

**BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION BOARD (“the Board”)**  
**HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2023 AT 5.00PM**  
**AT LANCASHIRE ENERGY HQ**

**Members’ attendance record:**

		28 Sep 2022	1 Nov 2022	6 Dec 2022	15 Dec 2022	31 Jan 2023	14 Mar 2023	25 Apr 2023	23 May 2023	4 Jul 2023	2022/23 attendance
Steve Fogg	Independent Member, Chair	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Helen Broughton	Independent Member	✓	A	✓	✓	✓					
Andrea Challis	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Mark Chapman	Student Member	---	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Jane Cole	Independent Member	✓	✓	A	A	A					
Darren Gorman	Student Member	---	✓	A	✓	A					
Colleen Hickson	Staff Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Chris Holt	Independent Member	✓	A	✓	✓	A					
Suzy Layton	Independent Member	✓	A	✓	✓	✓					
Sandy Lee	Staff Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	A					
Antony Lockley	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Martin Long	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Adrian Mills	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Bev Robinson	Principal and Chief Executive	✓	✓	✓	A	✓					
Wendy Robinson	Independent Member	✓	✓	A	✓	✓					

**In attendance:**

Linda Dean	Executive Director of Apprenticeships and People
Cheryl Dunn	Vice-Principal for Higher Education and Student Enhancement
Paul Howard	PDH Advisory (minutes)
Simon Hughes	Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum
Alistair Mulvey	Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning
Daryl Platt	Vice-Principal for Engagement
Rob Lawson	External Governance Reviewer
Scott Cubitt	Head of Engineering and Science (for item 17/23 only)

### **1/23 Chair and quorum**

Steve Fogg took the chair and noted that due notice had been given to all members and that a quorum was present. Accordingly, he declared the meeting duly convened and constituted.

### **2/23 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received as shown in the attendance table above.

### **3/23 Declarations of interest**

- (i) The Board noted that all employees of the Corporation had a pecuniary interest in minute reference 8/23 (update on proposed pay award 2023) by virtue of the fact that they would be beneficiaries of any agreed award. Note was made of the fact that at its last meeting the Board had agreed that those with a pecuniary interest would not participate in the discussion but that, as the discussion was a general one to inform later negotiations, it would not be necessary for individuals to leave the meeting. The Board **AGREED** that this approach remained appropriate at this meeting.
- (ii) The Board also noted that Senior Post Holders had a pecuniary interest in minute reference 18/23 (Review of Pension Exchange Policy) and that Wendy Robinson had an interest in minute reference 13/23 (Membership matters). For both these items, it was **AGREED** that the individuals concerned would leave the meeting during the discussion.

### **4/23 Minutes of the previous meeting**

- (i) The minutes and confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 December 2022 and the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2022 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.
- (ii) Confirmation was provided that all actions on the action log had been completed.

### **5/23 Dashboard**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum and the Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning presented the regular dashboard containing headline quality and performance metrics.
- (ii) In response to a question from Helen Broughton, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum advised that English and maths performance had remained fairly static and acknowledged the need to continue to focus on student attendance rates. He outlined the various ways in which B&FC engages with students before and after each Christmas break, to seek to ensure good levels of attendance are maintained.

- (iii) The Board received the dashboard and noted the content.

## **6/23 Principal and Chief Executive's report**

- (i) The Principal and Chief Executive presented her report which had been circulated with the agenda, and highlighted in particular the fact that levelling up funding had recently been received for the Multiversity project. The significant contributions made by Blackpool Council as B&FC's strategic partner, and by the Vice-Principal for Engagement as the lead executive, were acknowledged and commended by the Board.
- (ii) Note was also made of the fact that the licence for the Lancashire and Cumbria Institute of Technology (IoT) had been granted in December 2022, which marked the culmination of significant collaborative working across the region. In response to a suggestion from the Board, the Vice-Principal for Engagement agreed to provide an update paper on both the Institute of Technology and Multiversity at the next meeting.

### **ACTION: Vice-Principal for Engagement**

- (iii) Antony Lockley suggested that it may be beneficial to hold a future meeting at the Council offices in Bickerstaffe House, so that the Board is able to see the site where Multiversity will be located. In response to a question from Andrea Challis, the Vice-Principal for Engagement noted the inclusion of corporate social responsibility obligations in the contract which are likely to focus on the development of young people throughout the construction programme, noting that it is likely that a number of apprentices will be sought. Antony Lockley commented that a discussion on how the new facility will positively impact B&FC's HE offer would be welcomed at a future point in time, as well as how the development will be used as a vehicle for wider engagement, both during the construction phase and after.
- (iv) Following discussion, the Board agreed that it would be beneficial to hold a Board meeting in the Council offices within the next year, and that Multiversity would be a standing item at all Board meetings going forward.
- (v) Wendy Robinson asked whether any challenges with the IoT were anticipated, both locally and as part of any potential future change of government. In response, the Vice-Principal for Engagement commented that it was too early to comment on any macropolitical implications but that he was confident that B&FC has the bandwidth to deliver and that it fits within the wider organisational strategy. The Principal and Chief Executive endorsed this view, noting that a 5-year licence had been granted and the capital funding had been spent on learning and teaching equipment rather than a new build, which puts B&FC in a stronger position.
- (vi) The Board received the report and noted the content.

