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Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
Board members	Bishop Auckland College Patrick Lonergan (Chair), Natalie Davison-Terranova (Principal/CEO), Sharron Hogarth, Keith Ivory, Chris Hutchinson, Steve Robson; Graham Currie; Kim Nielsen; Di Gowland (<i>via mobile</i>); Simon Peacock	
In attendance	Clare Groves; Judith Layfield, Lynn Heighton, Ann Robinson-Ruddock (Clerk to the Corporation) External Auditor: Simon Turner (Armstrong Watson) External Governance Review: Chris Jones	
01	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received and accepted from John Yarrow and Katie Turnbull. Grant Sowerby was not in attendance.	
02	Welcome and Introductions The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.	
03	Approval of Kim Nielsen joining the Board The Meeting AGREED unanimously to Kim Nielsen joining the Board as of 12.12.2022.	
04	Finances 2021/22 - final approval S Turner explained that 2021/2022 was the first year Armstrong Watson had been involved with the external audit and it had gone very smoothly. The documents were now in a position to be signed, having been discussed at the Resources and Audit Committee meetings just prior to the Board meeting . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L Heighton commented that prior to pension adjustments, there had been a healthy surplus. <p>Simon Turner summarised the position :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £32m in property, plant and equipment. • £250k net assets • Covenant was not breached • £3m in cash • As a collective organisation, this was regarded as a going concern. <p>Q: With the announcement from ONS bringing colleges into the public sector, do you see that as a concern going forward? S Turner responded that in the short term, “no”, but he felt it could be very difficult for colleges to borrow money under the proposed rules. L Heighton confirmed that the College had no plans to borrow funds going forward.</p> <p>Q: How will any surplus be treated?</p>	

	<p>L Heighton confirmed that any surplus would not be taken away from colleges and N Davison-Terranova added that it is recognised that colleges need to generate a surplus in order to keep investing.</p> <p>The Board APPROVED the final accounts (subject to amendment of typos) and AGREED to signing the letters of representation. L Heighton to organise.</p> <p><i>S Turner left the Meeting at 7.10 p.m.</i></p> <p><i>K Nielsen joined the Meeting at 7.10 p.m.</i></p>	LH
05	<p>Chair's Address including Board discussion:</p> <p>P Lonergan explained that key priorities for the Board to consider are the College's financial position and the recently completed Self-Assessment Report.</p> <p>A support and appraisal system was being set up in the New Year to assist with Governor development and succession planning for the Board. P Lonergan proposed having two meetings, one formal and one informal within the year with each Governor.</p> <p>The Curriculum and Quality Committee would look at the Quality Improvement Plan and provide the Board with regular updates on progress.</p> <p>G Currie explained that the Resources Committee would be reviewing current financial risk management procedures to ensure robustness.</p> <p>A Remuneration Committee Meeting would be arranged in the New Year to look at salary benchmarks for senior leaders in the College. N Davison-Terranova emphasised that no senior leaders could attend but that the most recent AoC benchmarking data would be provided.</p> <p>S Robson questioned the implications of the ONS reclassification for the College. N Davison-Terranova explained that any implications would be fed back to the next Board Meeting, once queries raised by colleges had been addressed.</p>	
06	Declarations of Interest: None declared.	
07	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>i. <u>Careers Award:</u> P Lonergan explained that the student progression (careers) service within the College had been shortlisted for a prestigious AoC Beacon Award. Although there had been several nominations, only the College had met the shortlisting criteria for innovation in careers.</p>	
	Reports	
08a	<p>South West Durham Training Performance update:</p> <p>K Ivory reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Ofsted inspection was expected imminently. The Centre Management were confident in their Self-Assessment rating of 'good' overall. This had been reviewed by the Executive Committee. In general, KPIs were good in comparison with national averages, e.g. attendance, achievement, etc. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment numbers were not as high as hoped for, particularly engineering study programmes. However, some programmes had gone over target to partially compensate. The Centre was expecting a break-even year financially. During this academic year, the Centre was focusing on developing a sales and marketing strategy to improve the financial position in future years. M Henderson was providing support and experience with this. T Levels were due to commence in September 2023. 	
08b	<p>Durham Gateway performance update: P Lonergan reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Durham Gateway had returned to the main College site from Spennymoor. This had made it easier for students to attend and resulted in improved attendance figures. 97% of students who completed year 11 in July 2022 had successfully progressed to a positive destination. Staff were participating in extensive and high quality CPD. <p>Kim Turnbull and Donna Blackmore (Nursery Manager) would be invited to attend future Board meeting/s to give Governors a better insight into their departments.</p> <p>ACTION: ARR to invite K Turnbull and D Blackmore to next Board Meeting on 27.3.2023</p>	ARR
09	<p>Minutes of the Board Meeting 18.7.2022: These were AGREED as a true record.</p>	
10	<p>Review of previous Meeting assessment: No comments received.</p>	
11	<p>Actions Register: All actions had been successfully completed.</p>	
	Board Meetings	
12	<p>Draft Search & Governance Minutes 19.9.2022 and headline report from Chair: P Lonergan reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most governors had now completed the mandatory training sessions and those who had not were encouraged to do so. Two new Governors had been appointed recently – Simon Peacock as Student Governor and Kim Nielsen, who brings legal expertise to the Board. 	
13	<p>Draft Resources Minutes 5.12.2022 and headline report from Chair: G Currie reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three areas had been discussed at the last meeting. This included the quality rating of the meeting and the issues with the previous questionnaire, which had now been rectified. Governor training had been discussed at some length, including ensuring that all Governors were up to date with training requirements. Improvements to budget forecasting had also been discussed. 	

