



South Staffordshire College

Meetings of the Board of Governors

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

30 September 2021

9:00am to 11:48am

Governors present: Mike Rowley (Chair) (MR); Claire Boliver (Chief Executive & Principal) (CB); Tim Legge (Vice Chair) (TL); Philip Atkins; Yvonne Bradshaw (YB); Andrew Elsby-Smith; David Isted (DI); Tony McGovern; Dipal Patel; Helen Simpson; Nicola Truman.

Apologies received: Steve Burgin; Andrea Chilton; Hannah Montgomery; Stephen Oliver; Gail Steptoe-Warren

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)

Peter Marsh of Peter Marsh Consulting for items 1 and 2.

Board	Agenda Item	Actions
1.1	Welcome and Apologies for Absence MR welcomed Governors and Staff and Peter Marsh. MR welcomed Yvonne Bradshaw and Dipal Patel to their first meeting as governors and noted that Hannah Montgomery's term of office started on 1/10/21.	
1.2	Apologies were received from Steve Burgin, Andrea Chilton, Hannah Montgomery, Stephen Oliver and Gail Steptoe-Warren which were accepted by the board. MR noted the Board's thanks to Steve Burgin for his invaluable input over the past few years.	
1.3	MR explained that the Quality Recovery Group and the Finance Recovery Group had been renamed as the Quality Improvement Group (QIG) and the Finance Improvement Group (FIG) in recognition that the college now self-assessed a 'Good' college.	
2.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest in any of the items in part 1 or part 2 of the agenda.	
	<i>At 9:05am The Board then moved to Part 2 of the Agenda which is minuted elsewhere. PM left the meeting at 9:55am and the Board returned to Part 1 Agenda items at 10:00am.</i>	
3.1	Annual Safeguarding Report and update from Safeguarding Link Governor KV presented the Annual Safeguarding report for 2020-21 which detailed the number and categories of child protection, safeguarding, Prevent and mentoring referrals made to the College's Safeguarding Team during the 2020/21 academic year. This was to enable Governors to monitor compliance against statutory regulations.	
3.2	Key points from the report and responses to questions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The College has comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures in place that are reviewed annually for children and vulnerable adults. Retention rates were at 91% for learners with safeguarding issues and was 7% higher than 2019/20 rate. Retention rates for mentored learners was at 92%. There was an increased number of referrals to the mentoring service which KV felt was linked to lockdowns. 131 staff have completed an online course in mental health awareness and an additional mentor has been appointed to address this increase. KV liaises closely with TL (Safeguarding Link Governor) on serious issues including the Prevent referral where no further action was taken by the police. Darktrace, Fsecure and the inbuilt Microsoft Edge security were in place to monitor web site issues. None had been reported. Peer on peer abuse was being monitored with sharing of indecent images being increasingly common during lockdown. Reporting depended on circumstances such as age and external agency involvement. Victims were supported and appropriate 	



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3.3	disciplinary action taken and/or work with Mentors/reporting to First Response if police action not taken.	KV
3.4	Governors discussed the data noting the significant increase in referrals (+64) and it was agreed that data in future reports would be analysed further as a % of cohorts to understand how different areas were affected.	
3.5	TL confirmed that he had inspected the SCR and was assured by the rigorous monitoring by KO'R and the HR team. TL had also examined the support for LAC students and had been reassured by the support given by the College to its students. The Chair thanked KV and TL for the report which was accepted by the Board.	
3.6	Annual Health and Safety Report 2020-21 JS presented the Annual Health and Safety Report for 2020-21 which included the summary of yearly incident and accident statistics and demonstrated compliance with Health, Safety and Environmental Statutory legislation.	JS
3.7	Key points and responses to governor questions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal audit in March 2021 provided assurance as well as areas for improvement which had been included in the Action Plan for 2021-22. Covid 19 continued to impact on H&S 130 incidents reported with Rodbaston having the most incidents due to the type of activities carried out in that location. Reporting was in line with HSE requirements but this was not suited to college activities resulting in 54 incidents reported as 'Other'. 42 of these are in Futures provision due to challenging behaviours with other examples being related to animal incidents and food preparation in catering. 3 RIDDOR incidents which were animal related with one in a work placement. The H&S manager is constantly reviewing how to improve these. Incident reporting is low at Tamworth. JS noted that comparisons were difficult as students were offsite for a lot of the last 2 years. Reporting in the current year was expected to increase. Commonality in near misses. JS noted it was predominantly slips and trips. All near misses are reviewed and action taken to remedy any risks found. 	
3.8	A governor noted that land-based activities were a hazardous occupation and referred to the recent HSE report that demonstrated 25% of deaths annually were in agriculture (1.5% of working population). It was agreed that the H&S team would review the HSE report to identify common areas of risk.	
3.9	The Chair thanked JS for the report which was accepted by the Board.	
4.1	Principal's Report CB presented the Principal's report. Key points and responses to Governor questions: <u>Enrolment</u>	
4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently 2693 (above funded allocation of 2541) with increases in electrical, engineering and public services at Cannock. Tamworth enrolment for Hair and Beauty and Health and Social Care was lower. Level 3 entry was significantly higher. Absences were being followed up by staff and withdrawals had been mainly from students who had joined in July but then returned to 6th form after exam results. TAG grade inflation may be impacting on the enrolment resulting in students enrolled on inappropriate courses. The college had good links with schools in Tamworth and may have some students return to them from 6th form. Target number of 16-18 enrolments in the financial plan is 2700 with the aspirational curriculum targets set at 3200. Apprenticeship funding was expected to be £1.6m leaving a balance of £718k to be achieved in year. This would be closely monitored. 411 learners with EHCPs but income not yet known. Funding allocation for Adult Learning was expected to be on target Current enrolment for HE courses was 87 against a target of 115. HE data would be examined at QIG and brought to the next board meeting. 40% of level 3 2nd years have progressed to HE courses. There were some social space capacity challenges such as dining at Rodbaston but timetabling was being reviewed to ensure a spread of students across the week. 	

