

MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

TIME/DATE 4.00pm 20th May 2021

VENUE Virtual meeting by way of TEAMS due to the Coronavirus pandemic

Present:

Mr S Pierce	Principal
Mrs. S Jee (Chair)	External Governor
Mr. J Pinsent	External Governor
Mrs. E Brocklehurst	External Governor
Mrs. J Heap	Staff Governor
Mr. B Bennett-Stanley	Staff Governor
Mr. K Sanderson	External Governor
Mr. N Shore	External Governor
Mrs. A Cannon	External Governor
Mr. P Han	External Governor
Mr. J Heritage	External Governor
Mrs. D Calderbank	External governor
Dr D Balsamo	External Governor
Mrs S Littlewood	External Governor
Mrs L Duncan	External Governor
Mr Collum-Marsh	Student Governor
Ms K Mansfield	Student Governor
Mr A Lang	External Governor
Mr A Owen	External Governor
Ms Z Desai	External Governor

In attendance:

Mr S Jones	ESFA
Mrs P Odulinski	Board reviewer
Mr R Garcha	CFO
Mr M Doyle	Deputy Principal
Mrs L Lloyd-Williams	Governance Director
Mrs J Callaghan	Director of Marketing, Sales and Customer Relations

Italics denotes absence

DRAFT MINUTES

	The meeting opened at 16.01 and was quorate with at least 7 Governors present, the majority of whom were external members. New Governors were welcomed to their first Board meeting.
1.	GOVERNANCE Board Review

Mrs Odulinski thanked the Board for their cooperation and work that they had done. She advised that the Governance Director had worked very hard to keep her well informed. She explained that the intention of the review was to share the good practice that she had seen in a number of places and to add value and added that the Board was effective, working well and working under very difficult circumstances. Mrs Odulinski advised that the report set out what would help to take governance forward to the next stage and consolidate what had already been done.

Governors asked about increased levels of challenge and Mrs Odulinski advised there was a bit of joining up that needed to be done to allow Governors to home in on key risks. Mrs Odulinski cited the example of data in finance reports regarding KPIs in respect of staff utilization, and there being no questions regarding this from Governors. She explained that the key point was to find a way to ensure that critical points are raised as an area for focus and questioning, to help drive the pace of change. She added that there also needed to be some refinements to some of the documents particularly to the header sheets.

Governors also asked about the action regarding strategy and Mrs Odulinski explained that Governors need to be looking at the ends rather than the means and determining what the impact and outcomes are. In relation to the suggested action regarding stakeholder engagement, the Board were advised that when Boards got into trouble they say they were unsighted and did not know. The Board therefore needs to triangulate more and she explained that Governors need to be confident that they know all the different stakeholder groups and are having a good look at what information they receive.

16.25 Mrs Odulinski left the meeting.

Committee membership (on the recommendation of S&G committee)

Declarations of interest were made on behalf of Ms Desai, Mr Lang, Mr Owen and Dr Balsamo who abstained from discussion and decision on this item.

The Governance Director explained that the Search and Governance Committee had considered the skills and experience of the governors concerned together with the skills gaps that would be created when Mrs Jee, Mrs Brocklehurst and Mr Sanderson left the Board at the end of the academic year. It was also hoped to achieve some crossover of membership between finance and curriculum committees, which would be kept under review due to the heavy workload of these committees.

On the basis that Mrs Jee and Mr Sanderson were also now stepping down from FR&C committee with immediate effect, the Board was asked to make the appointments outlined in the paper. It was

	<p>Resolved</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To appoint Andrew Lang to the Audit Committee with immediate effect. 2. To appoint Zulakha Desai to the HE Committee with immediate effect. 3. To appoint Alun Owen to the Quality and Outcomes Committee with immediate effect. 4. To appoint Alun Owen and David Balsamo to the Finance, Resources and Commercial Committee with immediate effect.
2.	<p>GOVERNANCE: BOARD REVIEW</p> <p>Governors were asked to express their initial views about the Board review. After discussion it was agreed that a working party should be formed consisting of Mr Han, Mr Lang, Mr Pinsent, the Principal and the Governance Director to work on an action plan to send around to Governors for consideration.</p> <p>Action: Governance Director</p> <p>16.32 Dr Balsamo stepped out of the meeting.</p> <p>Governors also discussed the large amount of information they receive and asked Mr Lang to have a look at the risk register to provide any comments in vie of his role as Head of Risk .</p> <p>Action: Governance Director</p> <p>Mr Pinsent raised the issue of the legal title of the college and the possibility of a problem arising. He emphasised that this needed to be looked at again and that the correct usage of the legal title was a recurrent problem. The Principal advised that the Executive would look at what checks and balance it had in place and report back to Board on this.</p> <p>Action Principal</p> <p>The Principal advised that it was an issue of branding and that in his view the College needs to determine what it is about as part of its strategy and then the branding take place after rather than doing it at this point, which would be short term. This approach was endorsed by the Board.</p>
3	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Declarations of interest had been made in relation to the committee membership item by Dr Balsamo, Ms Desai, Mr Owen and Mr Lang.</p>