14	<p>Draft Curriculum & Quality Minutes 21.11.2022 and headline report from Chair:</p> <p>Di Gowland gave the following report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion had focussed on recruitment, quality of high needs provision, subcontracting and increased focus on attendance. • There had already been many attendance interventions, in line with protocols. Overall attendance was currently below the 90% target. • • The College had engaged Weston College, specialists in SEND, to conduct a review of the quality of Aspire and cross-College SEND provision. • There had been a long discussion around maths and English strategy going forward, with a whole college approach and consideration of how these subjects were being delivered. • The draft SAR had been moderated and then considered at an extraordinary C & Q Meeting on 30.11.2022. <p>Q: The stakeholder plan is referenced in a couple of places; what is that?</p> <p>N Davison-Terranova replied that the stakeholder engagement plan was established several years previously, demonstrating how different subject areas engaged with employers/stakeholders and highlighting any gaps. A working group comprising P Lonergan, K Ivory, J Leighton and J Vincent had been looking at engagement with employers and Ofsted skills requirements.</p>	
15	<p>Draft Audit Minutes 6.12.2022 and headline report from Chair:</p> <p>S Robson gave the following update in J Yarrow's absence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both AuditOne (Internal Auditors) and Armstrong Watson (External Auditors) had attended the meeting. • AuditOne had expressed concern about difficulty obtaining follow-up information on recommendations. After discussion, it had been agreed to add this as an agenda item at all meetings. L Heighton confirmed that a review of outstanding recommendations had now taken place and responses forwarded to AuditOne. The internal audit plan for 2022/23 had been agreed. 	
16	<p>South West Durham Training Executive Meeting Minutes 6.12.2022 and headline report from Chair:</p> <p>K Ivory had nothing to add to 08a above.</p>	
	Strategic	
17	<p>Strategic Developments:</p> <p>N Davison-Terranova gave the following verbal update:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>ONS decision to reclassify colleges to the public sector:</u> This decision created some potential challenges for colleges. For example, colleges could still sell assets, but the proceeds could now only be ringfenced for capital developments. N Davison-Terranova had consulted with the AoC funding and finance lead to understand the exact implications of this and other rules set out for colleges in response to the Managing Public Money framework. 	

	<p>Q: Does this affect the Aycliffe site sale? N Davison-Terranova responded that yes, it might, if the College wanted to use the proceeds for anything other than capital developments. Clarification would be sought on this point.</p> <p>Q: When does the new legislation come into effect? N Davison-Terranova replied that this had come into effect on 29.11.2022 and the reclassification was backdated to 1993.</p> <p>Q: Might it be a positive step to move away from private sector borrowing and refinance the College's debt through the public sector? N Davison-Terranova replied that the cost to break the current loan was £294k. and it may therefore not be cost effective to do at this time.</p> <p>ACTION: L Heighton to consider debt arrangements.</p>	
ii.	<p><u>Curriculum Developments:</u> Curriculum development was a key element of the overall strategic plan. The introduction of full degree courses had been a major step forward, with Sociology and Criminology being added to the existing Counselling and Sports Coaching courses. These were validated by The Open University. Provision of an MA course was viewed as the next step in higher education, with the validation event for MA in Counselling scheduled for February 2023, and the course planned to commence in September 2023. The Foundation Degree and top-up year in Healthcare studies was due to start in September 2023.</p> <p>Q: What were the plans for enrolment to these courses in 2023? J Layfield replied that it was planned to offer the MA course to students progressing from Degree level, and numbers were restricted in the first year. Discussions were taking place about the cost of the course. Work was needed on external recruitment.</p> <p>Q: Were existing internal staff sufficiently qualified to offer such courses or was additional recruitment required? J Layfield explained that the staff member leading on Counselling had a five-year plan and was building a strong team. The Healthcare Studies programme was being written by an existing experienced member of staff and an application for funding had been submitted to The Open University as part of a DfE initiative to strengthen HE in FE. The plan was to broaden the range of Level 4 and 5 courses offered by the College.</p> <p>Q: What happens if the funding request is turned down? J Layfield replied that HE developments would continue, although the pace of change might potentially be impacted by resource constraints.</p>	LH

