

Preston's College

Redacted and Abridged¹ Minutes of the Board Meeting held 9th July 2020 at 5pm via Zoom

Present:

Mr J Boydell	Chair
Dr E Smith	Principal and Chief Executive
Mr E Bassa	
Mr S Browne	
Mr M Collard	
Mr S Edwards	
Ms J Garcia	
Mr M Driver	
Mr J Jepson	(from minute 6)
Mrs L Mason	
Dr J McMullin	
Cllr J Mein	
Mr D Patel	
Mr T Readett	
Mr J Taylor	(from minute 11)

In attendance:

Mr S Nixon	Executive Director Resources
Ms M Haworth	Vice Principal Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support
Mr M Noblett	Vice Principal - Curriculum Delivery and Planning
Mrs C Rayner	Clerk to the Board
Ms G Thornton	Head of Human Resources.

Apologies:

Ms L Hornsby
Ms J Jones
Ms N Kirkbride
Ms K Williams

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Board noted that apologies had been received from Ms Jones and that Ms Hornsby, Mr Jepson and Mr Taylor would join the meeting later.

It was noted that a quorum was present.

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

¹ Please note that any matters which the Corporation is satisfied should be dealt with on a confidential basis have been removed from these minutes.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board meetings held on 30 April 2020 2020 as a correct record.

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board meetings held on 4 June 2020 as a correct record.

Resolved: The Minutes of the Board meetings held on 30 April 2020 and 4 June 2020 were approved as correct records.

4. Report of resolutions agreed in writing – June 2020 and items sent between meetings

The Clerk referred to a report on resolutions approved by the Board in writing in June including approval of the:

- Terms of Reference of the Senior Post Holder Remuneration Committee;
- membership of the Senior Post Holder Remuneration Committee.

The Board noted other information made available to the Governing Body between meetings:

- correspondence to governors from Rt Hon Gavin Williamson, Education Secretary, dated 3 June 2020 sent by email;
- information on AoC updates and webinars.

Resolved: The Board noted the report of resolutions agreed in writing – June 2020 and items sent between meetings

5. Matters arising

The Board noted a report, dated July 2020, on progress of matters arising since the previous meeting.

6. Principal and Chief Executive's Report

The Principal and Chief Executive summarised a presentation from Rt Hon Gavin Williamson, Education Secretary, on his vision for further education, which he had given earlier that day.

The Principal and Chief Executive referred members to her report and invited questions.

In discussion, members noted that the government had introduced a temporary limit on student numbers on full time HE numbers and the rationale for this. However, there was a possibility of increased Higher Education part time numbers at the College might increase for 2020/21.

Resolved: The Board noted the Principal and Chief Executive's Report.

7. Five Year Plan Revisited

The Principal and Chief Executive thanked members for their feedback on the proposed changes to the Five Year Plan following the previous meeting.

The Board noted that, up until the pandemic, the College had been on target to meet the outcomes identified for Year 2 of the Five Year Strategic Plan. The Principal and Chief Executive referred to her report “Five Year Plan Revisited” and referred to the Strategic Objectives and short term and long term outcomes which had been revised in light of Covid-19. She explained that, following feedback from a governor on the revised plan, she had clarified the reference to achieving Ofsted grade 1. She explained that, whilst there had been no intention to downgrade the College’s aim of becoming ‘outstanding,’ the uncertain context could impact on timescales to deliver.

The Board discussed the report with management, and noted that:

- hairdressing apprentices had attended College for assessments;
- other apprentices had continued their studies virtually during lockdown, including apprentices that had been furloughed.

Members commented positively on the virtual Preston’s College Staff Awards 2020 which had been held on 2 July 2020. The Principal and Chief Executive thanked members for the feedback and recorded thanks to all colleagues involved for their hard work in making the virtual event a success.

Resolved: The Board:

- **endorsed the revisions made to the Five Year Plan, in light of the likely impact caused by the pandemic;**
- **approved the proposed changes to the Strategic Objectives and outcomes;**
- **noted the progress made against the milestones, understanding the impact that lockdown had on ability to deliver.**

8. Management Accounts

Mr Nixon, Executive Director Resources, presented his report on the Period 9 Management Accounts and commentary. Mr Nixon reported:

- the Period 9 Management accounts had been reviewed at Resources Committee on 24 June 2020;
- expectations for the year end cash balance.

The Board discussed the Period 9 Management Accounts with management, and noted the reasons why working capital performance was better than expected.

The Board noted the Period 9 Management Accounts and commentary.

