

CORPORATION MAIN BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT SOUTH BRISTOL SKILLS ACADEMY TUESDAY 26 MARCH 2024 AT 16.30

Present: Peter Rilett, Chair
Steve Bennett, Vice Chair
Steve Boardman, Vice Chair
Tony Antonius
Neil Dimes
Judi Harper
Daniel Amin
Marc Griffiths
Sandra Gordon
Shawn Smith
Dan Jones
Zoe Taylor
Jess Winkler
Julia Gray, Principal & CEO (P&CEO)
Alison Beckingham, Staff Governor
Tony Green, Staff Governor
Meaghan Stillman, Student Governor

In attendance: Catherine Howett, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality (VPC&Q)
Tim Peacock, Executive Director of Finance & Funding (EDFF)
Hayley Shaw, Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development (DHROD)
Anne Roberts, Interim Director of Governance & Clerk (Clerk)
Jessica Thorne, Corporate Services Officer (CSO)

Attendance: 89%

Min. No.	
1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
1.1	Apologies were received from external governors, Andrea Arlidge and Julian Fleming, and from Joanne Ward, Vice Principal (Corporate Services & External Relations).
1.2	Shawn Smith, Marc Griffiths, Meaghan Stillman and Tony Antonius joined the meeting via video conference.
2	DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ANY OF THE ITEMS ON THE AGENDA
2.1	Stephen Boardman and Tony Antonius in relation to their terms of office (item 13).
2.2	CONFIDENTIALITY OF ITEMS The Board noted the reports marked confidential.
3	MINUTES AND CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2023
3.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

3.2 3.3	The Action Register was considered and it was NOTED that all actions had been completed. Written Resolution 003 outcome: It was REPORTED that the Single Equality Scheme had been approved on 1 February 2024.
3.4	The notes of the Strategy Day held on 26 January 2024 were APPROVED with one amendment: Shawn Smith was not listed on the attendees.
3.5	It was NOTED that the Governors Training Seminar date would change from 11 to 18 June 2024, to accommodate Guest Speaker David Hughes CBE Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges. A calendar invite would follow. ACTION: CSO
4	PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT
4.1	The P&CEO provided a written report updating the Board on key initiatives, including the College Strategy consultation 2024-27. She reported that positive feedback from both internal and external stakeholders had been received and she would provide an update next term.
4.2	The P&CEO reported on the College's sub-contracting relationships and the recent DfE visit in which the team had asked to hear our views to inform their approach to sub-contracting. The ESFA had confirmed that following their assurance review, the College had met the 2022-23 subcontracting standard and would not be required to resubmit an assurance review until July 2026.
4.3	Alison Beckingham and Daniel Jones joined the meeting at 16.45.
4.4	The P&CEO commented on the College's good or better than average rates in relation to the national achievement rates, her visit to 10 Downing Street for a skills reception, the positive relationship building with regional media during Colleges week and the Apprentices fayre which showcased to employers the teaching and innovative technologies in-use. The WECA Mayor had recently visited the SBSA campus.
4.5	Members congratulated the P&CEO on her key note speech on young people at the recent Bristol City gathering.
4.6	The P&CEO reported that the DHROD would be a lead contributor in the FE/HE Hub Event taking place to discuss the positive impact of the College's Management Academy on the College staff. The DHROD had also been asked to be the AoC HR lead for the SW.
4.7	Members discussed staff recruitment challenges, particularly for Maths. Discussion focused on the planning needed around increases to the curriculum hours and how that was used. It was noted that one of the biggest challenges was in relation to student attendance.
4.8	Members commented positively on the student stories included in the P&CEO report.
5	STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS
5.1	The P&CEO provided an update as part of item 4 above.
6	BRANDING– OUTCOME FROM CONSULTATION
6.1	Members considered a report of the feedback from the consultation. Confidential minute. The Board approved proceeding when the necessary consent had been secured. <i>Jess Winkler joined the meeting at 17.04.</i>

