



## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF GOVERNORS INCLUDING SELF ASSESSMENT MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2024

**MEETING COMMENCED: 5.00 pm**

**MEETING ENDED: 7.10 pm**

**PRESENT:** Denys Rayner (Chair), Andy Berry (AB), Helen Stapleton (HS), Nick Skyrme (NS)(via Teams) (until 6.40 pm), Sam Harris-Roberts (SHR), Alan Hunt (AH), John Jenkins (JJ) (via Teams), (HE Student Governor), Helen Stapleton, Sarah Shaw (SS) (FE Student Governor), Ros Wyke (RW)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Marcus Holder (MH) (Governance Professional), Louise Rowley (LR) and Katy Hockings (note taker)

**G.01.01.25 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

DR welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Jayne Woodland, Mark Cox, Mike Westlake, Beverley Hawkins, Leanne Mills, and Lyndon Brett.

**G.01.02.25 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JUNE 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2024 and of the extraordinary meeting of 10 July were reviewed and agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

**G.01.03.25 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest in respect of the meeting.

**G.01.04.25 MATTERS ARISING**

Safeguarding Training for Governors – reminder for all Governors to complete the safeguarding training that they have been sent, and to complete the annual safeguarding declaration.

**ACTION: All Governors to complete safeguarding training asap.**

**G.01.05.25 BOARD APPOINTMENTS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Vice Chair – HS had submitted an expression of interest to be appointed as Vice Chair. The motion was raised and DR proposed and AB seconded the appointment, and so HS was appointed as Vice Chair. As Vice Chair HS will become the Chair of the Audit Committee and will step down as a member of FP&GP Committee. As Chair of the Board, DR will become the Chair of the FP&GP Committee.

RW and MW had expressed interest in joining the Audit Committee. AH proposed the motion and CP seconded it, and approval was given for them both to join the Audit Committee with immediate effect.

Health and Safety Link Governor – MH highlighted that there is an opportunity for a link Governor to join the H&S Committee. No nominations were forthcoming and so Governors agreed that there will be a full report on H&S at the FP&GP Committee and detailed scrutiny of H&S will take place within this committee to ensure that the College is fully compliant.

The Colleges' Partnership - MH highlighted that Governors would be welcome to attend any Board meeting of the Colleges' Partnership (TCP), to observe. If any Board members would like to join this meeting, please let MH or KH know so that arrangements can be made.

AH noted the appointment of MH as a member of Board and the oversight of the functions of TCP by the College which is supporting the ongoing running of the company and ensuring compliance.

#### **G.01.06.25**

#### **PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE**

AB had submitted a written update prior to the meeting.

He provided an update on potential devolution of Somerset Council, and also an update on a meeting in London earlier this week with Jacqui Smith, Skills Minister, to discuss the curriculum review and qualification reform. As a result of this, AB will also join a monthly briefing with the Skills Minister, and she has expressed an interest in visiting the College in the coming months.

AB invited questions. HS highlighted the successful bid to OfS wave 3 for capital funding. The Board agreed this was a very positive outcome to this bid.

NS asked for further detail on his visit to China earlier in the summer. AB reported that this was partly a relationship building trip, to meet key staff at Agratas and its partners. It was also an opportunity to view a gigafactory in operation, which was extremely helpful in setting out an understanding of the processes involved.

The Board noted the Principal's Update.

#### **G.01.07.25**

#### **SAFEGUARDING**

Changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education – Governors had been provided with training on safeguarding, including highlighting of the changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Safeguarding Policies 2024-25 – LR highlighted minor changes to the policies for both HE and FE in light of the updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education. The changes had been provided in summary for Governors to note.

DR invited questions. AH highlighted that there is an expectation of OfS that institutions work with students to shape policy. LR highlighted there is a degree of engagement with students to review and comment on our policies. It was agreed this should be considered further within HE Senate to ensure that this has been fully covered. LR will also bring this to a Policy Review Group this week, when HE policies are reviewed. JJ agreed to be involved if required to support student input.

The Board approved the Safeguarding Policies which had been signed off by DR and AB.

**ACTION: Review level of student engagement in shaping HE Policy. LR to take forward.**

#### **G.01.08.25**

#### **EXTERNAL BOARD REVIEW**

The report from the External Board Review had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. From this actions had been drawn to form the Board's Performance Targets for 2023/24. This will be discussed in more detail at the second part of this meeting.

