



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

WEDNESDAY 6 JULY 2022

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 18 March 2022
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Open otherwise as marked confidential

Present: Sarah Stewart (Chair – SS)
David Alexander (Principal / CEO – DA)
Justice Abban (JB)
Aneela Ali (AA)
David Brind (DB)
Carol Davenport (CD)
Roux Diablo (RD)
Gareth Edmunds (GE)
Martin Gannon (MG)
Martin Hedley (MH)
Sharon Kinleyside (SK)
Claire-Jane Rewcastle (CJR)
Michael Wood-Williams (MWW)

In attendance: Jeremy Cook (Deputy Principal: Finance & Resources – JC)
Nadine Hudspeth (Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety – NH)
Ivan Jepson (Director of Business Development and Planning – IJ)
Chris Toon (Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality – CT)
John Taylor (ESFA – JT))
Emma Moody (Clerk - EM)

3212 Chair's welcome, apologies, conflicts of interest

SS welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Lisa Crichton-Jones.

It was noted that MG would be late to the meeting.

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 the same.

Appointment of support staff governor and 19+ student governor

The report was presented by EM and she set out the proposed recommendation to appoint the new Support Staff and 19+ Student Governor.

It being in the best interests of the College to do so, and in support of its effective governance, the Board agreed to appoint:

***(a) Sharon Kinleyside t as Support Staff Governor, for an initial two year term, and
(b) Justice Abban as Student Governor (19+), for an initial one year term,***

in each case, such appointment to take effect immediately from the start of the 18th March Board meeting.

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SS updated the Board on the recruitment of the Chair for Curriculum & Quality Committee. She reported that a meeting with **THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION** had taken place this week. SS outlined **THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION**. background and his current position as **THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION**. The panel who had met **THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION** supported his recommendation for appointment to the Board. EM confirmed that she would circulate candidate information to the Board for information.

Having considered the report from SS, the Board confirmed its approval to the appointment of THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION as a Governor of Gateshead College, and noted that EM would circulate his cv for information to Governors.

3213 Minutes of the previous meeting 15 December 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 15 December 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

3214 Matters arising and Action Log

The action log circulated in advance of the meeting was noted.

3215 Chair's Report

A verbal update was given by SS.

SS reported on the progression of the College away from formal intervention into Post Intervention Monitoring Support (PIMS). She welcomed this as a positive sign of the College's journey to recovery.

SS reported positively on the executive and wider team's work on the strategy to date, and noted that today's session on this topic, and 6/7 April, would take this forward with a further meeting potentially in May to enable a final review by the Board prior to presentation to the College staff conference in June.

SS reported on her recent attendance at the AoC National Governors Council meeting. One particular item of debate was the usefulness/effectiveness of college boards. JT observed that he felt this was a perception issue, rather than an issue of college boards being ineffective in practice. The meeting had also considered College governance models and SS would bring back further feedback to future meetings as the discussions progressed.

The report was noted.

3216 Principal's Report

DA delivered a Powerpoint presentation –



Key themes of the presentation were:

- DA reported on his review and subsequent changing of roles and remits within the executive team, seeing: a) the reallocation of responsibility for estates to DP: Finance and Resources, with Director of Marketing and Comms taking on responsibility for sustainability and corporate planning; b) The Director of Business Development will oversee the innovation focus within the College and his title will become Director of Business Development and Innovation; c) The DP: Curriculum and Quality will continue to oversee digital and IT, but this will continue to be reviewed as the College's strategy moves forward; d) Plans are agreed to appoint a Director of People and Organisational Development to take executive responsibility for HR and People matters;

- DA reported on KPIs – which continue to be reported to Committees. Financial performance is strong, even without the sale of the **THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION** albeit Governors were still keen to see this sale complete asap. Curriculum delivery continued to support student outcomes.

DB noted the work done on the financial KPIs and thanked the executive for their presentation of the same.

- DA confirmed that OFSTED had reviewed College bootcamp provision and complemented the College on its work in this regard. CT and DA were attending a meeting with the SoS for Education in London to discuss T levels next week.

