



Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 24 March 2022 at 17.30 room IP024/5

Present:	Ian Looker (Chair) Helen Crews Lee Probert (Chief Executive and Principal) Janet Dean Heidi Fraser-Krauss Rob Hickey Donald Inglis Ann Lees Kevin Moss John Robinson Andrew Thomas Owen Trotter Beth McHugh-Hicks (Staff Governor) Mark Rushworth (Staff Governor) Meltem Celek (Student Governor)	
In Attendance:	David Hawkins – Vice Principal, Finance and Professional Services Danny Brett – Deputy Chief Executive & Principal Carolyn Barker – Director of Governance Meg Mitchell (HE student)	
		Action
1.	Apologies for Absence/Declarations of Interest	
	Apologies were received from Cathy Waters. There were no declarations of interest.	
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
	2.1 Minutes of Meeting The Minutes of 13 December 2021 were reviewed. There were no observations/amendments noted. <i>The Governing Body resolved to approve the minutes of 13 December 2021 meeting.</i>	
3.	Matters Arising	
	3.1 Action Summary The actions summary was reviewed and noted. The Chair confirmed that the action on the Skills Strategy work is included as an agenda item. The action to sign the financial statement and accounts had been completed. It was noted that the action owner to review the Modern Slavery Statement had moved to the Vice Principal, Finance and Professional Services and this remained the only outstanding action.	
4.	Strategic Matters	
	4.1 Chair's Update	

	<p>The Chair provided a verbal update covering recent attendance at an Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and Association of Colleges (AOC) governor conference noting a few themes of interest.</p> <p>Local Skills Improvement Plans was a key area of focus at both conferences, with the proposed new statutory responsibilities for colleges a significant area of discussion. It was noted that College maybe assessed on how well they are meeting local skills need via a performance metric, and it may also be an area of focus for Ofsted in the future-</p> <p>External governance reviews were another discussion point at the conference noting that pilots have taken place and a reminder that reviews need to have taken place by the end of next year. The Chair advised that we are awaiting sight of the framework and principles for external reviews before we progress with identifying a third party to undertake a review. Intelligence from the pilots did not identify any areas of concern. Governors asked about who we would use to conduct the review and one governor offered a contact at a university. It was also noted that peer to peer review may be useful.</p> <p>The Chair provided a brief overview of a visit to Bishop Burton College with the Vice Chair and a visit to Wakefield College where he met with the CEO and Chair.</p> <p>A verbal update was given on the recent local employer dinner where the challenges in construction were articulated. It was noted how positive the employers are to support the College including the recent donation of 10,000 bricks from Permission Homes.</p> <p>4.2 Chief Executive and Principal's Report</p> <p>The Principal provided an update on the report covering key items of interest. Governors were asked to note that the report was focused on the external landscape around the Skills and Education Bill. Key points noted were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bill is ready to go through the House of Lords before moving through the process of receiving Royal Assent. • Post-18 review announcements made with some policies confirmed such as the overall fee cap. • Other consultations arising from the Post-18 review include lifelong learning entitlement and access to student learning funding. Most concern being the access for level 4 learners to funding. • Annual strategic conversation noting that the letter was seen as a positive endorsement of what the college is working on and the pay to staff ratio that has been discussed at committees. <p>A governor noted the Government announcement to boost access to high-quality digital skills and asked about the College's position. It was advised that digital was more schools focused however discussions are taking place with York University on the potential to partner on digital.</p> <p>4.3 Local Skills Implementation Plan</p> <p>The Principal provided an overview of York's 10 Year Skills Strategy. The document was circulated to Governors ahead of the meeting. Points discussed included maximising local initiatives and the priorities for action on pages 9 and 10.</p>	
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	<p>The Principal noted that there is a role for the College to step in and support the partnership working together on progression routes for learners whilst also ensuring we harness the talent in the city and benefit from the skills of those learners. It was noted that supporting businesses to access talent, providing tailored provision, and upskilling to retain learners is a good piece of work for the college to be involved in. The College has committed through the Higher York Board to the implementation of the strategy. It was noted that the Principal is the Chair of the Board to take the Strategy forward.</p> <p>A Governor gave thanks for the overview and asked what the role of larger employers was in York particularly bearing in mind the retail and construction sector. A lack of visibility of student volumes in the Strategy was noted by a governor and they asked how volumes are factored in. It was noted that there is a good opportunity to work together with employers in health with partnerships such as Nimbus Care, the University, and others where the breadth of roles and package in business, finance, and HR, for example, could be articulated.</p> <p>The Chair asked what the initial views were on how well the College's current provision met the skills need set out in the plan. The Principal advised that the College is well placed to meet local skills demands and has made investments, with the LEP's support in areas such as green technology for motor vehicle and in construction.</p> <p>The Principal noted that there was a timing tension between the investments made and the demand from employers, where whilst we have the product available, demand is still limited.</p> <p>The Governing body questioned the deliverability of the strategy to the stated timescales due to the number of partners involved, work needed to hold the partnership together and engaging with those hard-to-reach learners. The Principal concurred with this point and advised that part of the partnership is to sustain progress and the Higher York members would be key to this.</p> <p>The Governing Body asked how it may better understand the needs of other regional areas particularly as many college students live outside of York. It was advised that the geography element will be considered in the wider combined authority.</p> <p>4.4 Progress against Strategic Plan</p> <p>The Board received an update on the Strategic Pillars Implementation Plan. It was noted that the updates have been through all committees in the cycle and work is progressing on creating a top line dashboard. The Principal thanked those governors that had contributed to the development. It was advised that RAG ratings were the same as previously reported with many activities progressing well. Key points noted were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Education is stabilising in overall performance – clarity of leadership, scrutiny, and focus. • Student experience pillar requires additional focus to develop the student voice and a student's union subject to further views but seen as a positive step. • Investments – to note the submission of the capital bid to support T-Level provision. <p>The Principal acknowledged the good progress the Director of Strategic Partnerships and the team are making with strategic dinners, the work at Chair</p>	
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	<p>level and the positive strides forward to reconnect with representative/employer links and external engagement.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the plan is to have the KPI dashboard / framework in place from August 2022. The Governors were asked to share with the Principal any intelligence on good KPI's particularly for in-year measures.</p>	LP
5.	Education and Students	
	<p>5.1 Q&C Committee Chair Report</p> <p>The Committee Chair advised that the report was self-explanatory and noted that quite a lot of time had been taken in discussing the decline in apprenticeship outcomes at the last meeting. The Committee found the presentation and report helpful for members to familiarise themselves with the work on apprenticeships and were assured by the Strategic Leadership Team that work is in progress.</p> <p>The Committee Chair reported that effectiveness of the meeting in terms of reporting and monitoring progress was discussed. A review is in progress with the aim of streamlining processes and paperwork to ensure over the year all agenda items are covered.</p> <p>The Committee Chair commented that the committee minutes being appended to the Chair's report was helpful and asked if this was to continue. It was advised that it would be.</p> <p>The Governors discussed the likelihood of an Ofsted inspection in the short term and were advised that a pilot exercise was conducted last year. The Principal provided an outline of the inspection approach taken by Ofsted and advised that readiness plans are in place. Governors asked about inspection training, and it was confirmed a date is being set in the next few weeks. The Principal advised that as a minimum Ofsted tend to meet with the Chair of the Board and the Q&C Committee Chair. The Governors asked whether individual support for governors is planned. It was confirmed that governors will be given guidance from the Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p><i>The Governing Body noted the report.</i></p> <p>5.2 Student Association Report</p> <p>The Deputy Principal and Chief Executive presented the Student Association Report. It was noted that a full review of the student experience is currently in progress to ensure full representation across student groups and from board level down, in formal and less formal groups. The work to date is 80% complete. A new student association has been formed with the first round of student engagements taking place with key feedback and actions agreed.</p> <p>The student governor advised that although participation was low there was positive feedback from students and that there are plans for the student group to discuss equality and inclusion.</p> <p>A governor questioned a note in the report regarding a current issue about gender equality and wondered whether there was a particular issue that is recurring. It was advised that there is a raised awareness of students being more confident to raise issues and challenge as to whether the college is doing enough. This was in regard to understanding the effective use of pronouns/gender representation and the physical environment i.e. toilets. The student representatives mentioned mental health and wellbeing awareness</p>	