All outstanding actions within the External Board Review will be captured within Performance Targets for 2024/25.

DR invited questions and comments. MH highlighted Search Committee had discussed the recommendations of the report in detail. The Board noted the report and that actions will be collated into Performance Targets for 2024/25 and which will be approved by the Board at its December meeting.

**ACTION: AB, MH, DR to develop Performance Targets for 2024/25 for approval at December meeting, based on the outcomes of the External Board Review.**

#### **G.01.09.25**

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT**

LR highlighted that the Accountability Agreement has been updated as per comments and discussion at the June Board meeting. The final version of the Agreement document has now been finalised and submitted. It will be published on our website this month.

The Board noted the position.

LR highlighted the Agreement will be reviewed again in April 2025 and Governors will be asked to approve the Agreement again at this point. DR invited questions.

HS asked whether this document is within the public domain. LR confirmed that it is published on the College's website. CP highlighted that this could be used as a starting point for wider improved comms with stakeholders about what the College does and the breadth of its work and activity. LR would take an action to look into this in more detail and report back to the next meeting.

**ACTION: Investigate wider comms to stakeholders. LR to take forward.**

#### **G.01.10.25**

#### **OFSTED UPDATE AND BRIEFING**

A briefing paper update had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting, outlining the current position and preparation for an Ofsted Inspection during this academic year including the structure of Inspection and Board input in the process. Self-Assessment Reports have been produced for all departments and areas, and these will be incorporated within the full SAR document for the College for 2023/24.

RW asked for assurance that all areas of compliance for Ofsted have been completed from the 2019 Inspection. LR highlighted these were under an older framework, but work has been undertaken to improve in

these areas and take action to improve further. There is data to support improvements in all of these areas.

The Board noted the update on Ofsted and progress on the SAR.

**G.01.11.25**

**STRODE COLLEGE UPDATE**

AB highlighted that the College had made a formal presentation earlier today on a proposal to merge with Strode College. He provided an update on the position and invited questions from Governors. AB responded to questions but due to confidentiality the detail of these questions was not minuted.

AH asked that thanks be recorded to all those involved in putting together the presentation and all the work that surrounded it. The Board recorded its thanks to all involved.

AH highlighted the need for clear communications to all staff at Strode around this process as well as to BTC staff.

The Board will be copied in on all communications around this matter and provided with detailed timings of next steps.

**G.01.12.25**

**FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Management Accounts for the Year Ending July 2024 – MH had circulated the Management Accounts for the Year Ending July 2024 to the Board prior to the meeting. The External Audit on this financial year is currently ongoing and a report will be received to the Audit Committee in November. He highlighted key points within the document and invited comments and questions from the Board.

NS highlighted the ESFA financial health measure of 'Good', and that "pay to income" ratio had improved through the year and was below 60% in 2023/24, which is a positive position.

NS noted the LGPS pension position and MH confirmed this was still in surplus, but in accordance with normal accounting convention this is not shown within the balance sheet, but will be disclosed in the accompanying notes.

The Board noted the Management Accounts as presented and thanked MH for this and his team's work on these.

**G.01.13.25**

**STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2024/25**

A full report on student recruitment to date for 2024/25 had been circulated prior to the meeting. LR provided an overview of key information within the report. The current position for 16-18 year olds shows that recruitment is ahead of target. She invited questions and comments. NS asked for further information relating to HE recruitment, which had fallen. It was noted that some of the reduction relates to Motorsport degree which was withdrawn by Oxford Brookes. Attempts were made to replace this with an HNC with Pearson but this was not published by Pearson in time to run this course during the current academic year, so there is a gap in recruitment this year, but plans are to reintroduce this in 2025/26.

Apprenticeship current profile looks to be on target for the year.

HS asked about the current numbers for A Level enrolment and ongoing plans for marketing of A Levels. AB confirmed that work is ongoing on this element of our provision. There has been a drop in enrolments but this was due partly to results achieved by those students who applied and not achieving the required grades to progress onto A Levels. AB also confirmed that there is a need to better market the A Level provision within BTC.

RW commented on schools within the community and how we can work more with schools and link in with local role models who are success stories from the region. AB agreed that this is an area for further development, although we already have numerous links with various staff from BTC sitting on LGBs for a number of schools within the County.

