



Part 1 Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body Held on 30 June 2020 at 4.30pm via MS Teams

Present	
Gideon Schulman (Chair) (GS)	Sarbdip Noonan (SN)
Terry Butland (Vice Chair) (TB)	Carlton Downie (CD)
Mark Cooper (MC)	Faizan Cheema (Student Governor)(FZ)Items 1-9 only
Jean Lammiman (JL)	In Attendance
Viresh Paul (VP)	Bob Pattni (DP Finance and Planning) (BP)
Sundeep Bhandari (SB)	Nicola Conibear (VP Curriculum and Quality) (NC)
Alison Woolcock (AW)	Naomi Shoffman (Director of Governance)(NS)

1. Chair’s Opening Remarks and report of any Chairs Action taken since the last meeting:

- i. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and confirmed everyone was able to hear each other. GS apologised for having to leave the last meeting early as he was taken ill and had ended up in hospital.
- ii. GS commended the fantastic job done for the College by the Executive Team during this difficult period. Referring to the length of the Board pack for the meeting, GS reminded everyone that the majority of the papers had previously been seen at Committees and/or circulated by email and on the portal so they were being re-presented for good governance. As is the usual practice, he will treat the reports as having been read and asked that presenters highlight succinct points and Governors to just raise any further questions.
- iii. The Chair advised that Philip Simmons, Amirul Azam, and Mark Cooper, had each resigned from the Board and recorded his appreciation of their contribution to the Board.
- iv. The Chair reported the following Chair’s action taken since the last meeting:
 - Approval of the Safeguarding Policy

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Philip Simmons and Amirul Azam for absence and Raj Gill who had tried to join the meeting but was unable to do so due to connectivity difficulties

3. Declaration of Interests

GS and TB declared an interest in item 13

4. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 24 March 2020

These were accepted as a true record

5. Matters Arising Not on the Agenda

There were no matters arising.

6. Principal’s Report The Principal’s Report

SN said she would take her report as being read. The Academic year 2019/20 has been very fruitful, not only in terms of student performance but also our financial position, which will hit a significant surplus of £117k. Looking forward to 2020/21 the future looks very promising too in

spite of Covid-19 challenges. Both contract for the ESFA and GLA are based on this year's numbers due to lagged funding and these have been secured.

She then highlighted the following points:

- The raft of Covid 19 papers have been previously considered at all the Committees and the focus now is on the September return. The College has followed all the Government announcements. It is likely that when the current Lockdown rules are relaxed, and more normal social movement returns, there will be features of the pandemic that will be with us for some time to come. Indeed, there may be aspects of our current operations that we will wish to keep, having learnt much about the efficiency and effectiveness of online teaching and learning. Although the campus has been closed for the large majority of staff and students, we have remained open for business. All our students have been supported to continue in their progress towards achieving their qualifications. Online learning has been a positive experience for many, with 63% of students agreeing that overall the teaching and learning online have been good.
- The Governance Committee and leadership group has taken responsibility for managing the plans; since the March Board meeting, but the papers are provided here so all Governors have an overview seen the information.
- The Governance Committee will join the Executive Team to create a joint Covid – 19 planning Committee to meet as needed or at least once a month and will be focussing on the phased return. Governors need to be reassured that the Executive Team is doing everything it needs in line with guidance. The Governance Action Plan (GAP) will be updated to make reference to the Governance arrangements that have been put in place to manage the Covid -19 situation.
- Student survey results - 61% agree that online lessons are well organised; 60% agree that teachers are using different methods to help them learn; 63% agree that overall the teaching in online lessons is good; responses were polarised as to whether College should reopen
- Ofsted also sought views of students from 20 providers and the responses were very similar to ours in terms of Students missing face to face Teaching and Learning interactions, wanting immediate feedback and the digital poverty experienced by some learners. SLT will focus on all comments made by the students and Ofsted at their strategy day on Friday.
- Around 100 staff members completed the overall survey, and approximately nine in ten staff felt they agree or strongly agree with the statement that they have regular contact with their line manager, and with work colleagues in their immediate team, indicating team working has been established well in the period of lockdown. High figures for strongly agree or agree were given for the help and support staff receive during the period of remote working, the communication staff have received about the Covid-19 situation, and staff having the tools and resources to do the job properly in this time. Responses for strongly agree or agree were around the 60% mark for staff wishing to move towards more blended learning taking place prior to the current situation.
- The College is in ongoing consultation with TU's and has set up a working group to look at the operational detail to make the College a safe place for staff and student return in September. The College is struggling with HE recruitment – the relationship with the University of Portsmouth is under considerable strain following their withdrawal of the validation for The Foundation Degree and L6 in Business and in computing HND. The risk around this is huge and a meeting to discuss the situation with the University will be convened on Thursday; communication their end has not been good and the College has done everything it's been asked to do so we need to see what the issue is when we meet. The assumption is that they are concerned with the low recruitment and that all universities are struggling with their own recruitment
- Students' attendance figure before lockdown for this academic year was at 84.40%, an improvement by 1.4% from the previous year. However, the attendance rate for the period of Lockdown, where a student registered for at least one session during the week was 62.2%. The overall attendance for the whole of the current academic year is 80.8%, below the attendance target of 85%.

