



GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 18 December 2018

Present:	Mr J Kirk (<i>Chair</i>)	Chair of Governors
	Mr J Bagley	Principal
	Ms N Cuffy	Governor
	Mr H Hadani	Governor
	Ms P Hamer	Staff Governor
	Mr S Lodhi	Staff Governor
	Ms J Rossa	Governor
	Mr N Smith	Governor
	Ms S Varghese	Student Governor
	In Attendance:	Mr H Ravat
	Mr R Mansfield	Clerk

Ref.		Action
B/18/41	<p>Item 1 – Attendance and Membership Matters:</p> <p><i>1.1 Apologies for Absence</i> John Kirk welcomed Sarah Varghese, recently appointed Student Governor, to the meeting. All present briefly introduced themselves. Apologies for absence were received from Simran Gohil (recently appointed Student Governor), Stephen Holderness, Riyaz Laher and Harshad Solanki. John Kirk said that Riyaz Laher had advised him that his workload was now such that he was unable to fulfil his duties as a College Governor and that he would therefore shortly be resigning. John Kirk expressed his gratitude to Riyaz Laher for joining the Board at a time of need and for his service. The meeting was declared quorate.</p> <p><i>1.2 Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items</i> There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.</p> <p><i>In the absence of Ann Cheeseman Hamid Ravat provided a short briefing on recent developments to the governors' dashboard. Governors were now able to access via</i></p>	

Sharepoint real time data relating to matters such as Student Numbers, Retention, Attendance and Punctuality, and Funding. He briefly demonstrated these. Data relating to achievement would be available shortly after each Assessment Point. An alternative route to the data was the Remote Desktop Portal (RDP).

1.3 Governor Vacancies

Robert Mansfield reported that, following the appointment of the two new student governors, the strength of the Board had risen to 13. There were however still three vacancies, and these would increase to four when Riyaz Laher had resigned. He was currently following up a prospective governor who had been introduced by Nicola Martin. The priority remained to recruit more governors with business and financial experience.

The meeting received this oral report.

B/18/42 Item 2 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising:

2.1 Minutes of Meeting on 30 October 2018

The minutes of the meeting on 30 October 2018 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Kirk.

2.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not covered by agenda items.

B/18/43 Item 3 – Curriculum and Quality Issues:

3.1 Minutes of the Standards & Quality Committee 26 November 2018

John Kirk presented the headlines of the minutes of the meeting of the Standards & Quality Committee on 26 November 2018. In particular he asked the meeting to note that the recently updated Self-Assessment Report / Quality Improvement Plan had been thoroughly scrutinized. James Bagley had made a successful bid for Strategic College Improvement Funding. All governors had now completed their annual safeguarding training.

The meeting received the minutes of the Standards & Quality Committee.

3.2 Quality Improvement Plan – Progress Headlines

James Bagley presented the latest version of the Self-Assessment Report / Quality Improvement Plan. The recent OfSTED Monitoring Visit had concluded that the College had made Significant Progress in respect of outcomes for learners

and Reasonable Progress regarding teaching learning and assessment, quality of feedback to students, and governors holding managers to account. The Inspectors had also provided useful pointers to action, especially as regards consistency of classroom practice.

Jackie Rossa said that she felt there should be more emphasis on governance in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR), and that more robust action was required. She welcomed a suggestion from James Bagley that there should be a governance action plan. John Kirk agreed that it was not entirely clear how far governors had progressed.

Shez Lodhi said that he had welcomed an announced visit by the Chair of Governors to his classroom and would be pleased to see this practice extended by governors. James Bagley urged caution as he believed that few governors were equipped to form judgments on classroom practice.

John Kirk asked whether the SAR was still considered accurate in the light of the findings of the OfSTED monitoring visit. James Bagley considered the SAR still to be largely accurate, but there were persistent concerns about the quality of teaching and learning in some areas.

The meeting received this report.

B/18/44 **Item 4 – Student Issues:**

4.1 Minutes of the Student Affairs Committee 26 November 2018

John Kirk presented the minutes of the meeting of the Student Affairs Committee on 26 November 2018. He had been very impressed by the quality of the inputs of all the student representatives, and had found the meeting most useful.

Sarah Varghese explained how the topics raised had been selected. John Kirk had been pleased to see that these topics all appeared relevant, and James Bagley confirmed that all had been worth raising. Jackie Rossa said that the minutes suggested to her that a more supportive response to the reported difficulties in submitting homework by email would have been appropriate. James Bagley said that the issue was not a widespread problem or evidence of a systems failure. There had been some individual problems, often associated with the 'last minute' submission of work. Jackie Rossa said it was important to understand the root causes of problems in order for responses to be effective. Shez Lodhi said that students needed to understand that poor practice was no more acceptable in College than it was at work.

