

Preston College

Redacted and Abridged¹ Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 17th March 2022 at 5.30pm, Preston College/Zoom

Present:

Mr John Boydell	Chair
Mrs Louise Doswell	Principal and Chief Executive
Mr Steve Browne	
Mr Marcel Driver	
Miss Maty Geuye Seck	Until Minute 17
Mr Nevan Hunter	(Zoom)
Ms Joanne Jones	(Zoom)
Miss Lisa Keegan	
Mrs Laura Mason	
Mrs Lynda Mason	(Zoom)
Mr Dipesh Patel	(Zoom)
Miss Georgia Turner	

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

Absent:

Mr Martin Collard
Mr Steve Edwards
Mrs Janine Garcia
Miss Jessica Hopwood
Mr Robert Marshall-Slater

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Board confirmed the appointment of Miss Lisa Keegan, Staff Governor (Business Support) for a two year term. The Chair welcomed Miss Keegan to the Board.

The Chair welcomed Mrs Laura Mason to her first Board meeting, following her appointment as independent governor in January 2022.

It was noted that apologies had been received from Mr Steve Edwards and Mr Martin Collard.

It was noted that a quorum was present.

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

2. Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the inherent interest of all staff present in Item 9 - Pay Strategy – Review of the Harmonised Pay Spine and Item 6 (b) Hybrid Working Policy. The Board noted that under the Instrument and Articles staff governors were not required to declare an interest when staff matters related to the terms and conditions of all staff or staff in a particular class.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 9th December 2021 and the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 27th January 2022 as correct records. The Board noted the Notes of the Board meeting held on 9th December 2021.

Resolved: The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 9th December 2021 and the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 27th January 2022 were agreed and signed as correct records.

4. Matters arising

The Board noted the report on progress of actions from previous meetings and noted correspondence sent from the Chair of the Governing Body to all staff on behalf on the Board to thank staff for their contribution to the College during the pandemic.

Resolved: The Board noted the report on progress of actions from previous meetings.

5. Decisions Taken and Information Sent Between Meetings

The Board noted the report on Board decisions taken between meetings and information sent to members between meetings, which included confirmation that a written resolution had been carried on the appointment of Ms Dalton to the Corporation Board as an independent governor for a four year term and Ms Dalton's appointment to the Resources Committee.

Resolved: The Board noted the report on Decisions Taken and Information Sent Between Meetings

6. Resources and Audit Policy Review

The Board noted that:

- the Fees Policy 2022/23, at Appendix A, had been reviewed and approved for recommendation to the Board by the Resources Committee;
- the new Hybrid Working Policy (formally the Remote Working Policy), at Appendix B, had been reviewed and approved for recommendation to the Board by the Resources Committee;
- the revised Risk Management Policy, at Appendix C, had been approved for recommendation to the Board by the Audit Committee;
- the Resources Committee recommended re-approval of the Financial Regulations, dated 2020, with no amendments;

- any changes requested by committees to these policies where outlined in the cover report.

The Board approved the changes to the Fees Policy and Risk Management Policy, approved the new Hybrid Working Policy and re-approved the Financial Regulations.

Resolved: The Board:

- **approved the Fees Policy 2022/23;**
- **re-approved the Financial Regulations;**
- **approved the Hybrid Working Policy;**
- **approved the revised Risk Management Policy.**

7. Quality and Standards Policy Review

The Board noted:

- that the Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy, at Appendix A, had been reviewed and approved for recommendation to the Board by the Quality and Standards Committee;
- that the Quality and Standards Committee recommended to the Board the extension of the current Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy until 30th September 2022.

The Board approved the revised Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy and the extension of the current SEND Policy until 30th September 2022.

Resolved: The Board approved:

- **the revised Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy;**
- **the extension of the current SEND Policy until 30th September 2022.**

8. Management Accounts

Mr Nixon presented the Period 6 Management Accounts. Mr Nixon reported:

- additional grant money would not be provided to help colleges cover additional National Insurance costs;
- the College had benefited from additional in year 16 -18 learner funding due to recruitment above allocation for 2021/22;
- approaches which the Board could take to the Pay Award Strategy which could impact the deficit for 2021/22 but benefit the College's long term strategy;
- possibility of additional grant funding income.

Members noted the Period 6 Management Accounts, at Appendix A, the Management Accounts commentary at Appendix B, the Period 6 Funding Dashboard, at Appendix C, and the Period 6 Key Performance Indicators report at Appendix D. Members discussed the reports with management.

In response to a query, Mr Nixon confirmed that the increased National Insurance costs had been factored in to the 2021/22 management accounts.

In response to a query, management referred to the College's ongoing work to recruit staff in challenging and competitive sectors and the use of agency staff.

The Board and management also discussed the key role construction provision played in the College's involvement in the Institute of Technology and the Strategic Development Fund and the increased collaboration between local colleges.

Resolved: The Board noted the Period 6 Management Accounts.

