

**BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION BOARD (“the Board”)**  
**HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2022 AT 5.00PM**  
**ON THE BISPHAM CAMPUS**

**Members’ attendance record:**

		28 Sep 2022	1 Nov 2022	6 Dec 2022	15 Dec 2022	31 Jan 2023	14 Mar 2023	25 Apr 2023	23 May 2023	4 Jul 2023	2022/23 attendance
Steve Fogg	Independent Member, Chair	✓	✓	✓							
Helen Broughton	Independent Member	✓	A	✓							
Andrea Challis	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓							
Mark Chapman	Student Member	---	✓	✓							
Jane Cole	Independent Member	✓	✓	A							
Darren Gorman	Student Member	---	✓	A							
Colleen Hickson	Staff Member	✓	✓	✓							
Chris Holt	Independent Member	✓	A	✓							
Suzy Layton	Independent Member	✓	A	✓							
Sandy Lee	Staff Member	✓	✓	✓							
Antony Lockley	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓							
Martin Long	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓							
Adrian Mills	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓							
Bev Robinson	Principal and Chief Executive	✓	✓	✓							
Wendy Robinson	Independent Member	✓	✓	A							

**In attendance:**

Linda Dean            Executive Director of Apprenticeships and People  
Cheryl Dunn            Vice-Principal for Higher Education and Student Enhancement  
Paul Howard            PDH Advisory (minutes)  
Simon Hughes           Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum  
Alistair Mulvey        Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning  
Daryl Platt              Vice-Principal for Engagement  
Sue Hutchinson        Beaver and Struthers (for item 142/22 only)

### **133/22 Chair and quorum**

Steve Fogg took the chair and noted that due notice had been given to all members and that a quorum was present. Accordingly, he declared the meeting duly convened and constituted.

### **134/22 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Jane Cole, Darren Gorman and Wendy Robinson.

### **135/22 Declarations of interest**

- (i) Colleen Hickson and Sandy Lee declared a pecuniary interest in minute reference 143/22 (pay award offer) on account of them being employees of the Corporation and therefore recipients of any agreed pay award.
- (ii) Given that the discussions would be general in nature as opposed to their individual remuneration, the fact that negotiations with trade unions are led by someone who is similarly affected by the outcome and given that the Board was not being asked to make a firm decision at this meeting but to provide an offer for further discussion, it was agreed that the two Staff Members may remain in the room but that they would take no part in the discussions.
- (iii) The Principal and Chief Executive declared a pecuniary interest in minute reference 153/22 (Remuneration Committee report) and confirmed that she would leave the meeting for any discussion of her remuneration, although she noted that the recommendation at minute reference 143/22 would likely negate the need for any detailed discussion.

### **136/22 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes and confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 November 2022 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record, subject to the amendment of minute reference 126/22(i) to reflect that it was the Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning and not the Vice-Principal for Engagement that presented the high-level summary of pensions at B&FC.

### **137/22 Dashboard**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum and the Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning presented the regular dashboard containing headline quality and performance metrics.
- (ii) The Board received the dashboard and noted the content.

### **138/22 Principal and Chief Executive's report**

- (i) The Principal and Chief Executive presented her report which had been circulated with the agenda. Note was made of the fact that the initial intention to deliver an Institute of Technology in Lancashire, for which B&FC is the lead organisation, had now been expanded to include Cumbria and that the licence to operate the new Institute of Technology was due to be awarded during week commencing 12 December 2022.
- (ii) Note was also made of recent visits to B&FC by the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, as well as the Minister for Jersey and a Scottish Minister.
- (iii) The Board directed that the remainder of this item be minuted confidentially.

### **139/22 Period 3 finance report**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise the financial position as at 31 October 2022. He confirmed that the outturn position as at period 3 remained broadly in line with the revised forecast shared in September, with lower-than-anticipated income and surplus. He confirmed that interventions had been made accordingly. Given the volatility of several markets at present, the Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning noted the challenge of accurate forecasting, which he noted accounts for the wider-than-normal range in the full-year forecast.
- (ii) In response to a question from the Chair around energy costs and how other colleges were seeking to address this, the Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning advised that some organisations still have fixed price arrangements in place that have a further term to run, whereas others are buying energy at spot rates or entering into new fixed rate deals at higher prices. In response to a supplementary question from Andrea Challis, confirmation was provided that B&FC works with an energy broker to identify the best possible solutions that this arrangement could be changed if needed.
- (iii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

### **140/22 ONS reclassification outcome**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to confirm the recent decision of the Office for National Statistics to reclassify the further education sector; noting that colleges are currently classified as non-profit institutions serving households and would move to the central government sector with effect from 29 November 2022.
- (ii) Note was made of the fact that the implications of the change in classification were still being reviewed across the sector and it was suggested that this would be a useful discussion item at the next strategy session in January 2023.

