



South Staffordshire College

Meetings of the Board of Governors

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Board of Governors PART 1

22 October 2021
9:00am to 10:51am

- Governors present:** Mike Rowley (Chair) 'MR'; Tim Legge (Vice Chair) 'TL'; Philip Atkins; Andrea Chilton; Andrew Elsby-Smith; David Isted; Tony McGovern; Hannah Montgomery; Stephen Oliver; Helen Simpson; Gail Steptoe-Warren Nicola Truman.
- Apologies received:** Claire Boliver (Chief Executive & Principal) 'CB'; Yvonne Bradshaw; Dupal Patel
- In attendance:** Kirk Hookham Deputy Chief Executive 'KH'; John Snow (Deputy Principal – Finance and Resources) 'JS'; Karen O'Reilly (Assistant Principal – HR) 'KO'R'; Karen Turley (assistant Principal – Quality and Curriculum) 'KT'; Kim Vaughan (Assistant Principal – Learner Services & Adult Provision) 'KV'

Board	Agenda Item	Actions
1.1 1.2 1.3	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>MR welcomed Governors and Staff.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Claire Boliver, Yvonne Bradshaw and Dupal Pater which were accepted by the board.</p> <p>Andrew Elsby-Smith joined the meeting at 10:06 at minute 6.1 David Isted joined the meeting at 9:50am at minute 5.1 Tony McGovern joined the meeting at 9:32am at minute 4.12 Tim Legge left the meeting at 10am after minute 5.6</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in any of the items in part 1 or part 2 of the agenda.</p>	
3.1 3.2 3.4	<p>Safeguarding Update</p> <p>TL confirmed there was nothing of concern that had been reported to him since the last meeting. TL had reviewed the SCR and 6 staff were due to renew their DBS. KV confirmed that the rolling programme of renewals was in place and it was expected to always have some staff who were due to renew.</p> <p>KV confirmed there was an increased number of learners with anxiety as a result of 2 years of lockdown. Some students were behind in their progress and the November resits would provide further guidance on this.</p> <p>In response to a question, KV confirmed that exam grade inflation had not had a big impact on SSC learners, however, there were concerns that school leavers have had no exam experience.</p>	
3.5	<p>Employee Engagement Survey</p> <p>KO'R presented the Report on the Employee Survey. Key points from the report and responses to governor questions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • response rate increased from 31.4% to 62.7% (based on 616 staff) • engagement score (based on strongly agree only) was 35.8% - based on including agree scores this was 76.5% • satisfaction score (based on strongly agree only) was 32.5% - based on including agree scores this was 70% • The College is now tracking the Net Promoter Score and, where the question was asked in 2019, the scores were compared to what it would have been at that time. Out of the 11 questions where the NPS could be tracked, all scores had increased. • 3 questions out of 38 asked had negative NPS results – 2 around Resources and 1 for effective communication – the remainder were positive • Where questions were asked that could be compared to the 'York survey' The College had improved its percentage from the previous year and in all but 1 had also improved its placing. The one that had declined was around professional development. 	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> growing engagement and satisfaction scores would be a KPI. The action plan for professional development had involved the staff supporting change group and had been communicated to all staff. Staff could now say what they want in CPD activities, particularly in July. When iTrent is on board staff will be able to take ownership of their own CPD by creating development plans. Effective communications had scored low and KOR explained that some areas did not have regular meetings. The College encouraged managers to understand the benefits of having regular meetings. Whilst this would not be a target in manager appraisals there are additional communication features built into iTrent. 	
3.6	<p>Ofsted Update KH confirmed that the College remained well prepared. The SAR had been updated following a review by the Governors in QIG and the position papers had been updated to match the year end data.</p>	
4.1	<p>Principal's Report Governors received the Principal's report and, in the absence of CB, KH outline the key points in the report:</p>	
4.2	<p><u>Participation</u> Enrolment was continuing however, 16-18 provision had seen some withdrawals. Overall there was an increase of approximately 100 compared to the previous year. January enrolments would be considered. The College was experiencing some issues with student confidence and behaviour but this was a sector wide concern. Apprenticeships were on track to meet the income target of £2m.</p>	
4.3	<p><u>Performance</u> (Discussed in advance at QIG) Headline achievement for 2020-21 was on track to be 87.1% which was an improvement on last year (84.8%).</p>	
4.4	<p><u>Provision</u> Curriculum Planning was in hand and employers were being encouraged to attend the employer forum events in November at each of the Campuses. Governors were asked to circulate information on social media about the events where possible.</p>	
4.5	<p><u>People</u> Recruitment remained challenging in some areas as there was insufficient available staff in some sectors and therefore pay was increasing.</p>	
4.6	<p><u>Prosperity</u> The college had achieved an operating surplus for the first time in many years.</p>	
4.7	<p>Governors discussed the results and agreed that the staff should be congratulated and a letter sent from the board of governors to staff thanking them for their efforts.</p>	MM/ MR
4.8	<p>KPIs Governors reviewed the KPIs noting that future reports would be limited to relevant monthly or termly targets.</p>	
4.9	<p>A governor expressed concern over 46% of staff being 'regretted leavers' however, it was confirmed that the numbers were currently small being 6 out of 13 people in total although these had been key people in key roles.</p>	
4.10	<p>English and Maths Update (Reviewed in advance by QIG) KT presented the updated report and confirmed that learners progress had improved for the 3rd year in succession. Governors noted that although progress looks small at +0.10 (English) and +0.06 (Maths), this was a significant improvement and well above sector performance. KT agreed noting that the college had made good use of the tuition fund for students at grade 3 and grade 4.</p>	
4.11	<p>Functional skills at levels 1 and 2 had declined but investigations had shown that this was due to the structure of the distance learning programme and this had now been reconfigured to include weekly online sessions.</p>	
4.12	<p>Apprenticeships (reviewed in advance by QIG) The previous Director of Apprenticeships had resigned and the Interim Director had now accepted the permanent role in their place. There were 146 apprentices who were out of funding which was a significant improvement on the previous report.</p>	



