

**Greater Brighton Metropolitan College  
Board of Governors**

**Minutes of a meeting held at Northbrook MET, West Durrington Campus boardroom  
and virtually via Google Meet  
Tuesday 20 October at 3.00pm**

**Present:** Duncan Adams, Steve Bassam (Vice-Chair), Sue Berelowitz (Chair),  
Martin Colyer, Andrew Green (Interim CEO), Claire Hopkins (Vice-  
Chair), Sean Jacob, David Russell, Frank Toop

**In attendance:** Jon Rollings (COO), Helena Thomas (Principal), Sarah Box  
(Governance Manager), Shirley Collier (NLG) - observing

**Apologies:** Natalie Brett

**WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

10. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, in particular, Frank Toop who was attending to his first meeting. David Russell would be joining at 3.45pm and Natalie Brett's apologies were noted. It was explained that Shirley Collier (NLG) would be observing the meeting in order to provide feedback to the Chair, and was thanked for her support to date.
11. It was also noted that the Staff Governor had tendered his resignation. The Chair and Governance Manager had both written to him to thank him for his contribution and commitment to being a governor. In addition to the agreed agenda, an extra confidential staff item would be added to the end of the meeting.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 27 July 2020 and the Special Meeting of 15 September 2020**

12. The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2020 and the Special Meeting of 15 September 2020 were agreed as a true record and the Chair's electronic signature would be applied.
13. Part 1 - Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2020 for public record.
14. Part 2 - Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2020 and the Special Meeting of 15 September - confidential.

***Approved:***

***The Board formally approved the minutes of the 27 July 2020 and the Special Meeting of 15 September as a true and accurate record.***

**ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

15. The Board received and noted a schedule outlining the progress of actions from the minutes of the last meeting which were all complete or due for report at a later date.

16. The Chair noted that the workshop with the CEO of BHCC and officers was due to take place this week and the suggested date for the November strategy session was 25 November.

## **ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT AND POLICY**

17. The Board were advised that the report provided a summary of progress against key priorities. The Lead Governor for Safeguarding outlined key areas to note stating that the data in the risk assessment was reported from June 2020, this would be updated at the beginning of November in time for the next Safeguarding Board meeting. There were also changes to the key safeguarding roles within the College, as the Principal had now adopted the role of DSL. The Board were advised that the NSPCC would be delivering training to upskill and extend the number of staff who are DSL trained.
18. The Principal noted that the Safer Recruitment training listed in the 2019/20 priority list was now complete and outlined some of the key areas of focus for 2020/21 including the enhanced online safety for students and staff. In response to a query she noted the very small number of part-time Electively Home Schooled students, and explained that GB MET had developed bespoke safeguarding protocols for this group.
19. In discussion the Board noted the safeguarding data final year summary in particular the number of child protection and mental health related incidences. The Principal explained that mental health training had been extended to Teaching and Learning coaches, pastoral mentors, Deputy DSLs and lead mentors with safeguarding responsibilities. She reported that this work was supported by the Health and Wellbeing centre.
20. The Chair stated that the data provided assurance that safeguarding issues are being addressed and that lower numbers would be more of a concern. The headcount data was also provided to the Board and it was explained that the resource had been increased to deal with the increase in number of referrals. It was also noted that the risk related to hosting of events or speakers would be covered by the Freedom of Speech and Expression policy due for approval at December Board.
21. The Board agreed that the policy presented could be approved subject to the amendments discussed.

***RESOLVED: That the Safeguarding and PREVENT policy 20/21 was approved by the Board subject to amendments.***

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY AND DISABILITY STATEMENT**

22. The Board received the draft policy and statement and a discussion was held on the Board of Governors' role in the division of responsibilities section of the policy. It was noted that the demographic of the cohort and the communities would be provided as part of the SAR summary statement and the Board would strive to reflect this diversity as closely as possible.
23. Governors also considered whether this diversity should also be reflected in the SLT staff structures, and in response to a query, the Principal confirmed that the LGBTQIA+ and BLM priorities would be addressed via the Equality and Diversity Action Plan.
24. The Board approved the policy subject to the amendments discussed.

***RESOLVED: That the Equality and Diversity Policy and Disability Statement were approved by the Board subject to amendments.***

## **MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT**

25. The Board received the draft Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement. The COO noted that it had not changed substantially since the last approval date.

**RESOLVED: That the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement be approved by the Board subject to amendment to annual turnover.**

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

26. The Chair of the Finance Committee confirmed that the first two formal meetings of the committee had taken place on the 23 September and 7 October. To date, the committee had focused on the detail in the Recovery Plan, considering all elements of the Estates Strategy and plans to manage the overheads and liquidity during the recovery phase.

27. Committee members were thanked for their time and participation and for covering the detail of the Recovery Plan in depth.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE REPORT**

28. The Chair thanked David Russell for stepping in to chair the T&L Committee meeting in the absence of Natalie Brett, and he gave a brief overview of the previous day's meeting. It was explained that the first meeting had been convened in order to review the HE Institution Academic Health Report (IAHR) for 2019/20 and action plan for 2020/21. The report set out performance data and student feedback and clear actions for improvement to close the performance gaps highlighted.