(iii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

#### **141/22 Audit Committee annual report**

(i) Paul Howard presented the annual report of the Audit Committee, the contents of which had been prepared in line with the requirements of the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice and which had been approved by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 23 November 2022.

(ii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

#### **142/22 2021/22 year-end matters**

(i) Sue Hutchinson, from Beever and Struthers, joined the meeting to deliver the external auditor's findings to the Board. Following her presentation, the Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning thanked the collective audit team the way the audit had been conducted and for their useful insight. Thanks were also extended to the Audit Committee, and particularly to the committee's co-opted subject specialist, Peter Hewetson, for the detailed review of the documents which had been undertaken at its last meeting before being circulated to the Board.

(ii) The Corporation Board **RESOLVED** as follows:

1. THAT the presentation from the external auditors be received and noted.
2. THAT the annual report and accounts for the year-ended 31 July 2022 be **APPROVED** and that the Chair and the Principal and Chief Executive be authorised to sign where indicated on the Board's behalf.
3. THAT the associated letters of representation be **APPROVED** and that the Principal and Chief Executive be authorised to sign where indicated on the Board's behalf.
4. THAT the regularity self-assessment for 2021/22 be received and noted.

(iii) Sue Hutchinson left the meeting.

#### **143/22 Pay award offer 2023**

(i) Staff Board Members withdrew from the discussions on this item due to them having a pecuniary interest in the outcome. Confirmation was provided that the meeting remained quorate once their attendance had been discounted.

(ii) The Executive Director for Apprenticeships and People presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise the current position regarding pay award options for the Board's consideration, following receipt of the joint trade unions' pay request. She noted that the annual pay award, which runs for a calendar year rather than a financial year, is usually debated by the

Board in December so that information on enrolment and affordability can be taken into consideration, alongside external salary benchmarking information and the Association of Colleges' (AoC) recommendations. She also highlighted the fact that, for over a decade, B&FC had either met or exceeded the non-binding AoC recommendation and that the Board has chosen to award a pay award every year for at least the last 24 years, as well as aligning with the foundation living wage rate since 2018, with this being applied from January of each year rather than April which is the norm.

- (iii) The Executive Director for Apprenticeships and People confirmed the trade unions' position, highlighting their comments around the need to respond to a national crisis and detailed their requests.
- (iv) The proactive measures that had already been taken in relation to pay increases from August 2022 for the financial year 2022/23 were noted. The Chair commented that, in his opinion, B&FC had always taken a fair and reasonable approach and commended the quality of the report provided.
- (v) The Board discussed the options which had been outlined in the report. Particular note was made of the intention not to provide any consolidated uplift to Senior Management Team members in any of the scenarios outlined and the Principal and Chief Executive confirmed that steps had been taken to ensure that all affected staff members were given the opportunity to comment upon this approach and that there had been no dissent.
- (vi) Following detailed discussion, the Board agreed that its offer to the trade unions should be:
  - (a) a 2.5% consolidated pay award for all staff in scope, except for Senior Management Team members who would receive a nil award
  - (b) a £700 non-consolidated award to be applied to all staff in scope, including Senior Management Team members
  - (c) the continued implementation of the foundation living wage, although B&FC would not be seeking accreditation as a living wage employer, in line with the Board's previous approach.
- (vii) The Board **AUTHORISED** the Principal and Chief Executive and the Executive Director for Apprenticeships and People to negotiate with the trade unions and to make any amendments needed, staying within the cost envelope of what had been agreed above, without the need to return to the Board for further consideration.

#### **144/22 Curriculum matters**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum presented the Further Education Self-Assessment Report 2021/22 and the Vice-Principal for Higher Education

and Student Enhancement presented the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 2021/22, both of which had been circulated with the agenda and had been reviewed by the Quality and Standards Committee at its meeting on 22 November 2022.