## **7/23 Period 5 finance report**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise the financial position as at 31 December 2022. He drew particular attention to the significant increase in forecast energy costs, noting that the sector was lobbying for more support on such expenditure. Internally, he confirmed that there is a focus on seeking to reduce energy use where appropriate, such as investing in energy-saving equipment and reviewing further usage of photovoltaic technology. He also commented that simple steps, such as closing spaces when not in use, could have a positive impact. The Chair queried whether there was merit in seeking to work with other local public sector organisations to jointly procure energy, and also highlighted the opportunity to use the situation as a catalyst for positive behavioural changes. The Principal and Chief Executive confirmed that she had written to local MPs to raise the issue with them.
- (ii) In response to a question from Adrian Mills, the Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning agreed to review the option to use boreholes for water with the Director of Estates. In response to a further question from Adrian Mills, the Principal and Chief Executive explained how the college seeks to raise awareness of energy saving with staff and students, such as through a weekly email staff bulletin which is circulated.
- (iii) The Chair noted that there were some areas of the college that had lower levels of contribution than others. Whilst acknowledging the wider responsibility to the community to provide some key activities, the Board recognised that it is good practice to periodically review these areas.
- (iv) The Board received the report and noted the content.

## **8/23 Update on proposed pay award 2023**

- (i) Staff Board Members withdrew from discussion on this item due to them having a pecuniary interest in the outcome. Confirmation was provided that the meeting remained quorate once their attendance had been discounted.
- (ii) The Executive Director for Apprenticeships and People presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to update the Board on progress with the mandatory consultation process and to seek agreement on the next steps following a request from the trade unions.
- (iii) In response to a question from the Chair, the Executive Director for Apprenticeships and People, who had been part of the management negotiating team, outlined the specific request from the trade union to increase the non-consolidated element of the proposed pay award. Confirmation was provided that, given the number of staff employed at B&FC, for each increase of £100 per staff member, the cost to the Corporation would increase by c.£100k.

- (iv) A lengthy discussion was held and each Board Member had the opportunity to share their view. The Board concluded that the financial envelope agreed at its December 2022 meeting had been at the limit of what it could afford at the current time. The Board reminded itself that its decision had been based on affordability and that it had committed to a further review in July 2023. Particular note was made of the fact that pay award decisions are always based on affordability, with the Board looking to do everything possible to look after its people within these parameters. In reaching its decision, the Board was particularly mindful of the fact that energy costs for the coming year had not yet been finalised and could increase further.
- (v) The Board **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to maintain its current position and not to consider an increase in the non-consolidated element of its proposed pay award, but confirmed that it remains committed to a review in July 2023 if the pay award proposal is accepted.

### **9/23 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for HE and Student Enhancement presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to update the Board on changes to the Teaching Excellence Framework.
- (ii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

### **10/23 Proposed HE fees 2024/25**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to seek agreement of the higher education fees for 2024/25.
- (ii) Following discussion, informed by the government's decision not to increase the maximum fee limit, the Board **AGREED** to retain its fees at a maximum of £9k per annum for 2024/25.

### **11/23 Board strategy feedback**

- (i) The Principal and Chief Executive presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise the feedback from the Board's recent strategy session, held on 24 January 2023.
- (ii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

### **12/23 Opportunities across B&FC to support the drive for a low carbon economy**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for Engagement delivered a presentation to invite discussion and debate on how B&FC has been preparing for a wider focus on the green agenda and any other suggestions for consideration. The Chair suggested that

consideration be given to linking with the local NHS foundation trust and working together on developments, and the Principal and Chief Executive commented that the college was already working with Blackpool Council on this too. The Chair suggested that it could be possible for the College to position itself as a local convenor on this topic, bringing organisations together to consider how they may work and providing thought leadership. Helen Broughton also suggested that an educational course could be developed, based on compliance with ESG and getting to net zero.

- (ii) Following the discussion, Board Members agreed to reflect on the topic and to share any additional thoughts with the Vice-Principal for Engagement directly.

### **13/23 Membership matters**

- (i) Wendy Robinson withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.
- (ii) The Chair presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to present a recommendation from the Search Committee that Wendy Robinson be confirmed in post following a successful Induction Year.
- (iii) The Board **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to confirm Wendy Robinson in post for the remainder of her first term of office, which will end on 28 February 2026.
- (iv) Wendy Robinson returned to the meeting.

### **14/23 Risk Management Policy**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning presented a report to seek approval of an updated Risk Management Policy, noting that the proposed changes had been highlighted for ease of reference.
- (ii) The Board **APPROVED** the Risk Management Policy as presented.

### **15/23 Office for Students notification**

- (i) Paul Howard presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to seek approval to notify the Office for Students of the appointment of a new Accountable Officer with effect from 3 August 2023. Confirmation was provided that the necessary fit and proper person checks had been completed and that the post holder had provided a self-declaration of compliance with the criteria.
- (ii) The Board **APPROVED** the notification to OfS of Alun Francis as B&FC's Accountable Officer with effect from 3 August 2023.

### **16/23 Schedule of meetings 2023-25**

- (i) Paul Howard presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to set out the schedule of confirmed meeting dates for the remainder of 2022/23 and 2023/24, as well as the proposed dates for 2024/25.

- (ii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

**17/23 Training: Engineering and Science curriculum area**

Scott Cubitt joined the meeting and delivered an informative presentation to update the Board on the activities within the School of Engineering and Science. Board Members had the opportunity to ask questions and welcomed the update.

**18/23 Review of Pension Exchange Policy**

- (i) This item was considered by Independent Members only, and all others left the meeting whilst it was under discussion.
- (ii) Paul Howard reminded the Board that he had been tasked at the last meeting to update the Pension Exchange Policy in line with the Board's discussion and presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to seek approval of the updated policy.
- (iii) The Board **APPROVED** the revised Pension Exchange Policy as presented and agreed transitional arrangements for beneficiaries under the current policy.

**19/23 Date, time and venue of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Board will be held on 14 March 2023, 5.00pm, at Fleetwood Nautical Campus, with a tour being available from 4.00pm, led by Captain Neil Atkinson.