Resolved: The Board noted the Period 9 Management Accounts and commentary.

9. Performance Against KPIs

Mr Nixon referred to his report on the Performance Against Key Performance Indicators and the KPIs report for Period 9.

The Board discussed the Performance Against KPIs for Period 9 with management, and in response to questions, noted:

- the College would benefit from increased learner numbers in 2021/22 in enrolment increased in 2020/21;
- the impact of apprentice schemes on College performance.

Resolved: The Board noted the current performance against Key Performance Indicators.

10. Budget 2020/21

Mr Nixon presented the draft budget for 2020/21. He reported:

- the draft budget for 2020/21 had been reviewed at Resources Committee on 24 June 2020 and recommended to the Board for approval;
- rationale for proposal of a surplus budget, despite difficult economic conditions;
- the budget was challenging but considered realistic;
- importance of stability for staff where possible with no staff restructures planned.

In response to a query it was noted that staff had continued to engage with employers during lockdown to ensure that progress made to date could continue post Covid-19. Management discussed the intention to maintain momentum and build on growth of previous years, albeit in a different context than anticipated.

The Board approved the budget for 2020/21.

Resolved: The Board approved the budget for 2020/21.

11. College Re-opening Update

Mr Nixon, presented his report on plans for re-opening the College to staff and learners.

Mr Nixon reported:

- from September learners would experience a mix of remote and on- site learning;
- the government guidance as of 2nd July 2020, attached at Appendix A, would need to be considered in detail to ensure that the College's plans were consistent with expectations of funding bodies. Initial review suggested that this was the case, even in the context that the guidance seemed to expect far greater levels of "normality" than previously thought possible;
- limited activities which had taken place on site to date including: assessments of prospective ESOL learners for the 2020/21 academic year, selected examinations and the limited staff to live stream the virtual staff awards event;

- the plan to gradually re-open College to staff from 3 August 2020.

The Board discussed the report with management, and in response to questions, noted:

- the College, as an independent body, could make its own decisions on re-opening and would not need to change re-opening plans if there was increased government pressure to re-open for full time face to face on site. However, it was important to monitor the expectations of funding bodies to ensure compliance;
- College management considered it impractical to re-open for full time face to face learning in September;
- whilst some staff had initially been nervous, those staff that had returned had responded positively and had been reassured by the protective measures in place;
- positive feedback from a staff governor on the approach taken by management to date, she commented that staff she had spoken to felt that management communications during the shutdown had been clear, honest and human and staff felt supported as staff and learners were gradually integrated back into College;
- plans for wellbeing and support for staff and learners during the first term including partnership with the College's occupational health service;
- an update on curriculum planning for 2020/21.

The Board noted the report on Planning for College Re-opening and government advice related to re-opening colleges.

Resolved: The Board noted the College Re-opening Update report and government advice.

12. Risk Management Register

Mr Nixon referred members to the Risk Management Register for June 2020 which had been reviewed by the Audit Committee at its last meeting.

The Chair thanked members for sending comments on the Covid-19 Risk Assessment.

The Chair of Audit Committee reported that a potential pandemic had not featured on the risk registers of many organisations, including the College. He reported that the Audit Committee would review the College's Risk Register to see if there were any other potential scenarios which could potentially close colleges in the future and welcomed feedback from members.

Resolved: The Board noted the Risk Management Register, July 2020.

13. T Level Capital Grant

Mr Nixon, presented the T Level Capital Grant proposal. He outlined the proposal and referred to:

- the Concept Proposals and Feasibility Cost Estimate; ESFA Financial Plan 2019-22 Commentary T Level and the Capital Project Risk Register were included as appendices;
- a planned Board visit to the site had not been possible due to Covid-19;
- rationale for part funding proposed.

The Board discussed the report with management, and in response to questions, noted:

- how the plans would fit with the College's overall estates masterplan;
- the current proposal with a College contribution considered affordable;
- how the renovations would benefit learners and ensure the College's T Level training environment reflected modern construction environments;
- the positive impact on partnership work, including work with Eric Wright Group;
- costs only related to phase 1 of the project.

Following discussion, the Board approved a scheme to enhance the construction building for T Level delivery. The Board noted that this was in addition to the capital resource included within the 2020/21 budget item and that the Board would be asked to revisit the proposal if the Department for Education (DfE) requested additional contribution from the College.

Resolved: The Board approved a capital scheme to enhance the Construction building for T Level delivery, subject to the outcome of the grant application.

