

**PUBLIC MINUTES OF
THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS STRATEGY BOARD MEETING HELD ON
8 FEBRUARY 2024**

Present:

Mr W Abbott (External Board Member) (Chair)
Mr M Burgess (Principal)
Ms L Dance (External Board Member)
Mr A Dover (External Board Member)
Mr M Fabian (External Board Member)
Ms L Hargreaves (Student Governor)
Mr S Harvey (External Board Member)
Ms M James (External Board Member)
Mr P Lachecki (External Board Member)
Dr H Moyes (External Board Member)
Ms A Nutbrown (Staff Governor)
Ms G Read (External Board Meeting) (except item 4/24)
Ms C Simpson (Student Governor)

Apologies:

Ms J Buckland (Staff Governor)
Mr P Carr (External Board Member)
Ms C Rosser-Mayo - HR Director

In Attendance:

Mr A Bates - Chief Financial Officer
Mr D Kettley - Director of Student Employment and Experience, Curriculum Innovation and Students
Dr K Morris – Vice-Principal, Curriculum and Quality
Ms J Cosson - Governance Professional/Clerk to the Board of Governors
Ms M Drayson - External Governance Reviewer, Rockborn - observing

Attendance: 86.7%

1/24 Private Business

None.

2/24 Apologies

Were noted as above.

3/24 Declarations of Interest

It was confirmed that the Register of Interests recorded all of the current declarations of interests of those present.

4/24 Membership Proposals

Members had been provided with a Membership Proposals paper.

RESOLVED: The Board approved the recommendations of GRS as follows:

- That Georgina Read be appointed as an External Member of the Board and a member of the Audit Committee for a term of 4 years from 8 February 2024 to 7 February 2028.
- That the Board size be confirmed as 17.

They noted the Board's requirements in terms of skills, experience and diversity and agreed to consider any potential candidates/networks that may be approached/explored.

5/24 Confidentiality of Items

As marked (C) for a period of two years. All the marked items were declared confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.

6/24 Principal's College Update (C)

MB provided an update on matters since the December Board meeting. He presented the slides from the January Managers' Briefing by way of overview of the College's focus for this term.

Items covered were:

- Sector Update
- Financial Position
- Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum Change
- People and Culture
- Skills Needs and Demographic Change
- Growth Opportunities
- New Construction Centre
- Forest Campus

RESOLVED: Members noted the Principal's Update and the start of term briefing to Managers.

7/24 Strategic Discussion: Follow-up from last Strategic Board Meeting - Curriculum Reforms – Governor's Perspective (C)

Following on from the last Strategic Board Meeting, which had focused on curriculum reform, MJ presented her thoughts, as Chair of C&Q, on the risks and opportunities for the College of the curriculum changes. Her presentation was informed by her attendance at the recent AoC C&Q Chair's Network.

MJ began by reminding Members of the government's vision for post-16 education and the proposed qualifications landscape, particularly on the technical side. She summarised the key changes being introduced at Level 3 and the resulting suite of technical qualifications, as well as the qualifications landscape at Level 2 and below.

MJ addressed the risks for FE colleges and for GC.

Members discussed the introduction of T Levels.

Members debated the possible consequences of a change in government following the general election due this year. PL had gained the impression from a recent AoC Conference on The Changing Landscape of Further Education: Quality and Curriculum that a change of government could see a very different landscape. KM advised that there is likely to be a pause and review in such circumstances, meaning there is a risk of a hiatus for some while.

MJ went on to set out her ideas for the mitigation of the risks and reasons to be cheerful. MJ outlined where she saw the opportunities for the College to develop as a result of the reforms and concluded with some questions for governors to ask the Executive Team.

The Chair thanked MJ for her governor's perspective and for her input into C&Q. He noted that the reforms at Level 2 and below will be particularly important for the College's demographic and the College must be agile and flexible to take advantage of the opportunities. He asked Members to take the information and comments away, reflect on them and let MJ have any further thoughts.

8/24 Strategic Discussion: AI (C)

MB gave a presentation on the future of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technology in education with the aim of stimulating the Board's thinking about the possibilities associated with AI by exploring two big questions:

- How might AI affect the world of work and what does this mean for the skills learners will need?
- How might AI be used to enhance education and training, and what are the associated dangers?

and considering how the College should respond.

MB took Members back to the first wave of AI in the 1980's and the principles behind AI. He examined the second wave of AI when increasingly capable non-thinking machines developed as a result of an increase in the processing power and storage capacity of computers, and gave examples of where AI has replaced human judgement. He brought Members up to date with the latest developments including the advent of chatbots such as ChatGPT.

Members were asked to discuss how profoundly AI might impact the world of work. Will it be boom or doom? What skills will be needed to thrive in this future?

