

# PUBLIC MINUTES



## Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation of Yeovil College Held on Thursday 10 October 2019 at 16:30 In A310/11, Third Floor Kingston Building, Yeovil College

**Members:** Sam Best\*; Mark Bolton [Principal]\*; Mike Brinson\*; Ken Comber\*; Jacquie Dean [Vice Chair]\*; Lee Harwood\*; Jo Howarth; Jessica Hughes [Student FE]\*; Sam Leigh\*; Rebecca Marshall\*; Netta Meadows\*; David Mills\*; Paul Morey [Staff]\*; Jagtar Ner; Gayle Pogson [Staff]\*; Scott Roy\*; Peter Thomas [Chair]\*

**In attendance:**

**All Items:** Steve Chattell [Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality]\*; Emma Cox [Vice Principal Finance & Resources]\*

**Item 4 onwards:** Paul Clowes\*

**Clerk:** Kaz Corbett\*

*\*indicates presence at meeting*

### 1. MEETING PRELIMINARIES

**Apologies** for absence were received from Jagtar Ner and Jo Howarth. Jessica Hughes had advised she would be arriving late to the meeting, and Paul Clowes had requested to leave at 17.45. The meeting remained quorate throughout. There were no **Declarations of Interest** made on this occasion.

### 2. APPOINTMENT OF NEW PRINCIPAL

The Board **noted** the collated votes by email **approving** the appointment of Mark Bolton as Principal and CEO, and for the agreed handover date of 1 October 2019. Mark was congratulated on his new role.

### 3. APPOINTMENT OF NEW VICE PRINCIPAL CURRICULUM AND QUALITY

The Board **noted** the collated votes by email **approving** the appointment of Steve Chattell as Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality. Steve was congratulated on his new role and welcomed to the meeting.

### 4. APPOINTMENT OF NEW CORPORATION MEMBERS

Based on the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee, the Board **APPROVED** the appointments of:

- **Paul Clowes** as a new Corporation Member for a four year term of office commencing on 10 October 2019, and as a member of the Audit Committee (subject to usual conditions)
- **Derek Esp** as a new Co-opted Member of the Curriculum, Quality and Assurance Committee for a short term to end of 2019 (subject to usual conditions)

### 5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Board **APPROVED** the following minutes as true and accurate records of the meeting held on:

- 11 July 2019 Public
- 11 July 2019 Confidential

The Minutes were signed by the Chair. The Public Minutes would be uploaded to the College website.

6. **MATTERS ARISING**

The Action and Query sheet was reviewed, updated and noted. The VP Curriculum & Quality was asked to give a response to a query raised at the last meeting; a member had asked why the College had some protected characteristics from its Equality and Diversity report. The VP C&Q explained that the report was compiled from data that the College routinely collects on student enrolment forms, and not all protected characteristics are included on these forms. The College is now investigating collecting this data at enrolment, but would need to be clear of the purposes to ensure GDPR compliance. The Equality & Diversity Committee will follow up on this.

VP C&Q /  
E&D Lead  
Gov

7. **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Members **noted** the Chair's first report which today included updates on:

**Handover**

The Chair expressed his thanks to Jacquie Dean for her fantastic work as Chair of the Corporation for the last 6 years, and her continued support as Vice Chair.

8. **ESFA LETTER**

The Board **noted** a letter sent to the Chair from the ESFA regarding the oversight of the proper use of public funds by College governing bodies. A further checklist has also been issued and the Audit Chair informed the Board that the Audit Committee would be monitoring this at their meetings. The VP F&R added that the Audit Committee had discussed the regular reporting of SPH expenses at their meetings for additional scrutiny. The Board felt that there was already a robust system in place to monitor expense claims, and would continue to monitor these on an annual basis.

9. **IOT UPDATE**

The Board **noted** the Informal Notes taken by the Clerk at the Board's informal meeting on 22 July 2019. Following this meeting, the Board were asked to send their **approval** for the College to proceed with the project by email. The Board **noted** the collated votes of approval. The Principal and VP F&R informed the Board that the project is hoped to reach sign off in the coming weeks. One member asked why other IoTs had reached sign off before this one. The Principal explained that earlier issues with other partners within the Consortium had resulted in delays at this end of the process.

The Principal informed the Board that it remained unclear whether the College would be permitted two members (Principal and IoT Lead Governor) on the Consortium's Board as hoped. Other partners have selected their Principal as their representative. The Board supported the Principal holding sole membership if necessary.

10. **SUBCONTRACTING FEES AND CHARGES PLAN**

The Principal presented this item to the Board. The rationale for Subcontracting and the 2019/20 Fees and Charges Policy had been approved at the Board's meeting in June 2019, the ESFA also requires Board approval of the College's chosen delivery subcontractors. The Board **noted** a report prepared by the Partnership Contracts Manager in respect to this. Scott Roy informed the Board that he had advised on the document. He explained that a change to the ESFA Funding Rules around Subcontracting meant that Management Fee costs must now be itemised and calculated in detail, as opposed to using a standardised percentage.

The Board were reassured that Scott's specialist knowledge had been utilised to review the document, and **APPROVED** the Subcontracting Fees and Charges Plan including Delivery Subcontractors for 2019/20.

