



Part 1 Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body Held on 13 October 2020 at 6.15pm via Zoom

Present

Gideon Schulman (Chair) (GS)
Terry Butland (Vice Chair) (TB)
Sarbdip Noonan (Principal) (SN)
Sundeep Bhandari (SB)
Rishi Bhandari (RiB)
Rohit Bhatia (RoB)
Jan Doust (JD)
Jean Lammiman (JL)
Viresh Paul (VP)
Simon Radford (SR)
Carlton Downie (CD)
Amiah Hutton –Ebanks (AHE) between item 10
-11

In Attendance

Bob Pattni (DP Finance and Planning) (BP)
Nicola Conibear (VP Curriculum and Quality) (NC)
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.
- ii. The Chair reported that both the College finances and student numbers are looking good so this has been another bumper year we should all be proud of.
- iii. The Chair reported that unfortunately Alison Woolcock (AW) has stepped down due to work commitments. He reminded members that she was once a staff governor and after she left the College came back as an independent. The Chair said that he would like to leave the door open for her to come back on board should AW's circumstances change and recorded his appreciation of her contribution to the Board.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Raj Gill for absence.

3. Declaration of Interests

JL declared an interest as she has the portfolio for adult learning.

4. Minutes

i. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2020

These were accepted as a true record

ii. Draft Notes of the Governors Strategy day 25 September 2020

These were noted. NS advised these are still in draft and invited all to provide any comments on these before they are finalised.

5. Matters Arising not on the Agenda

There were no matters arising.

6. Principal's Report

SN said she would take her report, which she hoped Governors found interesting, as being read. In the report she has tried to provide a good overview of the College's position and in terms of government policy post pandemic. In summary we all understand there is a need for a new and upskilled workforce. The Government wants everyone have a real choice in life with not just one route to success. As part of that adults will have access to courses they need and opportunities that will align to government priorities. The College sector is looking for investment to a skills led recovery. The forthcoming FE white paper alongside the spending review is stating the nation has a unique opportunity to place Colleges at the heart of rebuilding the recovery from the pandemic of a skills led economy. Along with the pandemic government is looking for solutions from colleges to other current and emerging challenges including Brexit, climate change, black lives matter issues and new technologies.

SN then highlighted the following:

- A record number of students have applied to university this year
- The EDSK Report was published earlier this month with the main recommendation being that new FE director roles be created, to be based in LEP's, and given the remit to direct what colleges will deliver with a clear focus on the needs of that particular area.
- The DfE published updated guidance to make institutions more Covid-19 safe for staff and students. All updates are reflected in the College's BCP.
- The College is keeping UCU up to date with everything happening to keep staff and students safe.
- Current Headline figures shows 90% overall achievement, a 2.9% increase on the previous year and higher than national average
- The number of students sitting English and maths GCSE's has increased by 11% in English and 20.4% in maths. The ESFA guidance says that colleges are now able to access extra catch up funding for those learners who have already passed GCSE at grade 4/C. So there are a significant number of students doing resits which will be a huge logistical challenge.
- Results in English and Maths show an increase on last year's pass rates at grade 4/C or above with 26.7% (LY 18.2%) and 22% (LY 13,3%) respectively .
- The GCSE exams next summer will be pushed back 3 weeks to allow for students to catch up there is a whole range of views coming in as to how this will be done and the grades awarded but currently everything up in the air. It would be easiest for everything to go on line. There is nothing yet agreed about vocational assessment.
- The College has recruited 1524 learners to date which has exceeded the target. However we will not be getting additional funding for these learners this year but it will help lagged funding going forward.

SN concluded her report saying that recruitment is good, achievement excellent and the College has outstanding financial health with a forecast outturn of £157K for the 2019/20 year. This is a positive picture that no other college has achieved in all three strands. All business cases bids other than for T levels have been approved which has brought in an additional £1.5m funding for the college. BP and NC are due to meet with the DfE later in the week to see how the College site could be updated in terms of capital investment.

The Chair thanked SN for her very comprehensive report and commented that the recommendations in the EDSK report are a concern.

TB thanked SN and commended the College for having done very well in all areas and that the overall achievement rate of 90% is a fantastic outcome. The Grade C /4 for English results have also improved which is tremendous, so it's been a very good year.

Re the EDSK report TB said he thought it quite amazing this was coming from a conservative government as he would characterise it as a very left wing policy; this seems to be another way of

bringing about college mergers which is very disappointing. JL agreed saying she is very surprised too by this initiative. SN said that the government is trying to rationalise colleges in each area – a 6th form, community and technical college to try and cut down the number of colleges. SN said she was in support of having different types of colleges but not if they are competing against each other. The government will need to ensure colleges are each doing what they do well and the challenge is that it may be the FE directors making those decisions. JD asked whether this EDSK report recommendations are currently in consultation and also was she correct in saying there is nothing in the report about schools. SN that both the AoC and FE sector are responding to the report recommendations and confirmed there is nothing within it about schools.

