

Minutes of a meeting of the B&FC Corporation Board ('the Board')

Held on 5 December 2023 at 5.00pm

In the Boardroom on the Bispham Campus

Members' attendance record:

		26 Sep 2023	31 Oct 2023	5 Dec 2023	30 Jan 2024	12 Mar 2024	23 Apr 2024	21 May 2024	9 Jul 2024	2023/24 attendance to date
Steve Fogg	Independent Member, Chair	✓	✓	✓						100%
Helen Broughton	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓						100%
Andrea Challis	Independent Member	✓	A	✓						67%
Mark Chapman	Student Member	✓	✓	✓						100%
Jane Cole	Independent Member	✓	A	✓						67%
Alun Francis	Principal and Chief Executive	✓	✓	✓						100%
Chris Holt	Independent Member	A	✓	✓						67%
Suzy Layton	Independent Member	✓	A	✓						67%
Sandy Lee	Staff Member	✓	✓	✓						100%
Antony Lockley	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓						100%
Martin Long	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓						100%
Adrian Mills	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓						100%
Wendy Robinson	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓						100%
Jagjit Walia	Staff Member	✓	✓	✓						100%

In attendance:

Linda Dean	Vice-Principal for Apprenticeships, Business and People
Cheryl Dunn	Vice-Principal for Higher Education and Student Enhancement
Paul Howard	Governance Professional, PDH Advisory (minutes)
Simon Hughes	Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum
Alistair Mulvey	Vice-Principal for Finance, Planning and Facilities

132/23 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.

133/23 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

134/23 Declarations of interest

- (i) Note was made of the fact that staff members held a pecuniary interest in minute reference 143/23 (consideration of pay award for 2024) by virtue of their employment with B&FC. The Chair confirmed that they would not participate in the decision-making but, in line with usual practice, would not be required to withdraw from the meeting whilst the item was under discussion.

135/23 Audit Committee annual report

- (i) Jane Cole presented the annual report of the Audit Committee which had been circulated with the agenda, 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 22 November 2023.
- (ii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

136/23 2022/23 year-end matters

- (i) Sue Hutchinson and Emma Carroll from Beever and Struthers joined the meeting to deliver the external auditor's findings to the Board. Note was made that there had been a small number of outstanding matters at the time the auditor's report had been circulated to the Board and confirmation was provided that this had now been satisfactorily concluded. A minor change to the uncorrected misstatement within the ISA260 was also outlined and the Board confirmed that it agreed to this remaining uncorrected.
- (ii) The Vice-Principal for Finance and Planning took the opportunity to thank the audit team for their work and Helen Broughton acknowledged the support provided to the Audit Committee by its co-opted subject specialist, Peter Hewetson, throughout the year.
- (iii) Emma Carroll and Sue Hutchinson left the meeting.
- (iv) 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 2023 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 2022/23 be received and noted.

137/23 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes and the confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 31 October 2023 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record. Note was made of the fact that there were no outstanding actions on the action log.

138/23 Dashboard

- (i) Simon Hughes and Alistair Mulvey presented the regular dashboard containing headline quality and performance metrics and the Board had the opportunity to ask questions.
- (ii) The Board received the dashboard and noted the content.

139/23 Principal and Chief Executive's report

- (i) Alun Francis presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda, which primarily set out to summarise his assessment since joining B&FC as well as proposing specific areas of immediate focus as well as proposals for enhancing the strategic focus of the organisation.
- (ii) The Board discussed the content of the report, and noted the importance of ensuring that students have sufficient guidance and support to enable them to make informed choices about their direction of study, as well as ensuring that the college is well-connected and networked and is able to influence the national discourse. The importance of engagement with other non-education agencies, such as youth services, was acknowledged in order to seek a range of different perspectives.
- (iii) The Board endorsed the overall direction of the Principal and Chief Executive's work and the associated timetable, and further endorsed the six improvement projects outlined within the report.