- College business has continued to plan in spite of lockdown. The College will not be able to continue to recruit 19+ Level 3 Loan Learners and apprenticeships for the rest of the year (2019/20) due to COVID-19 restrictions. With regards to recruitment for 2020/21, our internal progression is at 93%, however applications are down considerably, 16-18 by 21% and 19+ by 17%
- Funding for 2020-21 has been secured based on this year's numbers and will be sustained for the next two years, this just needs to be confirmed contractually
- The ESFA contract based on this year's number increased from £7.232m to £7.492m
- The bid to GLA was for 330k which was submitted in December 2019, however we had been allocated £242k, as we had over delivered by £175K GLA funding is £160k for 2019/20 and £82k for 2020/2 so the financial position for the College is very secure for next two years.

TB congratulated SN on a very good report and all the College staff on a terrific performance; he also expressed sadness for the student who had passed away from Covid 19. TB went on to say he was shocked at what had happened with Portsmouth University, as someone who had managed many such relationships over the world, and said there has to be a good reason for that. MC said his understanding is that the decision was made by mutual agreement because of low numbers and because Stanmore was going to the University of West London (UWL). SN responded that she was surprised that this meeting is being told the decision was by mutual agreement and that we went to another university because Portsmouth had withdrawn the validation for the foundation degree and the HND Business and Computing, Level 4 and 5 until next year remains and there had not been any conversation around any mutual agreement other than the HND sports provision. She will be taking this up at the meeting with the pro-vice chancellor, NC and MC due to be held that week but reiterated to the Board that students would not have had a progression route if UWL hadn't validated the programmes.

FC observed that the student survey had been very well done and the results seem pretty accurate as lower level students struggle more with online delivery.

NC said she is planning to bring in a purely adult online course and some mixed models for the rest of students as the College needs to look at different ways of engagement but needs to ensure there is some blended learning with both face to face and distance learning (which has been around for a long time) so this is an opportunity. The SLT will be discussing and deciding how to manage different deliveries for different cohorts at their forthcoming strategy day at the end of the week. This will be presented to the Governors at their strategic planning day which will be in September to look at very closely.

JL asked in terms of digital poverty what has been done to assist students. BP advised that the College already has provision for some learners to borrow IT kit for this year though this was limited. Next year there is provision for buying up to 100 laptops but we may need to come back to Resources to ask for more capital funds. JL said that some of the most vulnerable students can't access lessons in that way so we need to look at the reasons for digital poverty. NC advised what is being done to support such learners and help them to learn and access resources remotely; digital poverty isn't as simple as issuing a laptop as some students don't have an internet connection or a place to work. In the plan for next year there will be opportunities to have some learners on site for part of the time so staff will be able to use that time to support the vulnerable learners. There will be some feedback on this in due course. In terms of remote assessment, teaching staff have been very good in adapting ways material can be assessed so it really depends on how flexible the awarding body is.