4	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Mr Collum Marsh, Mr Heritage, Ms Mansfield and Mrs Littlewood.</p>
5	<p>NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no items of urgent business.</p>
6	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 25th March 2021</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on the 25th March 2021 were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting and authorised for signature by the Chair of the Governing Board.</p>
7	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>The Board confirmed that they would still wish to hear from the manager of the nursery at a future date.</p>
8	<p>PRINCIPALS REPORT (Confidential)</p> <p>The Principal spoke to his report which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a summary of the current financial performance. • Updated the Board on progress against the College's Transformation Programme. • Summarised the progress on curriculum planning for 2021/22. • Provided a progress report against the current Further Education Commissioner's (FEC) recommendations. • Provided a brief update on Summer 2021 assessment and grading. • Informed the Board of the intention to bid collaboratively for the new 'Strategic Development Fund'. • Summarised the latest position in respect of managing Covid-19. • Provided a short update on sponsorship of the Sutton Academy. <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>he Principal advised the Board that the Academy was doing well since its last progress monitoring visit. [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The Principal drew the Board's attention to the work on quality improvement and centralising pastoral support. Governors were also advised that the College might be overstaffed [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>

	<p>Governors asked about the breadth and depth of the curriculum and whether there would be scope for redeployment within the redundancies. The Principal advised that the College has a very broad curriculum compared to other colleges and also depth in terms of the number of levels of qualification. He confirmed that the college would always seek to avoid compulsory redundancies and would look for opportunities to redeploy staff.</p> <p>Governors challenged the Executive regarding the compatibility between the aims of improving outcomes for students and the efficiency of delivery. The Principal advised the college had been very robust in relation to curriculum planning and therefore identified inefficiencies regarding staffing. The Principal also advised that the changes in the pastoral system would produce a better system for students and therefore help to improve outcomes.</p>
9	<p>SUMMARY RISK REGISTER</p> <p>The Board were advised of the main movements since the last meeting of the Governing Board which were as follows:</p> <p>Increased Risk</p> <p>R24 increased from 6 to 16 to reflect the growing prevalence of cyber-attacks in the education sector.</p> <p>R25 decreased as the College is now compliant with the Public Equality Duty, but then increased as non-compliance with COSHH regulation was highlighted during a health and safety review by our advisors, Ellis Whittam. This issue has now been resolved and the risk will decrease again once the COSHH process is reviewed and updated to mitigate future risk.</p> <p>Decreased Risk</p> <p>R8 decreased from 12 to 9 as the College is compliant with FNTI and FEC recommendations.</p> <p>R10 decreased from 8 to 4 as the College is projecting underspend on staffing budget.</p> <p>R11 decreased from 8 to 4 as the College is projecting underspend on non-staffing budget.</p> <p>R13 removed as this relates to the disposal of Beechams.</p> <p>R17 decreased from 16 to 12 as the risk of Covid-19 reduces due to the roll-out of the vaccination programme and established systems of control.</p> <p>17.30 Mrs Duncan left the meeting and it remained quorate.</p>
10	<p>QIP UPDATE</p> <p>The Deputy CEO spoke to his report ,which provided Governors with an update on progress against the College's Quality Improvement Plan and Scorecard. In relation to the QIP the period of changes was from the 25/03/21 until 13/05/21. Key points to note included:</p>

- 247 teaching observations had been completed to date. Of these, 163 were sessions delivered in the college and the remaining 84 were delivered on-line. 3.7% of completed observations had been judged as requiring a re-observation.
- 16-18 level 1 retention was at 90.4%, compared to 89.2% at the end of 2019/20.
- At 86.1%, 16-18 attendance had improved slightly (1.2%) since the lockdown ended but was still 3.9 percentage points below the year-end target.
- At 72.9%, 16-18 English and maths attendance had improved by two percentage points since the return to on-site study, but remained 12.1 percentage points below the college target of 85%

Regarding the scorecard which provides the Board with an update on KPIs within the Quality Improvement Framework, the following was noted:

- The College had completed 90% of its targeted lesson observations, up to the end of April 2021 (247/275), which was 148 more than at the same point in 2020.
- The College had carried out 78% of its targeted learning walks, up to the end of April 2021 (741/956), which was 419 more than at the same point in 2020.
- To date, 96.3% of observations had been judged as not requiring a re-observation.
- Attendance for students aged 16-18, whilst having improved by 1.2 percentage points since the return to on-site study, was 0.2 percentage points below the same point in 2020.
- At 90.3%, attendance for students aged 19+ was 1.7 percentage points above the same point in 2020, and 0.3 percentage points above the college target for 2020/21
- Work experience and industry placements were still on hold due to COVID restrictions.

Governors asked about attendance and to what extent there were external benchmarks for both this and other things such as the marketing budget. The Deputy Principal advised that there is no national average in FE for attendance, but that the target was 90% which is ambitious.

