement. It was proposed that the target for apprenticeship overall achievement remained at 70% for 2021/22 due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19.
- Community learning had increased by 4% following a decline in the previous year, with retention being the main reason. It was proposed that the target for community learning remained the same at 89% for accredited and 94% for non-accredited provision.

Governor Questions:

- Are these good results following a pandemic?
Yes, the College had to assess learners in a variety of ways i.e. teacher assessed grades and centre assessed grades with some areas having no dispensation.
- Will there be an indication on national achievement rates during lockdown?
DfE outcomes have not been completed over the last two years.

The Chair mentioned that whilst there were no national figures GM colleges were going to ask the Principals to share their results locally. The Principle said this is being done.

Members noted that staff had worked over the summer holidays to support students through practical assessments.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report on Achievement Rates 2020/21 and Performance Targets for 2021/22 be approved.

2.3 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2020/21 AND LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

The Executive Director of Finance and the Group's external auditors, Azets, presented the Financial Statements for 2020/21 and Letter of Representation.

The Statements had been scrutinised by the Audit Committee at its meeting held 2 November 2021.

The following key points were highlighted:-

- The external auditors gave an unqualified audit report and confirmed that the College was regarded as a going concern. It was also noted that the Finance Team had provided a strong set of accounts and working documentation and had responded to all the audit questions in a timely manner.
- The College had complied with its banking covenants (noting the Board had approved the revised operating leverage covenant variation for 2020/21).
- pre-FRS charges, the College had recorded an operating surplus of £1.273m.
- The College had a strengthening cash position.
- The Audit Report showed that no adjustments were needed to the accounts.
- There was a contingent liability in the Financial Statements with the College confident of a satisfactory conclusion on the matter.

It was **RESOLVED** that:-

- (i) the Financial Statements for 2020/21, Letter of Representation and Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire be approved; and
- (ii) the Audit Management Report and the College's financial health/bank covenants be noted.

(Gary Devlin of Azets left the meeting at 5.38pm)

2.4 COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER – DEANE & DERBY COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Executive Director of Finance presented the report and the following points were highlighted:-

- The College wanted to apply for the transfer of the Deane and Derby Community Learning Centre from the Council to the College, around 60% of the College Community Learning provision was delivered from this site.
- The Community Learning Centre had been designated as an education facility with the expectation that there would be caveats related to non-change of usage.
- The building would require maintenance, repairs and capital investment that would form part of the College long-term estates strategy. It would be used for work experience and curriculum projects for construction trades.
- Transfer of the hub would be a change to the College asset register and would require University Board and bank approval.

Governor Questions:

- What was the financial impact, the initial outlay and ongoing costs?
The centre would be gifted and as such there would be no initial outlay. There will be some ongoing costs for repairs and maintenance however, the College would be paying for proportion of this if the centre remained under Council ownership in accordance with the rental agreement.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Community Asset Transfer be endorsed for approval at the University Board.

2.5 ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT 2020/21

The Executive Director of Finance presented the Annual Health & Safety Report which provided a summary of health and safety activities during the academic year 2020/21.

- The report had a COVID-19 bias with a significant amount spent to ensure COVID-19 compliance with some monies recovered from the business interruption claim.
- An internal audit review on health and safety was scheduled this academic year. The Executive Finance Director would communicate audit progress and outcomes to the health and safety link governor.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Health & Safety Annual Report 2020/21 be noted.

2.6 COLLEGE KPI DASHBOARD

The Assistant Vice Chancellor (Planning & Student Experience) (University of Bolton) presented the College KPI Dashboard, which detailed the key sustainability indicators and other indicators, based on the areas to be monitored by the ESFA.

A minor change in the format of the dashboard was noted with a section entitled 'reporting requirements and reportable events'.

Governor Questions:

- How are the College HE numbers?
There are 95 HE learners that was a reduction of 10 learners based on the original target. The College and University had held a successful workshop to look at academic curriculum, progression and operational matters.

It was **RESOLVED** that the College KPI Dashboard be noted.

2.7 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Executive Director of Finance presented the Audit Committee Annual Report 2020/21 which provided the Audit Committee's annual assessment of the control systems in operation at the College, based on the reports received from the Internal and Financial Statements & Regularity Auditors and other sources.

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that the reports over the year from the internal auditors on key activity within the College had very few issues or concerns having been raised. The single medium and low risk findings from the internal audit reports had been shared and the Chair derived that there was a high degree of assurance with the Executive Team effectively managing and resolving any findings raised by the auditors.