29. The Committee had requested further detail describing how the actions would address issues highlighted in previous reports and to note how cultural issues will be addressed by the Recovery Plan.

**RESOLVED: That the IAHR be approved by written resolution, timed to meet the University of Brighton deadline.**

## **RECOVERY PLAN SIGN OFF**

30. The Chair reported that a case conference had taken place with the ESFA and FEC earlier in the day and the draft Recovery Plan had received positive feedback and support from both stakeholders. The ESFA would accept the final version of the plan following submission at the end of October and track progress against the action plan. The requirement for a SPA would be based on the options analysis due to take place at the strategic away day. It was also noted that the FEC would be conducting a virtual stocktake visit on 10 November.

31. The Interim CEO thanked Governors for their initial feedback on the draft Recovery Plan and considered that the result was a practical, workable document to ensure the future of the organisation. Members were invited to provide feedback on the final version, and in discussion the following points were noted:

- Ensuring consistency across the plan with regards to the estates rationalisation, cash flow, operational savings, going concern and debt reduction. Some of the detail in the financial appendices should be included in the main part of the report for clarity.
- Incorporating all recommendations from the FEC.

- Articulation of the vision for growth, offsetting the challenges of apprenticeships and international.
- Definition of the USP and relationship with employers
- Further detail on the approach to culture and people and how this will bring the desired impact. Coaching and leadership will be central to the plan and processes to monitor cultural change will be outlined.
- Enhancements to the Digital Strategy workstream, outlining how targeted investment will bring return. The Interim CEO confirmed that the strategy will be developed and enhanced by the new Director of Curriculum Development and Digital and informed by sector best practice.

**ACTION: that the final version of the Recovery Plan would be circulated to the Board for final comment in advance of the submission to the ESFA.**

## **CEO REPORT**

32. Governors noted that the new committee structure would bring a change in the way the information previously reported in the CEO report was presented. Much of the detail previously considered at Board would be covered by the T&L, Finance, Audit & Risk and HR and Remuneration Committees. The CEO presentation at Board meetings would now consist of an update on Government policy and impact on FE, progress against each strategic objective, Securing our Future (Recovery Plan) activity and news and celebration of students.

### **Government Policy and impact on FE**

33. The AoC have written to Gillian Keegan with 20 urgent issues, including:
- a. Concern over GCSE retakes this autumn and student safety
  - b. Additional costs of exams for colleges (not allowed to charge)
  - c. Digital poverty and impact on young people
  - d. Ability to find work placements for 16-18 year olds
  - e. Pressure on when Ofsted will recommence inspections
  - f. 40% of FE colleges have cash flow problems and the Aoc are asking DfE to suspend Notices to Improve
  - g. AEB reconciliation – GB MET 83%
  - h. Asking DfE if a two week circuit break was appropriate for Colleges
34. The Interim CEO confirmed that 12 positive Covid cases had been reported across the College and the decision had been taken the previous day to shift the day time provision at Broadwater to online only. The closure had been managed effectively and the campus remained open for any vulnerable students or those who required IT equipment. The situation would be kept under review and Governors would receive updates on any substantive changes to maintain oversight of the situation.
35. The Prime Minister's recent speech regarding FE was outlined, some of the key points included a clear shift away from apprenticeships dominating the policy, growth in levels 4 and 5, free level 3 for adults and a move to greater collaborations within the sector. Uncertainty continued around the spending review and a one or three year review was expected to be announced in due course. GB MET had received 1.2 million in capital funding which had been allocated to repairing roofs and replacing lifts. The Covid spend in the sector was reported to be over £100 million. The publication date Post 16 White Paper had not yet been confirmed. It was expected that it would focus on employer orientated mechanisms and recasting the FE sector as part of the industrial system.

### **Progress against Strategic Objectives**

36. The Interim CEO asked the Board for a steer on the reporting of strategic objectives in light of the Recovery Plan. Governors agreed that it would be sensible to focus on the RP priorities in order to avoid duplication, but that a complimentary set of high level objectives should be developed for the areas not included in the RP. In response to a query, the COO confirmed that the objectives detailed in the Annual Operating Plan had been incorporated into the Recovery Plan.
37. All objectives would be SMART and measurable and progress against them would be reported at future Board meetings. A public version would be produced to clearly outline the revised objectives.

