

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Corporation

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| Date: | Monday 20 May 2024 | Room number | Boardroom |
| Present: | <p>Andy Forbes (Chair)</p> <p>Charles Tennant (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Natalie Davison (Principal/CEO)</p> <p>Carole Ditty (CD),</p> <p>Geoff Hall (Staff Governor) (GH)</p> <p>Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe (EK)</p> <p>Nick Kavanagh (NK)</p> <p>Bal Panesar (BP)</p> <p>Paige Summers (Student Governor) (PS)</p> <p>Esther Thompson (ET)</p> <p>Jahaid Zaman (JZ)</p> | | |
| In attendance: | <p>Jason Turton (Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality)</p> <p>Victoria Eastwood (Chief Governance Officer)</p> <p>Michelle Allen (Executive Director – HR & Safeguarding)</p> <p>Hiten Savla (Deputy Principal – Finance & Resources)</p> <p>Sandra Prail (External Board Review, AoC) - Observer</p> | | |
| Apologies | <p>Bim Osunsami, Alex Keay (AK), Forhad Altafi (Staff Governor), Katharina De Vita, Molly Makota. Shaafee Uddin.</p> | | |

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| 1. | <p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Bim Osunsami, Forhad Altafi, Alex Keay, Molly Makota and Katharina De Vita.</p> <p>Sandra Prail, who was undertaking the External Board Review for the Corporation, was welcomed to the meeting as an observer.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare an interest in relation to specific items on the Agenda if appropriate. None were anticipated.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Corporation – 25 March 2024</p> <p>The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 25 March 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>Approved: The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 25 March 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Matters arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p> |
| 5. | <p>Chair's Actions</p> <p>There were no Chair's actions to report.</p> |

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| | <p>Agreed: that the current update be noted.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Student Wellbeing – Update</p> <p>In the absence of the Director for Student Welfare and Support, the Principal/CEO provided an update on the restructure of the Student Services department. The Corporation were informed that Student Services needed to be at the centre of the College and at present, the structure was multi layered with a lack of clearly defined roles. Issues were dealt with by level and links with the parents/carers were not adequately in place. Elements of the current structure were under resourced – careers team trying to support all students with less than two full members of staff and there was a similar issue around enrichment and the wider offer. The intention was to achieve a structure where each student support worker could form relationships with the students, their parents and carers. It was noted that this was not a restructure focussed on redundancies as there would be an increase in new jobs in the new structure.</p> <p>The Principal/CEO advised that safeguarding presently sat under the Executive Director HR & Safeguarding (EDHRS) but it was proposed that this would move under Student Services as there was a disconnect between safeguarding and the student support team.</p> <p>GH stated that increased involvement for apprentices within the student support services would be beneficial going forward.</p> <p>Agreed: That the current position be noted and a further update be provided at the next meeting.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Search & Governance Committee Update</p> <p>The Chief Governance Officer (CGO) provided an update on discussions from the recent Search & Governance Committee and asked the Board to consider the targeted recruitment areas recommended by the Committee within the report.</p> <p>Discussion took place on the current composition of the Board and it was agreed that EDI composition should also be included alongside considering current employers engaged with the College.</p> <p>NK updated the Board on the work he was doing with the BTEC L3 Creative and Design learners and advised of the good quality he had seen within the department.</p> <p>Approved: The Corporation approved the targeted areas for Governor recruitment recommended by the Search & Governance Committee.</p> |
| 8. | <p>KPI's 2023-24 Monitoring Report/Dashboard</p> <p>The Principal/CEO presented the current KPI position, highlighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domain 4 – 4.1 employer satisfaction at 69% positive feedback is low; staff retention 82.3% - not dissimilar to other London Colleges • 4.4 – staff body was under representing some minority areas • Staff satisfaction – not had a robust survey in recent years – moving to an external survey • 4.6 – staff vacancy rate – October 2022 was 15% now stabilised • Finances based on March management accounts – April being finalised but moving in a positive direction <p>CK referred to domain 4.4 and questioned whether there was a reason why there were less applications from ethnic minority candidates. The Principal/CEO replied that previously there had not been a focus on the local community in terms of recruitment but this had now changed. The EDHRS stated that the data reflected employed staff and did not include agency staff. Application numbers could be analysed</p> |

but it was hoped that targeting local recruitment would help to increase the College's reputation, however, positive actions and targeted advertising would also be considered.