SR said he agreed with the last set of comments and extended congratulations to the exec team and college staff for all their hard work.

RoB asked in terms of the recruitment targets whether we know what it is that helped increase numbers so this can be captured for next year. SN said that there were a number of different reasons for the increase including other partnerships, the College absorbing every single opportunity that comes our way and the fact that our reputation is good as results have gone up.

NOTED

THE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

7. Final Strategic Plan 2020-21

SN spoke to the final strategic plan which captures and reflects what was discussed at strategy day and the agreed changes. She confirmed the College is well placed to address the Green agenda. The Chair commented that there are too many values and it would be pithier if we could reduce them to 3 or 4 and also merge some of them. SN explained that these are decided by staff in consultation as it is the staff that own them, therefore she was suggesting that the college can revisit them for next year.

TB said he was pleased to see all the additions re the green agenda and thanked SN and the team for that.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED

THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-21

8. Strategic Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) 2020-21

SN spoke to the report and advised new Governors that KPI's are reported on at every Board and Committee meeting. This report summarises the new targets for the academic year 2020/21 and the KPI's that will be used to monitor monthly progress.

SN then went through the targets and progress made as at September 2020 which show a good start to the year. She advised that following the change in modes of lesson delivery the overall attendance for college has been split into three to show Overall college attendance (everything including Online): 78.3%, attendance on site only: 78.31% and attendance online only: 76.24%. All the Key Financial Indicators are RAG rated Green. The Forecast Surplus, staff cost/cash ratio available end of October

RiB asked what can be done to improve attendance as the rates have been static over the past three years. SN said this is being addressed through a new tutorial structure in place to look at what needs to change and what else the College needs to do to ensure attendance improves. So we are exploring other ways to improve this year. TB commented that this is something that has always been an issue for him and asked whether the College is involving parents. SN responded that the College engages with parents all the time but there are many who do not always want to engage. The College looks at many ways and opportunities to engage parents and even provide

interpreters. A new head of Student Services has recently been appointed and he will be looking at attendance as part of his remit but students also have to take responsibility. A huge amount is done with parents but there is a lot of apathy. SR asked whether there is a cut off age when the College are not permitted contact students' parents. NC responded that the majority of students join and start a course when they are under 18 and the College will continue to report to parents until they finish that course, however there are confidentiality issues as to what matters can be discussed with parents.

NOTED

THE STRATEGIC KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI'S) 2020-21 AND PROGRESS MADE TO DATE

9. i. Verbal update on Covid 19 Planning Committee meetings

The Chair advised that the Covid 19 Planning Committee had convened three meetings since June, including one earlier that day where it had received a very comprehensive presentation from NC.

ii. Business Continuity Policy (BCP) – response to Covid 19 pandemic and progress against Action Plan

SN spoke to the BCP and which takes in all the government advice which is updated weekly. All SLT contribute to the BCP and all updates are in a different colour. SN said the main concerns are the likelihood of another lockdown and students being tested positive resulting in the College having to ask staff to isolate which has a huge impact on the organisation. The College has exhausted all its resources in ensuring all classes are supervised.

In the BCP there are three models of delivery planned for September 2020:

- Plan A: all learners back on site in September,
- Plan B: some learners on site, scalable 25% to 100%,
- Plan C: all learning online (second spike)

The College is currently working to Plan B- a scalable proportion of students on site. Within Plan B there are four potential levels of scalable delivery identified:

- Option 1 - 85% of learners on site
- Option 2 - 75% of learners on site
- Option 3 - 50% of learners on site
- Option 4 - 25% of learners on site

Option 3 will be put in place after half term and we have planned ahead and are ready to implement any option at short notice. The plans are robust so if we go into another lockdown they can be switched immediately.

TB asked how the College interacts with subcontractors in terms of Covid 19. SN responded that all subcontractors have to comply with the College's BCP.

iii. Risk Register as at September 2020

BP reported on the College's progress against the detailed Risk Register which has been updated for October and compares to the last review in July 2020. BP said that the risk register is very comprehensive and for the benefit of the new governors he explained how it is scored and rated. BP then highlighted the following:

- All updates are in red and all are very positive
- A lot of risks that were in green are now moving into amber as we go into the new academic Year
- The College is managing, controlling and mitigating against all know risks well in this uncertain climate.

