

**PUBLIC MINUTES OF
THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS BUSINESS BOARD MEETING HELD ON
21 MARCH 2024**

Present:

Mr M Burgess (Principal)
Mr P Carr (External Board Member) except part of item 21/24
Mr A Dover (External Board Member)
Mr M Fabian (External Board Member)
Mr S Harvey (External Board Member)
Ms M James (External Board Member/Board Vice-Chair) (Chair for the meeting)
Dr H Moyes (External Board Member)
Ms A Nutbrown (Staff Governor)
Ms G Read (External Board Meeting)
Ms C Simpson (Student Governor)

Apologies:

Mr W Abbott (External Board Member/Board Chair)
Ms J Buckland (Staff Governor)
Ms L Dance (External Board Member)
Ms L Hargreaves (Student Governor)
Mr P Lachecki (External Board Member)

In Attendance:

Mr A Bates - Chief Financial Officer
Mr D Kettlety - Director of Student Employment and Experience, Curriculum Innovation and Students
Dr K Morris – Vice-Principal, Curriculum and Quality
Ms C Rosser-Mayo - HR Director
Ms J Cosson - Governance Professional/Clerk to the Board of Governors
Ms M Drayson - External Governance Reviewer, Rockborn – observing vis MS Teams
Mr I Valvona – External Governance Reviewer, Rockborn - observing

Attendance: 66.7%

14/24 Private Business

None.

15/24 Apologies

Were noted as above.

16/24 Declarations of Interest

It was confirmed that the Register of Interests recorded all the current declarations of interests of those present.

PC noted an interest in item 21/24 – Gloucestershire AEB Devolution and would withdraw for that item.

AN noted her interest as a staff member in the same item but was invited to remain in the meeting to listen to the discussion.

HM noted her interest in an item on the Actions Matrix.

17/24 Confidentiality of Items (C)

As marked (C) for a period of two years. All the marked items were declared confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.

18/24 Membership Proposals

Members had been provided with a Membership Proposals paper.

RESOLVED: The Board approved the recommendations of GRS and agreed as follows:

- That Scott Harvey be appointed as a Co-opted Member of the Audit Committee, GRS, SSEC and EWG with effect from 7 May 2024.
- That the remit of the Cyber Link Governor be broadened and renamed Digital Technology Link Governor, the current JD to be updated by GRS.
- That Georgina Read be appointed as Wellbeing and Mental Health Link Governor from 7 May 2024 in line with her term of office.
- That the remit of the Careers Link Governor be broadened to include Skills, the current JD to be updated by GRS.
- That Scott Harvey be appointed as the Board's whistleblowing contact with effect from 21 March 2024, the College's Whistleblowing Policy to be amended to reflect this.
- That Peter Lachecki be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee with effect from 21 March 2024 in line with his term of office.
- That Peter Lachecki be appointed to GRS and SSEC with effect from 21 March 2024 in line with his term of office.
- That the designated Board size be confirmed as 17 at present.

Members noted the Board's requirements in terms of skills, experience and representation and agreed to consider any potential candidates/networks that may be approached/explored.

19/24 Minutes of the Meeting of 8 February 2024

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

20/24 Matters Arising from the Minutes and Actions Matrix

Members were provided with an Actions Matrix and noted the status update of each item.

21/24 Principal's College Update (C)

Gloucestershire Adult Education Budget (AEB) Devolution (C)

PC withdrew for this item.

PC rejoined the meeting.

MB provided an update on matters since the February Board meeting.

Items covered were:

- Annual Strategic Conversation
- Teaching and Learning
- Policy Issues
- RFD Campus
- Recruitment
- Cheltenham Construction Centre
- Safeguarding

MB reported that MB, AB, KM and JC had met with representatives from the DfE and FEC Commissioner's team on 19 March for the **Annual Strategic Conversation (ASC)**.

Discussions had focused on meeting learner and labour market needs: The duty to review, Accountability Statements, LSIPs and devolution. The DfE were complimentary about the College's Accountability Statement and were interested in the influence of the LSIPs on the long-term direction of the College and the impact on the College's strategy.

The College provided an overview of progress. The DfE noted that the College engages in a lot of DfE initiatives e.g., Bootcamps.