	<p>discussions and an App that is available for students. The Staff Governor advised that mental health issues are also discussed in tutorials.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the meeting was poorly attended and that it may be partly affected by Covid and perhaps other students not being aware of the association. The governors questioned whether with improved promotion of the association and its benefits it would improve participation. It was agreed that there is an opportunity to better promote the student association and provide some CPD where necessary to support tutors.</p> <p><i>The Governing Body noted the contents of the Student Association Report.</i></p>	DB
6.	Audit and Risk	
	<p>6.1 Committee Chair Report - Audit</p> <p>The Committee Chair advised that there was a deep dive exercise on apprenticeships discussed at length. The routine audit outcome and bus fraud were discussed at committee. The bus payment issue has improved with some parents having provided payment. Bus companies are on board with monitoring. It was noted there is a concerted approach overall to monitoring.</p> <p>The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services advised that some students are being taken through disciplinaries as a result of non-payment and in some cases, parents have approached the college to pay monies owed. An example of a student falsifying a bus pass for next year was noted. A governor advised that it could be considered a criminal offence, reportable to the Police. The Committee Chair advised that the matter was considered in detail by the Committee who concluded that the proportionate approach was to deal with it through the student disciplinary process. In addition, advice was given to the Strategic Leadership Team to check all cash-based sources of income. The Governing Body advised that students should be reminded that non-payment of bus fares is classed as fraud.</p> <p><i>The Governing Body resolved to note the report.</i></p>	DH
7.	Finance and Resources	
	<p>7.1 F&GP Committee Chair Report</p> <p>The Committee Chair noted the financial performance, and the pay award having been discussed at the recent committee meeting.</p> <p><i>The Governing Body resolved to note the report.</i></p> <p>7.2 2021-22 Year End Financial Forecast</p> <p>The Vice Principal for Finance and Professional Services provided an overview of the Financial Forecast. At the end of January there was a £139k deficit based on the breakeven budget that was set at the beginning of the year. Key messages to note were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very positive on apprenticeship numbers • Under delivered on adult education provision to date and full costs • Extra costs on estates • Factored in the pay award within the £139k <p>The relatively small deficit was noted. The Vice Principal for Finance and Professional Services advised that since the January position there has been</p>	