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4.13	<p>Learner Involvement Update</p> <p>Governors received the report and KT outlined the key points including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new learner involvement procedure was implemented from September 2020 and has a range of well-established processes to gather and respond to learner feedback. An external audit for learner involvement took place in July 2021 which resulted in substantial assurance with positive feedback stating there are robust systems of internal controls operating effectively. The Apprenticeship on-programme survey completed in August identifies that all 4 key satisfaction areas are equal to or above external benchmark. Analysis of trend data (QDP Surveys) demonstrates a three-year improvement in overall learner satisfaction at induction from 91% in 2018/19 to 96% in 2020/21. The College exceeded the KPI by 2% in both the induction and on-programme survey (recommend the college to a friend)/ 	
4.14	Governors agreed that their letter to staff (<i>reference minute 4.7</i>) should also include praise for this, particularly as this had been during covid.	MR/MM
4.15	<p>Curriculum Strategy Implementation</p> <p>Governors received the report and KT outlined the key points including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The College had continued its drive to expand the digital offer and had formally launched the opening of the two new Digital Academies and had successfully grown the gaming provision (from 45 learners in 19/20 to 99 learners in 20/21). Continuing to Increase the higher-level offer, and successfully recruited to the FD in Engineering and level 4 in counselling and continue work with Wolverhampton and Staffordshire University to develop courses for Sept 2022. Continuing with the #getemployed campaign and working closely with the WMCA to respond to sector needs and creating a range of SBWA. The College was currently working with NHS England delivering its step into care and with Bar Sports and Premier Suite to deliver its step into hospitality. Successfully implementing a range of new courses, such as, Uniformed Services and Princes Trust at Cannock, Nail Technology at Tamworth and Agriculture Level 3 at Rodbaston. Work with Miller and Carter in Cannock to staff its new restaurant. There had been some closures at level 2 due to higher exam results this summer resulting in more learners starting at level 3. Investment in infrastructure at Rodbaston for Dog Grooming, vet nursing, animal care and the Animal Zone. 	
4.16	Governors queried the data on uniformed services closing level 2 yet the course was reported as successful at Cannock. KT confirmed that more learners had started at level 3 due to improved exam grades this year. KT expected level 2 to run next year if exams took place as normal in summer 2022.	
4.17	Governors asked about staffing constraints on Engineering with the addition of the Foundation Degree and it was confirmed that staffing levels were stable and it had been felt better to have larger groups with a permanent member of staff rather than smaller groups with agency staff.	
4.18	It was noted that Governors would discussed how they could support Employer Engagement at the Strategy Day in November.	
5.1	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting</p> <p>Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 30 September 2021 and be approved and signed electronically by the Chair as a true record.</p>	
5.2	<p>Action Grid</p> <p>The Board reviewed the Action Grid. The Clerk reported that she would be circulating the details for the Governance Development Programme next week with directions to individual governors for relevant courses for their development.</p>	
5.3	<p>Quality Improvement Group</p> <p>TS confirmed the QIG had met on 13th October 2021 and thanked the group for their support. The work of the group had involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> arranging governor visits to student groups in the week of 10th January 2022; providing feedback on the draft SAR; 	