Action: Resources Committee to review the impact of agency costs on contribution.

9. Pay Award

Ms Thornton, Head of Human Resources, presented her Pay Award report.

Members discussed the report with management.

The Board agreed Model A should be taken forward in the local pay negotiations with the recognised trade unions, subject to the caveats on affordability.

Resolved: The Board agreed Model A should be taken forward in the local pay negotiations with the recognised trade unions, subject to the caveats on affordability.

10. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Update – Equality Objectives

Mrs Haworth, Vice Principal Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support, presented the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Update. Mrs Haworth referred to:

- the Board had approved the Corporate Equality Objectives for the period 2021 – to 2025;
- the draft College Equality Statement, at Appendix A, which had been reviewed by the Resources Committee and was recommended to the Board for approval;
- the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Learner Review 2020-21, at Appendix B, which had been considered by Resources Committee and Quality and Standards Committee;
- the College Workforce Profile Report, at Appendix C, and the Board demographic summary as of 31st July 2021 at Appendix D, which had been considered by Resources Committee;
- plans to produce an abridged EDI report for 2020/21 which would be published on the College's website and shared with the Board;
- plans for the development of a College EDI strategy in consultation with key stakeholders.

Following a request, Mrs Haworth undertook to add a column to the table 4 – Breakdown of Staff Ethnicity - to include the College catchment area.

The Board noted the EDI Update and the update on plans to develop a College EDI strategy. The Board approved the draft College Equality Statement.

The Board:

- **approved the draft College Equality Statement.**

- noted the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Learner Review 2020-21, the College Workforce Profile Report, the Board demographic summary as of 31st July 2021;

- noted plans for the development of a College EDI Strategy.

Action: To add a column to the table 4 – Breakdown of Staff Ethnicity to include the College catchment area.

11. Governance Matters

The Clerk referred members to her report which included an update on the current Board and committee membership, governor recruitment and succession planning.

The Clerk referred to a proposal from the Search and Governance Committee for the introduction of biannual Chairs' meetings with the Chair of the governing body, the Vice Chair of the governing body, committee chairs, the Principal and Chief Executive and the Clerk. The Board approved the proposal.

Resolved: The Board:

- noted the current Board membership, Term of Office and membership of committees;
- noted the governor recruitment and succession planning update;
- approved the proposal for biannual chairs meetings.

12. Learner Numbers and Market Analysis

The Board noted the Learner Numbers and Market Analysis presentation and report. The Chair explained that the Learner Numbers and Market Analysis presentation would be deferred to ensure the Board had sufficient time to discuss. The Clerk reported that plans were in train for the workshop session to take place in April and undertook to send further details.

Mr Noblett requested that if possible the workshop should be held in College rather than on Zoom as this would enable him to better demonstrate the software used by the College.

Members commented positively on the information contained in the presentation and welcomed an opportunity to explore in more detail.

Resolved: The Board noted the Learner Numbers and Market Analysis report and presentation and agreed that a separate workshop should be held on the presentation.

Action: The Clerk to arrange a date for the workshop and confirm by email.

13. Principal and Chief Executive's report.

The Principal and Chief Executive presented her report. She reported:

- on College fundraising initiatives by staff and learners to support the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine;
- on Ofsted inspections which had taken place in local colleges;
- on the significant work involved in the development of the Strategic Development Fund bids led by members of The Lancashire Colleges which were successfully progressing through Department for Education. She reported that the low carbon construction project, a bid to enhance Building Services engineering provision across the County which the College was leading on, had been approved for funding;
- on the considerable efforts of staff to work with learners to improve behaviour and attendance during this term;

- that the first governor and staff engagement lunch would take place on 29th March 2022 and a second lunch was planned for 10th May 2022. It was noted that further details would be sent by email.

The Board noted the Principal and Chief Executive's report.

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

14. Five Year Strategic Plan

The Board noted that the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) had revised the College's Strategic Objectives, at Appendix A, to reflect feedback from the Board at the previous meeting.

It was noted that the references to learners and students would be revised for consistency. With this amendment, the Board approved the proposed changes to the College's Strategic Objectives and outcomes.

Resolved: The Board approved the proposed changes to the College's Strategic Objectives and outcomes, with the amendment agreed to refer to learners consistently in the objectives.

15. Quality Improvement Plan

Mrs Haworth presented her report on the Outcomes of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2020/21. Mrs Haworth reported:

- on staff focus on learner attendance and retention;
- how the experience of teaching from September had been very different;
- on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions planned throughout the year to support staff;
- on the 16-18 tuition funding had provided additional resources to support the College's most vulnerable learners. She explained that the fund supported both economic disadvantaged and low prior attainment learners through 1 to 1 support and small group teaching;
- in-year retention for Looked After Children, Level 1 and below;
- that management continued to monitor progress against the QIP;
- on alignment of the QIP with the College's five year plan through curriculum area review meetings.

