

BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION BOARD
HELD ON 16 MARCH 2021, 5.00PM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Members' attendance record:

		22 Sep 2020	3 Nov 2020	8 Dec 2020	2 Feb 2021	16 Mar 2021	27 Apr 2021	8 Jun 2021	6 Jul 2021	2020/21 attendance
Alan Cavill	Independent Member, Chair	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Helen Broughton MBE	Independent Member	-	-	-	✓	✓ ¹				
Jane Cole	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	A				
Steve Fogg	Independent Member	-	-	-	✓	✓				
Kenny Gilmour	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ²				
Vicky Henderson	Student Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Colleen Hickson	Staff Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Lucy Holden	Student Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Chris Holt	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Heather Knight	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Suzy Layton	Independent Member	-	-	-	✓	✓				
Martin Long	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Judith Mills	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Lorraine Moffat	Independent Member	✓	-	-	-	-				
Anne Parmley	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	-				
Bev Robinson OBE	Principal and Chief Executive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Joanne Shepherd	Staff Member	✓	A	✓	✓	✓				
Steve Williams	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	A				

Key: ✓ attended including by tele/videoconference | A apologies sent and accepted | ✗ did not attend

In attendance:

Nigel Brown, Director for Students, for Minute 33/21(c) only
Linda Dean, B&FC's Executive Director for Business
Cheryl Dunn, Vice-Principal for Higher Education and Student Enhancement
Simon Hughes, Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum
Alistair Mulvey, Vice-Principal Finance and Planning (observer)
Steve Nunwick, Director of Estates, for Minute 33/21(d) only
Daryl Platt, Vice-Principal for Engagement
Robby Ryan, Chief Operating Officer
Danya Young, Company Secretary

¹ Excluding Minute 34/21

² From Minute 22/21

16/21 Chair and quorum

- i. Alan Cavill 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.
- ii. The Chair welcomed A Mulvey, Vice Principal Finance and Planning who was attending the meeting as an observer.

17/21 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received as shown in the members' attendance record above.

18/21 Declarations of interest

- i. M Long declared an interest in agenda item 11 at Minute 26/21, specifically paragraph 2.0 on page 43 of the proposed updated Property Strategy. Due to the nature of his interest, it was noted that it was not necessary for M Long to withdraw from the meeting for this item, nor was he precluded from counting in the quorum or voting on the same.
- ii. It was noted that H Broughton would withdraw from agenda item 18 at Minute 34/21 due to her interest in her proposed appointment to the Quality and Standards Committee.

19/21 Minutes of the previous meeting and action log

- i. The minutes and the confidential minutes of the previous meetings held on 2 February 2021 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record and the Chair was authorised to sign the same on behalf of the Board.
- ii. The Board noted the completed actions in the action log.

20/21 Matters arising

The Chair recorded the written resolution relating to B&FC's capital bid to the DfE was passed on 24 February 2021.

21/21 Dashboard

- i. The Board considered the headline performance and quality metrics in the circulated dashboard, noting the steady progress which was in line with expectations and tolerances. The Board also received a summary of the status of the financial metrics and noted that they would be reported on fully at agenda item P6 2020/21 Financial Report at minute 24/21 below.
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- ii. The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the dashboard and noted the content.

22/21 Principal and Chief Executive's report

- i. The Principal and Chief Executive presented her regular report which had been circulated with the agenda and which included the following key areas:

- a) Inclusive college
- b) Government funding
- c) Appointment of Education Recovery Commissioner
- d) Letter from the Office of the Further Education Commissioner of 22 February 2021 enclosing revised FE Commissioner Financial Benchmarks

- ii. On considering inclusivity, the Board agreed that notwithstanding its support of the various requests B&FC received to endorse a variety standpoints and definitions, B&FC's stance was that it was a college focussed on building and maintaining a diverse, inclusive environment where everyone was supported to reach their full potential free from any form of prejudice. To that end, B&FC did not publish its support for any one specific, individual group over any other.