	<p>other pressures notably transport providers increasing costs by 8-10% for the rest of the year.</p> <p>The Governing Body questioned how management were trying to get the adult numbers up. The Deputy Principal and Chief Executive advised that there is a greater effort to appropriately spread the burden by applying targets across college to improve staff awareness of the adult education budget. There has been some progression over the last few weeks and months and if projections for April are not achieved, interventions will be put in place by SLT.</p> <p><i>The Governing Body resolved to note the report.</i></p> <p>7.3 Staff Pay Award</p> <p>The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services advised that the F&GP Committee had discussed the proposal in quite some detail. At the time of the F&GP meeting the allocations were not known. It was challenged at the meeting to see if a pay award could be made from 1st January. The proposal was considered to be affordable.</p> <p>Governors fully supported the proposal and were happy to approve. A staff governor advised that it will be gratefully welcomed.</p> <p><i>The Governing Body supported the proposal and approved the pay award.</i></p> <p>7.4 Gas Contract</p> <p>The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services advised that several colleges are increasingly concerned about their association with a gas provider that has its links with Russia. The College is in contract with the same provider. The purpose of the paper and discussion with Governors was regarding the break clauses of the contract. If the College were to break the contract there is a requirement to cover the providers losses with an approximate impact of £600k or alternatively to pay the contract outright, being a similar amount.</p> <p>Ordinarily the Senior Leadership Team would have treated the matter as a management decision but as well as financial implications there were moral and repetitional implications to be considered. Some colleges have been subject to adverse publicity and therefore the SLT brought the matter to the attention of the Governing Body to discuss and agree the way forward. The advice from the Department for Education is not clear but have stated colleges should hold their nerve. A Governor noted that if we were to break our agreement, Gazprom could sell on the gas at considerably higher rates given the inflation in gas prices this year.</p> <p>After further debate the Governing Body recommended that the college retains its position with a view to re-tendering towards the end of the contract term. The Governing Body recommended the SLT develop a media statement ready for any enquiries.</p> <p><i>The Governing Body noted the content of the report and endorsed the proposed position.</i></p>	DH
8.	Governance & Assurance	
	8.1 P&G Committee Chair Report	

	<p>The Committee Chair provided an update from the recent committee meeting including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor engagement and training - a review of Governor training records had been completed with a recommendation to approve the use of the College's e-learning system to record all training. • Governing Body membership - governor recruitment was discussed picking up on the key skills needed. Skills audit identified that there is a good skills range in the governing body at present, with the main area requiring strengthening being around education/skills expertise. In addition, we would look to broaden the range of perspectives around the Governing body focusing on ethnicity and local employer views. Recruitment strategy approved with the aim of having new governors in place by 1st August 2022. <p><i>The Governing Body noted the report.</i></p> <p>8.2 Strategic Risk Monitoring</p> <p>It was noted that the Strategic Risk Monitoring document was reviewed by each committee in relation to the relevant Pillars of the Strategic Plan. At the audit committee there were some points noted that were out of date. The points raised have been addressed since the meeting.</p> <p>The Vice Principal of Finance and Professional Services noted that the risk register is starting to grow again and will review with risk owners the wording.</p> <p><i>The Governing Body noted the strategic risk monitoring report.</i></p>	DH
9.	PART 2	
	<p>9.1 Financial Reserves Policy</p> <p>The policy was recommended for approval from the F&GP committee to the Governors.</p> <p><i>The Governing Body approved the Financial Reserves Policy.</i></p> <p>9.2 Funding Audit Report</p> <p>The Governing Body received the funding audit report following the audit in December 2021. It was noted that a detailed presentation was given at the audit committee and a discussion on the anomalies.</p> <p><i>The Governing Body accepted and noted the report.</i></p> <p>9.3 Public Benefit Statement</p> <p>The statement was submitted to the Governing Body for approval following a review and recommendation at the P&G committee. The statement was checked for accuracy against the wording in the financial statement and accounts to ensure consistency.</p> <p><i>The Governing Body approved the Public Benefit Statement.</i></p> <p>9.4 Schedule of Delegation</p> <p>The schedule was approved by the People & Governance Committee on 2 March 2022. Some minor updates were made to the OfS schedule.</p>	

	<i>The Governing Body approved the Schedule of Delegation.</i>	
10.	SUMMARY MATTERS	
	10.1 Any Other Business There being no further business, the meeting closed.	
11.	11.1 Date of Next Meeting 13 th July 2022, 17:30, Room 1F024/25	
Signed		
Name:	Ian Looker (Chair)	
Date:		