

## BOSTON COLLEGE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2023

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#### 1. **PRESENT**

David Earnshaw (Chair), Daran Bland, Gavin Booth, Daniel Elkington, David Fannin, Claire Foster, Kimberley Jones, David Parnell, Helen Rumbold, Gerry Tawton, Paul Tomlinson, Lucy Walker (from item 2), Sandra Williamson, Nick Worth and Fiona Wrisberg.

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Jen Durrant (Executive Director: People), Debbie Holland (Chief Operating Officer), Tom Hughes (Assistant Principal: Quality, Performance and Standards), Abid Hussain (Assistant Principal: Student Experience) and Heather Marks (Deputy Principal). Neil Percy (Director of Learning: Creative & Cultural Industries) and Adam Wardell (Director of Learning: Health & Care Industries) attended for the presentation under item 3 only.

Apologies for absence were received from James Brindle, Heather Lee, Jurate Matulioniene and Katy Priestley.

Meeting attendance: 75%

#### 2. **MEMBERSHIP**

Members were advised that Lucy Walker had been nominated as a student governor. It was agreed that she should be appointed for a term running to the end of the 2024-25 academic year.

Lucy Walker joined the meeting.

#### 3. **OFSTED**

Claire Foster provided information on the recent Ofsted inspection. She thanked governors for their contribution to the process, particularly Daran Bland for his input on High Needs which was an aspect of significant scrutiny during the inspection and recognised the work carried out by Heather Marks (nominee), Wendy Poole, (skills nominee) Abid Hussain and Tom Hughes as well as the Directors of Learning. Members thanked the Executive for their work on the inspection.

#### 4. **PRESENTATION: CHALLENGE 90**

Neil Percy and Adam Wardell gave a presentation on Challenge 90.

Fiona Wrisberg asked if there was any analysis of low attendance. It was reported that a lot of additional support needs were identified and there had been some parental feedback on learners not participating. Neil Percy suggested that a post-COVID shift in resilience had some impact. The gap in attendance between English and maths and main courses was noted and a question raised about whether the college's approach to English and maths was ambitious enough. Adam Wardell advised that a different approach is being taken to curriculum planning for this area with the length of delivery slots changing, delivery within directorates and a change of days. Neil advised that a robust approach is being taken to schemes of work. Heather Marks commented that a number of strategies are being brought forward to enhance attendance. Directors of Learning are working together to

share lessons learned through data analysis. It was noted that attendance can be impacted by multiple factors and it is important to inspire motivation.

5. **ACTION LOG**

Members reviewed progress made against items in the action log.

6. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

a) **Corporation - 16 October 2023**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2023 were reviewed and approved as a correct record.

b) **Audit Committee - 13 November 2023**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2023 were reviewed.

Sandra Williamson advised that the committee had noted good work done on the financial audit. As part of its review of risks, the committee has asked the Standards committee to look at apprenticeship reviews and work experience and the Finance and Resources committee to stress-test cash levels.

c) **Search and Governance Committee - 20 November 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2023 were reviewed.

Gerry Tawton advised that the committee had looked at implementation of the Code of Good Governance and asked for feedback on link governors' work. David Fannin suggested that members should receive routine reminders about this. It was noted that the follow-up review of the External Governance Review would be arranged in early 2024.

d) **Finance and Resources Committee - 20 November 2023**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2023 were reviewed.

Gerry Tawton advised that the committee had a closely scrutinised debts and also agreed that the Property Group should meet in early 2024.

e) **Remuneration Committee 20 November 2023**

Eligible members reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2023 and agreed to approve the committee's recommendations.

f) **Standards Committee – 22 November 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2023 were reviewed.

Daran Bland highlighted the business carried out in the committee and advised that improved reporting is helping clarify progress and priorities.

g) Remuneration Committee 11 December 2023

Eligible members reviewed the written resolution made on 11 December 2023 and agreed to approve the committee's recommendation.

7. **REPORTS**

a) College Self-Assessment Report 2022-23

Members received a report from the Deputy Principal on the 2022-23 self-assessment.

Members were advised that the grade for adult provision had been changed to Good and noted a comment from the FE commissioner: *"I was delighted to hear the news of the Ofsted judgement and wish to congratulate you both and the wider team for such a great outcome. Achieved whilst reshaping the college is a fantastic accolade for you both."* Ofsted had agreed with the grades. An area looking to improve is High Needs where performance needs to be driven forward. In response to a question from Daran Bland, it was confirmed that there were no issues with limiting grades.