- iii. The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

23/21 B&FC's revised operations

- i. The Principal and Chief Executive introduced the report on B&FC's revised operations, the purpose of which was to share with the Board B&FC's revised operations in light of the latest guidance for colleges in England to have wider opening from 8 March 2021. The Principal and Chief Executive drew the Board's particular attention to the key differences to the B&FC operation from those previously reported on in February 2021. The Board received the following progress updates from the attendees on their respective business areas:

- a) The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum provided an update on curriculum delivery.
 - b) The Chief Operating Officer provided an update on service operations noting that service colleagues were working in line with government guidance with either wholly on-site support, if necessary, or maintaining a blended working approach depending on the needs of the business.
 - c) B&FC's Executive Director reported B&FC's risk based approach and working practices for employees.
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- d) The Vice-Principal for Higher Education and Student Enhancement provided an update on working practices for students and highlighted students' positive proactive behaviours and compliance and B&FC's focus on student achievement and progression.
- e) The Chief Operating Officer provided an update on general physical operations, health safety and risk assessments including lateral flow testing.
- f) The Vice Principal for Engagement reported on the continued effectiveness of B&FC's comprehensive employee and student communication strategies and the employer and wider stakeholder engagement strategies, the broad approaches for which had remained unchanged.
- g) The Vice Principal for Engagement also provided an update on business opportunities for B&FC.
- h) The Company Secretary underlined the Board's ultimate accountability for compliance and highlighted the report in itself provided assurance of B&FC's compliance with the government guidance.

ii. The Executive team members provided detailed responses to the questions and comments raised by Board members on the above sections which the Board considered and was content with. The subject areas included student appetite for returning to onsite learning; initiatives in place to address any learning deficit that had resulted from the absence of physical practical work during the lockdowns and to enable students to catch-up and develop a high level mastery of requisite skills; the individualised support for students recognising their specific individual circumstances and commitments and summer school support for new entrants; B&FC's percentage of learning on site; and B&FC's robust and stringent safety measures and adherence to government guidelines, notwithstanding the government's vaccination regime.

iii. The support from Public Health Blackpool with the provision of lateral flow tests was acknowledged.

iv. The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

24/21 P6 2020/21 Financial Report

i. The Chief Operating Officer presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise the Corporation's year to date income and financial position as at 31 January 2021 and to share the details of the outcome of the grass roots detailed P6 forecast that had been completed since the last meeting. The Board also received a detailed update on the government's adult education allocation and the current unknowns relating thereto. The Chief Operating Officer emphasised that notwithstanding the unforeseen circumstances of COVID-19, there were no concerns regarding B&FC's financial health score.

- ii. The Chief Operating Officer also drew the Board's attention to the detail of the letter from the Office of the Further Education Commissioner of 22 February 2021 enclosing revised FE Commissioner Financial Benchmarks and reported on B&FC's positive performance against each of the benchmarked detailed therein. The Board noted that it would receive reporting against the minimum guidance measures three times per annum.
- iii. In response to questions from H Broughton on the government's approach to the adult education budget and B&FC's previous year's pay award, the Chief Operating Officer reported that the government's decision was expected to be made available imminently, and he reminded the Board of the rationale and decision taken in the previous year regarding the pay award.
- iv. In response to a question from K Gilmour regarding stress testing and modelling for the forthcoming financial year, should similar pandemic circumstances recur, the Chief Operating Officer provided a detailed response regarding B&FC's budget assumptions, cash position and risk mitigations to provide the Board with assurance. The Principal and Chief Executive also updated the Board from a curriculum planning perspective noting that the practical skills requirements of courses are being scheduled to minimise the impact on learning of any future risk during the usual flu season.
- v. The Corporation Board was assured by the report and solvency of the College and the trajectory for the next year. The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

25/21 Outline of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025

- i. The Chief Operating Officer presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to share the outline of the strategic plan following the Board's input at the strategy session in January 2021. The Board was invited to provide feedback, to advise whether the outline was in line with expectation and to suggest any additions they wished to include.
- ii. The Board was content that the outline was in line with expectation subject to the inclusion of additional adjectives in one section to strengthen the community purpose statement.

ACTION: Chief Operating Officer

- iii. The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the report and noted the outcome.

26/21 Property Strategy 2021-2025

- i. The Chief Operating Officer presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to enable the Board to consider the progress made in respect
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of the condition of the estate and the proposed revision covering 2021-2025. The Chief Operating Officer drew the Board's attention to the risks and implications, costs proposals and the key themes referred to therein.

ii. The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the report and following consideration **RESOLVED THAT:**

- The 2021–2025 Property Strategy enclosed in the appendix be approved; and
- The Principal and Chief Executive and the Chief Operating Officer or Vice Principal Finance and Planning may vire between the proposed project expenditure whilst staying within the overall expenditure envelope of £13m.