The meeting received the minutes of the Student Affairs Committee.

4.2 Matters of Interest and Concern to Students

Sarah Varghese said that there were no matters to report that had not been addressed during the meeting of the Student Affairs Committee.

B/18/45

Item 5 – Estates, Finance and Staffing Issues:

5.1 Minutes of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee 4 December 2018

In the absence of Steve Holderness Robert Mansfield presented the headlines of the draft minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee on 4 December 2018. This had been a joint meeting with the Audit Committee, whose minutes shortly were to be considered under item 7.1. All the other business considered by the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee alone would be considered under other agenda items later in the meeting.

The meeting received the minutes of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee.

5.2 Revised Financial Recovery Plan

Hamid Ravat presented the financial recovery plan, as recently revised in the light of the reduction in student numbers in the current academic year and its impact on the funding outlook. A very significant consequence was that a reduction in staff costs of £1 million (equivalent to about 30 FTE staff) over the next three years was needed. The plan projected deficits of £750K in the current year and the one thereafter before returning to breakeven in 2020/2021. The main focus of the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) was currently upon the liquidity of colleges. Over the next two years a large part of the College's cash reserves would be consumed. Its Financial Health rating was forecast to decline to Satisfactory in the next two years, before returning to Good. The College faced a very difficult and challenging period. Hamid Ravat advised the meeting that a new insolvency regime was to be introduced in 2019, placing greater emphasis on the Board's accountability for solvency. Harnish Hadani asked which areas had been identified for headcount reductions. Hamid Ravat said that, once the Board had approved the plan and in the light of the outcome of the Structure and Prospects Appraisal (SPA), he and James Bagley would examine the scope for savings. Harnish Hadani said it was important not to damage the quality of the College's offer. John Kirk said that the College was very fortunate to have the services of John Boyle and Jo Nowacki in undertaking the SPA. The ESFA was content with the College's recovery plan, though shared the concerns about

operational viability and the curriculum offer. Hamid Ravat said that the issue of savings would need to be handled most considerably as livelihoods were affected.

Nelista Cuffy asked what scope there was to secure alternative income streams. Hamid Ravat replied that the options were very limited. The demand for facilities for Adult and Higher Education was much reduced. James Bagley said that opportunities were also constrained by the College's current OfSTED Inspection Grade 3. He said the College's approach would be methodical, diligent, informed by the outcome of the SPA, and communicative.

Patsy Hamer asked when staff would be informed. James Bagley said the first step was to obtain the approval of the Board. He expected to brief staff early in the New Year.

Jackie Rossa recognized that uncertainty and feelings of threat themselves posed significant risks. John Kirk said that the College would continue its policy of openness and would hope to avoid compulsory redundancy. The FE Commissioner's office recognized that the College was 'well ahead of the game' in planning for its future.

Nathan Smith asked whether it would not be advantageous to pay off the bank loan early. Hamid Ravat said that any potential benefit would be likely to be offset by the impacts of the loan covenants and penalties for early repayment. John Kirk said that the College was in no hurry to lose staff. Shez Lodhi said it would be helpful for a target for voluntary redundancies to be published.

Harnish Hadani then proposed and Nathan Smith seconded the approval of the financial recovery plan.

The meeting then voted to approve the revised financial recovery plan, with Sarah Varghese (as required) and Nelista Cuffy abstaining.

B/18/46

Item 6 – Admissions and Marketing Issues:

6.1 Student Numbers: Reasons for Decline and Action Planned

James Bagley presented an analysis, as requested by the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee, of the reasons for the unpredicted recent decline in student numbers, and the action now taken or in hand.

The College's previous Inspection Grade appeared to have had a more serious impact than expected. He had written to all schools about the summer results and improved Inspection Grade and had instituted efforts to ensure that the message reached teachers, subject advisers and learners in schools this year. The College was making efforts to build on the improvement in conversion rates achieved in the previous year by reinforcing the steps that appeared to have achieved

this. Feedback from schools in the current year was much more positive. James Bagley thanked all staff who had contributed to this. Although it was too early to form predictions, he advised the meeting that there had been a year-on-year increase in applications in the current year. The marketing and admissions plan had been simplified to focus on three key themes.

Nathan Smith questioned whether the College was making sufficient use of social media and developing sufficient relationships with businesses. He described a video used by Mattioli Woods in recruiting apprentices. James Bagley said that once an additional member of the Marketing and Admissions team had joined, he hoped to devote additional resource to such activity, which had been increased in the current year.

The meeting received the report.

B/18/47

Item 7 – Governance Issues:

7.1 Minutes of the Audit Committee 4 December 2018

Harnish Hadani presented the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee on 4 December 2018. This had been a joint meeting with the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee. The main business had been the scrutiny of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2017/2018. The audit report was very clean, thanks to the work of Hamid Ravat and his team. The auditors' Management Report was also exceptionally clean.