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5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing the achievement data which was an impressive 4% above national average including a slight improvement in value added despite Covid; • review and challenge on the Apprenticeship Data which showed improvement but still had further to go; the group were assured by the appointment of the new Director of Apprenticeships: • The land based sector had shown remarkable improvement due to rigorous management support and intervention strategies by the senior staff; <p>It was agreed that the data showed that the quality improvement strategy undertaken by the college was effective and this should provide future assurance to the governors that other areas in need of improvement would be also be addressed by effective strategies.</p>	
5.5	<p>Finance Improvement Group</p> <p>MR confirmed that the FIG had met on 14th October 2021. The financial outturn for 2020-21 was better than expected and there were no significant financial concerns.</p>	
5.6	<p>Governance and Search Committee</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2021 were received together with the recommendations of the Committee. MR confirmed that the Committee had reflected on the composition of the board and the timing and format of its committees and working groups and this would be part of the discussion on the Strategy Day in November. MR thanked Governors for participation in the appraisals process and confirmed he would be also be connecting with the new governors later in the term.</p>	
6.1	<p>Management Accounts</p> <p>JS presented the management accounts to 30 September 2021, outlining concerns with the banking covenants, the growth in provision for 16-18 year olds, the energy supply contracts from March 2022 and the low numbers in HE provision. Staff costs were below expected but recruitment has been difficult and agency staff are being used.</p>	
6.2	<p>A governor asked about the risks associated with the ESFA Funding Audit. JS confirmed that the audit would commence the following week and that it may be necessary to put a provision in the annual accounts to cover the ESFA funding audit.</p>	
6.3	<p>A governor asked about the risks associated with the bank covenants. JS confirmed that the college was meeting regularly with all three banks and the banks had been kept informed of any re-forecast and Yorkshire Bank, whose covenants are most at risk, were positive about any request from the College to consider changes to or a waiver of covenants.</p>	
6.4	<p>Financial Outturn 2020-21 <i>(reviewed in advance by FIG)</i></p> <p>JS updated the Board on the likely outturn from the 2020-21 financial year and confirmed it had been a good year. and the following information was highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The external audit process was mostly complete • The potential clawback for apprenticeships of £200k had been built into the budget • There had been a holiday pay accrual error of £50k adverse. • Pension provision costs had increased from £1.269m to £1.729m. • The ESFA audit had started. 	
6.5	<p>Financial Regulations 2021-22</p> <p>JS presented the revised Financial Regulations to the Board, providing detail on the amendments made to the document. The Board received confirmation that the FIG had reviewed these in advance of the meeting where a recommendation for approval had been made.</p>	
6.6	<p>Resolved: that the Financial Regulations be approved.</p>	
6.7	<p>Tenders over £75,000</p> <p>A report which detailed payments and proposed payments in excess of £75k was presented to the Board, which included confirmation of the tender process in relation to each purchase, reviewed in advance of the meeting by the FIG.</p>	
6.8	<p>Resolved That the tender and quotation outcomes exceeding £75,000 be approved.</p>	
7.1	<p>Policy Approvals</p> <p>The board received the following policies that were due for approval: Drugs and Alcohol Policy (a new policy) and the Redundancy Policy. Governors were advised on the rationale for the Drugs and Alcohol Policy and of any material changes to the Redundancy</p>	



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7.2	<p>Policy. Equality Impact Assessment analysis had been reviewed by members of the board in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Resolved: The policies be approved.</p>	
7.3	<p>Standing Orders</p> <p>The Clerk advised that the annual review of Standing Orders would be postponed until after the Strategy Day in November. The Audit Committee Terms of Reference had been updated and would be reviewed by that Committee at its next meeting.</p>	
7.4	<p>Governor Code of Conduct</p> <p>The Clerk advised the Board that a review of the Board's Governor Code of Conduct had taken place and as such, presented the revised document for approval along with detail on the proposed amendments. Governors received confirmation that the Governance & Search Committee had recommended the document for approval at its last meeting where a recommendation for approval had been made.</p>	
7.5	<p>Resolved: that the updated Governor Code of Conduct be approved.</p>	
7.6	<p>Governors' Training and Development Plan</p> <p>The Clerk presented the updated Training and Development Plan and advised Governors of the addition of the ETF governor development programme.</p>	
7.7	<p>Resolved: To approve the Governors' Training and Development Plan</p>	
7.8	<p>College Seal</p> <p>The Clerk reported that the College Seal had not been used since the last meeting.</p>	
8	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no other business</p>	
9.1 9.2	<p>Impact Statements</p> <p>Governors held a robust discussion on how they should evidence the impact of their governance arrangements and the reports received and decisions taken at meetings. Governors agreed this could include a wide range of things such as community impact, use of resources, risk management, improvement of the learner experience, equality. It was agreed that this could be explored at the Strategy Day and the report format reviewed to support this.</p>	ALL
	<p>Date of Next Meetings</p> <p>Audit Committee Wednesday 24th November 2021 8:30am – all Governors invited to hear the report of the External Auditor</p> <p>Strategy Day Wednesday 24th November 2021 12:30pm</p> <p>Board Meeting Thursday 9th December 2021 9am.</p>	

Chair

9 December 2021

Date