LR highlighted work which is ongoing to look to secure progression of existing students on Level 3 courses into HE courses. The Dean of UCS is working on strategies to encourage internal progression into HE courses.

CP asked how HE links into the Board, and LR and AH confirmed that there will be discussion around the structure of HE Senate and direct links into the Board as a Committee of the Board directly rather than via the Q&S Committee. Further updates on this will be provided to the Board in due course.

#### **G.01.14.25**

#### **RESULTS 2023/24**

A full report on Results for 2023/24 had been provided after results were received in the summer, and a further detailed report was submitted to the Board prior to this meeting for review. LR highlighted the key points within the report and invited questions. A focused results meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee had been convened on Tuesday 1 October to undertake detailed scrutiny of results. The forthcoming Area Review Group (ARG) meetings will further review and analyse results data across individual department courses. Actions have been taken on the small number of courses which did not perform at the expected level, and focus will be on these courses to monitor and support improvement over the coming year.

T Level results have been extremely positive, and BTC is one of the highest performing T Level providers in the country, with all examinations externally marked against national benchmarks.

Vocational qualification results are above national average.

GCSE English and maths results were reviewed in detail and information provided. Focus will be placed on areas that have not performed at or above target, and support will be put into place in these courses to support improvement. The Board noted the results report. AB encouraged Governors to attend the Quality and Standards Committee meetings where detailed scrutiny takes place as a further opportunity to learn more detail on results and teaching, learning and assessment data.

NS left the meeting at 6.40 pm

**G.01.15.25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

**G.01.16.25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 5 December 2024 at Conference Centre, Taunton. This will be followed by dinner in the Quantock Restaurant.

**SELF ASSESSMENT MEETING**

**G.01.17.25 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNING BODY 2023/24**

A draft annual report had been collated for consideration and approval by the Board. MH highlighted the information within the report. He highlighted that the Search Committee has reviewed the report in detail. MH invited questions and comments.

The Board reviewed the annual report and approved it as an accurate review of the Board's performance over the academic year 2023/24.

**G.01.18.25 GOVERNORS PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2023/24**

MH confirmed that Search Committee had analysed and reviewed the Performance Indicators of the Board for 2023/24 and also the RAG rating which had been agreed at the end of the year. MH highlighted the key points of the performance targets for 2023/24. MH and AB confirmed that those rated red or amber would be carried over into the 2024/25 Performance Targets. AB, MH and LR would be developing with DR, Performance Targets for 2024/25 and these will be presented to the December Board meeting for final approval. Search Committee will review and assess the draft Performance Indicators prior to being submitted to the full Board. AB highlighted that campus boards and group board structure will be a focus of the Performance Targets for the coming year.

CP highlighted that campus boards will be a useful mechanism for driving stakeholder involvement within the local campuses and ensuring that the local community aspect of each campus is captured and engaged with effectively.

**ACTION: DR and AB to draft Performance Targets for 2024/25 for Board approval at its next meeting.**

**G.01.19.25 REGULARITY SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

MH highlighted the completed regularity self-assessment questionnaire which is a legal and regulatory requirement. This had been completed in line with external audit processes, and MH highlighted the key points within the document. He invited questions and comments. The Board approved submission of the questionnaire as part of the External Audit process and for AB and DR to sign it off on behalf of the Board.

The meeting finished at 7.10 pm

## ACTIONS

Item	Action by Whom and When	Update	Status
Nominations for 2 x vacancies on Audit Committee	Search and Governance Committee September 2024	RW and MW appointed	Complete
Complete and return Register of Interests	ALL		Complete
Discussion on further working with local school	LR/LM		Ongoing
Safeguarding Training Update for Governors	KH, autumn term	Governors reminded to complete training as soon as possible.	Ongoing
Performance Targets 2024/25	DR, LR, AB, MH	To be brought to December Board	Ongoing
Policies – HE – student engagement and involvement in developing policy	LR	Review level of student engagement in shaping HE policy per OfS guidelines	Ongoing
Wider Comms to stakeholders	LR	Look at ways to develop wider comms to staff	Ongoing
Performance Targets 2024/25	DR, AB	To produce draft targets for review and approval at next Board meeting	Ongoing