The DfE wanted to hear about the opportunities, strengths, and challenges for 2023/24. MB highlighted the challenges of the ONS reclassification. He raised two specific challenges for the College. The DfE did not have any immediate answers but agreed to take the matters back to the department for consideration.

Apprenticeships were noted as a strength of the College. The FE Commissioner's team would like to use the College as an example of one of 4/5 colleges delivering good outcomes and significant growth.

The FEC Adviser finished by providing examples of effective practice and outlining the active support available to the sector from the FEC team.

MB is pleased with progress in **Teaching and Learning**. He highlighted the significant efforts made to help learners secure work placements, the increased number of areas self-assessing as 'Outstanding' and the top end of the 'Good' spectrum. He thanked governors who were able to attend the recent Performance Reviews.

Much good work has gone into professional development days and industry days for staff to engage with employers and enable them embed meeting skills needs in the curriculum e.g., Computing staff visited BAE systems and spoke to them about the sorts of hobbies and interests they would like to see in students; Harbour House staff went to a hotel and asked what would be expected of students on a supported internship. Staff have been asked to report back on where they went, who they met, the learnings from the day and how they will use these in the curriculum. This will be presented as part of the paper on meeting skills needs at the May Board meeting.

DK described the number and sorts of work placements students have been undertaking, including Level 1 and cross-College High Needs students.

Members had been sent a news item featuring the two Student Members.

With support from their Student Mentors, Catering and Hospitality students LH and CS have both been working hard to gain valuable work experience, aiming to fill their holidays with as much activity as possible, and have undertaken impressive work placements in Michelin Star restaurants including The Ritz, Muse and The Langham. They commented that they had been well supported by the College.

Members congratulated the Student Members on their ambitious career plans and the excellent work placements they had secured.

MB reported that there have been some good improvements in learner and employer feedback which were reported at the last Curriculum and Quality meeting.

High Needs continues to be the main area of focus.

MB referred to the **financial position**. The big risks to the financial plan will be the pay award, non-pay costs and IT costs.

MB updated Members on a new requirement for **additional hours in English and maths** and the phasing out of the **English and maths tolerance**. A Member asked if this posed a significant risk to the College. MB replied that the College is in a better position than many colleges since it already teaches three hours but the extra hour for maths could be a problem in terms of staffing. KM is reviewing the timetabling. There is still time to plan to mitigate the impact of the removal of the tolerance.

MB gave an update on progress with the new **Cheltenham Construction Centre** including the latest photographs. The building is taking shape and the danger period in terms of keeping to the schedule has passed. Planning approval has been granted for the relocated MUGA.

Members reviewed a paper on the latest **recruitment position** and noted that 16-18 recruitment is on track and has been removed from the Risk Register.

There have been some questions within the College around the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill (also known as **Martyn's Law**) which is currently out for consultation, and which proposes proportionate requirements to protect and

prepare publicly accessible premises from possible terror attacks. Until the consultation is complete and the detail of the legislation known, it is unclear how it will affect educational institutions like the College.

On a related theme, the Police recently held an event for schools and colleges across the County to reflect on learning from the incident that took place at Tewkesbury School last year. The College is reviewing its lockdown processes and will meet any obligations arising.

Members had been provided with the Operating Plan Summary and Scorecard.

The HE Link Governor asked if the Lifelong Learning Entitlement, which is coming in in September 2025, might be an opportunity for the College in terms of adults if the equivalent or lower qualification is being removed. KM advised that the loan must be pointed at the full qualification even if it is a modular programme, but the College will keep a watching brief.

RESOLVED: Members noted the Principal's Update and developments at the College.

22/24 Estates Strategy

JB attended for this item.

MB presented an update on progress against the College's Estates Strategy for 2022-2025.

Having an estates strategy affords an overview of the development of the estate and is required to support any capital bids to the DfE.

MB drew Members' attention to the priorities for 2024/25 and highlighted three areas for attention:

1. The need to have plans for the development of the 125 Business Park, so the College is in a position to proceed should the opportunity to submit a capital funding bid arise.
2. Ensuring GC Zero is delivering the expected benefits, both environmental and financial.
3. MB tabled the Environment Agency flood risk map for 2040 showing the areas that will be below annual flood level and highlighting the serious risk of flooding to the College in the coming years.

