



Mission Statement: *Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures*

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION OF BLACKPOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Date: Tuesday 21st March 2023
Location: The Blackpool Sixth Form College
Time: 5.15- 7.45pm

Present: Cllr Callum Baxter (Chair)
Ms Jill Gray (Principal)
Cllr Don Clapham
Ms Debbie Taaffe
Mr David Gascoigne
Mr Jeremy Mannino
Ms Sukie Woodhouse
Mr Nick Andrews
Ms Tabitha Davey
Ms Kirsten Burnett

Together with: Mrs Sue Hawitt (Governance Administrator-FCAT)

Apologies: Ms Nina Karunasekara, Mr Alistair Burr, Ms Caroline Coyne and Mr Kellen Collumbine

Not in Attendance: Ms Tabitha Davey

- 01.2023 Preliminaries**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Kirsten Burnett (new Non-Executive Director) and Sam Brown (new Assistant Principal); everyone introduced themselves. Apologies were noted.
- 02.2023 Declaration of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest to consider
- 03.2023 Consideration of any items of urgent business**
There were no items of urgent business to consider
- 04.2023 Confirmation of Quoracy**
It was noted the meeting was quorate
- 05.2023 Minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2022**
The minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2022 were approved
- 06.2023 Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda**
- a) **College Action Plan**-(item 53.2022 from the previous minutes) Agenda
confirmation training on understanding the different strands of retention will be delivered to directors at the May Standards Board meeting
 - b) **Membership Matters**-(item 58.2022 from the previous minutes)
confirmation consideration had been given to the start time of full board meetings – these will remain at 5:15pm
- 07.2023 Retention**-the Assistant Principal: Student Services gave directors an additional update on retention figures (as requested by directors at the last

Retention is much improved on the same time last year.

- U6 - 98.3% compared to 96.9%
- L6 - 95.6% compared to 91.7%
- Route3 - 90.9% compared to 79.7%.

A few further highlights:

- Overall, there have been 76 fewer leavers this year compared to this point last year.
- Retention for students with mental health conditions is currently 98.0% compared to 90.6% at this point last year
- Retention for Closing the Gap students is currently 96.9% compared to 91.6% at this point last year.

Four schools where retention strategies were being targeted have also shown improvements:

- Fleetwood - 96.6% compared to 70.0% at this point last year.
- South Shore - 95.2% compared to 73.9%.
- Carr Hill - 95.2% compared to 87.0%.
- LSA - 96.6% compared to 89.9%.

Directors were informed that from a finance point of view there have been savings of around £350,000 through this increase retention. There is still no room for complacency but signs are positive.

Questions from Directors

In response to a question about retaining funding for U6 students who leave the college early, it was noted that most of the funding is retained. Directors were informed that the focus is on internal progression, i.e. R3 to U6 and L6 to U6. Directors were reminded that the retention calculation starts once a student has been on their study programme for 42 days.

Asked about funding for the third- year, it was noted that funding is available but at a reduced rate.

08.2023 Destinations Report-Directors received the Destinations report 2021-22 (paper 10.1), the agenda item was brought forward for discussion with Tom Holland (Head of Student Services) who had been invited to the meeting.

He gave directors a summary of the key headlines from the report which included, a slight decrease in students progressing to positive destinations by (-2pp) using the more rigorous college measure and (-6pp) using the DfE definition; the figures are still above the DfE measure but are declining year on year.

An increase in students progressing to apprenticeships and employment with training accounts for the lower proportion of students progressing to high and high tariff universities was noted. There was a significant increase in students taking a gap year representing more than double from the previous year, it is believed some of this could be based on the cost of living crisis and a decrease in students progressing to employment-low skilled. There was also a clear increase in 'destination not known' suggesting follow up destinations were not as successful as the previous year.

Directors were informed of the key actions in place for 2022-23 which includes; a continued focus on career information, advice and guidance (CIAG) for students, especially those students planning a gap year with the aim for students having firm plans in place for after their gap year, review the follow up process of student destinations with the aim to decrease 'not known'

destinations, and implement a dedicated gifted and talented pastoral cohort for students intending to apply for high and high tariff universities.

Questions from Directors

In response to a question about why students are not classed as employed when working during a gap year, it was noted that anything below 16 hours is not counted towards employment.

Asked if students choose UCLan as the most popular destination is perhaps down to cost, it was noted that other factors including mental health may result in students wanting to stay local.