27/21 Review of the Risk Appetite Matrix

- i. The Chief Operating Officer presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda, the purpose of which was for the Board to determine whether B&FC's risk themes still appropriately reflected the Board's current risk appetite in light of the current landscape. For the benefit of the new Board members, the Chair also provided the background information and highlighted the practical value of the risk appetite matrix to the College thus far.
- ii. S Fogg and K Gilmour shared positive feedback on the presentation, level of detail and process regarding the risk appetite matrix.
- iii. The Board **APPROVED** the Risk Appetite Matrix and the accompanying interpretations.

28/21 International fees policy

- i. The Chief Operating Officer presented a report to seek approval of the updated international fees policy. The proposed amendments to the policy had been highlighted for the Board's reference.
- ii. The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the updated international fees policy as presented.

29/21 B&FC Gender Pay Gap Report, snapshot as at 31 March 2020

- i. B&FC's Executive Director for Business presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to present B&FC's annual gender pay gap report with the Board prior to publication and to share the key actions which were in progress to continue to enhance B&FC's approach.
- ii. It was noted that B&FC continued to compare favourably against organisations in education and in the UK overall.
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- iii. The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

30/21 Audit Committee matters

J Mills presented the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 25 November 2020 and provided a verbal summary of the business transacted at its most recent meeting on 3 March 2021.

31/21 Appointment of external auditors

- i. The Chief Operating Officer presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to report on the Audit Committee's recommendations for the tender for external audit services given that the tenure of the previous auditors had expired. The report also included the Audit Committee's recommendation to extend the internal audit contract by one year to reflect the previously agreed approach to stagger the contract end dates of the external and internal auditors.
- ii. Following discussion, the Board **APPROVED** the Audit Committee's recommendations:
- THAT Beever and Struthers be appointed external auditors for a four year period with a break option after two years.
 - THAT the contract with the internal auditors, TIAA, be extended by 12 months until 31 July 2022.

32/21 Board members' forum

As this was R Ryan's last Board meeting before his retirement, on behalf of the Board, the Chair expressed his deep gratitude and thanks to him on behalf of the Board, acknowledging that B&FC had been fortunate to have benefitted from the skills and qualities he had brought to the role during his four and a half years with B&FC, including his exceptional leadership and sound judgement, which were invaluable to the Board and B&FC as a whole.

33/21 Mid-year reports

(a) Risk register

- i. The Chief Operating Officer presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to share the updated risk register and confirmed that it had been scrutinised by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 3 March 2021.
- ii. Following consideration, the Corporation Board **APPROVED** the risk register as presented.
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(b) HR Report 2020/2021

The Executive Director for B&FC for Business presented the mid-year report on human resources which the Board considered and **RECIEVED**.

(c) Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity mid-year report 2020-21

- i. The Director for Students joined the meeting and presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise the mid-year position in relation to safeguarding and equality and diversity, highlighting the challenging year in terms of safeguarding and the tangible value of B&FC's safeguarding interventions
- ii. In response to a comment from S Layton, the Director for Students clarified the sections in report where there had been no previous base line data. H Broughton commented that the report provided very rich valuable information and asked the Director for Students to share with the Board the key risk areas from his perspective. The Director for Students provided this information together with the mitigating factors and interventions that were in place.
- iii. K Gilmour thanked the Director for Students for the report and impressive work of the Director for Students and his wider team. This was echoed by the Principal and Chief Executive and the Chair.

(d) Health, Safety and Environmental mid-year report

- i. The Director of Estates joined the meeting and presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise the mid-year position in relation to health and safety and he provided responses to the questions the Board members raised regarding employee mandatory health and safety training and positive engagement therewith. The Director of Estates and B&FC's Executive Director for Business also reported on the mechanisms in place to monitor and support employee wellbeing, in response to a question from H Knight.
- ii. The Chair highlighted the value of future reports capturing previous year's normal operating data which was agreed.

ACTION: Director of Estates

- iii. On behalf of the Board, the Principal and Chief Executive recorded her formal thanks to the Estates Directorate as a whole and J Shepherd, Health and Safety Manager and Board Member, in particular for their sterling and invaluable work.
 - iv. The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.
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34/21 Committee appointment

H Broughton withdrew from the meeting for this item.

The Board considered and approved the Search Committee's unanimous recommendation to appoint Helen Broughton to the Quality and Standards Committee with immediate effect for an initial term of four years to run concurrently with her Board appointment.

35/21 Date, time and venue of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Corporation Board would be held on 27 April 2021 at 5pm, via videoconference.