NOTED

THE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

7. i. Business Continuity Policy (BCP) – response to Covid 19 pandemic and

progress against Action Plan

The Board noted the report which had been discussed at length by all the Committees and had also been referred to in the previous item.

ii. Risk Register as at June 2020

BP advised that a complete review of the Risk Register had been undertaken in April to take on Board the added new risks which are highlighted in amber and are unlikely to change.

BP highlighted the Top Key Risks that remain as **Amber** as follows:

AIM 1: Ensuring excellent learning, teaching and assessment leading to higher student achievement. Risks 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.6

AIM 2: Excellent learner support providing a high level of satisfaction for learners and stakeholders. Risk 2.1, 2.5 (new risk in April)

AIM 3: Organisational excellence in all that we do. Risks 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 (new risk in April).

AIM 4: Taking the Curriculum Strategy to the next level in 2019/20 and securing a sustainable future for the College. Risks – none in Amber or Red

AIM 5: Aligning Human Resources with the College's strategic direction. Risk 5.2, 5.5, 5.6

AIM 6: Establishing sound financial health for the College. Risks 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5

The new risks that were added in April under aims 2, 3 and 5 relate in particular to assess the Covid – 19 impact on learners, staff and finances. BP said he believes the mitigations in place have been effective. He reported that in all areas the College is in a better position than at the same time last year.

SB advised that RSM, the internal auditor, had been very happy with what they saw covered in the Risk Register.

The Board commended this great piece of work by the Executive Team.

NOTED

BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY (BCP) AND UPDATE ON THE RISK REGISTER

8. i. Progress Against the Strategic Operational Plan (SOP)

SN reported that the Strategic Operational Plan brings together the strategic action plan and the quality improvement action plan together under one umbrella. Progress is mostly shown as green with a few ambers and no reds; some actions need to be closed off as we have not yet completed the year. SN reminded the Board that as previously reported, the SOP could not have addressed the Covid- 19 issues which is why both plans have been kept separate.

The Board commended the good progress made.

ii. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) as at June 2020

SN reported that the College is making good progress against all the KPI's which are mainly in green. In terms of the changes from May to June SN highlighted the following:

- Attendance figures are disappointing; they have increased slightly but remain below target.
- Punctuality has gone up slightly but are still below target.
- Anything in white is a measure which is assessed annually and will be completed at the end of the year.

The Board commended the good set of KPI's

NOTED

THE PROGRESS MADE AGAINST THE STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL PLAN AND THE KPI'S REPORT

9. Draft minutes & verbal summary of the Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting on 12 May 2020

The draft minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting on 12 May 2020 were received. TB reported that much of what was considered at the meeting is on this agenda. TB said that the very good student achievement being predicted is something the College should be congratulated on given the Covid 19 issues. The only thing not being covered in this meeting are the Curriculum reviews in English and Business as those areas have not performed so well; the reviews were very well done and some very good actions have come out of it.

FC advised he would be leaving the meeting at this point and thanked everyone for their support. GS thanked FC for his contributions to the Board and the Curriculum and Quality Committee over the past two years.

RATIFIED

THE UPDATED COLLEGE POLICIES

NOTED

THE REPORT FROM THE CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

10. Draft minutes & verbal summary of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting on 16 June 2020

i. Meeting Summary

The draft minutes of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting on 24 March 2020 were received. In addition to those items already considered on this agenda and the items below (10ii-ii), SB highlighted the following points:

- BP has managed to achieve a reduction in audit fees from both sets of auditors for next year.
- The GDPR audit was very clean.
- The Committee had agreed it was important that the Board at some point has a discussion around their appetite for loss/risk.

ii. Appointment of Internal and External Auditors

The Board considered the re Appointment of the current Internal and External Auditors which had been recommended for approval by the Audit and Assurance Committee. JL observed that it was important to maintain continuity with both sets of auditors at this point in time.

iii. External Audit Strategy for 2019/20 Financial Statements

The Board considered the External Audit Strategy for 2019/20 which was in standard format and had been scrutinised and recommended for approval by the Audit and Assurance Committee.

iv. Internal Audit Strategy for 2020/21

The Board considered the Internal Audit Strategy for 2020/21, which had been scrutinised and recommended for approval by the Audit and Assurance Committee.