Working in groups, Members deliberated the parallels with significant technological changes in the past, such as the industrial revolution and the birth of the internet, the extent to which we are already engaging with AI, the need to use it effectively and the potential impact on productivity, creativity and literacy.



MB continued by explaining the education and training response to AI, which has three different dimensions (What? How? When?), and the concerns students have expressed regarding AI. He took Members through the possibilities of AI in the following areas:

- Search, interface and accessibility
- Learner engagement
- Learning delivery
- Performance support

Members were asked to think about how the College should respond to this huge technological disruption/shift.

They discussed how AI might be used to enhance teaching and learning (the opportunities and the dangers), how the College can prepare learners to thrive in an AI future and what the College should be doing at this moment.

They debated the potential impact on blue-collar work (e.g., agriculture) and the skilled trades as well as on white collar, higher order activities such as the professions (lawyers, accountants and teachers). They considered the need, in the short term, for people to continue to carry out tasks that machines cannot do, but also the possibility of mass redeployment of the workforce in the long term. They contemplated the areas where AI might be deficient (such as student discipline) and the potential for misuse/exploitation of AI. They reflected on the opportunities for lifelong learning, accessibility and personalisation of the curriculum as well as the use of AI to combat the dangers of AI.

KM gave examples of the ways in which AI is currently being used within the College as a resource/tool in teaching and learning.

AB set out how AI is being used in professional services and the next steps for the College.

Members were pleased to have had the opportunity to debate the matter. They found the possibilities for teaching and learning both daunting and exciting and agreed that the College should engage with the opportunities offered by AI. They suggested that the College put together a framework ready for the new academic year to include a statement of the College's vision and ambition for the use of AI.

WA invited any further perceptions on AI and asked Members to reflect on what they had heard and discussed and to let the Executive Team know if they think there is anything else the College should be doing to implement AI.

9/24 Minutes of the meeting of 7 December 2023

The minutes of the meetings were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

10/24 Matters Arising from the Minutes and Actions Matrix

Members were provided with an Actions Matrix and noted the status update of each item.

11/24 Use of College Seal

RESOLVED: The Board noted and endorsed the use of the Seal as set out in the paper.

12/24 Governance Matters

Governance and Regulatory Developments

JC presented a paper which included details of the following matters and the actions to be taken in relation to each of them:

1. Safeguarding
2. EDI
3. Financial Sustainability/Funding
4. Curriculum
5. HE/OfS
6. Legislation/Legal
7. Meeting Skills Needs and Accountability Agreements
8. Technology
9. Governance
10. Governor Training and Development

A Member asked if the Executive Team are happy that they have in hand all necessary arrangements to comply with those new pieces of guidance that relate to operations at the College and if they need any guidance or decisions from the Board.

Members noted the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance. DK is satisfied that all is in hand. He confirmed that the College is part of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board Partnership and is engaged in regular meetings/discussions, He understands this update is on the agenda for the next meeting but, in general, the changes have little impact on the College's policies/procedures.

No guidance or decisions are required from the Board at this stage. However, an update will be provided to the Board in relation to the Gender Questioning Children guidance and Martyn's Law legislation consultations once the final guidance is published.

JC highlighted the new guidance on the public sector equality duty for public authorities. DK and CRM will work through any changes required or that impact on the College's work in relation to staff and learners.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Governance and Regulatory Developments since the last meeting and the actions taken as a result.

Governor Learning and Development Activity Record and Governor Learning and Development Reports

Members had been provided with the record of Governor Learning and Development activities and feedback from recent activities including Learning Walks (SH, PL, MF and MJ), the High Needs Conference (MJ) and the AoC Finance Masterclasses (MF and WA).

WA thanked Members for the time they had given to attending and sharing their feedback on these important development opportunities. He went on to say that the Finance Masterclass training he had attended with MF had left him feeling reassured that the College's explanations of the ESFA financial health criteria and the financial dashboards produced by the College are accurate. There had been a lot of discussion regarding lagged and in-year funding for this year. He is comfortable that what is presented by the College accords with what the delegates were told.

JC reported that several Link Governor visits had taken place recently. Written feedback will be reported to the next meeting. SH advised that he had spent the day in the College in his Cyber Link Governor capacity. He had been pleased to learn that six higher level Apprentices have achieved their degree with UWE (half with first class honours and half with second class honours). He mentioned that his conversations around Cyber are expanding into AI and digital technology more generally.

SH had also met with DK in his capacity as Wellbeing Link Governor and was reassured that there is a lot happening in terms of staff wellbeing.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Governor Learning and Development activities, which enrich governors' understanding and oversight of the College.

13/24 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Business Board Meeting 21 March 2024, 4.00pm, C128a/b, Gloucester Campus

MP James

21st March 2024