## 11. SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE

The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee shared the headlines from the Committee's earlier meeting:

- The Committee is actively seeking a HE Student Governor in partnership with the HE Manager. A new FE Student Governor would also be sought to allow a handover period before Jess's departure in 2020
- The Corporation Chair had met with the Head of Marketing to discuss improving Governor visibility within the College. It was agreed that a photographer would be invited to take photos immediately before the Board's next meeting
- Governors are to be invited to participate in at least one Learner Walk during the College's observation windows. The Clerk would circulate further information
- The Committee noted that overall the Board is strong, without any significant gaps in knowledge or skills at this time

## 12. TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Board **noted** a Teaching and Learning update from the Chair of the Curriculum, Quality & Assurance Committee. Particular points noted included:

- A Level CAM attended the Committee and gave a positive update on A Level provision
- Learner outcomes
- Curriculum offer
- HE Manager attended the Committee and delivered a presentation on the HE Access and Participation Plan

### **HE Access and Participation Plan**

The Principal explained that the College was required to submit a HE Access and Participation plan to the OfS to allow fees to be charged over the 'basic fee' threshold (higher fee income). The plan covers three strands; Access, Support and Destination. The College has had to identify gaps in applications and attainment, and plan ways to reduce these.

The Board viewed the fees and funding summary, showing the planned spend and higher fee income for the next five years. The Principal explained that the expenditure is largely on staffing costs for taster sessions and events. The OfS will compare the amount spent against the higher fee income. As the College is planning to receive an increasing higher fee income over the next five years, this will reduce the proportional spend over time. One member asked if the planned spend was sufficient. The Principal reassured the Board that most providers spend less than 1% of higher fee income on Access and Participation. The Chair assured the Board that Derek Esp had spent a significant amount of time working with the HE Manager to develop the plan, and had given his recommendation of approval. The C,Q&A Committee will monitor the implementation of the plan on behalf of the Board.

The Board **delegated approval** of the finalised HE Access and Participation Plan to the Chair.

***Paul Clowes left the meeting at 17.50.***

## 13. FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Board **noted** the July 2019 Management Accounts and related financial commentary, in addition to noting a verbal update from the Vice Principal Finance and Resources. Further details on this item are recorded separately in a confidential set of minutes.

### **Treasury Management Report**

The Board **noted** the Treasury Management Report which detailed treasury activities undertaken during 2018/19 as prescribed in the Financial Regulations. No short/medium term investments were made during this period. Cash flow for 2019-20 is forecast to be significantly improved on last year, and will continue to be monitored closely by the Finance and Remuneration Committee. The report identified an opportunity to invest cash into an

easy access deposit account to earn additional interest. The Board **approved** the pursuit of this opportunity, on the recommendation of the Finance and Remuneration Committee.

The Chair added his thanks and congratulations to the VP F&R and her team for the continued high standard of accounts. The Chair will write to the team to acknowledge the year's achievements on behalf of the Board.

#### 14. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Corporation **noted** the Principal's Report. On this occasion there was particular emphasis upon:

- Learner numbers
- Learner achievement
- Higher Education
- Multi Academy Trusts
- New staff
- Edurank
- Security on site

The Board then noted the updated Operating Statement for 2019/20.

#### 15. **LEGAL, POLICY and REGULATORY MATTERS**

##### **CEIAG Policy**

The Board **Approved** the newly created CEIAG Policy.

##### **DSAs Diagnostic Support Fund Policy and Guidance**

The Principal informed the Board that this was a newly created policy, and explained the purpose of the support fund is to provide financial support to HE students requiring diagnostic testing as part of an application for DSA. The fund is primarily designed to support students with Dyslexia; identified as an area to target under the Access and Participation plan. The Board questioned whether the form was accessible for those with a disability such as Dyslexia. The Principal explained that the Equality and Diversity Committee would normally review all new policies before seeking Board approval, but this had not been possible on this occasion due to time constraints. The Board **approved** the Policy and Guidance, subject to review by the E&D Committee.

##### **Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity Update**

The Board **noted** a verbal update on Safeguarding and Equality & Diversity presented by the Principal. Particular points noted included:

- 70 students with an EHCP enrolled for 2019-20, against a planned 58. In 2018-19 this was 36 students
- 19 'looked after' students enrolled
- Separating E&D and Safeguarding into two distinct Committees has led to a much improved level of challenge and discussion within E&D Committee, it is hoped to replicate this at Safeguarding Committee

##### **HE Update**

The Principal had no further HE items to add.

***Sam Leigh left the meeting at 18.50.***

##### **Whistleblowing, H&S and Fraud**

There were no incidents to report on this occasion.

##### **Staff Voice**

There were no items to raise on this occasion.

### **Student Voice**

The Student Governor congratulated the Principal and VP C&Q on their appointments on behalf of the students, and added that students had been excited by the changes. She informed the Board that she had recently participated in the college Open Evenings, and had enjoyed talking to people in a positive learning environment. Feedback received on the night was also positive.

## **16. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROLS**

### **External Audit Engagement Letter**

Following the recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Board **APPROVED** the Engagement Letter issued by Mazars LLP. The Chair of the Corporation would sign the Specific Service Agreement indicating the Board's acceptance of Mazars LLP Engagement Pack and Terms & Conditions of Business for the audit of the College's annual financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2019 and a limited assurance engagement on regularity.

### **Regularity Audit Questionnaire**

Following the recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Board **APPROVED** the completed Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire (RSAQ) and noted that the related evidence would be made available to the auditors. The RSAQ would be signed by the Principal and Chair.

### **Audit Committee Minutes 25 September 2019**

The Board **noted** the draft minutes of the Committee's last meeting.

## **17. CLERK'S NOTE**

### **Digital signatures**

The Board was informed that the College would now be using digital signatures for documents to be uploaded to the Portal. The Clerk would collect the signature of Chairs and Vice Chairs as necessary.

### **T Level Training**

The Clerk informed the Board that the ETF were offering a free one-day training session on T Levels in Bristol on 31 January 2020. An email would be circulated with further information.

## **18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no other items of business to note on this occasion.

## **19. NEXT ORDINARY MEETING**

Thursday 5 December 2019

***Meeting closed at 1900.***