APPROVED

- **RE -APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDITORS**
- **EXTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY FOR 2019/20 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**
- **INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY FOR 2020/21**

NOTED

REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

11. Draft minutes & verbal summary of the Resources Committee meeting on 23 June 2020

The Board received the following reports:

- i. Management Accounts up to 31 May 2020
- ii. Monitoring Report
- iii. Funding Comparison
- iv. Sub-Contracting Plans
- v. Capital Plans
- vi. Fees policy
- vii. Efficiency Plans
- viii. Indicative Budget and Forecast for 2020/21 and follow up report
- ix. Updated Financial Regulations
- x. Health and Safety Policy
- xi. HR Report

VP reported that all of these reports have been scrutinised carefully by the Resources Committee and recommended for Board approval where required. At the time of the Resources Committee whereas we were looking at a loss of £3k we were aware of the good news of the additional GLA funding. Therefore the indicative figures for the coming two years are very good. The Committee thanked BP for having kept a very tight rein on the finances. BP responded that it is always a team effort and commended NC and her team for having to work with very limited funding.

BP was then asked to summarise the financial position for this and next year and he highlighted the following:

- Although this has been a challenging year the Board wanted to award staff a salary increase. Most staff were surprised to receive this as they are aware that many College were unable to do so. In addition to the 1% pay award the College will be paying a £26 per month home working allowance for three months for each member of staff and will also be giving an extra incentive day off.
- The College had not made any redundancies during this period, unlike many Colleges and in fact will be recruiting new staff in September.
- There had been a considerable reduction in income for the last quarter, as the College could not recruit adult learners as previously reported.
- The GLA awarded a higher AEB allocation, more than we had anticipated and £160k will be allocated into this year and £82k for next year.
- Overall the forecast surplus for this year is expected to be £117k (subject to audit and pension impact).
- The College has been advised that one or two awarding bodies are planning to reduce the exam fees by 20-25% next year which is very good news.
- The T Level capital bid is also being looked at. Originally the College was planning to bid for £200k which the College would then have to match, but now we have put in a £750k bid and moved our own capital spend into that. The Government has announced billions for capital build in the education sector so hopefully some of that will be allocated to the FE sector.
- We are waiting for the pension revaluation (external independent valuation) which may have an impact on pension asset interest (income) and interest on pension liabilities (non-pay costs) which, may downgrade our surplus.

BP advised that the Resources Committee has agreed to work on a 10 year property development plan and hopefully some of that will be covered at the forthcoming SLT strategy day. All options will be looked at from doing nothing, to rebuilding, relocation with a land swap, or refurbishment building by building. We have learnt from Covid 19 that we do not necessarily need a mass of additional educational buildings as we have seen we can deliver good education online. So we need to be innovative on our thinking. JL commented that Harrow is very poor for land so asked whether a land swap is a serious option? BP said he recognised it may be difficult – perhaps it may be a case of one school to another site – JL said this would be highly unlikely and from her experience will be more problematic. TB said it would look like an immediate reason for a merger

so we would need to be careful how this is broached. GS said we have to look at all options available. JL and TB both agreed that they didn't think the land swap option is viable. BP said it's about what is best for the students as a lot of the current accommodation is not suitable for a modern learning environment. TB reminded the meeting that at some point in the past plans had been drawn up for completely knocking down and rebuilding the site so we should see if we could locate them. BP said there are some detailed plans which he will look at as a starting point.

VP concluded his report by saying that going forward he has asked for the papers for meetings that require approval of minor updates such as review of policies should be uploaded on the Governance portal outside of the meeting and recorded in the minutes as such.

VP also said that he has asked that standing items be reported by exception with clear and succinct executive summaries so as to reduce both duplication and the volume of meeting papers. The Board agreed this was a good way for all Board and Committee meetings to work.