Asked if alumni of the college are invited back to talk about their experiences, it was noted that some of the students are speaking at the Building Futures event taking place this evening.

In response to a question, the Head of Student Services gave directors a brief overview of the difference between the prestigious colleges.

Asked about retention of students from Blackpool Sixth at universities and the drop out rate, it was noted that it is reported on in general term, however does not provide any context therefore is not helpful, e.g. who dropped out, from which programme, etc. Blackpool Sixth carry out a six- month sustained follow up programme which can provide more meaningful data.

In response to a question about gap year, it was noted that these students are still supported through college, despite this being unpaid work for the college. Some students taking a gap year do have deferred places at universities.

In response to a question about how the college reach out to parents/carers, it was noted that parents are invited to the Building Futures evening and the Futures team also send out regular communication to parents/carers.

Directors asked about the Oxbridge candidates, it was noted that students at Blackpool Sixth are always at a disadvantage when up against independent schools, however college staff do a lot of work to help raise students' aspirations and the success rate in terms of offers to applications is good compared to many independent schools.

Asked about students wanting to study medicine, it was noted that students aspiring to these routes are supported by a specific pastoral mentor and staff from the medical society.

It was noted that a significant number of students from Blackpool Sixth have gone onto apprenticeships changing the trend, however the report shows positive destinations are better than in previous years.

Directors thanked the Head of Student Services for providing a very detailed and excellent report.

Tom Holland left the meeting

09.2023 Focus - Academisation update-Directors were asked to consider and approve the proposed structure for the new MAT (paper 7.1) presented by the Principal. It was noted that Wendy Middlemas, a retired Chair of the Corporation had agreed to be a member of the new MAT. The Principal noted anyone from the governing body wanting to put themselves forward for a trustee role should complete a Skills Questionnaire.

The Principal gave directors a possible timeline of events but said there is a lot of work to do in the meantime. She assured directors that she would keep staff and directors up to date on a regular basis.

Directors were invited to ask questions

Directors asked about college reserves and if they would be ringfenced for future use, it was noted that discussions are still underway about reserves and loans, it was noted that the discussions are about trying to find a balance between each institution keeping their own reserves and pooling resources into the trust for the greater good.

Directors noted that some kind of equity needs to be reflective in the decision-making process as once an agreement is made, trustees are responsible for

making financial decisions. The Principal informed directors that other schools in the trust do also have healthy reserves.

It was also noted that on becoming a trust more funding will become available.

In response to a question about the alternative provision (AP) schools within the trust, it was noted that this will provide a real strength for the trust.

One director noted the more information received the less likely they are convinced of joining a trust and cannot see the benefits for Blackpool Sixth, however another director said the opposite and said they were even more convinced that joining a trust was the right decision for the college.

The Chair acknowledged there are some key issues that need to be resolved but in the longer term the benefits for the college outweigh the drawbacks.

It was noted that a final decision will not be made until all the due diligence is completed and directors are right to challenge the decision-making process, it was also noted that even when an academy order is received the process can be stopped if it not right for Blackpool Sixth.

The Chair suggested the consultant involved in academisation talk to directors to answer any further questions at a future date to be arranged.

09.2023 D1 resolved: Directors agreed to seek academy status and to join the proposed 'Horizon Trust' as a forming partner.

10.2023 Directors' CPD

ALPs and future reports - delivered by Gail Yeadon

Directors received further information about the A-Level Performance System (ALPS) a system that allows college to get a measure of the value they add to a students' level 3 performance compared to what might be expected of them following their previous performance at GCSE.

Curriculum model- (paper 8.2) delivered by Tina Cooper

Directors were presented with an update on Applied General Qualifications (AGQ) and what it might mean for Blackpool Sixth. Directors were informed that the college have considered various options for moving forward in terms of courses offered in the future. It was noted that it has been a slow-moving process with little clarity from government and an ever-changing landscape making curriculum planning challenging.

The Assistant Principal: Vocational gave directors an up-date on the 'Accountability Agreement' which will be required to draw down funding. Directors were given a timeline of events and the approach being taken to ensure the college was compliant with the accountability agreement. It was noted that a number of additional meetings may be required to discuss the different changes.

Directors agreed with the approach outlined by the AP: Vocational

Directors thanked SLT for their informative presentations and acknowledged that the changing situation is very challenging

Some of SLT left the meeting

11.2023 College Action Plan

Directors received and approved the College Action Plan (paper 9.1) presented by the DP and were invited to ask questions.