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4.3



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<p>4.11</p> <p>4.12</p> <p>4.13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% of level 3 learners could apply to UCAS. It was too early to provide destination data at this stage. Hannah Montgomery has been appointed as the Governor who will lead on the strategic interest of Careers Education and Guidance and encourage employer engagement <p><u>Careers Strategy</u></p> <p>KV presented the CEIAG strategy 2021-23 which linked the SSC careers strategy to the Gatsby Benchmarks.</p> <p>A Governor asked whether the College was on Target to meet the Gatsby Targets by end 2021 as per Government's expectation and what percentage was required for each of the benchmarks and overall to have deemed to have met the requirements. KV confirmed that the percentage required to meet the benchmarks is judged against the criteria set by Careers Enterprise Company and the Compass self-assessment tool. The College had an action plan to meet the criteria although Covid and the lack of available work experience had had an impact on performance.</p> <p>Resolved: That the CEIAG Strategy for 2021-2023 be approved.</p>	
<p>4.14</p> <p>4.15</p>	<p>Ofsted Planning</p> <p>KH confirmed that SAR and the position papers were nearly complete and a small group of Governors had received a briefing update. Regular updates were issued to all staff and governors and staff felt well prepared.</p> <p>Governors congratulated ELT noting the significant amount of work that was being done and sought assurance that ELT were mindful of their own wellbeing during the process.</p>	
<p>4.16</p> <p>4.17</p> <p>4.18</p>	<p>Annual HR Report 2020-21</p> <p>KO'R presented the annual HR report including the HR Strategy update and a report on HR policies that had been internally approved in 2020-21. Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopting iTrent – a combined HR and Payroll system Impact of Covid 19 New staff contracts DBS checks now every 3 years with staff encouraged to join the update service Recruitment update Performance management and succession planning Rewards and accreditations Gender pay gap information Health and Wellbeing <p>A Governor praised the progress on the DBS checks.</p> <p>Resolved: to ratify the HR policies listed in the report.</p>	
<p>4.19</p> <p>4.20</p>	<p>Progress on English and Maths</p> <p>KT presented the report on English and Maths confirming that the data was provisional and would be confirmed and examined in detail at the QIG before return to the board in October.</p> <p>Maths and English achievement rates were above national QAR (qualification achievement rate) averages by +3% (Maths) and +7-9% (English) however the adult high grades are below QAR in both subjects and will be monitored.</p>	
<p>4.21</p>	<p>Progress on Apprenticeships</p> <p>KT presented the report on Apprenticeships. Key points and responses to governor questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing issues were being resolved by actions taken by the senior leadership team. 2 new business managers had been appointed. Assessor vacancies were being covered by agency workers. 7% of reviews were overdue but this was within the KPI of 90%. The College was working with CWM on plans to share underutilised staff across West Midlands Colleges Leadership and Management have taken a lot of action to support improvement and current experience for most apprentices is 'good'. Targeted employer surveys showed that they were happy with the College but there was more work to do in order for all customers to be happy with the service. 14% of apprentices were affected by late reviews (7% of these were due to sickness). 	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position papers were available to identify actions and progress. 	
5.1	Minutes of the Last Meeting Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 9 July 2021 be approved as a true record and the written resolution dated 13 July 2021 be ratified.	
5.2	Action Grid The Board reviewed the Action Grid noting the action closed. The clerk reported that the Governance Development Programme had been purchased from ETF and suitable courses would be identified at the Governance and Search Committee for sharing with the Board members.	
5.3	Audit Committee 16/9/21 minutes The Board received the minutes of the meeting held on 16/9/21 with HS noting the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no issues had been raised in private with the committee by either the auditors or management. The Whistleblowing Policy had been reviewed and was recommended to the board for approval The anti-bribery policy had been reviewed and was recommended to the board for approval as part of the Financial Regulations (to be approved 22/10/21) The Committee had received and reviewed the internal audit reports on HR and Safeguarding (reasonable assurance), Cash Receipting, Controls and Banking (reasonable assurance) and Student Voice (Substantial Assurance). HS praised and recommended the board read the Student Voice report. The committee had received and reviewed the Internal Auditor's annual report A review of the Internal audit action grid showed that progress on Apprenticeships was disappointing but progress on procurement was better with only one outstanding follow up action. The External auditor's report had been reviewed. The committee had noted that the External Auditor must now present their findings to the board and following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair. It was agreed that all board members be invited to attend the Audit Committee on 24th November at 8:30am to hear Mazars present their findings and if unable to attend could listen to the recording of the meeting. The ESFA would be carrying out a funding audit however, Mazars would also be undertaking a detailed testing of covenants. The Committee received and closely reviewed the Risk Registers. 	
6.1	Outline Management Accounts to 31/8/21 JS presented the management account in their new format noting that August was a quiet month. Key risks were the bank covenants which will be monitored throughout the year; funding staffing to meet growth in learner numbers; Tamworth Development Costs and the outcome of the ESFA Funding Audit. Cash reserves were better than expected (+£937,000 compared to budget).	
6.2	2020-21 Financial Outturn JS presented the report confirming the external audit process would start the following week. Key points included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another reduction in apprenticeships funding which reflects the full costs of the current apprenticeship audit risks (reduced from £1,700,000 to £1,675,000), Further increases in non-funding lines of income, e.g HE fees, full cost/learner loans fees, income generating activities and other income, An overall increase in College income (£23,596,000 compared to July forecast of £23,545,000), A slight reduction in overall pay costs (£16,688,000 compared to July forecast of £16,693,000), A reduction in overall non-pay costs (£5,192,000 compared to July forecast of £5,241,000), Operating surplus increasing to £135,000 from the July forecast of £50,000, The increase in the College's FRS102 pension costs which affects staff costs and interest & other finance costs. This is based on the actuarial review received in mid- 	



