



Bishop Auckland College (BAC) Group

Corporate Board meeting

Wednesday 26th March 2025

5.00pm-7.00pm

Room 286a, Bishop Auckland College, Woodhouse Lane. DL14 6JZ

MINUTES

Present: Mo Dixon (MD), Chair of Corporate Board, BAC
 Christopher Hutchinson (CH), Vice Chair of Corporate Board, BAC
 Dominic Raymont (DR), Board member, BAC
 Gavin McIntyre (GMc), Board member, BAC
 Kim Nielsen (KN), Board member, BAC
 Michelle Andelin (MA), Board member, BAC
 Shaun Hope (SH), Principal/Chief Executive Officer, BAC

In attendance: Anne-Marie Chiswell (AMC), Assistant Principal Business and Community, BAC
 James Robson (JR), Executive council member, South West Durham Training
 Judith Layfield (JL), Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality, BAC
 Lynn Heighton (LH), Assistant Principal Finance and Resource, BAC
 Marie Nigrelli (MN) (Minutes), Clerk to Corporate Board, BAC

NO	ITEM	Action
1	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence Apologies received from Joy Allen, Keith Ivory and Pamela Petty, Board members and Matthew Hedley, Student representative, BAC.</p> <p>1.1 Chair’s address It was Mo Dixon’s first Board meeting as Chair, Chris Hutchinson’s as Vice Chair and Marie Nigrelli’s as Clerk.</p> <p>Board was informed of the many changes taking place in the Group which was covered in the agenda.</p>	

	<p>Changes had taken place to the membership of Board and its sub committees and an advert to recruit new Board members was live. There had been a lot of interest with leads being followed up with the hope to recruit by summer.</p> <p>It had been an extremely busy and successful year so far with the partnership with Kier, the opening of McIntrye's, a good Ofsted report and a visit from Office for Students, along with the sale of the Spennymoor campus.</p> <p><u>Action</u> <i>Circulate advert widely within contacts.</i></p>	ALL
2	<p>Declarations of interest None were declared.</p>	
3	<p>Minutes of the last meeting held 11th December 2024 for approval The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record.</p> <p><i>*Post meeting note*</i> The minutes of the following meetings approved by email 9th April 2025 with no matters arising; 4th September 2024 28th October 2024</p>	
4	<p>Matters arising from the minutes of the last meetings held 11th December 2024 There were no matters arising.</p>	
5	<p>Action register to date The action register update with; 1403 – included with other Board training. Complete. 1404 – complete 1405 – included with other Board training. Complete. 1435 – annual open house staff and students. Good uptake for staff but not students. Chair and student representative to take this forward. On Board work cycle. Complete. 1436 – duplicate action. Complete. 1437 – visitor monitoring forms to be replaced with register. Complete.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p>	ALL

	<p><i>Report to Clerk any other work/visits carried out by Board members for the Group outside Board and its sub committees.</i></p> <p>Action register to be updated. Completed items to be archived.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Sub Committees Spring term update with minutes of meetings for acceptance. The minutes of all meetings were shared.</p> <p>6.1 Search and Governance draft minutes dated 29th January 2025. Board agreed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the clerk/chair to contact Board members when there were three missed meetings to determine future of membership. • A new recruitment process and accepted the changes to Board and its sub committees memberships. • To produce a new meeting schedule by the summer to maximise efficiency of time. • To enforce the use of BACOLL emails. • Review Instrument and Articles annually. • For Board skills/training to remain as a standing agenda item. <p><u>Action</u> <i>Safeguarding/training to be brought to next meeting. To go on schedule.</i></p> <p>6.2 Resource draft minutes dated 12th February 2025. Board agreed to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the Partnership Plan to £500k. • Note the Sub Committee approved quarter 2 forecast. • Consider options analysis for *confidential item* at this Board meeting (item 7.3). • Receive the Woodhouse Lane and South West Durham Training (SWDT) master plan. <p>6.3 South West Durham Training draft minutes dated 5th March 2025. Board agreed for;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executives to carry out an options analysis for the future of SWDT with a clear focus on its future capital investment. It would first be presented to SWDT in the summer and then to Board. Considerations to be made on retaining it as a stand-alone organisation, absorbing it into BAC Group or adopting the estate. SWDT was forecasted to make a profit this year. SWDT's market share improved. 	<p>CH/MN</p>