- DA noted that the "annual strategic conversation" with the ESFA and FEC team had taken place in February and the follow up letter from the visit was in the Board pack.

- DA complimented the efforts of the student and staff in supporting the ongoing effort for Ukraine. The College had been a hub for student and staff and wider community support for the situation in Ukraine, and the contribution of donations and volunteering support.

- DA also reported on certain particular positive student outcomes/achievements.

The report was noted.

3217 Update from Committee Chairs

Audit Committee

An update on the work of the Audit Committee was provided by MWW.

Key updates as follows:

- The Committee would lose its external co-opted member – Neil Weddle who had retired from the Committee. The Governance Committee had discussed composition of the committee and had a plan to recruit new members.

- MWW reported on one weak audit finding. This related to risk management. MWW noted the ongoing work in this area to address the recommendation and the ongoing development of risk management systems, processing and reporting. The Committee was continuing to monitor this.

Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee

An update on the work of the Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee was provided by SS as interim Chair.

Key updates:

- The review of the QiP had been detailed and the Board would look at this more regularly going forward;
- MWW had attended and reported as Safeguarding Governor;
- The Committee looked at the recruitment of staff against the needs of the College.
- Student outcomes remain strong. However, the Committee continued to closely monitor apprenticeship improvement, and the ability of staff to change the delivery model to meet the new framework, given this had previously been raised by OFSTED as an area of concern.. Admission of apprenticeships remains strong as therefore does the financial position.

Action: date of next C & QS meeting to be circulated to all Governors in the event they are able and wish to attend.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

An update on the work of the Finance and General Purposes Committee was provided by MH.

Key updates:

- The Committee had received the report on the sale of the **THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION**. Otherwise, the Committee's business was routine. He noted the work looking at the College's procurement processes and that there would be work being done to strengthen the College's processes in this regard.
- He complimented the work done to improve the presentation and profiling of data, which would come through to Board reports.

Governance

An update on the work of the Governance Committee was provided by SS.

Key updates (other than covered elsewhere on the agenda):

- The recruitment of new Director of Governance and Compliance was underway;
- The Committee had considered the Governor Development Plan, the need to identify mandatory training and ensure compliance, and to provide opportunities to undertake other training;
- There was discussion around the Governor Code of Conduct and this would be revised both to consider legislative changes and also to reflect the College's strategy and values;
- Further discussion had taken place around the AoC Code of Governance and the Committee would continue to take forward the College's approach to the emerging issues highlighted by the Code.

People and Remuneration

An update on the work of the People and Remuneration Committee was provided by CJR.

Key updates as follows:

- People KPIs and recruitment. Recruitment was proving to be a challenging sector wide issue in the current employment market. The Committee had been reassured that this was not posing an immediate risk for the College but was being kept under close review and any change in risk would be reported to the Board.
- It had received an update on staff training requirements which outlined the work being done in this area to support the overall mandatory training provision and compliance.
- The Committee was also going to make some changes to its terms of reference to reflect the positive cultural people agenda.

The reports were noted.

3218 Gateshead College Intervention – ESFA Update

A verbal update was given by JT.

JT reported on the review by Dame Mary May who had identified that Colleges were remaining too long in intervention and that ways by which they could be from intervention were too limited and recommended that actions be taken to shorten time periods in intervention. Post Intervention monitoring support (PIMS) had been introduced to address this gap. It allowed Colleges to move forward from formal intervention while remaining under some degree of oversight.

JT confirmed that as a result of the above review and reform, ESFA has internal governance now that allows it to consider a college's move from intervention to PIMS. As a result, in moving from full intervention to PIMS, the College's Financial Notice to Improve would then be removed. The FEC, ESFA and PMO would now look to agree a plan to enable a move to PIMS status for Gateshead College and set out what the College needs to do to comply. This would then be subject to ongoing monitoring.

JT noted that ESFA team also provided support to colleges generally.

SS asked about the duration of PIMS. JT said the conditions of the PIMS plan would be discussed and agreed with DA. It would likely be linked to financial recovery and compliance with funding terms. JT highlighted the positive aspects of moving out of intervention, including ongoing access to T Level funding.