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	<p>September. Overall profit and loss costs increase from £1,269,000 forecast to £1,792,000 as confirmed in the actuarial report. However, overall balance sheet liability drops from £19,465,000 to £17,774,000,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension costs result in forecast accounting loss increasing to £626,000 deficit from July forecast £188,000 deficit. • The improvement in the projected financial out-turn has no major effect on banking covenants other than to significantly reduce the risks surrounding the mock funding audit and apprenticeship income. • The College has been selected for a full ESFA funding audit and the nature of these audits is that data will be scrutinised and any opportunity for clawback of funding will be taken. 	
6.3	<p>FE Condition Fund Summary</p> <p>JS confirmed that the College received £835,404 to improve the condition of its estate and presented the report which showed that it had been spent on Rodbaston and Tamworth campuses, with around £12,000 unspent which will be returned to the ESFA.</p>	
6.4	<p>CB confirmed that a lot of work had been carried out by the Estates team over the summer and all College sites were looking good with nice facilities. The Board asked CP to pass on their thanks to Chris Ashforth (Head of Estates).</p>	
7.1	<p>Regularity Audit Self-Assessment 2020-21</p> <p>The board received the self-assessment for 2020-21 which would be reviewed by the External Auditor during the audit of the Financial Statements.</p>	
7.2	<p>Resolved: that the Regularity Audit Self-Assessment 2020-21 be approved for signature by the CEO and the Chair.</p>	
7.3	<p>Annual Internal Auditors Report, Subcontracting Report, Risk Registers and Action Plans</p> <p>The board received these reports noting the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting as assurance that these had been comprehensively reviewed by the Committee. There were no further questions from the Board on these reports.</p>	
7.4	<p>Policy Reviews</p> <p>The board received the following policies that were due for approval: Safeguarding and Child Protection; Whistleblowing, Learner Conduct. Governors were advised on any material changes to the policies. Equality Impact Assessment analysis had been reviewed by a member of the board in advance of the meeting.</p>	
7.5	<p>Resolved: The policies be approved.</p>	
7.6	<p>Compliments Complaints and Comments 2020-21</p> <p>The board received the annual report noting the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of complaints received 2020-2021 has seen a minimal increase to the previous year from 39 to 44. • Complaints response averaged at 8.1 working days, with 9 of the 44 complaints exceeding 10 working days (a reduction of 10% on the previous year). • 150 compliments were received across 20-21, an increase of 29 from the 121 received in 19-20. • The number of complaints were in line with the size of each campus with Apprenticeships having 17 complaints. • Data on compliments would be broken down by faculty/campus next year. 	
7.7	<p>A governor noted that the compliments outweighed the complaints and praised the college for developing effective methods for securing positive feedback as well.</p>	KT



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7.8	College Seal The Clerk reported the use of the College Seal in relation to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a revised loan agreement with Lloyds Bank PLC approved by the Board at its Meeting on 9 July 2021 (<i>minute 620 refers</i>) • A consent letter relating to debt facilities with Barclays UK PLC approved by the board at its meeting on 9 July 2021 (<i>minute 621-623 refers</i>) • The lease of a nursery block at Cannock to Little Owl Nursery approved by the Board at its meeting on 9 July 2021 (<i>minute 600-601 refers</i>) 	
8	Any Other Business None. The meeting closed at 11:50am. The next meeting is Friday 22 October 2021 at 9am.	

 Chair

 Date