	<p>Attendance at executive council meetings was minimal. Advert to be circulated.</p> <p>6.4 Curriculum and Quality draft minutes dated 12th March 2025. No main concerns to report to Board with other items covered in item 8.</p> <p>James Robson (JR) joined the meeting. Item 6.3 was recapped.</p> <p>6.5 Audit draft minutes dated 12th March 2025. Board agreed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where rapid decisions needed to be made, email circulation was sufficient with agreement from the amount of Board members ordinarily required for quorum. This would then be minuted at the following Board meeting. • To adopt recommendations on risk appetite agreed at the Sub Committee. <i>*Post meeting note* recommendations to be presented at next Board meeting.</i> • <i>*Post meeting note* Confirmed the sale of Spennymoor had previously been agreed by Board.</i> <p>All minutes of the meetings were accepted.</p> <p>Thanks was given to sub committee chairs for providing covering summary sheets.</p>	
7	<p>Strategic developments - confidential</p> <p>7.1 Strategic updates shared 7.2 Capital development update 7.3 Confidential item 7.4 Corporate Strategy and Key Performance</p> <p><i>Redacted due to commercial sensitivity.</i></p>	
8	<p>Curriculum, Quality and Performance</p> <p>8.1 Curriculum, quality and performance update shared for information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North East Combined Authority (NCLA) had supported BAC in funding a number of employer-based pilot programmes for adults, as BAC evolved its curriculum to respond to the new way in which adults consume learning. • Progress was being made against the actions in the Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIAP) developed from the 2024-25 Self 	

	<p>Assessment Report (SAR). However, the impact of these actions in all areas was not as significant as hoped.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance continued to be a challenge and the procedure would be fully revised with input from local secondary schools to allow BAC to benefit from their learning. • These were good initiatives for new income. 	
<p>9</p>	<p>Finance</p> <p>9.1 Finance update Finance matters document shared for information.</p> <p>There was so much uncertainty with a lack of information from government agencies on funding and timelines, which meant plans could not be made. Toolkits were provided to be able to plan but then methodology changed.</p> <p>Quarter 2 forecast was based on increases in some income streams which were unconfirmed. Allocation was given on one. Several key government announcements that had taken place recently;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in-year growth; Government had reported a significant increase in the number of 16 to 19-year-old students requiring funding for the academic year 2024-25. This growth had been described as exceptional and exceeded the budget available for in-year payments. As a result, the Government planned to fund apx two-thirds of the expected growth funding for this year. However, an allocation was made today which was £120k down. BAC could not yet determine how the calculation was made. • National insurance funding ; grant income related formula announcement was further delayed until May 2025 with a lump sum to be paid in September 2025 for March 2025-26. There was no indication if support for NI would continue beyond March 2026. BAC could not predict what that formula would be. Based on current salaries, this could cost BAC £210k per annum. • Post-16 budget grant; for the academic year 2025-26 an additional £300m had been allocated to further education, with £50m of this being distributed to colleges between April and July 2025 through the post-16 budget grant. This grant aimed to address challenges like workforce recruitment and retention. Awaiting confirmation on how the grant would be calculated. • Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) guarantee; a vital assurance for further education (FE) colleges. BAC’s review had taken place and the £40k annual charge had been removed from 1st April 2025. There had also been a reduction to the contributions, 19.4% to 18%. The full year benefit of this based on current salary costs was £36k. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 to 18 course funding rate rise (consolidating the £50m) would mean the 16 to 18 education budget would be 5% higher next year than this year. • £302 million FE College Condition Capital Allocation; was distributed among eligible further education colleges in England based on specific criteria. The allocation considered a number of factors to ensure that the funding was targeted towards colleges with the greatest need for improvements and upgrades. Funding yet to be confirmed. <p>9.2 Group management accounts 28th February 2025 The accounts were shared for information.</p>	
10	<p>Business and community - confidential</p> <p>10.1 Strategic stakeholder engagement update</p> <p><i>Redacted due to commercial sensitivity.</i></p>	
11	<p>Governance</p> <p>Governance update shared.</p> <p>Board agreed;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Training; all training was up to date except for one module for one Board member who was aware it was overdue. 2) Assessment of previous meeting; previously implemented to improve the effectiveness of meetings. As all comments were positive and necessary changes put in place, this would become part of the annual Board Appraisal process. 3) Board governance packs to be refreshed and done annually. 4) BAC had new website. Board members were asked to review the content of their bios and give updated versions to Clerk if necessary. In the Summer, it is proposed to standardise photographs and have them retaken by College’s photographer in a college setting. 5) Board away day agenda; Board, SWDT executive council and management team away day. Agenda to be circulated in due course. 	
12	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>Board was satisfied with the way reporting was presented at the meeting and agreed for the format to continue.</p>	
13	<p>Summary of key actions</p> <p>Confidential items which were identified as commercially sensitive. To be redacted from website published minutes;</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Item 7 Strategic developments• Item 10 Business and Community• Item 7.3; to proceed with actions set.	
14	<p>Date of next meeting To be confirmed after new meeting schedule set.</p> <p>Wednesday 9th July, 5pm-7pm, Room 278, Bishop Auckland College, Woodhouse Lane, Bishop Auckland. DL14 6JZ</p>	

Signed on behalf of the Corporate Board; Mo Dixon, Chair of Corporate Board.

Date: 9th July 2025

Contact for meeting Clerk to the Corporate Board; marie.nigrelli@bacoll.ac.uk