

**Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Corporation held on Tuesday 9 May 2023
at 6:00pm in the Conference Room Washington Campus**

Present:

- Louise Bradford, Vice Chair
- Ian Brown
- Jill Colbert
- Pamela Dawson
- Louise Doyle (Teams)
- Louise Farthing
- Julia Fox
- Ellis Hill, SU President [left after item 61]
- Sue Houston
- Chris Jones
- Susan Pollard, Staff Governor [left after item 61]
- Richard Redpath, Staff Governor [left after item 61]
- Alison Shaw, Vice Chair
- Philip Smith
- James Stuart, Chair
- Ellen Thinnesen, Chief Executive

In Attendance:

- David Howells, Chief Financial Officer
- Toni Rhodes, Principal, Sunderland College
- Kendra Kirby, Vice Principal, Curriculum
- Judith Quinn, Vice Principal, Curriculum Enhancement, and Innovation (Teams)
- Lee Lister, Vice Principal, Northumberland College and SEND
- Vikkie Morton, Vice Principal, Curriculum and Student Services
- Iain Nixon, Vice Principal, Partnerships and Commercial
- Naomi Robson, Vice Principal, Resources
- Christine Stretesky, Head of Corporate Governance and Policy
- Donna Swan, Governance Officer
- Zoe Wortley, GatenbySanderson – Observer [left after item 61]
- Mark Powell, GatenbySanderson – Observer [left after item 61]

The Chair welcomed Ms Wortley and Mr Powell to the meeting and explained that they would be observing the meeting as part of the External Review of Governance (Review). He reminded Governors of the need to complete the Real-World Group survey and invited everyone to the half-day workshop on 1 June 2023, where the outcomes and recommendations of the Review will be shared and discussed.

Bd/22-23/48 Apologies and consent for absence and declarations of interest

There were apologies for absence, for which consent was granted, from Governors Hope, O’Leary, Ramanathas and Towns.

The following interests were noted but without conflict:

- Governor Houston – item 52 as a member of the board of the North East Process Industries Cluster (NEPIC), and
- Governor Shaw – item 54 as a member of faculty at Newcastle University.

Bd/22-23/49 Minutes of previous meeting held on 14 February 2023 and Matters Arising

The Board agreed the minutes presented as an accurate record of the meeting held on 14 February 2023, subject to minor amendment. The remaining part of this item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

The following matters arising were noted:

- Bd/22-23/35: the letter from the Annual Strategic Conversation has been shared with the Board via SharePoint; and
- Bd/22-23/37: the report on the Curriculum Contribution of EPNE Training was presented at the Finance, Resources and Projects Committee on 21 March 2023.

Bd/22-23/50 Chair’s Report

The Chair updated the Board regarding the need for a special interest, time limited group to manage the changes coming through because of National Reforms.

He then invited the Vice Chairs, Governors Shaw, and Bradford to share the messages from recent events they attended:

- Governor Shaw attended the AoC Chairs and Vice Chairs’ briefing where the main discussion included:
 - T-Levels – disquiet about viability and employers’ commitment,
 - Staff pay, and
 - ONS Reclassification.
- Governor Bradford attended the National Chairs’ Council event, “Governor Call to Action: Finding Our Voice” which focused on preparation for potentially a change of Government.

AGREED: to note the reports.

Bd/22-23/51 Strategic Roadmaps

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/22-23/52 Accountability Agreement

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/22-23/53 Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) Statement

The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Student Services (VPCSS) presented the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Statement (Statement), a welcoming and accessible document which has been developed by a group of curriculum and support staff working together to support the

College's approach to creating a "Culture of Belonging". The Statement comprises of 4 sections as follows:

- Our pledge,
- Value statements,
- How we live it, and
- EDIB through the lens of leadership, curriculum, and business support.

As part of the EDIB through the lens of development process, sessions have taken place with curriculum staff, students, including the Student Councils at each campus and Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and (ESOL) English for Speakers of Other Languages students.

The next steps, once the Statement has been approved, will be to:

- Publish the Statement on the College's website, intranet and with posters displayed across campuses.
- Curriculum and support areas will create department level statements that will be displayed within classrooms, workshops, and offices.
- There will also be student-led development of resources to reinforce EDIB messages.