- The College is making good progress against the identified risks and has been assured through the positive outcomes of recent internal audit reviews that the College has made progress in terms of compliance and risk mitigation. However, when considering COVID-19 risks, there are areas to be RAG rated as **AMBER** for the October 2020 review. The College has also indicated the Risk Target for all risks and opportunities is **GREEN**.
- **Top Key Risks that remain as Amber are:**
 - AIM 1:** Ensuring excellent learning, teaching and assessment leading to higher student achievement. Risks: 1.1 (now Green), 1.2 (now Green), 1.5, 1.6 Opportunity: 1.1 (now Green),
 - AIM 2:** Excellent learner support providing a high level of satisfaction for learners and stakeholders. 2.1, 2.5 (now Green), Risk - none in Amber or Red
 - AIM 3:** Organisational excellence in all that we do. Risks 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 (now Green), 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 (now Green), 5.5, 5.6
 - AIM 6:** Establishing sound financial health for the College. Risks 6.1,6.4 (now Green), 6.2, 6.5

NOTED

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

10. I.i Financial Monitoring Summary

BP spoke to the Summary report and highlighted the following:

- Recruitment is on target although not all of it is funded, but the College will put forward a business case for additional funding as we also have waiting lists.
- The College will take advantage of all government initiatives to generate more funds.
- Statement of comprehensive income shows how the College intends to spend the additional funds to ensure students get additional catch up learning.
- Although there is additional income there are also additional costs. For instance the College is providing free school meals for learners who aren't coming into College as we need to support learners in the best way possible.
- The College is looking for growth funding for adult learning with a range of courses to upskill and retrain them.

SN confirmed that we will continue to recruit as the College will get lagged funding for next year; however this year will be a challenge to fund these additional learners in the budget.

SN commented that the government is expecting colleges to take on additional adult learners yet in terms of extra funding we have to keep challenging and fighting for it.

JL said it was good to know we are on the front foot with everything and that the key for adult learners is upskilling for the work force.

I. ii. Management Accounts to 31 August 2020

BP spoke to the Summary report and reported that the Management accounts shows the College is doing well with a forecast surplus of £106k to July 2021 (£157k in July 2020 subject to audit).

The one concern to highlight is that the Committee who manage's Harrow council local government pension decided to sell at the bottom of the market so the college has taken a £2.8m hit. This will have an impact in the pension valuation in the balance sheet but will not affect the I&E or the bank covenants. BP said he will bring the actuarial pension valuation to both the Audit and Resources Committees.

The Board discussed this issue and agreed that the pension fund's actions should be challenged as it will leave many institutions out of pocket and there should be some transparency in terms of what advice they were getting.

JL suggested and it was agreed that she speak to one of her council colleagues who may be able to find out more information and that SR who had had some experience on his area, could be part of that discussion.

It was further agreed that BP would take this up with Harrow and copy in JL on any correspondence.

II. Sub-Contracting Strategy

BP reported on the College's Sub-contracting/ Partnership Strategy which has been produced in response to the new ESFA guidance for Colleges to reduce their reliance on subcontracting. BP then highlighted the following:

- The College is seeking to reduce 16-18 subcontracting to 10-15% through more direct provision, working with organisations to recruit directly and learners' part of college as well as co-delivery.
- The College is no longer able to work with people at a geographical distance under the new rules.
- The strategy has been developed within the context of government priorities, national priorities demographics, local and regional priorities and the labour market.
- Subcontracted provisions will be provided where the College is limited by facilities or physical space so we can ensure every learner has access to all learning.
- The College is a charity therefore we make sure funds received through sub-contracting are re-invested for the benefit of the learners.
- The areas of delivery will centralise the geographic pool in London and Hertfordshire with a focus on school leavers and the adult market.
- All the College's quality assurance processes will be applied to the direct and co delivery models.

SB asked how the Board will get visibility of the quality assurance. SN said that the reports do not separate them as it is all part of our provision so we wouldn't know the impact of sub-contractors as opposed to college delivery. However there is robust monitoring in place and if anything goes awry this will be brought to the attention of governors so there are no surprises at the end.

APPROVED SUB-CONTRACTING STRATEGY

NOTED

i. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS UP TO 31 MAY 2020

ii. MONITORING REPORT

AHE, the student Governor, joined the meeting at this point and was asked whether she had anything she would like to contribute. She advised that some of the students found the temperature checks at the gate to be invasive in the way the thermometer was pressed against their foreheads. SN advised that the only way to take the temperature and it's the process and there is not a lot that can be done about it. All students should be aware why and how temperatures are being taken. NC said she will ask all tutors to reiterate that this is the only way to do it.

SN asked AHE whether in terms of safety do students understand why they are in bubbles AEH said they are very well aware however being teenagers they do not always take other people into considerations. SN responded that the risks need to be understood better so more work needs to be done on this with student body. SN said she would like to meet the student body outside this meeting to discuss solutions and consider what options we need to consider to help address this.