Governors also questioned the Executive about the quality of Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA) online compared to on campus. The Deputy Principal advised that the College had learnt a lot about online delivery over the last 12 months. Governors were informed that feedback from the observation team was that TLA was improving and in most areas was as good as onsite teaching. The Deputy Principal was asked what his

	<p>biggest worry was in terms of achieving the QIP and he advised that it was attendance and that in respect of TLA he wanted to see at the end of the year what the outcomes were and be assured that TLA had improved. The Deputy Principal added that Alps and value added will not have made improvement this year and the College would need to look at how to improve this next year.</p> <p>17.39 Mr Bennet Stanley left and the meeting remained quorate.</p>
11	<p>MARKETING (This item was taken earlier in the agenda)</p> <p>The Director of Marketing, Sales and Customer Relations spoke to her report ,which contained a summary of the marketing tactics applied across the multiple brands and audience groups for the College, with impact analysis. Governors thanked the Director for her comprehensive paper.</p> <p>Governors asked about the number of channels the College goes through and questioned whether the College should be focusing on a particular channel. They were advised that the College measures as much as it can but some channels are much easier to do this with than others. The Director of Marketing explained that if the College focused on one channel, it can become very narrow and there is a need to address a number of different audiences. Governors advised they would like to see what is successful and what is not. The Director of Marketing advised that she could provide the return on investment data and was asked to provide a comment as to which were the most effective, to give assurance to the Board that money was being used wisely. The Director advised that all the fundamentals are covered and that she would show how the College measures and give data to show the effectiveness and the impact.</p> <p>Action: Director of Marketing</p> <p>Governors asked about the impact of Covid on admissions and were informed that admissions were good on both campuses with some strong growth areas. From curriculum planning, the College was also anticipating growth on internal progression. The Director of Marketing advised that her team had adapted very well to the pandemic and gave examples of some of the virtual events that had taken place.</p> <p>Governors asked if the College were to spend more than the current budget what would it be spent on. [REDACTED]</p> <p>17.03 The Director of Marketing left the meeting.</p>
12	<p>MARCH MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS</p>

The Board considered the College Group management accounts for the 8 months to 31 March 2021. The CFO took the Board through a presentation setting out the summary financial performance for the period, the key highlights of which were:

- EBITDA of 8.1% achieved and on track to out-turn close to 6.5%
- Operating Surplus is expected to be ahead of budget.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] days in hand remain high at 28, with a low point in April of £1.9m
- 16-18 funded enrolment numbers are on track to achieve allocation.
- Adult enrolment numbers have continued to rise, but heavily impacted by the pandemic. Adult Education funding student numbers below plan but devolved tolerance of 68% means majority of funding secure.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

In relation to adult funding the Board were advised that Apprenticeship income was below target due to new starts being realised later than planned, which in turn meant lower cash value generated in 2020/21. Whilst HE Tuition Fees were ahead of target Adult Learner Loans were proving a challenge and the main cause of the overall adverse variance.

Regarding cost control, the Board were advised that 68% on staff costs was lower than last year and this year the College would be making a surplus. The CFO advised that there had been a significant improvement in cashflow and the cashflow forecast is healthy with no months where there were any issues.

Governors questioned whether the underlying business was still positive when grants were taken out of the accounts. The CFO advised that it was and that there had been an improvement in the underlying position of the College. Governors commented that it was great to have a clear presentation and have confidence in the work being undertaken. The CFO advised that the College has a very good Head of Finance.

13

ESTATES STRATEGY (Strategic Estates Plan) CONFIDENTIAL

The Board considered the estates strategy (Strategic Estates Plan (SEP)), which the College was required to produce under the conditions of the ESFA's Financial Notice to Improve (FNTi). [REDACTED]

	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>18.01 Mrs Calderbank and Mr Jones left the meeting and it remained quorate.</p> <p>Governors commented that it was an excellent plan, but that it needed to be considered in the light of what the Colleges future strategy might be. The Principal advised upon being asked that he would consider with the Board the new strategic plan soon after the new Chair is in place.</p> <p>18.04 Mrs Brocklehurst left the meeting.</p> <p>18.06 Dr Balsamo rejoined the meeting.</p> <p>It was Resolved to approve the estates strategy.</p>
14	<p>TRANSPARENCY INFORMATION</p> <p>The Deputy Principal spoke to the report. Governors asked about the low BAME representation and whether the College was underrepresented compared to the local population. The Deputy Principal advised that it was recognised in the Access and Participation Plan that the College should</p>

	<p>look to increase BAME representation but that the BAME community in the local population was quite small and he would expect the figures to remain suppressed.</p> <p>It was Resolved to approve the publication of the transparency data.</p>
15	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no urgent business.</p> <p>Governors asked whether the final meeting could be in the College. The Principal advised Governors had to feel comfortable and the College would not want to compel anyone to attend. Furthermore, the College would struggle to find a room big enough with social distancing in place. It was agreed that Governors would contact the Governance Director individually with their preference.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Governor informed the Board that the safeguarding team were very busy and are doing positive things around mental health. Members were informed that the College is piloting a mental health app with staff.</p>
16	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING 8th July 4pm location TBC</p>
	The meeting closed at 18.18