The Board welcomed the Statement and praised the presentation as having real impact. Recognising its use of inclusive language, the Board agreed it could be made stronger with the following suggestions:

- The replacement of "equality" with "equity" throughout, and
- The replacement of "cultivate" with "nurture".

The VPCSS shared that use of the term 'equity' had been discussed during drafting the Statement, and while the College has introduced the term to staff and students, there is a need to provide a better understanding of what it means in practice. The Board further suggested language such as "traditional norms" should be avoided, even in the context of these being rejected, and replaced with positive, assertive statements of what the College intends to do and how decisions are actively informed by EDIB. There should also be some text about how the College is driving, and evaluating the impact of, change.

The Board also recommended further development of its taking the leadership on EDIB into our communities, schools and amongst local employers. The reference to "environmental elements" should also be expanded upon to describe how embedding equity within decisions about new spaces can work for groups of students.

The final thought posed was in relation to the composition of the Board with the Board asking itself, "Who would the students want to see having a seat at the Board table?"

AGREED: to approve the Statement as College policy, subject to the suggested amendments being made.

Bd/22-23/54 CEO's Report

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/22-23/55 Chair Updates

The following updates were provided by the Committee Chairs:

Finance Resources and Projects Committee

Governor Fox highlighted the following items as significant from the previous meeting:

- Management Accounts – liquidity and impact on Financial Health rating,
- EPNE Training – curriculum contribution,
- Revised Budget being prepared for presentation to the Board,
- Market Share presentation – challenges in the market clarified,
- Hartlepool Sixth Form College estate profile, and
- ONS Reclassification.

Curriculum Quality and Student Experience Committee

Governor Jones highlighted the following items as significant from the previous meeting:

- There had been more detail provided on the opportunities available to students to make informed choices about their destinations/progression, and
- An early discussion of the College Performance Tables data had taken place but at the next meeting there would be an in-depth analysis to identify those areas where intervention may be required.

English and Maths Scrutiny Committee

Governor Bradford highlighted the following items as significant from the last meeting:

- Progress on intended impact outcomes,
- Progress on attendance, and
- Proposed deep dive into Thrive results/actions.

AGREED: to note the reports.

Bd/22-23/56 Board Acknowledgements and Committee Recommendations

The HCG advised that there had been no requests for either of the following items to be withdrawn for further discussion by the Board.

- **a. Publication of the Gender Pay Gap Report**
The Board acknowledged the publication of the Gender Pay Gap Report on the EPNE website, pursuant to its approval granted via email during week commencing 13 March 2023.
- **b. Approval of the Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions Policy**
The Board approved the Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions Policy in accordance with the recommendation of the Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience Committee, subject to the following minor amendments:
 - Removal of references to Regional/Local Boards; and
 - Inclusion of additional detail about the treatment of anonymous complaints.

Bd/22-23/57 Draft Minutes of the following Committees

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/22-23/58 Papers from Committees

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/22-23/59 ONS Reclassification

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/22-23/60a Any Other Business

The Chair shared with the Board that Governor Colbert had resigned as a Governor with effect from the end of May 2023. This would, therefore, be her last meeting. He thanked her for the significant contribution she had made to the work of the College, commenting on the “value added” she had brought to the role and the clearly communicated advice she had offered.

Governor Colbert responded that she had enjoyed her time as a Governor and was sorry to have to give it up. However, the additional responsibilities now attaching to her substantive role within Sunderland City Council brought a greater potential for conflict and, as a consequence, this seemed the appropriate time to step back. The CEO also offered her thanks to Governor Colbert and stated that she would be missed.

[The Chair then took item 61 out of turn.]

Bd/22-23/61 Date, time, and venue of the next meeting

The Board noted the arrangements for the next meeting as follows:

- Tuesday 4 July 2023 at 6:00pm in the Conference Room at Washington Campus.

[At the direction of the Chair, the Staff and Student Governors, and guests left the meeting.]

Bd/22-23/60b Any other Business

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:30pm.

These minutes were approved by the Board of the Corporation at its meeting on 4 July 2023 pursuant to minute Bd/22-23/67.