12. Any Other Business

APPROVED

- i. FUNDING COMPARISON**
- ii. SUB-CONTRACTING PLANS**
- iii. CAPITAL PLANS**
- iv. FEES POLICY**
- v. EFFICIENCY PLANS**
- vi. INDICATIVE BUDGET AND FORECAST FOR 2020/21 AND FOLLOW UP REPORT**
- vii. UPDATED FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**
- viii. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

NOTED

- i. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS UP TO 31 MAY 2020**
- ii. MONITORING REPORT**
- iii. HR REPORT**
- iv. REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

13. i. Verbal Report of the Governance Committee meeting on 30 June 2020

GS reported that the Governance Committee had:

- Been delighted to accept the Principal's withdrawal of her retirement notice
- Considered the Governor Link visits report which shows an improving picture though we are not quite there yet.
- Agreed some further actions/amends in the GAP which once updated will be uploaded to the portal for comment.
- Received the Self-assessment report and asked for a follow up paper to come to the Governors strategy day.
- Agreed to hold the deferred Governors' Strategy day in late September.

v. Governor Appointments

The Governance Committee had interviewed four prospective Governors, Rohit Bhatia (RoB), Rishi Bhanderi (RiB), Ms Jan Doust (JD) and Simon Radford (SR) at their meeting earlier that day.

GS reported that the Committee had no hesitation recommending the appointment of all four to the Governing Body. Each candidate has a skills set that would complement the Board membership. Their CV's are available within the Governance Committee meeting pack on the Governance Portal.

The Committee had also recommended that RoB and RiB be appointed to the membership of the Resources Committee; and JD and SR be appointed to the membership of the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

The Committee had also received the CV of Ms Amiah Hutton-Ebanks the Student Governor nominee for the 2020-21 academic year.

APPROVED

- I. THE PRINCIPAL'S WITHDRAWAL OF HER RETIREMENT NOTICE**
- II. THE APPOINTMENT OF JAN DOUST AS A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR A PERIOD OF 4 YEARS UNTIL 31 JULY 2024**
- III. THE APPOINTMENT OF ROHIT BHATIA AS A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR A PERIOD OF 4 YEARS UNTIL 31 JULY 2024**
- IV. THE APPOINTMENT OF RISHI BANDERI AS A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR A PERIOD OF 4 YEARS UNTIL 31 JULY 2024**
- V. THE APPOINTMENT OF SIMON RADFORD AS A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR A PERIOD OF 4 YEARS UNTIL 31 JULY 2024**

RATIFIED

THE APPOINTMENT OF AMIAH HUTTON-EBANKS AS A STUDENT GOVERNOR FOR A PERIOD OF 1 YEAR UNTIL 31 JULY 2021

NOTED

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

14. Election of the Chair and Vice Chair of Board of Governors for 2020-21

NS advised that only one nomination for each of the roles had been put forward – GS for Chair and TB for Vice Chair.

GS and TB temporarily left the meeting at this stage and members discussed the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair.

VP nominated and JL seconded GS for Chair and TB for Vice Chair.

GS and TB re-joined the meeting and duly accepted the roles.

APPROVED

- I. THE REAPPOINTMENT OF GIDEON SCHULMAN AS CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR THE 2020/2021 ACADEMIC YEAR**
- II. THE REAPPOINTMENT OF TERRY BUTLAND AS VICE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR THE 2020/2021 ACADEMIC YEAR**

15. Link Governors not yet reported to the Governance Committee (if any)

None

16. Meeting Review and Evaluation

Governors agreed the meeting had in the main gone well. JL said that the virtual meetings were improving and she found them to be open and transparent. CD said this had been a good meeting but there were some sound issues with the room acoustics.

TB said the room layout change was better and suggested sound may be better with more than one microphone.

i.TB asked about the use of testing in education establishment and whether that will become more possible? SN said that nothing has been mentioned to date, but the College will be taking students temperatures.

ii.GS Reiterated his thanks to MC for his contribution through the Board and Committee meetings and SN thanked him for his support with the University of Portsmouth. MC wished everyone the best going forward and that he hoped the matter with the University will be dealt with on Thursday

17. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 13 October 2020

Meeting ended at 6.30pm

Signed G. Shulman

Chair Date 13 October 2020

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