14. Partnerships

Mr Noblett presented his report on Partnerships 2019/20. He reported;

- that it had been recognised at the Board's Strategic Planning day in January 2020 that the Board required greater oversight of the College's partnerships and subcontracting activities. Also, following DfE consultation with the sector it was anticipated that, in order to improve sub-contracting provision, greater engagement of governing bodies would be a key recommendation. He referred to the proposal for the appointment of a link governor for partnerships and subcontracting to help increase Board oversight;
- a summary report of the College's subcontracting partners and an overview of how the partnerships were progressing had been provided at Appendix A and had been reviewed by the Quality and Standards Committee;
- a proposal to recommend to the Board endorsement of the enhancement of the College's partnership with Preston North End Community and Education Trust (PNECET) as outlined in Appendix B which had been approved by PNECET;
- changes in Faith School Provision for 2020/21.

In response to a query, Mr Noblett outlined funding arrangements for PNECET. It was noted that the proposal had been considered by Quality and Standards Committee and recommended to the Board for approval. The Board approved the enhancement of the of the College's partnership with Preston North End Community and Education Trust (PNECET).

The Board noted the Partnerships 2019/20 report and approved the proposed sub-contracts for 2020/21. The Board approved the appointment of a link governor for partnerships and subcontracting. Mr Noblett asked members to contact the Clerk if they would like to volunteer as the link governor for partnerships and subcontracting.

Resolved: The Board:

- **noted the Partnerships 2019/20 report and approved the proposed sub-contracts for 2020/21;**
- **approved the appointment of a link governor for partnerships and subcontracting;**
- **approved the enhancement of the College's partnership with Preston North End Community and Education Trust (PNECET).**
- **noted the change in Faith School Provision for 2020/21.**

Action: Members to contact the Clerk if they would like to volunteer as link governor for partnerships and subcontracting.

15. Policy Approval

Ms Thornton, Head of Human Resources, referred members to the proposed changes to the Management of Attendance Policy which had been reviewed as part of HR's rolling review of employment policies. She reported that:

- the policy was fit for purpose and only minor amendments had been made;
- no changes to legislation needed to be incorporated;
- a reference to the Gender Recognition Act 2004 had been included to recognise that some absences related to this act may apply under our Management of Attendance associated procedure;
- the revised policy had been recommended to the Board for approval by the Resources Committee.

The Board approved the revised Management of Attendance.

Ms Haworth, Vice Principal Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support, referred members to the Covid-19 Addendum to the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy which had been introduced in light of Covid-19 and recommended to the Board for approval by the Quality and Standards Committee. She explained that the addendum outlined arrangements for learners and staff for remote learning/ working from home and included support for vulnerable learners. The Board approved the Covid-19 Addendum to the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.

Resolved: The Board approved the:

- **revised Management of Attendance Policy;**
- **Covid-19 Addendum to the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.**

16. Higher Education Update

Ms Haworth, Vice Principal Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support presented her Higher Education Update report which outlined the current external factors impacting on the College's Higher Education provision and in particular the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ms Haworth reported:

- the formal quality and standards review had taken place from 8th – 10th October 2019 by the QAA and the Board had reviewed a draft report at its meeting 12 December 2019. The College was informed that the QAA had revised the format of the report at the request Office for Students (OfS). However, the outcomes and recommendations for the College had not changed. She referred members to the final report at Appendix A, which had previously been made available on the Governors' Portal;
- potential impact of the temporary cap on full time HE numbers;
- as Higher Apprenticeship provision would move to standards from the 1st August 2020 the College would need to change the awarding organisation for some of its Engineering provision.

Resolved: The Board noted the Higher Education Update and the final QAA Quality and Standards Review report.

17. Committee Minutes

The Board noted the minutes of the Committee minutes:

Quality and Standards Committee – 5 March 2020
 Resources Committee – 24 June 2020
 Quality and Standards Committee – 25 June 2020.

Resolved: The Board noted the Committee minutes.

18. Governance Matters

The Clerk presented her report on Governance Matters, dated July 2020.

a) Government guidance on the phased wider opening of colleges

The Clerk referred members to a weblink in her report to government guidance on the phased wider opening of colleges and in particular to a link to the Government's Guidance on "*Maintaining education and skills training provision: further education providers*" which had been published on 14th May 2020, with the latest changes made on 8th July 2020 and summarised in her report.

b) Governance Meeting dates 2020/21

The Clerk referred to the draft Governance Meeting dates 2020/21. She reported:

- an Audit Committee videoconference might need to be held in early September to review the external and internal audit plans for 2020/21;
- dates for the Board strategic planning meeting and a governors' question time event with students would be decided in the new term pending Covid-19.

