MINUTES

BOLTON COLLEGE BOARD

Minutes for the meeting held on Tuesday 5 April 2022 – (PART A)

Time: **5.00pm**
Venue: **Boardroom / Video Conference**

Members present:
Dr Andrew Roberts (Chair)
Mr Andrew Fawcett (Vice Chair)
Miss Rameen Ambar
Dr Adrian Brooks
Mrs Kate Flood
Dr Sue Lomax
Mr Tom Martin
Ms Stephanie Nixon
Mr Tony Unsworth
Dr Gill Waugh
Professor George Holmes
Mr Bill Webster (Principal)

In Attendance:
Mr Mark Burgoyne (Deputy Principal)
Miss Deborah Bradburn (Clerk)
Mr Garry Westwater (Executive Director of Finance)
Ms Jane Marsh (Executive Director of HR)
Mrs Karen Westsmith (Director of Curriculum and Quality)
Mrs Kate Wallace (Director of Curriculum, Employer and Student Services)
Mr Tim Openshaw (Assistant Vice Chancellor (Planning & Student Experience) (UOB)
Miss Jill Hebden (Minute Taker)

1. SECTION A - BUSINESS MATTERS

1.1 WELCOME TO MEMBERS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which commenced at 5.09pm. He confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

1.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Chris Ball, Gulnaz Brennan, Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, Rebecca Davison, Fardean Farooq and Sharon Martin.

1.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. Standing declarations were noted particularly in relation to the University of Bolton reciprocal governance arrangements and also paid positions.

The Clerk declared an interest in Item 2.6 (iv) of the Agenda: Conflict of Interest Policy.

1.4 REQUEST FOR AN ITEM TO BE UNSTARRED

Members were reminded that starred items on the Agenda would be taken as read rather than being presented. However, Members could ask questions of the report author, or ask for any item to be unstarred for full discussion.

There were no requests for items to be unstarred for discussion.

1.5* MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Minutes of the Meeting held 8 February 2022 - general publication

The minutes of the meeting held 8 February 2022 had been previously circulated to members for consideration.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record and authorised for publication (Part A).

1.6 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Members had received a summary of actions arising/outstanding from previous meetings, noting that all actions had been completed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the matters arising be noted.

1.7 MINUTES (SUB-COMMITTEES):

1.7 (i) Standards & Performance Committee of 16 March 2022

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held 16 March 2022

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be received as detailed.

The Chair of the Standards and Performance Committee noted the changes in place for English and maths. There was also the new qualification of ETQ's that would open up a new area of provision for the College.

Governor Questions:

Was the number of apprenticeship withdrawals a cause for concern?

No, this figure is in line with previous years and performance is extremely good. The national rate was 57.3% and the College was significantly above this at 65.3%. The number of withdrawals was cumulative over a period of time with different circumstances related to those withdrawals.

2. SECTION B - COLLEGE MATTERS

2.1 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal presented the sixteenth report under the 'Designated Institution' Bolton College, which provided an overview of key issues. He highlighted the following points:

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update:

- The College no longer held any stock of lateral flow tests and would not receive any further free tests.
- The College had been chosen by the DfE to take part in a review of the College's COVID-19 response and work on mental health and wellbeing.

School White Paper:

The School White Paper and learner attainment would be the basis of discussions with the Director of Children's Services at Bolton Council.

Adult Budget:

- The College's underperformance on adult education delivery was a legacy from COVID-19. A lot of work had been undertaken to narrow the gap between the learning provision delivered and contracted target.
- GMCA had not yet confirmed their response to contract under-delivery.

Matrix Inspection:

The College had a successful external inspection review for the re-accreditation of the Matrix Standard (the sector kite mark for information, advice and guidance). The review report, as provided to the Board, confirmed that all previous identified strengths had remained with new strengths identified. The matrix accreditation was important as it demonstrated that the College provided independent and impartial advice.

Wave 3 Capital Bid:

- Work on the capital bid was underway with a risk of cost overrun currently forecast at £300k above the original budget. The DfE had confirmed that there would be no additional funding available to support any current and ongoing cost increases.
- The Wave 4 bid for a building extension had been submitted with a response expected in May 2022.

British Sign Language Bill:

A number of College hearing impaired learners and members of staff had travelled to London for the British Sign Language Bill on 18 March 2022. With support from local MPs learners were able to engage with the debate.

Governor Questions:

Was there an emerging theme through the Skills Development Fund 2022-23 and was the College likely to submit a bid?

Only one collaborative and substantive focused bid would be accepted. If the bid was skills focused and directly linked to the skills agenda it may have a chance. Work was ongoing and a decision would be made as a Group.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Principal's Report be noted.

2.2 FINANCIAL UPDATE INCLUDING LOAN COVENANTS

The Executive Director of Finance presented the Financial Update and Loan Covenants, the following key points were highlighted:

- The operating surplus had reduced from £799k to £649k prior to any potential clawback of GMCA adult education funding.
- A pay award effective from 1 April 2022 had been communicated to all staff.
- Cash balance was strong at £5.8m at the end of February 2022, ahead of forecast subject to any funding clawback.
- The ESFA financial health grade of 'outstanding' remained.

