



**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING  
HELD ON THURSDAY 20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

**Present:** Gary Baines, Lucy Barrow, Sue Higginson (Principal), Tim Kelly (Chair), Richard Mawdsley, Phil McKeown, Ian Parkinson, Jayne Winders, Simon Wrigley (staff governor)

**In attendance:** Ste Bailey, Executive Assistant Principal – Student Services  
Christine Carter, Vice Principal – Curriculum  
Phillip Jones, Vice Principal – Quality  
Nikki Leising, Financial Controller  
Ryan Morris, Administrator to Governors  
Michael Norton, Deputy Principal  
Lesley Venables, Clerk to the Governors  
Laura Wilcockson, Director of Human Resources

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Lucky Ali (external governor), Paul Smith (external governor) and Gary Doyle (external governor). The absence of Gill Roberts was noted.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2. The following standing interests were declared:

- Lucy Barrow – employed by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.
- Tim Kelly - any matters relating to the Merseyside Pension Fund.

**BOARD MINUTES**

3. **Resolved** That the minutes of the meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (parts 1 and 2) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Governors received a progress report on the actions identified at the previous meeting and noted that all of these had been completed or were in progress.

**WRITTEN RESOLUTION**

5. The Board noted the outcome of the recent written resolution on the staff pay proposals for 2022/2023, which had been approved remotely by a majority of external governors.

**PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE**

6. The Principal gave a verbal update on recent College activities, including very positive feedback from the Governors' Strategic Seminar.

## CHAIR'S UPDATE

7. The Board received for information a report on the Chair's activities since the July 2022 meeting.

## 2021/2022 OUTCOMES TO INFORM SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

8 The Principal reported that this information had formed part of the agenda for the seminar held earlier in the day and would be monitored throughout the year by the Quality & Standards Scrutiny Committee. An assessment of performance against key indicators would be prepared in advance of any Ofsted inspection and would be presented to the next Board meeting.

## COMPLAINTS 2021/2022

9. Governors received for information a report on complaints in 2021/2022. There had been a total of 31 complaints during the year (compared to 38 in 2020/2021), 6 of which had been upheld. It was noted that the majority of complaints related to the issue of certificates by awarding bodies, payment of tuition fees and staffing.

10. All complaints were investigated thoroughly and the Quality Department continually analysed the information resulting from complaints, to identify and address any common themes.

## ANNUAL STUDENT SUPPORT RETURNS 2021/2022

### 16-19 Bursary

11. The Deputy Principal presented a report on the allocation of 16-19 Bursary funds in 2021/2022 and the Bursary Policy and procedures for 2022/2023. It was noted that the College's forecasting procedures were highly accurate and that the full allocation (£76,657) had been spent.

12 In response to a question from a governor on the rules for the allocation of these funds the Deputy Principal reported that the management team assessed the level of need amongst the student cohort and that the amount for free meals had been increased for 2022/2023 against the background of additional hardship due to the national cost of living crisis.

13 Governors were advised that there was a significant underspend against both these elements in the current year, mainly because students were not using public transport and did not collect travel passes and the lower uptake of kits and equipment within curriculum areas. The Deputy Principal undertook to check that the College would be able to carry forward £105K of the under-spend into 2022/2023.

14 The Board felt that the management team needed a degree of flexibility in the allocation of these funds to maximise the support provided to students. The policy would be updated accordingly and governors would receive information on the level of expenditure through the management accounts.

15. **Resolved**
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| 1 | That, subject to its rewording to enable staff to have a degree of flexibility in its application, the Policy and Procedure for the 2022/2023 16-18 Bursary Fund be approved. |
| 2 | That the Chair be given delegated authority to sign off the final version of the policy   |

## **Learner Support Funds (LSF) and Advanced Learner Loan (ALL) Bursary**

16. The Deputy Principal presented a report on the LSF and ALL Bursary operations for 2021/2022, together with planned activities for 2022/2023. The purpose of these funds was to provide financial support to students to enable them to overcome financial barriers to studying at the College.