- (ii) The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Self-Assessment Report for 2021/22 and received and noted the Self-Evaluation Document for 2021/22, which had been approved by the HE Academic Board.

#### **145/22 Employee pulse survey results**

- (i) The Executive Director for Apprenticeships and People presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to share the outcomes of the employee pulse survey which had been undertaken in October 2022. She confirmed that employee engagement continues to be a key strand of B&FC's People Strategy and the Chair commented on the overall participation rate of 82.93% which he noted was extremely high.
- (ii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

#### **146/22 Risk management report**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to present the 2022/23 risk register for approval, following consideration by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 23 November 2023.
- (ii) The Principal and Chief Executive reminded the Board of its earlier discussions in relation to the reclassification of the further education sector by the Office for National Statistics and noted that it may be necessary to amend the risk register in the Spring once the implications of the change are better understood.
- (iii) The Board **APPROVED** the 2022/23 risk register as presented.

#### **147/22 Senior Staff Remuneration Statement 2021/22**

- (i) Paul Howard presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to seek approval of the Senior Staff Remuneration Statement for 2021/22, following its review by the Remuneration Committee on 3 November 2022.
- (ii) The Board **APPROVED** the Senior Staff Remuneration Statement for 2021/22 and directed that this be published on the website.

**ACTION: Paul Howard**

#### **148/22 Student Union accounts**

- (i) The Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to share the Student Union accounts for the year-ended 31 July 2023.
- (ii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

#### **149/22 Strategy session proposals**

- (i) The Principal and Chief Executive presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to invite the Board to agree the content of its forthcoming strategy session on 24 January 2023.
- (ii) Following discussion, the Board agreed that it would wish to cover the Office for National Statistics' recent reclassification as well as higher education and the future of learning in detail. Note was made of the fact that the external governance reviewer would be providing some input into the session and that there may be another agenda item following the confidential discussions undertaken under minute reference 138/22.
- (iii) Adrian Mills asked how the Board was able to hear from students directly. In response, the Principal and Chief Executive suggested that some student stories could be brought to a future Board meeting. Chris Holt suggested that it may be beneficial to invite a small number of students to join the strategy session as part of the future of learning discussion which Mark Chapman supported, suggesting the usefulness of ensuring a good breadth of student experiences across different curriculum areas.

**ACTION: Executive Team**

#### **150/22 Board members' forum**

- (i) Antony Lockley advised the Board that he had recently given a talk to Management Forum around the future of Blackpool and its potential challenges, with a particular focus on ensuring that the curriculum offered by the college aligns well. Chris Holt referred to the recent World Skills event and asked whether any feedback had been received, to which the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum advised that initial feedback had been very positive and the event had been considered a success, however detailed feedback had not yet been received and the intention for future events was not known.
- (ii) Martin Long noted that B&FC had participated in a sustainable business event delivered by the Responsible Business Network and that it would be hosting a meeting of the Blackpool Business Leaders' Group in January 2023.

## **151/22 Quality and Standards Committee matters**

Helen Broughton provided a verbal update on the business transacted at the most recent Quality and Standards Committee meeting on 22 November 2022 and the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2022 had been circulated with the agenda for information.

## **152/22 Audit Committee matters**

- (i) Paul Howard provided an overview of the business transacted at the most recent Audit Committee meeting on 23 November 2022 and the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2022 had been circulated with the agenda for information.
- (ii) The Board noted that the Audit Committee had proposed some minor changes to its terms of reference and **APPROVED** the revised terms of reference as presented.

## **153/22 Remuneration Committee report**

- (i) Staff and Student Board Members, and all non-Board Members, left the meeting during consideration of this item. Confirmation was provided that the meeting remained quorate.
- (ii) A report had been circulated with the agenda to outline the Remuneration Committee's recommendations as to the Senior Post Holder pay award for 2023, however it was noted that negotiations with trade unions around the general staff pay award had commenced after the Remuneration Committee had met to consider its recommendation.
- (iii) In line with the discussions at minute reference 143/22 above, the Board **AGREED** that all Senior Post Holders would be treated in the same way as Senior Management Team Members for the purpose of the 2023 pay award; that is, that they would not receive a consolidated pay award.

## **154/22 Date, time and venue of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Board will be held on 31 January 2023, 5.00pm, at Lancashire Energy HQ.