DA thanked JT and Emma Stookes of ESFA for their support to the College in being able to progress from full intervention to PIMS.

JT commented on the restructure of ESFA. Going forward, ESFA will continue to have responsibility for funding however, the policy responsibilities that they currently hold will move to the DfE. This will align post 16 policy with post 16 delivery.

DB wondered if the restructure would result in some dis-connect between ESFA teams. JT said the teams would work closely with one another so providers should still benefit from a comprehensive support service.

The report was noted.

3219 Policy / Regulation Approval

Risk Management Policy

The report was presented by JC. The policy was distributed to Governors.

The next W & B session will be run on 20th May prior to the F & GP meeting.

The Risk Management Policy was approved.

Financial Regulations

The report was presented by JC.

The Financial Regulations were approved.

Health and Safety Policy

The report was presented by JC.

CD asked about radioactive sources and whether the College had any. CD highlighted that the policy could be expanded to include this. It was agreed that this would be added to the Policy in being asked to approve it.

The Health and Safety Policy was approved for signature by the Chair and Principal, subject to an addition to cover radioactive sources (as above).

Gender Pay Gap Report

The report was presented by CT.

DB commented on inflation issues impacting on wage gaps and the impact this may have on gender.

MWW commented on the legislative position and individuals who do not identify as male or female. It was thought that changes in legislation may provide clarity in this area for future reporting. RD asked to take part in discussions in relation to the development of College practice in this area and CJR confirmed RD would be welcomed at People and Remuneration Committee to feed into this discussion.

The Gender Pay Gap Report was approved for publication, subject to any changes in presentation of the same to accommodate for different audiences.

3220 Financial Update

Management Accounts

The report was presented by JC.

The College was projecting an overall surplus of £673k for the year, a better position than forecast due to two particular projects.

Cash position remains healthy, with cash in bank standing at £6m, and confirmation that bank covenants will be met.

The main risk to delivering the forecast was agreed as being AEB activities, including maximising income from rail activity (currently not achieving budgeted amount).

Overall, the financial position continued to stabilise.

Board members were encouraged to see the position continuing to improve.

Action: Board members to spend some time, with DB, at a future meeting looking at the data in more detail and the revised reporting style.

The report was noted.

2022/23 Budget Update

The report was presented by JC.

DB was satisfied in seeing the process of building the budget and receiving this update at this point in the year.

The report was noted.

3221 Risk Register

The report was presented by JC.

The report remained static. Risks were now cross referenced against the strategic plan.

DB commented on the external inflationary risk and impact on pension contributions. The College needed to be aware of this and continue to review. The College continued to engage with the TWPF and DA and JC had met with representatives of the same, and a presentation would be given to F & GP at the next meeting.

The report was noted.

3222 Update on External Funding Bids and Collaborations

The report was presented by IJ.

SS had asked if the College could continue to focus on core delivery as well as taking on the additional responsibility for this contract extension. Governors were reassured by IJ that the College had the resource to deliver this extension.

JT asked about the members of the consortium and IJ noted that some members had changed since the first round of delivery.

The Board approved the signing of the variation to contract with Department for Education, to lead the digital bootcamp consortium to deliver up to £1,003,337 skills training to March 2023.

3223 Update on Improvement Plans

The report was presented by CT.

Four out of the ten actions relate to apprenticeships. CT highlighted a couple of key risks:

- Attendance: Current challenge is that attendance rates are slightly below targets. Post Christmas attendance was at c84% (target 89/90%). The College has dedicated resources to look at this and encourage attendance. Feedback is that impact post covid people are re-evaluating their direction.

- Apprenticeships: Change in delivery model from competency based assessment to course based learning. This has caused challenges but the College is making good progress. The key risk lies in financial impact of non-achievement. The College will perform against the national rate but the College continued to strive to improve performance in this area.

The report was noted.

3224 Any Other Business

There was none.

3225 Date of next meeting

The next meeting was confirmed to be Wednesday 6 July 2022 at 10.00am. The Board Spring Conference will be held on Wednesday 6 and Thursday 7 April 2022.