	<p>T Levels in a small number of subjects were being introduced in September 2023. P Lonergan felt that a strengthened engagement strategy with employers was necessary to understand their current needs. J Layfield explained that relatively recent work on this had identified gaps in programming and systems development provision, as an example.</p> <p>N Davison-Terranova was part of the Stronger Towns Board. In addition, as a Stronger Towns Fund (STF) project lead, the College had secured the lease on the former McIntyre building in Bishop Auckland. As discussed previously, plans were progressing to create a business and community hub, which would include a training café, open access digital facilities for the public and a job matching service, amongst other activities. Consideration was also being given to a potential retail offer.</p> <p>Q: When will the Centre be open? N Davison-Terranova explained that extensive building work to treat dry rot is the current priority. Opening was expected during the 2023/24 academic year and regular reporting of progress would be provided to the Board.</p> <p>S Robson declared an interest in this going forward and would not be involved in discussions at future Board Meetings.</p>	SR
18	<p>KPI Monitoring Report 2021-22 and update 2022-23 N Davison-Terranova highlighted key points from the report.</p> <p>Q: What was the reason for the Quarter 1 downturn in the current financial year? N Davison-Terranova replied that under-performance on adult education budget (AEB) was the key issue. This had led to systems being strengthened and a more realistic AEB target being set.</p> <p>Q: In terms of the Resources Committee, how did we tighten forecasting? G Currie replied that an action plan had been put in place, the results of which would be evident over time. The Quarter 1 reforecast and targets had been reviewed.</p>	
19	<p>Student involvement strategy and update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five new student ambassadors had been appointed. • A student-led prom was being organised this year, overseen by staff. • A new Student Governor had been appointed to the Board. 	
	Quality and Performance Matters	
20	<p>College Self-Assessment Report 2021-2022: The SAR had been moderated and the vast majority of areas were graded as 'good'. An external quality improvement advisor, who was also a part-time Ofsted Inspector, had been on the moderating panel, and in his view the SAR was accurate. High needs provision had been identified as an area for improvement and staff were working closely with Weston College, which is a national leader in SEND provision.. They would be visiting the College in March</p>	

7

	ACTION: L Heighton to add percentage variances next to figures on management accounts.	
26	Financial Matters: In view of ONS reclassification L Heighton would need to research any insurance implications. ACTION: Insurance may be affected by the ONS reclassification. L Heighton to look at insurance going forward.	LH
27a	Risk Register: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eight significant risks had been identified, two of which related to Durham Gateway. Steps were being taken to reduce this number. The Register was reviewed and updated by management at least three times annually. 	
27b	Data Protection: No questions arose from the documents circulated prior to the Meeting.	
	Human Resources	
28	Health & Safety Policy approval: The Board APPROVED the Health & Safety policy.	
29	Property Strategy 2022/23 approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With regard to SWDT, a training provider wanted to continue to lease part of the older building and arrangements were being made to set up a longer lease. The sale of Business Training Services in Newton Aycliffe was being handled by Carvers. An offer had been made and accepted. A ten-year lease with a five year break clause had been taken on the McIntyre building in Bishop Auckland. Longer term plans impacting upon property strategy included provision for T-Levels and the growth of higher education. The Board APPROVED the Property Strategy for 2022/23.	
30	Summary of Key Actions from the Meeting: In addition to actions identified earlier in the meeting, P Lonergan emphasised the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor Training – All training must be completed as soon as possible. ACTION: ARR to check on this prior to next Meeting Clarity needed regarding the ONS reclassification announcement regarding Colleges moving to the public sector. ACTION: NDT/LH to pursue queries 	ARR
	Date of next meeting: 27 March 2023	
	Ann Robinson-Ruddock Clerk to the Corporation	

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.



Signed:
Patrick Lonergan
Chair

Date: 27 March 2023

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