Questions and comments

Directors commented on the progress made and the direction of travel which is good.

11.2023 Safeguarding

Directors noted the final minutes of the FCAT Safeguarding Board 23rd June 2023 (replaced by governor safeguarding network)

Directors were given an overview of the safeguarding team within the college and how resources are used to meet the growing demands, not just in

numbers and trends but in complexity of cases. It was noted that research into an external 24/7 online resource which offers direct support is currently being considered.

The remainder of SLT left the meeting

12.2023 Strategic Priorities

Directors received the draft SWOT Analysis (paper 12.1) presented by the Principal and were informed that these had now been shared with SLT and the wider Leadership Team to form the strategic decision making.

Directors received the draft Strategic Priorities 2023-24 (paper 12.2) presented by the Principal and were invited to ask questions

Questions from Directors

In response to a question about including outcomes on the document, it was noted that 'developing assessment practice' (priority 3) has a direct impact on outcomes and reports on outcomes are presented at every Standards Board meeting. Directors agreed that a separate priority for outcomes is not required.

In response to a question about a 2-year retention target, it was noted that there is a 2-year target in place, however the hotspots are when students leave in-year Route3 and Lower 6 which is the focus.

The Principal asked directors if using GMeet or webinar for a specific item would be useful due to the fact there are so many documents being sent out and agendas of full board meetings are increasing in length and time, directors thought this was a good idea.

The Principal, Chair and Clerk agreed to meet to discuss full board agendas with a view to streamlining, focusing on priorities and improving the effectiveness of meeting agendas.

JG,CB,SH

13.2023 Professional Support

The Principal gave directors a verbal update on one member of staff on a fixed term contract who is currently on the first stage of disciplinary support plan.

14.2023 Principal's Report

The Principal presented her report (paper 14.1) and highlighted the following two points: applications are only 5 lower than this time last year, teachers' pay award has been agreed at 5% backdated to September, however unions are still lobbying the government in respect of this. Directors were informed that a third of college teachers went out on strike.

Questions and comments from Directors

Directors commented on the excellent attention to staff well-being.

Jeremy Mannino left the meeting

15.2023 Directors Self-Assessment report

Directors received and approved the self-assessment report (SAR) and Directors' Quality Improvement Plan (DQIP) (paper 15.1) which was based on the response received at the time. A discussion took place about directors training and the best way forward. It was agreed to create an essential training plan that directors can add bespoke options too. Other discussions involved directors visiting departments within the college based on their skills, interests and experiences. The Principal, Chair and Clerk will discuss this further outside the meeting.

Action

JG/CB/SH

16.2023 Clerking Service

The Principal noted that the Clerking Service with FCAT had been renewed for a further year. Thanks were given to SH for her impactful clerking.

17.2023 Calendar of Directors' Meetings 2023-24

Directors received and approved the calendar for 2023-24 and noted some of these dates may be subject to change due to the academisation process.

Debbie Taaffe left the meeting

18.2023 Report on Chairs actions since the last meeting

The Chair reported that he had spent most of his time focusing on academisation and meetings with the Principal.

Committee Meetings

19.2023 Audit Committee

Directors received and approve the Audit committee meeting minutes held on 24th January 2023 and approved the Risk Management report and Risk Registers.

19.2023 D1 resolved: to approve the risk Management Report and Risk Registers

20.2023 Search and Governance

Directors received and approved the Search and Governance committee meeting minutes held on 23rd February 2023 and approved the following appointments;

20.2023 D1 resolved: to approve the appointment of Kirsten Burnett to the Corporation and the A&F Committee

20.2023 D2 resolved: to approve the re-appointment of Cllr Callum Baxter to the Corporation

20.2023 D3 resolved: to approve the appointment of Stephen Cooke to the Corporation

20.2023 D4 resolved: to note the resignation of Ray Baker

21.2023 Remuneration Review

The Chair gave directors a brief update on the recent Remuneration Review meeting

22.2023 AOB

There was no any other business to discuss

23.2023 Identification of any new or amended risks

There were no new or amended risks at present, however, it was noted that the current absence of the Head of Finance may have an impact if it was longer than anticipated.

24.2023 Date and Time of next meeting

Tuesday 4th July 2023 at 5:15pm

Signed _____

Date _____