



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

FRIDAY 26 MARCH 2021

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3 February 2021
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Open

Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

Present: Sarah Stewart (Chair)
Andy Cole (Interim Principal / CEO)
Aneela Ali
Robin Bailes
David Brind
Martin Gannon
Martin Hedley
John Hogg
Chris Macklin
Sarah McBean
Georgina Moroney
David Mitchell
Claire-Jane Rewcastle
Sara Vening
Michael Wood-Williams

In attendance: Ivan Jepson
Keith Oxspring
Chris Toon
Steve Campion
John Taylor (ESFA)
Emma Moody (Clerk)
Suzanne Clark (Minutes)

3134 Chair's welcome, apologies, conflicts of interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Simon Ennew, Carol Davenport and Nadine Hudspeth.

The Chair invited members to indicate if they wished to raise a question by using the hand or notes feature of MS Teams.

No governor declared any conflict of interest at this stage but governors were reminded that if a conflict arose during the meeting, they should declare it as soon as they became aware of it.

3135 Matters arising

The Chair confirmed that due to time restraints the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) will be deferred until the next full Board meeting.

3136 Operational Update including COVID

A verbal update was given by the Interim Principal / CEO.

The operational update included information on the College's response to COVID-19, the recent Ofsted monitoring visit, ESFA engagement, property disposals and executive activity. A PowerPoint presentation was used.

The 16-18 student governor advised that some students have not completed the student consent form for testing and are reluctant to be tested which was a concern. She asked whether those learners would still be allowed to come into College. The Interim Principal / CEO explained that mass testing was established for full onsite delivery. During the current lockdown period learners are not being encouraged to come in for testing unless they are required to be onsite. When on-site delivery returns, students will be encouraged to undertake testing. Testing is not mandatory and it was confirmed that there are a variety of other COVID safety mechanisms in place. Clear messaging will be in place that a combination of all measures will give everyone the best chance of being protected. The College must have learner consent to be able to test. Staff are keen to be tested and it was highlighted that student behaviour throughout the last term has been excellent with very little non-compliance. There have been no 'super spreader' events identified in College.

The ESFA representative confirmed that the rules for 16-18 growth funding were published earlier in the day. The Interim Principal / CEO welcomed this information and indicated that he would share details with governors.

A member advised that local intelligence for the North East suggests that the area is well on track to vaccinate the top four priority groups and is currently ahead of schedule. The infection rate for the North East is below the national average. Positive cases in Gateshead are reducing as is the pressure on the QE Hospital. All signs are currently very positive for a lifting of restrictions from 8 March 2021.

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The Chair thanked the Interim Principal / CEO for the update.

The report was noted.

3137 Impairment of Assets

The report was presented by the Interim Finance Director.

It was confirmed that the report was previously presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee at their meeting on 29 January 2021 and had also been circulated by email to Audit Committee members which had both approved it. The Board was advised that the value of properties have been reviewed and no impairments are required. The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee confirmed that the report was reviewed in detail and the Committee were satisfied with the recommendation.

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The Chair asked that governors are kept up to date in relation to property disposals.

3138 Loan from the ESFA

The report was presented by the Clerk.

It was confirmed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee received the report and draft legal agreement at their meeting on 29 January 2021. ESFA grant funding is being converted to loan funding. The agreement is currently in draft and there is still some work to be done on the commercial aspects. The Committee was asked to delegate authority for negotiation and oversight to 2 governors. The Chair of the Committee had agreed to provide support and another member is required. David Brind agreed to support the process.

The report was noted and the loan would be brought back for approval.

3139 Any Other Business

The Chair thanked all present for their inputs and contributions. She recognised the very valuable discussions and debate that had taken place across the sessions during the Winter conference preceding this meeting. Members were advised that feedback will be requested by way of a short questionnaire that will be circulated. This will be used to identify future areas for development.

The Chair gave an update on senior post holder recruitment reporting significant interest in the Principal / CEO role. Discussions have taken place with a number of potential candidates and the closing date is approaching soon. It is hoped to be in a position to confirm an appointment by Easter. The Finance Director vacancy has been advertised and the Chair indicated that this has been staggered to allow the new Principal / CEO to be involved in the recruitment process.

The 16-18 student governor asked when the process will begin for recruitment of student governors. The Clerk advised that the election process would normally start around March / April. The process will be overseen by governors.

The Chair reflected on earlier discussions in relation to committees and KPIs and indicated that the Clerk will be seeking volunteers to join the various committees to continue to strengthen and build on them. Governance Committee will meet next month and a report to the Board would be made after that. The Chair also advised that there was now a need to fill the vice chair position and asked governors to consider whether they would want to nominate someone or volunteer themselves for this. Again, this would be reviewed by the Governance committee.

3140 Student Voice

The session closed with a student video.

3141 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 21 April 2021.

The meeting closed at 16.20.