AEH asked why, if students are wearing masks, are they not able to mix. SN said the college policy is that different students in different bubbles cannot mix. NC thanked AHE for her comments and said she will include information about this in the student bulletin.

AHE withdrew from the meeting.

11. Governance

i. Chair's Report of the Governance Committee meeting 13 October 2020

The Chair reported that the Governance Committee had:

- Been updated on the Vice Principal recruitment process. The closing for applications is 15th October with shortlisting taking place on 16th October.
- Received the Governance Self-Assessment, Skills Audit and Training and Development summary report of the presentation at the Governors strategy day and agreed some changes.
- Noted that Alison Woolcock's departure leaves a vacancy on the Board for an external member and also on the Curriculum and Quality Committee of which she was Vice Chair. It was agreed as there are so many new members on that committee, to consider a suitable person for the role at the next meeting of this committee. It was also agreed that NS will continue the recruitment of new governors' process in an effort to recruit 2 or 3 more as, along with this vacancy, one or two governors may be stepping down next year.
- The remainder of the matters discussed and recommendations made to the Board follow as substantive items

ii. Academic Staff Governor and Student Governor appointment

NS advised that as there had been three nominations for the Academic Staff Governor role an election was held and Ramin Hashemian, a Lecturer in Adult Skills for Life was voted in.

NS reported that further to the call for student governor nominations, two students were put forward. As the student voice is a vital component of the Governance of the College, NS proposed that the Board consider appointing both students which would give us a total of three student governors as there is already one student Governor on board. However in order to do so the Board would need to change the composition in our Instrument & Articles to reflect this. The Governance Committee having considered this proposal were happy to endorse it and agreed to recommend to the Board approval and the change of wording to the Instrument 2 (1) as follows:

Composition of the Corporation

2—(1) the Corporation shall consist of—

From

(d) two members who are students at the institution and have been nominated and elected by their fellow students, or if the Corporation so decides, by a recognised association representing such students ("student members").

To

At least one and up to three members who are students at the institution and have been nominated and elected by their fellow students, or if the Corporation so decides, by a recognised association representing such students ("student members").

The Board approved the changes and noted the nominations of the following two students as student governors for this year:

- Monika Gangwani who is studying for an Award in ESOL Skills For Life (S&L)
- Azita Obaydi who is studying for BTEC Nat Ext Dipl in Applied Science-Medical L3 Y1

iii. Governance Action Plan (GAP) 2020-21

The Board considered the GAP which has been updated for 2020-21 to reflect actions completed and additional actions agreed at the Governors Strategy day. NS advised that she had omitted to include the agreed aim to be a learning and reflective Board. Subject to this addition the GAP was approved as recommended by the Governance Committee.

iv. Confirmation of Governing Body and Committee Membership 2020/ 2021

The Board considered the Governing Body and Committee Membership 2020/ 2021 and approved the Governance Committee's recommendation to appoint Sundeep Bhandari to the membership of the Remuneration Committee.

v. Governors' Attendance 2019/ 2020

The Board considered the report and noted that overall attendance at meetings in 2019-20 was 73%, a disappointing decrease of 15% compared to the previous year's and 7% below the national average.

NS reported that the majority of the absence was due to several members who have subsequently resigned due to being overcommitted elsewhere. In addition attendance by the student governors was poor. If their attendance is excluded the rate improves slightly to just under 75%.

The Chair advised that the Governance Committee had discussed this and agreed that going forward the data would be better defined by arranging it in the following categories - staff, students, external governors and Chairs - which will contextualize and make future reports sharper.

vi. Governor Links

The Board considered the revised Governor Links list for 2020-21 which had been recommended by the Governance Committee for approval. NC highlighted some of the staff links that should be changed. Subject to these changes the revised list was approved.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVED

- i. GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN (GAP) 2020-21**
- ii. CONFIRMATION OF GOVERNING BODY AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2020/2021**
- iii. AMENDMENT TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE CORPORATION IN THE INSTRUMENT AND ARTICLES**
- iv. GOVERNOR LINKS LIST FOR 2020-21**

RATIFIED

- i. THE APPOINTMENT OF RAMIN HASHEMIAN AS A STAFF GOVERNOR FOR A PERIOD OF 4 YEARS UNTIL 31 JULY 2024 AND TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE.**
- ii. THE APPOINTMENT OF MONIKA GANGWANI AS A STUDENT GOVERNOR FOR A PERIOD OF 1 YEAR UNTIL 31 JULY 2021 AND TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE.**
- iii. THE APPOINTMENT OF AZITA OBAYDI AS A STUDENT GOVERNOR FOR A PERIOD OF 1 YEAR UNTIL 31 JULY 2021 AND TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE.**

NOTED

- i. GOVERNORS' ATTENDANCE 2019/ 2020**
- ii. REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

