

## BOSTON COLLEGE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2023

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#### 1. **PRESENT**

David Earnshaw (Chair), Sergio Afonso (from item 2), Daran Bland, Daniel Elkington, David Fannin, Claire Foster, Kimberley Jones, Heather Lee, Jurate Matulioniene, David Parnell, Katy Priestley, Helen Rumbold, Gerry Tawton, Sandra Williamson, Nick Worth and Fiona Wrisberg (from item 2).

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). Phil Peatling (Head of Digital Learning) attended for the presentation under item 3 only.

Apologies for absence were received from Gavin Booth, James Brindle and Paul Tomlinson.

Meeting attendance: 84%

#### 2. **MEMBERSHIP**

Members were advised that Sergio Afonso and Fiona Wrisberg had been nominated as staff governors. It was agreed that they should be appointed for four year terms.

Sergio Afonso and Fiona Wrisberg joined the meeting.

#### 3. **PRESENTATION: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

Phil Peatling gave a presentation on AI and its potential use and impact. The presentation outlined how staff and learners could make use of AI and the training which was being given to staff to support its use. It was noted that this is evolving rapidly and the college is taking a proactive approach to it.

#### 4. **REAPPOINTMENTS**

Heather Lee and Nick Worth left the meeting while members discussed recommendations for their reappointment being made by the Search and Governance committee.

Members reviewed the committee's recommendations and agreed to appoint both members for a further four year term at the end of their existing terms of office.

Heather and Nick rejoined the meeting and were advised of the Corporation's decision.

#### 5. **ACTION LOG**

Members reviewed progress made against items in the action log.

It was noted that an apprenticeship survey was currently underway. Abid Hussain advised members that the MyConcern safeguarding software was in the process of implementation and training would be complete by the end of October.

## 6. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

### a) Corporation – 5 July 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2023 were reviewed and approved as a correct record.

### b) Search and Governance Committee - 25 September 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2023 were reviewed.

### c) Finance and Resources Committee - 25 September 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2023 were reviewed.

David Earnshaw asked about increasing debt levels. Members were advised that the Finance and Resources committee would be closely monitoring this.

### d) Standards Committee – 27 September 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2023 were reviewed.

Members noted that the committee had closely scrutinised English and maths outcomes. In response to a query about the need to replace the VITAL tracking system, Tom Hughes advised that it lacks some capabilities required by an outstanding college.

## 7. **REPORTS**

### a) Principal's

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

Claire Foster advised that there was still confusion over the future qualification framework.

Nick Worth gave an update on devolution and it was noted that a draft text could be agreed shortly. If a devolution deal is agreed, the combined authority will take over the budget for adult education. Timescales for implementation could be rapid.

Claire advised members that recruitment had been good but the oversubscription numbers were not sufficient to prompt additional funding at the present time. There is significant increase in English and maths numbers. There are concerns about some learner behaviour. Helen Rumbold commented that it was interesting to hear of behaviour concerns since the Standards committee had looked at evidence of positive behaviour. Daran Bland suggested that if Ofsted witnessed unfortunate behaviour it was important that data to support positive judgments was readily available. Abid Hussain commented that most learners are focused on achieving their qualifications and staff are being supported in challenging poor behaviour. Kimberly Jones advised that staff are picking up on behaviour issues and responding appropriately. Fiona Wrisberg suggested that Senior Learning Leads are having a positive effect because of their knowledge of their learners.

David Earnshaw asked the new staff governors whether they had any comments about Ofsted readiness and the uncertainty of inspection timing. Sergio Afonso commented that his area is ready for inspection and is doing all it can for learners. Fiona Wrisberg advised that data is being prepared and timetables finalised in readiness for the inspection.

b) Finance

Members received a report from the Chief Operating Officer which included draft management accounts to 31 July.

Debbie Holland advised members that the end of year audit was currently underway. The accounts were awaiting completion after discussions about treatment of the pension valuation. Members noted the draft outturn for the LGPS and, in response to a query from Heather Lee, were advised that it had not yet been agreed how to reflect the figures in the accounts. David Earnshaw raised a question about apprenticeship output funding and members were advised that outstanding payments will come through in 2023-24.