Members debated what action the College can realistically take in relation to the flood risk. MB raised his concerns with the DfE at the ASC and has written to the city council asking what is being done to address the issue. Members concluded that the College will need to take action over the next five years, but input is needed from the wider community and there were concerns about the proportion of funding being allocated to the matter.

RESOLVED: The Board:

- **Noted and approved the Estates Strategy.**
- **Approved the development of plans for the 125 Business Park so the College is prepared for any funding opportunities.**

JB left the meeting.

23/24 Golden Valley Cyber Park Presentation

AB gave a presentation on progress with the Golden Valley Cyber Park.

Members debated the opportunities and risks for the College. Whilst there will inevitably be competition, the College is well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities for collaboration with the various occupiers, including the proposed National Cyber Innovation Centre, as well as the wider opportunities for recruitment of learners. The College will continue to maintain a strong profile in the project, particularly through its cyber accreditation with UWE. AB will keep Members informed of progress until such time as any decisions are required regarding direct involvement.

RESOLVED: The Golden Valley Cyber Park Presentation was noted.

24/24 Update on GCC SEND Inspection (C)

DK presented an update on the outcome of the SEND Inspection of the Gloucestershire Local Area Partnership and the implications for the College. The presentation was provided for context and to inform the discussion about meeting skills needs at the May Board meeting.

The judgement is not graded, it is a statement: "The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.

DK highlighted the elements of the report that will involve the College as part of the local area partnership.

The Chair of C&Q asked a question about the review of EHCPs and was informed that EHCPs are more about long term outcomes now.

Members queried the next steps following the report. DK will continue to work with GCC to support its ambitions.

As Link Governor for Careers and Skills, PC understands that the College's willingness to adapt and be part of the solution is highly valued by the local authority.

DK reported that the missing piece of the jigsaw for young people is often mental health services for which there is a huge demand. A Member wondered if any charity partners could help. DK advised that the College works with the partners

mentioned in the report such as Teens in Crisis but many of them are at breaking point.

RESOLVED: The Update on the GCC SEND Inspection was noted.

25/24 Student Progress Update (C)

KM provided an overview of the curriculum information covered at C&Q.

MJ confirmed that C&Q had been encouraged to learn that an increasing number of areas are being assessed as 'Outstanding' and 'Good' and that interventions are starting to have an impact.

C&Q will review progress at its June meeting.

ACTION: MJ and LD to meet with the High Needs external reviewer in June.

26/24 HR Update

CRM provide Members with an operational update on progress against key priorities in the College's People and Culture Strategy.

The Cheltenham Construction Centre campaign has been active for six weeks and the response has been very good. Potential applicants continue to express an interest, particularly via the social media campaign on Facebook.

Members noted that the conversion rate from interest to appointment appears good. CRM replied that applications have been of a high standard and 2 appointments have been made (one carpenter and one electrician). There have been several applicants for plumbing, but none were qualified to Level 3, so no appointments have been made since this is required to sign off students. The College is considering whether it can provide the Level 3 qualification to applicants who do not have it.

A Member enquired about the HR KPIs and wondered what the figures related to and how they compared to other colleges. They were informed that 22% relates to all staff and 15.5% relates to permanent staff. The average is 17.5/18% for permanent staff. The College is lower than this, but the figures have only recently stabilised.

ACTION: The Board asked to see the staff turnover figures broken down into length of service.

A Member commented on the number of overdue appraisals, which appeared to be high. MB explained that the new Director of People and Culture will be asked to review the appraisal system because it is currently unmanageable. A balance needs to be struck to ensure performance is reviewed without overwhelming managers.

Another Member asked if appraisals are carried out alongside regular meetings. CRM answered that 1-1 meetings take place every two to three weeks in addition to

team meetings. The Member was pleased to hear that opportunities for discussion are not being lost.

The Chair thanked CRM for her report which was, as always, thorough, interesting, and supported by data.

Safeguarding Update

DK reported on a Safeguarding matter not covered within the papers.

RESOLVED: The HR and Safeguarding Updates were noted.