NK referred to domains 5.1 and 5.3 and queried why the turnover was forecasting £36.1 million which was close to target but the EBITDA was down. The DPFR advised that the turnover would improve. The EBITDA was currently down because in P8 accounts the 400K agency costs had been reinstated which had decreased the EBITDA, however, at present there was a potential decrease in projected deficit for the accounts at P9.

CD noted the comment re vacancy rate percentages and comparison against sector and asked for reassurance that the College could reduce agency spend without negatively affecting the quality. The Principal/CEO replied that the College had a clear view of agency staff and intended to convert stronger agency staff into current vacancies.

CD questioned whether there was any examples of good practice around what could be done to improve attendance particularly in English and Maths. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality (DPCQ) informed the Board that work was taking place on intervention methods alongside the restructure of student services. Intervention had had an impact for Maths and English but once this was addressed it would improve the attendance percentage overall. Use of the learning support zone and strengthening links with parents and carers was also in place.

BP stated that it was good to see the current vacancy rate within domain 4.6 but this was camouflaged, and it would be preferable to be able to see vacancies being filled by agencies, measured separately against full time recruitment and variables. The Principal/CEO responded that, going forward, the intention was to vastly reduce the use of agencies. The DPFR advised that the data was based on permanent establishment staff against the position – any posts filled by agency staffing was a post that needed to be in place and was therefore considered as a vacancy. BP added that it would be useful to see the ageing profile of some positions that had been held for a long period of time.

In response to a query from BP concerning utilisation, the Principal/CEO advised that there had been inefficiency and high cost in this area and work was taking place to improve utilisation. The target for utilisation featured in the contribution rate and work was taking place to understand contribution by area.

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

9. Management Accounts as at March 2024

The DPFR highlighted the following:

- Numbers had been updated based on comments received from BP at the Strategic Planning Event
- Agency costs had been reduced in year which had been reviewed and reinstated, however, this had created the position of the annual deficit looking worse than P7
- P9 accounts under review but position around agency did not change – some positives – income increased slightly

An overview of the current position of the P9 accounts was provided:

- Difference between IT and communication costs – budget had been increased but the actual spend to date reduced at P9 which had improved the position
- Decreased the loss more in line with P7
- Payment from insurance company had not been put into the I&E which would further reduce the loss position
- Loss at Broadway increased slightly
- Looking at pushing College position to break even by the end of the academic year

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| | <p>BP stated that this was encouraging news and suggested it would be beneficial to be able to see capital projects progress month on month - actual spend vs project budget. The DPFR advised that changes to the risk register would redesign the management report to provide a summarised commentary alongside a detailed analysis which would include a rolling 12 month cashflow and capture capital.</p> <p>In response to a query from NK, it was noted that the insurance claim had not yet been included as income and it was recognised that this was a one-off element.</p> <p>The Chair referred to the KPI target of reaching an operating surplus, advising that the College was still slightly in firefighting mode. Many FE Colleges had complicated finances but there were a significant number of projects for BDC and thanks were recorded to all involved. BP stated that there was also a need to maintain sufficient margin on the banking covenants.</p> <p>Action: Management accounts to include monthly capital projects progress (actual spend vs project budget). Agreed: that the current update be received.</p> |
| <p>10.</p> | <p>Capital Projects Update The DPFR highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two elements- 800k approved through budgeting and additional funding received through grant funding • Largest element of grant funding sat with T-levels • Reviewed position against fund spend to date <p>The DPFR advised that the College needed to be clear that funding delivery was aligned to the funding request made to avoid clawback. It was therefore important that Governors asked the right questions.</p> <p>CD questioned whether it was likely that monitoring would differ from one grant funded project to the next or whether this would be on a case by case basis. The DPFR replied that it would be case by case in real terms – the chances of clawback were not as significant for some projects as for others. T-level 5 funding differed in that the College must have spent the funding before it could be claimed back. The DPCQ added that each curriculum area was aware of the monitoring requirements when considering business planning.</p> <p>BP suggested sponsorship from manufacturers be considered and discussion took place on the area of electric vehicles. The Chair stated that the government policy and demand for this was very unclear. The DPCQ advised that the College was in negotiations with Ford and also in contact with Huawei.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the DPFR for the report.</p> <p>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</p> |
| <p>11.</p> | <p>Insurance Claim Update The DPFR presented the paper for clarification on the insurance claim, advising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College had already received £250K • £350K would go back to the contractor re the roof <p>In response to CD, awaiting conformation and confident this wil go through.</p> |
| <p>12.</p> | <p>HR Update The EDHRS updated the Board on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Service Goals • Confidence in data • Headcount - validating data between March and May with Finance |

- Reducing number of staff
- Incorporated learning support separately in the data to see if this reduced business support staff but there were still less lecturers than business support – this was being explored
- Number of starters since August 2023
- Leavers 2023/24
- Managing staff performance and behaviours
- Targeted recruitment – applicant representation
- Defining teacher training offer
- Full induction day for new starters
- Work with alumni.