7	ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT
7.1	The P&CEO presented a report from the VPCS&ER, regarding the Accountability Agreement and the College's delivery of education as a response to the Local Skills Improvement Plan. Regular updates were provided at Senior Leadership Team meetings.
7.2	Members considered the report and asked for the opportunity to review the document and provide feedback in May 2024.
7.3	The deadline for the final Accountability Agreement submission was 30 June 2024. As the Board was not scheduled to meet until July, the Board delegated approval to the Chair and Vice Chairs on its behalf.
8	CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE
8.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2024 were provided to members, together with key reports on Safeguarding, Teaching, Learning & Assessment and Student Voice.
8.2	The Chair of the Committee spoke about the positive contribution from the two Student Council members who had attended the meeting. There was a high degree of governor, student and staff engagement in the work of the committee. He highlighted the work being done on Safeguarding and Careers, to which the Safeguarding and Careers link governors had input, and the forecast achievement rates.
8.3	The VPC&Q provided a further update on the achievement results and forecast which had improved compared to previous years. The College was now in the top quarter of providers in the South west. Level 3 rates at 16-18 proved more challenging but progress was being made. The College's aim was to be excellent and 3 year targets were being set and data sets developed to achieve greater confidence in forecasting. Members thanked the VP (C&Q) for all the work that had gone on to achieve these results.
8.4	
8.5	It was reported that the College had successfully recruited a new Director of Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning to commence at the end of April 2024.
8.6	Members APPROVED the following policies: a) HE Access and Participation Statement b) HE Student Protection Plan
9	FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
9.1	The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 were provided to members. The Chair of the Committee commented on the positive key improvements, particularly the College's strong financial position.
9.2	Estates- Capital Bids A confidential report was provided to the Board, outlining major capital projects underway or planned, a proposal for the College Green site and campus reports for each College site. These had been considered by the Finance & Resources Committee.
9.3	A proposal for a redesign of the College Green reception and outdoor areas refurbishment was considered. This used the new investment five case model framework and required Board approval. The EDFF reported on the tender process leading up to the recommendation for project award.
9.4	Members asked for reassurance on the recommended contractor's previous work given the size of the contract. They also asked about the appetite for a new location. The P&CEO confirmed that the spend had to be on the current estate and that the building materials had been signed off, via the commissioned architects before contractors were engaged.

	Members noted that the contractors who had tendered, had completed local works in Bristol and the surrounding area.
9.5	Members discussed the visual differences between the College Green entrance and those of other sites, and the importance of creating an exciting, welcoming space and good first impressions, as well as improved accessibility. The designs and inclusion of a coffee shop were welcomed.
9.6	The Board APPROVED the proposal for the award of the contract to the recommended contractor, subject to further assurance on their previous work being provided to the Chair of the Corporation and the Chair of Finance & Resources Committee. ACTION: EDFF
9.7	INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (IoT) Members considered confidential reports in relation to the West of England IoT. The College was an associate member but could now join as a full member.
9.8	Members discussed the proposal and asked about the funding and benefits of being a full member. It was noted that there would be an associated annual cost of £40k . After a full discussion, the Board APPROVED the proposal in principle for the College to be a full member of the West of England Institute of Technology subject to legal advice and a review of the Partnership Agreement and governance arrangements.
9.9	HR Update Gender Pay Gap 2023 Members noted the significant improvement to the gender pay gap which had reduced by 6.34% in two years. The mean and median gender pay gap had both decreased. It was noted that the college was less than half of the ONS figure for gender pay gap for all employees. The Board APPROVED the Gender Pay Gap report for publication.
9.10	Members discussed the HR update, which included key HR data, EDI monitoring, management training and the new fostering friendly accreditation and paid volunteering leave. It was noted that staff turnover rate was significantly lower than in the previous year. Sickness rates had also reduced by 1.6% on the previous year. The P&CEO reported that the only outlier was in relation to SEND and that activity was in hand to review and address this.
9.11	The next staff survey (York Survey) would be launched in May-June 2024. Results would be received in September 2024. The DHROD had recently provided staff with an update on outcomes and actions taken; as a result of staff feedback in the previous year.
9.12	The Board noted that the EDFF had been appointed as Director on the Bristol Professional Services Board and that the Company had adopted new model Articles.
9.13	Policies The Board APPROVED the following policies: i. Disciplinary Policy ii. Capability Policy iii. Grievance Policy iv. Subcontracting Policy v. Redundancy & Redeployment Policy
9.14	Health and Safety Termly Update Members considered the Health and Safety termly update. The DHROD reported on the