In looking at 2023-24 performance, Nick Worth asked about plans to address AEB challenges. Heather Marks advised that meetings were taking place with areas with large gaps and targets were being set. Directors have targets for delivery.

Daran Bland asked how useful the CEFSS report had been. Debbie advised that it had shown how the college could be made more efficient including changing benchmarks for teaching hours. Claire Foster commented that it validated actions which needed to be taken. Fiona Wrisberg stated that changes had helped with the curriculum planning process.

Sandra Williamson asked whether AI links with efficiency. It was suggested that the Audit committee could look into this. Katy Priestley asked how funding was linked to hours delivered and Fiona gave examples of how this element of funding works. David Parnell commented that this demonstrated how decisions made had clear consequences. Tom Hughes advised that the Quality team works with staff to help them work more efficiently.

Members noted the position on the international debt and agreed to confirm acceptance of a settlement offer and write-off of the balance.

c) Governance

Members received a report from the Clerk to the Corporation.

Members agreed to appoint Daran Bland and James Brindle to the Audit committee, Sergio Afonso to the Standards committee and Fiona Wrisberg to the Finance and Resources committee.

Performance of the Corporation and committees against targets for 2022-23 was reviewed.

The committees' proposals for 2023-24 targets were reviewed and agreed. It was agreed that the corporation's targets for 2023-24 should be:

- 80% attendance

- Monitor the follow up and impact of the external governance review
- Monitor the response to the local skills improvement plan (LSIP) and alignment to local skills improvement fund (LSIF) and other funding opportunities
- Raise awareness of the requirements of and opportunities created by the move of colleges into the public sector
- Oversight of the delivery of the strategic plan and the impact of the college on its local community
- Maintenance of £1.5m cash reserve

Members reviewed the Corporation and committees' decision-making processes and confirmed that they remained appropriate.

d) Human Resources Annual Report

Members received a report from the Executive Director: People.

Members reviewed the detail of the report and were advised by Jen Durrant that the college was looking at new software which would support production of monitoring information. Claire Foster commented that a deeper analysis including trends over time and external comparators would provide improved assurance. ●

In reviewing information on staff turnover, Jen advised that this was in line with what other colleges were experiencing. David Earnshaw asked about the age profile of leavers. Claire and Jen suggested that life choices and work expectations have an impact on this. Heather Lee suggested that it would be helpful if the leaver statistics were split between voluntary and involuntary to provide better understanding of the data. Daran Bland commented that the Department for Education had identified staff loss in the first four years of employment as a huge issue. Helen Rumbold commented that the County Council was introducing 'stay' interviews. ●

e) Health and Safety Annual Report

Members received a report from the Head of Health and Safety which was presented by the Executive Director: People.

Members noted the information provided and particularly the focus on wellbeing.

f) Safeguarding and Prevent

Members received a report from the Assistant Principal: Student Experience giving an overview and assurance of Safeguarding and Prevent procedures and compliance.

Abid Hussain told members that the counsellors were extremely busy and that to support offered to enhance learner wellbeing had been highlighted at inductions. It was noted that Fastvue has been implemented and is being used alongside Smoothwall to filter and monitor any inappropriate or unsafe IT usage. Daniel Elkington asked about the timescales for implementing MyConcern and Abid advised that implementation had been delayed allowing better management of the change. Sergio Afonso asked about responses to the generic safeguarding email address and Abid explained that measures were in place to ensure emails were dealt with immediately.

g) Learner Views

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

It was noted that the Full Time learners' start of year survey had closed and had a high response rate. Tom Hughes advised members that information was also gathered directly from learners with the current key theme of learning walks being online safety. Daran Bland reported on positive feedback he had received from learners on a SEND visit.

h) OfS Reportable Events

Heather Marks confirmed that there was nothing to report.

8. **MENTAL HEALTH**

It was reported that Jen Durrant was taking up the role of Mental Health Lead. It was suggested that there should be a Wellbeing governor and it was agreed that this should be combined with the Safeguarding Lead Governor role.

9. **PRESENTATIONS**

It was suggested consideration be given to making VITAL and MyConcern the subject of future presentations. ●

10. **NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Corporation will take place on 13 December 2023.