In response to a query on the attendance levels an update was provided.

In response to a query on whether additional resources were required, it was noted that ELT would review resources at the next Business Planning meeting and further tuition fund support was expected for the next academic year to support vulnerable learners.

The Board and management discussed the increase in vulnerable learners at the College and the role Advanced Practitioners could play as an additional resource. Management confirmed that good practice was shared between College schools.

Members referred to the data provided in the EDI report on the College's progress in closing achievement gaps for high needs learners who were now achieving the same outcomes as other learners. Members commended staff for this achievement which demonstrated the added value of College staff in supporting learners and improving their outcomes. Members highlighted the importance of celebrating and publicising the College's work in this area.

Following discussion on the number of Looked After Children at the College, the current number was noted with more children expected to enrol during 2022. Members asked for data on the number of Looked After Children at the College to be included in future reports to enable ongoing monitoring. It was noted that further information on this was included in the EDI report considered earlier which had also been discussed by Quality and Standards Committee.

Following a query on monitoring staff attendance, members noted that this was monitored and that the latest Covid strain had contributed to a dip in staff attendance.

Following a query on monitoring the quality and performance of agency staff, members noted that this was monitored and action had been taken where the quality of agency staff had not been at required standards. Members noted plans to further strengthen support for agency staff.

Resolved: The Board noted the Quality Improvement Plan.

Action: To add the number of Looked After Children at the College to the QIP report.

16. Risk Management Register

Mr Nixon referred to his report on the Risk Management Register and referred members to the Risk Management Register, dated March 2022, at Appendix A.

Mr Nixon reported that:

- the most significant increasing risk related to cyber attacks. It was noted that attacks had become more prevalent and the conflict in Ukraine would increase the likelihood of attacks. Mr Nixon provided assurance that the College had robust systems in place, and management were in regular dialogue with JISC;
- the College's approach to the government's Living with Covid Plan and the updated Covid Risk Assessment at Appendix B. The Board noted that College Covid cases had been in decline but had started to increase in recent days, however people were generally not as sick as with previous Covid strains;
- staff and learners were asked not to attend College for five days if they tested positive and masks were recommended in public areas. It was noted that as generally the Covid risk was decreasing, this advice would remain in place at College unless there a new variant was identified.

Mr Nixon responded to questions on the Covid related staff and learner absence and how this was recorded. It was noted that the recent rise in cases at the College would continue to be monitored.

The Board discussed the Risk Management Register, and agreed the current risks, actions completed and further actions still to be completed the Risk Management Register.

Resolved: The Board noted the Risk Management Register and agreed the current risks, actions completed, risks to be removed and further actions still to be completed.

17. Higher Education Update

Mrs Haworth presented her HE Update report. She reported:

- proposed changes to the current Access and Participation Statement, at Appendix A, and the proposal to extend the statement until 2022/23;
- the Office for Students (OfS) had completed three consultations looking at: student outcomes, Teacher Evidence Frameworks (TEF) awards, and new data requirements. She explained that the revised conditions were part of the OfS ongoing work on quality and standards and allowed the OfS to intervene more robustly where courses fell below expectations, or where the rates of top degrees awarded continued to rise without good reason;
- the OfS changes to Condition F3: Provision of information to the OfS, which took effect from 1st January 2022, at Appendix B, including classifications of reportable events;
- the TEF consultation (B5) outlined how the OfS plans to implement a revamped version of the awards and referred to the proposed TEF implementation timeline.

The Board noted the HE Update report and proposed changes to the Access and Participation Statement and approved the recommendation from the Quality and Standards Committee, to extend the revised Access and Participation Statement for 2022/23.

Resolved: The Board noted the HE Update report and extended the revised Access and Participation Statement for 2022/23.

18. Committee Minutes

The Board noted the Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meetings dated 1st December 2021 and 3rd February 2022, the Minutes of the Resources Committee dated 25th November 2021 and 10th February 2022 and the Quality and Standards Committee Minutes dated 18th November 2021 and the Minutes of the Audit Committee meetings 24th November 2021 and 7th December 2021.

The Chair of Audit Committee reported that the College's external auditor had indicated that they were moving out of the FE sector and the Audit Committee were working with College management on alternative options.

Resolved: The Board noted: the Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meetings dated 1st December 2021 and 3rd February 2022, the Minutes of the Resources Committee dated 25th November 2021 and 10th February 2022, the Quality and Standards Committee minutes dated 18th November 2021 and the Minutes of the Audit Committee meetings 24th November 2021 and 7th December 2021.

19. Newsletter

The Board noted the Board noted the News for Governors and Staff, March 2022.

Resolved: The Board noted the Board noted the News for Governors and Staff, March 2022.

20. Date of Next Meeting – 7th July 2022

The Board noted that the next meeting would be held on 7th July 2022. It was noted that an additional Board workshop and two staff and governor engagement lunches would be held before this meeting.

The meeting ended at 19.48pm