	recruitment challenges in relation to H&S posts; a recent advert posted this month on a BPS contract had generated a good number of applications.
10	AUDIT COMMITTEE
10.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 were provided to members. The Committee Chair highlighted the excellent outcome of the ESFA and WECA funding audits and thanked staff involved. He also reported on the review of the Risk Management Policy and new Risk Register.
10.2	The EDFF echoed the Committee's Chair's sentiments. The funding audit results were an excellent achievement considering the college's size and complexity; and the comparison to other educational institutions assessed. He thanked the MIS Manager and her team for her contribution to the success of the funding audit.
10.3	The following policies were APPROVED by members: i. Risk Management Policy ii. Data Protection Policy
11	FINANCIAL POSITION
11.1	Members received the following financial update reports: i. CoBC Management Accounts P6 ii. PiB Report and Management Accounts P7 iii. SWAC Report and Management Accounts P6 22-23
11.2	The EDFF provided headline data and highlighted curriculum areas which had a higher actual income than forecast. Cash and covenants were in a strong position with some further successes in non-pay budgeting. Pressures remained in recruitment, on agency staff and some long term sickness.
11.3	PiB had a strong financial position with bootcamps very successful. SWAC were back on track with recruitment numbers.
11.4	Meaghan Stillman left the meeting at 17.41.
12	STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER
12.1	The EDFF reported on the robust discussion at Audit Committee and stated that the Risk Appetite Survey of Governors and the Executive had contributed to strong planning around perceived risks, and informed discussions at SLT-level. The targeted work was now much clearer for management. Members considered the three risks which were outliers in relation to risk scoring and risk appetite and noted that these would be reviewed. ACTION: EDFF
13	SEARCH & GOVERNANCE
13.1	Report from Search & Governance Committee held on 26 March 2024 Members considered a report from the Search and Governance Committee which had met earlier that day.
13.2	The Board APPROVED the following extensions to terms of office: • Stephen Boardman for a 2nd term to 31st July 2028 and continuation as Chair of Finance & Resources and Vice Chair for the same period (proposed by Steve Bennett and seconded by Dan Amin) • Tony Antonius for a 2nd term to 31st July 2028 and continuation as Audit Chair

13.3	The Clerk reported that nine expressions of interest had been received for the two Staff Governor roles. These had all been from curriculum staff and ways of encouraging professional services staff should be reviewed at the next call for expressions of interest. Interviews were underway and the Board would be asked to approve the appointment of the successful candidates. ACTION: CLERK
13.4	A Staff Governor suggested that any new staff governors might attend the College Staff Forums, to gain a good understanding of feedback themes across-campus.
13.5	It was reported that Frank Teagle had resigned from his post as Student Governor in February 2024. He was thanked for his contribution to both the Board and Curriculum & Quality Committee discussions. Meaghan Stillman remained as student governor until July 2024. The Clerk reported that she was in discussion with the Head of Student Experience in relation to a student governor for 2024/25.
13.6	Two co-opted Governors would end their first term of office on Audit Committee later this year. The Chair of the Audit Committee would discuss whether they wished to stand for a second term and report back to the Clerk. ACTION: CLERK
13.7	Asma Ahmed, co opted governor on Curriculum & Quality ended her term of office in July 2024 and had indicated that she did not wish to continue. Vanessa Moon ended her 2 nd term of office on Search & Governance Committee this July and this meant the end of the co opted role on that committee. Members highlighted the positive impact of having co-opted members, particularly for diversity on the Board.
13.8	The Governors Skills Audit would be circulated to members for completion next term, and a separate survey in relation to Chair appraisal. ACTION: CLERK
13.9	Code of Good Governance The Board received a report from the Clerk on the revised AoC Further Education Code of Good Governance which the Search & Governance Committee recommended for adoption. Members discussed the new Code and noted that the College was well placed to meet the recommended practice outlined for each Principle. Areas where work was in progress or needed further discussion was noted.
13.10	Members commented that the Code was very clear and succinct. A question was asked about Principle 3, Leadership and Integrity, and how the source of assurance could be ascertained. This might need further reflection and discussion.
13.11	The Board APPROVED the adoption of the new FE Code of Good Governance effective from 1 August 2024.
14 14.1	CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2024 External Members APPROVED the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024 (previously circulated), as an accurate record.
15 15.1	ANY OTHER BUSINESS A member congratulated the P&CEO for her leadership and the impact she and her team had achieved in a relatively short space of time, which was clearly shown by the improvements in reporting and the quality of data provided.
15.2	NEXT MEETING Governor Development evening seminar: 18 June 2024 18:00 Formal Board meeting: 16 July 16:30 (nb date subsequently changed to 15 July)

15.3	The calendar and meeting dates for 2024/25 would be circulated to Members for comment after the meeting. ACTION: CSO MEETING CLOSED AT 18.20
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Approved as a correct record on by the Chair on 14 May 2024