Governor Questions:

- What was the medium risk identified?

This related to the debt policy and chasing students for fees in addition to an internal consolidation matter.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Audit Committee Annual Report be approved.

2.8* STARRED ITEMS:-

(i) SAFEGUARDING POLICIES 2021/22 UPDATE

Members had received and reviewed the Safeguarding Policies 2021/22 Update.

The College's Safeguarding Policies were updated on an annual basis, with the review process incorporating any legislative changes, alterations to local safeguarding processes, best practice, and lessons learnt.

The College had four key policies and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Children (0-18) Policy
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy & Procedure
- Abuse of Trust Policy
- Personal and Professional Relationships at Work Policy

The policies had been updated with minor changes to terminology and regulations.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Safeguarding Policies 2021/22 Updates be endorsed.

(ii) ANNUAL RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020/21

Members had received and reviewed the Annual Risk Management Report 2020/21.

The report enabled the Audit Committee to review and subsequently advise the Board on the progress being made with regard to Risk Management to assure the Board that risks were being managed effectively.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Risk Management Report 2020/21 be noted.

(iii) ANNUAL CAPITAL SPEND REPORT 2020/21

Members had received and reviewed the Annual Capital Expenditure Report 2020/21.

The total additions in year were £1.419M (£419k in 2019/20) that included an addition to the intangible asset for the potential commercialisation of College intellectual property. This asset would be depreciated over three years unless commercialised or otherwise impaired.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Capital Expenditure Report 2020/21 be noted.

(iv) TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY

Members had received and reviewed the Treasury Management Policy.

Governor Questions:

- When might foreign currency transactions occur?

There were very few circumstances when this would occur, the most recent would be members of staff who went on an Erasmus trip.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Treasury Management Policy be approved

(v) ANNUAL REPORT ON SENIOR POST HOLDERS' REMUNERATION

Members had received and reviewed the Annual Report on Senior Post Holders' Remuneration for 2020/21 as considered by the Remuneration Committee at its meeting held 22 September 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Report on Senior Post Holders' Remuneration be approved.

(vi) ANNUAL REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

Members had received and reviewed the Annual Report on Development and Fundraising as provided by the Principal.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Report on Development and Fundraising be noted.

3. SECTION C - UNIVERSITY GROUP MATTERS

3.1 BOLTON COLLEGE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (BCMS)

The Vice Chancellor reported that a Steering Group had been established and negotiations were underway with the Local Authority regarding the terms and conditions of funding. The project would be monitored by the Local Authority and Central Government with an anticipated build time of 18 months.

It was **RESOLVED** that the BCMS Update be noted.

3.2 Starred Item:

3.2 (i)* GROUP RISK REGISTER

Members had received and reviewed the Risk Management/Risk Register at University and Group level.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group Risk Register be noted.

4. SECTION D - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP PROPOSALS

(Dr Adrian Brooks withdrew from the meeting at 6.15pm during consideration of the following item)

(i) Search & Governance and Resources Committees

The Clerk presented the proposal to appoint Dr Adrian Brooks as a member of the Search and Governance Committee and Baroness Sayeeda Warsi as a member of the Resources Committee.

This appointments had been considered by the Search and Governance Committee and recommended to the Board for approval.

Following a vote, where Members voted unanimously in favour of the appointments, it was **RESOLVED** that the appointment of Dr Adrian Brooks as a member of the Search and Governance Committee and Baroness Warsi as a member of the Resources Committee be approved.

(Dr Adrian Brooks re-joined the meeting at 6.25pm)

4.2 MEETING EVALUATION

The Chair noted that it was important that Members continued to have the opportunity to join both Board and Committee meetings remotely with any audio issues to be resolved.

Members noted the uplifting and inspiring training that had taken place earlier that day.

(All Members and Officers save for Independent Members left the meeting at 6.30pm)

4.3 RESERVED BUSINESS MATTERS

5. SECTION E – FUTURE MEETINGS

5.1 Governors' Meetings

The dates and times of future meetings were noted as follows:-

Board Meeting - Tuesday 8 February 2022 at 5.00pm

Committees -

Resources Committee – Tuesday 18 January 2022 at 5.00pm

Standards & Performance Committee – Wednesday 19 January 2022 at 2.00pm

Audit Committee – Thursday 24 March 2022 at 5.00pm

Search & Governance – Tuesday 21 June 2022 at 5.00pm

Remuneration Committee – Wednesday 21 September 2022 at 4.00pm

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and the meeting closed at 6.45pm

Chair's Signature:



Date: 8 February 2022