The Vice-Chair questioned how the data for new starters by area compared with the previous year, whether leavers data included agency and if the turnover was higher for teaching or support staff. The EDHS agreed to provide a direct comparison of starters and leavers in each area (including agency) and to clarify re turnover of staff.

NK queried how Governors could be more involved in induction days to raise the profile of the Board – it was agreed that this would be considered.

GH stated that mentoring for new tutors for the first month to provide support would assist in retention.

The Chair asked whether the College had explored partnering with the Borough. The EDHS replied that discussions had taken place and the Borough had been approached to advertise vacancies on their website.

The Chair informed the Board that the EDHRS would be leaving the College at the end of the academic year and the recruitment process for a new Director of HR had commenced with the AoC – final interviews scheduled for 26 June 2024.

Action: Direct comparison of starters and leavers in each area (including agency) data to be provided.

Action: Data on turnover of staff (teaching and support) to be provided.

13. Notes from the April Strategy Event – Looking Forward – Update on Discussions

The Principal/CEO provided an update on reflections from the Strategic Planning Event and intended work on the College's Strategic Directions/Strategic Plan:

- Initial draft strategic plan would be finalised over the summer period and presented at Autumn Board Meeting
- Key elements of curriculum strategic plan to carry forward
- Work will take place to build on common agendas with stakeholders/LBBD
- Intent of the College to consider
- Important element re performance targets – strong connection from strategic piece to targets
- Suggested areas of focus:
 - Workforce strategy
 - Curriculum decisions/Apprenticeships delivery
 - HE
 - ELIOT – partners and employers
 - Broadway
 - EDI
 - Climate action including estates, procurement
 - Stakeholder engagement and work within the community

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| | <p>In response to a query from NK, the CGO reported that work had already taken place with the DPCQ to agree the curriculum links areas and this would be issued to the Board once finalised. In addition, CD had agreed to become Safeguarding link governor alongside BP and the Head of Safeguarding would be contacting them directly to for an induction meeting.</p> <p>BP stated that the College's position in the community and links with secondary schools needed to be reinforced. ET advised that some local schools had visited the College but school liaison would be useful as it could be unclear who to contact. CK added that there was a need to 'sell' the College and be proactive.</p> <p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p> |
| 14. | <p>Risk Register</p> <p>The DPFR highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk register had been retained in its current format but would be moved to the model provided by Scrutton Bland • Changes in funding policy had remained as a high level risk • Two medium risks had been recategorized as low risk • Some risks would be combined to reduce the number of overall risks <p>CD noted that the Policy & Resources Committee had requested that Health & Safety be identified as a separate risk within the register. The DFPR advised that this would remain a key risk and would be included as such in the new format.</p> <p>It was agreed that a draft risk register in the new format would be circulated to Governors for comment.</p> <p>Action: Draft risk register in new format to be circulated for comment.</p> |
| 15. | <p>ONS Reclassification</p> <p>The CGO advised that this was a standing agenda item and the College was currently compliant with ONS requirements. Discussion took place on a potential future settlement which would require approval by the Policy & Resources Committee in the first instance.</p> <p>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</p> |
| 16. | <p>AoB</p> <p>The CGO advised that a self assessment form to review the meeting would be issued via email.</p> |
| 17. | <p>Date and time of next meeting – Additional Corporation Meeting (Accountability Statement) – Tuesday 25 June 2024, 6pm via Teams</p> <p>Board of Corporation Meeting – Monday 8 July 2024, 4.30pm, Boardroom</p> |

The Chair recorded his thanks to all in attendance for their contributions.

The meeting closed at 7.01pm.

| Agenda Item | Action | Responsibility | Timescale | Update |
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| 9. | Management accounts to include monthly capital projects progress (actual spend vs project budget). | DPFR | ASAP (P10 accounts) | |

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| 12. | Direct comparison of starters and leavers in each area (including agency) data to be provided. | EDHS | ASAP | |
| 12. | Data on turnover of staff (teaching and support) to be provided. | EDHS | ASAP | |
| 14. | Draft risk register in new format to be circulated for comment. | DPFR | ASAP | |

Signed.....
 Andy Forbes (Chair)

Date.....