The Board approved the draft Governance Meeting dates 2020/21.

c) Link governor

The Clerk referred to the recommendation of the Quality and Standards Committee that Mr Collard be appointed a link governor for careers. The Board approved the appointment.

d) Review of Board compliance with AoC Code of Good Governance for English Colleges

The Clerk referred to her report on the Board compliance with AoC Code of Good Governance for English Colleges (the Code). She reported that:

- the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), Search and Governance Committee and the Clerk had reviewed the College's compliance with the Code. The Search and Governance Committee had approved the RAG rating for each individual detailed consideration (objective) and identified key focus areas;
- Appendix B included extracts from the report including all objectives which the Search and Governance Committee had rated amber or red;
- a copy of the full report was available on the Governors' Portal;
- the Search and Governance Committee had agreed only one objective should be rated red: *7.9 - The Board must be assured that the student voice is heard through all partnership activities*. She outlined progress to date in improving Board oversight of subcontracting and partnership work, including the Board's approval of the appointment of a link governor and increased reporting at the Quality and Standards Committee and Board level on contracting and partnership matters. Also, during the 2019/20 year governors had taken part in a number of initiatives to gain greater awareness of student voice, including: meeting with scholarship students, a Governors' Question Time event and attending student performances;
- prior to Covid-19, the Clerk had begun developing a communications plan for staff and learners, which would be re-started when possible. It was noted

consideration might need to be given to alternative ways governors could meet with students if face to face meetings could not take place for extended periods;

- a summary of the Board's compliance with the Code would be included in the College's draft annual report and accounts for review by the Board in December 2020.

The Board noted the review of the Board's compliance with AoC Code of Good Governance for English Colleges.

e) Correspondence from FE Commissioner – April 2020 and June 2020

The Board noted correspondence from the FE Commissioner dated April 2020 and June 2020

f) The News – Governors' newsletter

The Board noted The News – Governors' newsletters dated March 2020 and July 2020.

Resolved: The Board:

- **noted the update on Government guidance on the phased wider opening of colleges;**
- **approved the Governance Meeting dates 2020/21;**
- **approved the appointment of Mr Collard as a link governor for careers;**
- **noted the review of the Board's compliance with AoC Code of Good Governance for English Colleges;**
- **noted Correspondence from FE Commissioner dated April 2020 and June 2020;**
- **noted The News – Governors' newsletters dated March 2020 and July 2020.**

19. Any other business

Following feedback from a staff governor on lack of awareness of the role and work of the Board by some staff during the Staff Awards, the Board agreed that it was important to raise the profile of governors, and the role of the governing body, with staff as well as students at the College. It was agreed to consider initiatives to achieve this in 2020/21.

In response to a query, the Board noted the plans in place for apprentices returning to placements in September 2020. It was noted that engagement with employers was ongoing and risk assessments would be put in place.

The Chair reported it was the final meeting for the student governors appointed for the 2019/20 academic year. On behalf of the Board he recorded thanks to Dr McMullin and Ms Kirkbride for their contribution as student governors and wished them well. The Chair thanked Dr McMullin for his contribution to Board and Committee discussions.

The Chair reported that this would be Mr Bassa's final Board meeting following 12 years as a governor at Preston's College, including terms as Chair of the Board and Chair of Audit Committee. On behalf of the Board and management the Chair recorded thanks to Mr Bassa

for his contribution, commitment and support. Governors also paid tribute to Mr Bassa's contribution over 12 years. Mr Bassa thanked the Board and management for their comments and reflected on his term as a governor, which he had found enjoyable and beneficial. He wished the College well for the future.

20. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next formal Board meeting was scheduled for Thursday 15th October 2020. However, the Clerk would discuss with the Chair and Principal and Chief Executive whether an additional teleconference update meeting would be beneficial at the start of term, subject to the situation at that time.

Part 1 (b)

21. Board Effectiveness Review and Feedback from Committees

The Clerk referred to a report on the postponement of further discussions on Board effectiveness until 2020/21 and a summary of action points from committee effectiveness reviews conducted in 2019/20. The Board noted the report.

Resolved: The Board noted the report on Effectiveness Review and Feedback from Committees.

22. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 February 2020

The Board approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 February 2020 as a correct record. The Board noted that the minutes had been brought forward as student and staff governors had been present at this Part 2 meeting.

Resolved: The Board approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 February 2020 as a correct record.