Members agreed to accept the self-assessment report with the modification to the grade for adult provision. It was agreed that the committees should look at areas for improvement for monitoring. It was noted that information about Ofsted grades is confidential until the report is published.

b) Principal's

Members received a report from the Principal on sector and college issues.

Members noted an additional payment being made to staff from extra funding made available to the college. In response to a query from David Parnell, Debbie Holland advised that the Mayflower project was now very close to its target price and that demolition works on the site would be starting in January.

c) Finance

Members received a report from the Chief Operating Officer which included annual accounts for 2022-23 with supporting documents, management accounts to 31 October 2023 and the annual risk management report.

Debbie Holland advised members that the accounts have already been considered by Finance and Resources and Audit committees. Gerry Tawton and Sandra Williamson gave feedback from the committees on the accounts. Gerry noted that there were more control observations to be addressed than in the past.

Having reviewed the information presented, members confirmed compliance with the requirements for signing off the accounts, agreed to approve the annual accounts and authorised signature of the management representations. Members confirmed their acceptance of the Audit committee's annual report which included the internal audit annual report, the internal audit plan and the external audit findings.

In looking at the management accounts, it was noted that the Q1 reforecast had been completed in detail. Financial health is bordering on Outstanding as the position has improved. In response to a query, Debbie confirmed that the improvement had largely been achieved by savings on vacancies. It was noted that staff cover costs would offset some vacancy savings and therefore the forecast was prudent.

Members noted that arrangements were being made for risk management training to be provided for governors. ●

d) Governance

Members received a report from the Clerk to the Corporation.

The annual report of the Search and Governance committee was received. Proposals from the Audit committee for its 2023-24 targets were considered and it was agreed that the committee's targets should be:

- 80% attendance at meetings
- Deep dives of key risks
- Strengthen links and seek assurance through coordination of the work of the Corporation and committees

e) Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Members received a report from the Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing which was presented by the Assistant Principal: Student Experience.

Abid Hussain highlighted key elements of the report and advised that he anticipates giving a presentation on MyConcern to the next Corporation meeting. ●

Sandra Williamson asked about learners waiting for support. Abid advised that a triage system is used to address this and deal with immediate concerns. Daran Bland highlighted the challenges which can be raised by changed systems. In response to a query from David Earnshaw, Kimberley Jones advised that she was not aware of any student concerns about accessing support.

f) SEND

Members received a report from the SEND Managers which was presented by the Assistant Principal: Student Experience.

Abid Hussain advised that the biggest challenge in this area was the recruitment of LSAs. Fiona Wrisberg noted that there is also a challenge in providing support to adult learners, particularly those on evening provision. Daran Bland asked if the college was able to use apprenticeships in these roles and Claire Foster said that this had been considered but will be revisited. Gavin Booth commented on the impact of time limitations on support for individual learners. ●

David Fannin asked about decisions to decline places for individual students and Abid explained the evaluation process followed. The decision is made by the SEND panel. Claire commented that the first priority is to keep these and other learners safe.

g) Learner Views

Members received a report from the Assistant Principal: Quality, Performance and Standards.

Tom Hughes advised that the response rate to the part time learner survey had been low but it had provided some useful feedback. Responses to the Apprenticeship and HE surveys had been higher with the latter being strong. The main point made by learners in the HE survey was their wish to have learning space which felt more like a university.

h) Higher Education Performance - Annual Monitoring Report 2022-23

Members received a report from the Assistant Principal: Quality, Performance and Standards.

Tom Hughes advised that this was the HE equivalent of the self assessment report. It was noted that this was usually dealt with by the Standards committee.

Members noted that higher education numbers had not grown and that there was a lower number of male learners. Daniel Elkington queried the reported dropout rates and members were advised that these included some learners who chose not to progress to level 6. It was noted that higher education delivered in an FE environment is a different experience for learners than a university.

Sandra Williamson asked about SEND learners on higher education courses. Tom explained that learners were screened and support was offered but the take up of support is limited. In response to a query from Fiona Wrisberg, it was confirmed that learners are making use of academic coaches and online support.

i) OfS Reportable Events

Heather Marks confirmed that there was nothing to report.

8. **HELEN RUMBOLD**

It was noted that it was Helen Rumbold's last meeting as a governor. She was thanked for her service and the knowledgeable and insightful contributions she had made during her membership.

9. **NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Corporation will take place on 6 March 2024.