The meeting received the minutes of the Audit Committee.

7.2 Annual Report and Accounts 2017/2018

Hamid Ravat presented the Annual Report and Accounts for 2017/2018. These were as originally presented to the auditors, and had been commended by the Audit Committee and the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee for formal approval. Nelista Cuffy then proposed and Harnish Hadani seconded the approval of the Annual Report and Accounts.

The meeting voted unanimously to approve the Annual Report and Accounts 2017/2018, with Sarah Varghese abstaining as required.

7.3 Management Report of RSM UK Audit

Hamid Ravat presented the Management Report of RSM UK Audit. The auditors had found nothing to report. He recognized the good work of the Finance team in achieving this outcome.

The meeting received the Management Report of the auditors.

7.4 Letters of Representation

Robert Mansfield presented the Letters of Representation. These had been commended by the Audit Committee and the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee. Harnish Hadani then proposed and Nelista Cuffy seconded the approval of the signing of the Letters of Representation.

The meeting voted unanimously to approve the signing of the Letters of Representation.

7.5 Annual Safeguarding Report 2017/2018

James Bagley presented the annual safeguarding report for 2017/2018. The report, which had been considered by the Standards & Quality Committee, contained a reasoned assurance that the College's safeguarding arrangements were effective.

The meeting received the annual safeguarding report.

7.6 PREVENT Strategy

James Bagley presented the PREVENT strategy. Nelista Cuffy urged that the strategy should include explicit reference to the threats of 'far right' extremism. James Bagley acknowledged that such threats appeared to have increased but said that the wording of the strategy was based upon expert independent local advice.

The meeting received the PREVENT strategy.

7.7 Safeguarding Policy

James Bagley presented the safeguarding policy.

The meeting received the safeguarding policy.

7.8 Annual Learner Involvement Report 2017/2018

James Bagley presented the annual learner involvement report for 2017/2018. This provided an account of how the learner voice was heard by the College. He accepted Jackie Rossa's comments about the tone of the responses provided on some occasions. Feedback from surveys was increasingly positive, and for nationally benchmarked questions generally in the upper quartile. He had been very pleased to note the progress made in this regard.

The meeting received the report.

7.9 Behaviour for Learning Policy

James Bagley presented the behaviour for learning policy. This had been considered and commended by the Standards & Quality Committee.

The meeting endorsed the behaviour for learning policy.

7.10 Lesson Observation Policy

James Bagley presented the lesson observation policy. This had been considered and commended by the Standards & Quality Committee.

The meeting endorsed the lesson observation policy.

7.11 ECSW Lesson Observation Policy

James Bagley presented the ECSW lesson observation policy. This had been considered and commended by the Standards & Quality Committee.

The meeting endorsed the ECSW lesson observation policy.

7.12 Learner Performance Tutor Policy

James Bagley presented the Learner Performance Tutor lesson observation policy. This had been considered and commended by the Standards & Quality Committee.

The meeting endorsed the Learner Performance Tutor lesson observation policy.

7.13 Letter from Education and Skills Funding Agency

Hamid Ravat presented a letter recently received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), giving notice that the College was now in formal Early Intervention. As such, the College was now required to submit quarterly financial reports to the ESFA.

The meeting noted the letter.

7.14 Structure and Prospects Appraisal

James Bagley submitted a paper prepared in the light of a scoping meeting for the Structure and Prospects Appraisal recently held with John Boyle and Jo Nowacki of the FE Commissioner's office.

The meeting received the paper, thereby confirming the establishment of a SPA Steering Group with terms of reference as set out in the paper and the revised statement of preferences also contained therein.

7.15 Annual Concerns and Complaints Report 2017/2018

James Bagley presented the concerns and complaints report for 2017/2018. The concerns and complaints fell broadly into three categories:

- Complaints about student behaviour near the College
- Concerns from parents about the treatment of recently enrolled students
- Complaints from students (mostly recently enrolled) about members of staff.

The report described how each instance had been resolved, insofar as was possible. There were no concerning patterns or trends.

The meeting received the report.

B/18/48 Item 8 – Date and Time of Next Meeting:

The date and time of the next meeting were confirmed as Thursday 7 March 2019 at 5.30 p.m. at the College.

B/18/49 Item 9 – Any Other Business:

There was no other business. John Kirk thanked everyone for their participation during the year and wished them a merry Christmas.

The Staff and Student Governors and Hamid Ravat then left the meeting prior to consideration of the confidential item (see below).

B/18/50 Item 10 – Confidential Items:

10.1 Minutes of the Search & Remuneration Committee 30 October 2018

The meeting received the minutes of the Search & Remuneration Committee.