17. **Resolved** That the Policy and Procedures for the allocation of the LSF and ALL Bursary for 2022/2023 be approved.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY 2022/2023**

18. **Resolved** That the Health & Safety Policy for 2022/2023 be approved

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE – 28<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

19. The Chair of the Audit Committee presented for information the draft minutes from the Audit Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

20. The Committee had received the Internal Auditor's Annual Report for 2021/2022, which had graded the College's internal control systems as 'adequate and effective'. An update on Risk Management had also been received, with no significant changes identified.

21. Governors had recommended for approval the ESFA's Self-Assessment Regularity Questionnaire and Annexes.

22. **Resolved** That the Regularity Audit Self-Assessment questionnaire be approved and signed by the Principal and the Chair of the Board.

## **FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 4<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

20. The Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee provided a verbal report on the inaugural meeting held on 4th October 2022.

21. Governors had discussed in detail the management accounts, an update on capital projects and had recommended for approval a revised People Strategy for 2022/2025. The HR Director explained that an annual update on the organisation's priorities within the Strategy would be presented to the Board.

22. A governor asked whether the College was experiencing difficulties in attracting and retaining staff, particularly in non-teaching roles. The Principal reported that a more flexible working model may be required as part of normal practice for some non-front-facing posts in order to attract high quality staff.

23. The Committee had requested a paragraph to be added to its Terms of Reference enable it to address any urgent capital items between scheduled meetings through chair's action. A revised document would be submitted for approval at the December Board meeting.

24. **Resolved -**

1	That the revised People Strategy for 2022-2025 be approved
2	That the updated Terms of Reference be submitted for approval to the December Board meeting

## **GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE – 5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

25. The Chair of the Governance & Search Committee provided a verbal report on the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

26. Members had met recently with a potential candidate for governorship who had retired from the College earlier in the year. However, this individual was no longer eligible to be appointed as an external governor as they were undertaking a temporary teaching role within the College. Further work on governor recruitment would continue throughout the year to fill any existing and future vacancies.

27. The Board received a summary of the outcomes of the governor review process for 2021/2022, which had been undertaken by the Chair of the Board and the Clerk. It was noted that they would be working with the Principal to address any actions resulting from these discussions.

28. The Annual Report on Governance for 2020/2021 and a report on current and future membership issues had been discussed by the Committee and the Chair highlighted the need for improving the Board's diversity and succession planning to be considered in relation to any recruitment strategy.

29. The Committee had also received recommendations on the reclassification of confidential minutes. It was agreed by the Board that any matters relating to safeguarding should be automatically classified as 'confidential' and this would be built into a revised version of the Standing Orders.

30. **Resolved**
1. That the action plan resulting from the governor review process for 2021/2022 be approved.
  2. That proposals on the reclassification of confidential minutes for 2021/2022 be approved.
  3. That the Standing Orders be updated to ensure that all safeguarding matters were classified as 'confidential' within the minutes

## **QUALITY AND STANDARDS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

31. The Chair of the Quality and Standards Scrutiny (QSS) Committee summarised the main points of the QSS meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October.

32. Governors had discussed a number of items related to the Balanced Scorecard. Positive outcomes of work experience and significant improvements in Level 3 courses had been noted, together with good progress on Apprenticeships, with a higher level of scrutiny that was now being rolled out to other areas of provision (such as HE). Information had been received on the successful round of student events and social media coverage which continued to enhance the College's reputation.

33. Changes to the College's subcontractor (JM) were noted, with no impact on the financial position or quality arrangements. The Annual Quality Assessment for HE and Quality Framework were recommended for approval.

34. **Resolved** That the Quality Assurance Frameworks for both further and higher education provision for 2022/2023 be approved.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

35. Governors noted that the next meeting would be held in the newly-created Independent Living Suite at Conway Park to enable governors to view this facility.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Signed: T. Gray Date: 4.5.23

Chair