### **Securing our Future**

38. Governors were given an overview of the Recovery Plan activity.
- A Leadership and Management restructure and an Assessor consultation had been announced on 19 October with communications out to staff. The proposed leadership structure was shared, it was reported that the ESFA had provided positive feedback on the structure.
  - Apprenticeship Recovery Board established
  - Curriculum staffing utilisation complete circa £150k saving
  - Teaching and Learning refocus
  - Staff webinars invitations
  - 1-2-1 meeting with all managers
  - Unions communicated with all areas for review
  - Programme manager seconded to run PMO
  - Maximising recruitment campaign
  - AEB action plan in place
  - Cultural change underway everyday

### **Celebration of Students**

39. Governors were given a selection of some of the recent student success stories.

### **COLLEGE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

40. The Principal presented slides outlining the achievement data. The overall college achievement was expected to remain broadly the same as last year at c88.5% (347 outcomes were yet to be confirmed).
41. In an analysis of the classroom based achievement by level, Governors were informed that the 16-18 achievement data was slightly reduced from the previous year. This had been attributed to the issues with Functional Skills delivery previously discussed at Board, which had now been bought in house as part of the new approach. Entry level for adults had seen a positive outcome. Level 1 achievement had increased for the third year in a row, so although below benchmark the improvements continued in the right direction.
42. Level 2 16-18 achievement was reported at 88.25 and Level 3 had increased to 90.8, above benchmark. Level 1 and Level 2 Adults had dipped just below benchmark but Level 3 showed an increase of 5%
43. Achievement by subject sector areas for all ages above and below the average level were shown, and the Principal highlighted the positive achievement for social sciences in particular. 49 courses were noted as below the national average.

44. The equality measures were illustrated separately on a slide and it was noted that achievement gaps were reducing but still required work. In particular, the gaps between BME and non BME students, LLDD and non LLDD and LAC and non LAC were noted as particular areas of focus.
45. The data for apprenticeship achievement for all ages and timely apprenticeship achievement for all ages was discussed. The Principal explained that the first Apprenticeship Board meeting/workshop had taken place and there was a genuine commitment to drive the quality of this area by all staff.
46. The enrolments data provided a positive picture, as the targets for FE and HE had been exceeded. The impact of the low apprenticeships enrolments was currently being reviewed. Attendance being considered and it was confirmed that looking at how app figs will impact . Attendance data showed a slight improvement compared to 2019/20, access to maths and English was being monitored.
47. The Board were encouraged to see the increase in enrolment numbers and noted that the information presented in this section would normally be discussed fully at Teaching and Learning Committee and then provided to full Board for information.

## **FINANCE**

48. The COO presented the Financial Update explaining that the Finance Committee would normally review the Management Accounts prior to the Board meeting.
49. It was noted that the July Management Accounts did not present the final funding claim (apprenticeships), FRS102 pension adjustments and audit adjustments. The overall position was reported in line with the projected forecast.
50. The full year pay was above forecast. The year-end reduction was lower than projection, mainly due to significant continuing agency costs in Construction, and Business and Computing, to cover vacancies. The year-end cash balance at below the phased forecast was noted as a timing variance only.
51. The September Management Accounts showed an EBITDA above budget. The income was reported below budget, which included some additional funding for ESFA and Adult contracts but this was offset by the downturn in apprenticeship recruitment. Adult fee income and International income was below budget to date. The positive position on cash was noted. It was confirmed that the rolling cash flow is currently indicative and under review as part of the Recovery Plan work, at this stage though it showed no in-year borrowing requirement.
52. The Board noted the risks to revenue and the requirement for additional revenue to offset the reduction. The COO explained that SLT were monitoring the risks to International income and there were cost mitigation measures in addition to the recovery plan

## **GOVERNANCE AND RECRUITMENT UPDATE**

53. Members approved the new approach to recruiting student governors in order to increase engagement and raise the profile of the learner voice on the Board. The Governance Manager explained that this would be achieved by recruiting directly from the Student Executive team. Amendments to the relevant sections of the Standing Orders were approved.

- 54. In light of the Staff Governor’s recent resignation from the Board, it was agreed that a recruitment campaign to enlist two staff governors would now be initiated. One would bring a teaching and learning perspective and the other a corporate services view.
- 55. Progress with the recruitment of new governors were noted and shortlisting and interviews were due to take place on 12 and 19 November respectively.
- 56. The Terms of Reference for the new Recovery Plan Steering Group were agreed and membership would be finalised in due course. The first meeting would take place on 3 November and would continue monthly thereafter.
- 57. The Board approved that the scope of RemCo would be extended to incorporate HR and staffing issues. The Chair of RemCo explained that the Committee required internal strategic HR advice in order to fulfill it’s duties and this was noted as a risk with the current structure.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2020**

- 58. The Board noted the Audit Committee minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2020.

**COLLEGE SEAL REPORT**

- 59. The Board noted the College Seal Report.

**INTER-CREDITOR DEED WRITTEN RESOLUTION DATED 25 SEPTEMBER 2020**

- 60. The Board noted the inter-creditor deed written resolution.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 21 December 2020

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**CONFIDENTIAL STAFFING ITEMS - RECORDED SEPARATELY IN PART 3 OF THE MINUTES**

*The Principal, COO and Governance Manager withdrew from the meeting.*

**REMUNERATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

CEO left the meeting.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Signature of Chair...  . Date.....21 December 2020.....