Governor Questions:

Will an over recruitment on apprenticeships be unfunded?

This goes through the digital apprenticeship service with all provision funded. The levy is discussed with all businesses on engagement.

It was **RESOLVED** that the:

i) Reduced operating surplus at LEO2 was noted.

ii) Potential permanent change to the Operating Leverage banking covenant was noted.

iii) The financial pressures facing the College draft budget for 2022/23 was noted.

2.3 COLLEGE KPI DASHBOARD

The Assistant Vice Chancellor (Planning & Student Experience) (UoB) presented the College KPI Dashboard, which detailed the key sustainability indicators and those indicators on areas monitored by the ESFA.

The main areas of risk related to adult education funding and English and maths that had been discussed at length. No new performance data was currently available although a lot of activity was taking place.

2.4 ANNUAL EQUALITY & DIVERSITY REPORT

The Director of Curriculum and Quality presented the Annual Equality and Diversity Report and highlighted the following key points:

- The Rainbow Flag journey continued to be developed.
- The Single Equality Scheme had been reviewed and rewritten.
- The number of partner quotes included in the report had increased due to the successful Bolton Family Magazine.
- The gun and knife crime pastoral delivery project had been well received with the College involved in a further pastoral delivery project on sexual harassment and consent, the Mayor of Manchester was also involved in the project.
- The College continued to work closely with the Council and supported it in getting key health messages into the local community.
- The Board demographic data showed that the College remained within the 3% differential parameter.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Equality and Diversity Report was noted.

2.5 MATHS AND ENGLISH UPDATE:

The Director of Curriculum, Employer and Learning Support presented the Maths and English update noting the following key points:

- The action plan showed the progress made on programme improvements with attendance improving since last year.
- English and maths continued to be a key focus in performance enhancement reviews.
- The College had worked on new strategies with the November re-sit achievements in line with the summer achievement.
- Various actions had been taken which included a University and College working group.

The Board noted that the College was in a good position as part of the University Group with the skills and support that the University could provide in this area.

Governor Questions:

What had caused the rapid improvement in attendance?

Attendance had been monitored since September with each subject area provided with learner attendance reports. The data could be reviewed at a granular level with a stronger level of ownership and behaviour for success being implemented consistently.

2.6* STARRED ITEMS

(i) GENDER PAY ANNUAL REPORT

Members had received and reviewed the Gender Pay Annual Report

It was **RESOLVED** that the Gender Pay Annual Report be noted.

(ii) HR STRATEGY (PEOPLE STRATEGY) 2021/23

Members had received and reviewed the HR Strategy (People Strategy).

It was **RESOLVED** that the HR Strategy (People Strategy) be noted.

(iii) COMMONALITY OF INTERESTS POLICY

Members had received and reviewed the Commonality of Interests Policy which required annual review.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Commonality of Interests Policy be noted.

(iv) CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Members had received and reviewed the Conflict of Interest Policy which required annual review.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Conflict of Interest Policy be approved.

(v) ANTI-BRIBERY POLICY

Members had received and reviewed the Anti-Bribery Policy which required annual review.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Anti-Bribery Policy be approved.

3. SECTION C - UNIVERSITY GROUP MATTERS

3.1 SECTION 28 FOLLOW UP REVIEW

The Chair provided a review of the Section 28 Follow Up Review visit, highlighting the following key points from the verbal feedback provided:

- College governance was working effectively with sufficient autonomy. The College senior management team and Board members valued the additional oversight provided by the University with governance considered inclusive and viewed as a Group.
- Six independent College Governors had been effective. Three College Governors on the University Board ensured that both Boards were updated on activity and provided for a shared strategy.
- A cabinet of all senior leaders in the Group was helpful.
- Both the College and University had benefited from the merger with a common vision, purpose and values that were embedded across the Group that would ensure continuation should there be a change in senior leadership.

4. SECTION D - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 MEETING EVALUATION

The Board agreed that it would be beneficial to continue to have Maths & English as a standing item on the Board agenda.

5. SECTION E – FUTURE MEETINGS

5.1 Governors' Meetings

The dates and times of future meetings were noted as follows:

Board Meeting - Tuesday 28 June 2022 at 5.00pm

Committees -

Resources – Tuesday 7 June 2022 at 5.00pm

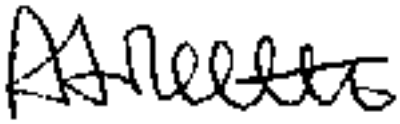
Audit - Thursday 9 June 2022 at 5.00pm

Standards & Performance – Tuesday 21 June 2022 at 2.00pm

Search & Governance - Tuesday 21 June 2022 at 5.00pm

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and the meeting closed at 6.10pm

Chair's Signature:



Date: 28 June 2022