27/24 Financial Matters (C)

Management Accounts and Financial Forecast Update

Members had been provided with the latest Management Accounts including the Financial Forecast Update. The budget for 2024/25 will be presented to the July meeting.

RESOLVED: The Management Accounts were noted.

28/24 Audit and Compliance (C)

Health and Safety Update

The report had been presented to and reviewed at the last Audit Committee meeting.

TD reported that he had met with the Health and Safety Manager prior to the Audit Committee meeting and that he is reassured that the College is on top of what needs to be done.

RESOLVED: The Health and Safety Update was noted.

Risk Management Update

The report had been presented to and reviewed at the last Audit Committee meeting.

RESOLVED: The Risk Management Update was noted.

Subcontracting Update

Members reviewed the latest Subcontracting Update.

RESOLVED: The Subcontracting Update was noted.

29/24 Committee, Subsidiary Company, and Link Governor Reports

TD presented the Audit Committee report. He added that he had attended a recent AoC meeting of Finance and Audit Chairs. The new ESFA Finance Handbook had been referred to. There were many concerns expressed about funding, although there was a clear distinction between those colleges that have cash and those that are much closer to the edge. The breakout session with Audit Chairs had focused on reserves policies and the lack of a competitive market for auditors.

SH reported from the EWG that the new Cheltenham Construction Centre was one week behind schedule but was expected to catch up. EWG are due to carry out a site visit at their next meeting on 17 April.

SH presented the GRS report. A governor recruitment campaign is to take place with a plan to over recruit for core skills and broader skills and to widen the pool as far as possible to include College stakeholders and communities. Governors were also asked to explore their networks.

GRS had reviewed the Board's EDI objectives and recommended them for approval. Broadening diversity will be a key part of the recruitment campaign.

The Link Governor Scheme had been reviewed and updated and was recommended for approval.

The Annual Governance Self-Assessment Action Plan had been reviewed and actions are ongoing, but GRS is also awaiting the outcome of External Board Review before presenting a development plan to the Board to ensure they align.

SH emphasised the current offer of learning walks, finance training and other activities requested in the self-assessment.

A brief update on progress with the External Governance Review was provided, noting that IV had observed the GRS and SSEC meetings.

MJ referred to the C&Q report, most of which had been covered earlier in the meeting.

It was noted that TD and MJ had recently carried out Health and Safety and Safeguarding Link Governor meetings respectively.

RESOLVED: The Committee and Link Governor reports were noted. The Board approved:

- **The revised EDI objectives.**
- **The updated Link Governor Scheme.**

30/24 Use of College Seal

RESOLVED: The Board noted and endorsed the use of the Seal as set out in the paper.

31/24 Governance Matters

Governance and Regulatory Developments

JC presented a paper which included details of the following matters and the actions to be taken in relation to each of them:

1. Mental Health and Wellbeing
2. Financial Sustainability/Funding
3. Legislation/Legal
4. Curriculum
5. Sustainability
6. Governance
7. Governor Training and Development

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Governance and Regulatory Developments since the last meeting and the actions taken as a result.

Governor Learning and Development Activity Record and Governor Learning and Development Reports

Members had been provided with the record of Governor Learning and Development activities and feedback from recent activities.

MF had provided feedback on the AoC series of Finance Masterclasses and ETF Introduction to Audit Session led by RSM that he had attended. PL had provided feedback on the Performance Reviews he had attended on 22 February in MV1, EY/HSC, English and Maths, IT2 and Betaris.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Governor Learning and Development activities and thanked Members for their engagement and for their reports, which enrich governors' understanding and oversight of the College.

32/24 Any Other Business

The Chair noted that it was CRM's last Board meeting before leaving the College. Members thanked CRM for all the work she had done to develop and support the College, the Executive Team and the Board over the last seven years and wished her well in her future endeavours.

33/24 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Strategy Board Meeting – 2 May 2024, Gloucester campus.

34/24 External Members Only Item

SSEC Minutes 6 March 2024

External Members had been provided with the minutes of the SSEC meeting from 6 March 2024 and were invited to submit any comments or questions to the Chair of SSEC. No comments or questions were received.

Signed: MP James

Dated: 2nd May 2024