140/23 Period 3 finance report

- (i) Alistair Mulvey presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise the financial position as at 31 October 2023. Chris Holt highlighted the adverse variance to budget associated with Fleetwood Nautical Campus and Alistair Mulvey briefed the Board on the underlying position, as well as confirming that he was confident that the position would be recovered overall in-year.
- (ii) With regard to Fleetwood Nautical Campus more generally, the Board recognised the strategic importance of the provision, both to the college and to the local area, and that B&FC was one of only a small number of providers nationally to offer such a curriculum. It was agreed that a further discussion on this would take place later in the year.
- (iii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

141/23 Proposal to amend Financial Regulations

- (i) Alistair Mulvey presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to seek approval of a proposed amendment to Financial Regulation 7.6, to extend the maximum fixed-term deposit period from six months to twelve.
- (ii) The Board **APPROVED** the change to Financial Regulations as presented.

142/23 Apprenticeship process for income

- (i) Alistair Mulvey presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda in response to a request from the Board at its previous meeting, to set out the onboarding and funding process for Apprenticeships.
- (ii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

143/23 Consideration of pay award offer for 2024

- (i) Linda Dean presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to set out a number of options for the Board's consideration in respect of a pay award for staff in 2024. Due to them having a pecuniary interest, Staff Board Members did not participate in the discussion nor decision-making in respect of this item.
- (ii) In response to a question from Chris Holt, Alistair Mulvey outlined the assumptions that had been built into forecasts and Wendy Robinson noted the need to consider the matter holistically, such as taking account of the staff turnover level and any feedback from exit interviews. In response to this, Linda Dean noted that feedback from the staff survey had indicated that one area of staff feedback surrounded the level of remuneration paid. With regard to the first question posed within the report, the Board **CONFIRMED** that B&FC should continue to align itself with the Foundation Living Wage in 2024, noting the amendments to salary scales that would be required to achieve this.
- (iii) A discussion was then held on the various options set out in the paper, and particular note was made of the fact that the executive team had recommended option 3 which would provide a 6.5% increase to the remuneration of all colleagues, in addition to a potential non-consolidated payment of 1% later in the year, based on affordability at the time.
- (iv) The Board had regard to the advice received from the executive team, and also noted that the use of non-consolidated payments in-year had the potential to adversely affect those in receipt of certain benefits. It was therefore agreed that a piece of work would be completed to better understand this, and to consider alternative options that may be available.

ACTION: Linda Dean

- (v) The Board therefore expressed a preference for a greater level of consolidated increase, and the removal of the non-consolidated element. In response to this suggestion, Alistair Mulvey confirmed that a 7% consolidated uplift would be affordable in-year, although it may impact on full delivery of the year-end surplus, but cautioned that it would be necessary to amend the assumptions that had been incorporated into financial planning for 2024/25.

- (vi) Following discussion, and having regard to the college's financial position and the potential adverse impact of non-consolidated increases on those in receipt of certain benefits, the Board agreed to offer a consolidated increase of 7% for the 2024 calendar year, noting that this would be subject to agreement by the trades union. Confirmation was provided that, this year, it was intended for the agreed pay award to be paid to Senior Post Holders as well as staff who were otherwise eligible.

144/23 Curriculum matters

- (i) Simon Hughes presented the Further Education Self-Assessment Report for 2022/23 and the Vice-Principal for Higher Education and Student Enhancement presented the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document for 2022/23, both of which had been circulated with the agenda and reviewed by the Quality and Standards Committee at its meeting on 21 November 2023.
- (ii) The Board **APPROVED** the Further Education Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 as presented and noted the content of the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 2022/23 which had been approved by the Higher Education Academic Board.

145/23 Fleetwood Nautical Campus update

The Board received a report which had been circulated with the agenda and noted that a more detailed discussion would be held later in the year.

146/23 Major projects update

- (i) Alun Francis presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to provide the Board with an update on the major projects currently underway at B&FC.
- (ii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

147/23 Risk management report

- (i) Alistair Mulvey presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to seek approval of the risk register, following scrutiny by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 22 November 2023.
- (ii) The Board **APPROVED** the risk register as presented.

148/23 Review of external governance review action plan

- (i) Paul Howard presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to update the Board on progress with implementing the actions arising from the recent external review of governance.
- (ii) With regard to the action to consider the establishment of a Finance Committee, the Board agreed that this would be beneficial. It was therefore agreed that a proposal, including draft terms of reference and a draft schedule of meetings, would be prepared for the Board's consideration at its next meeting.

ACTION: Paul Howard

- (iii) The Board also noted the output of the recent skills audit and agreed that a Search Committee meeting should be convened with a view to identifying candidates with further education experience to join the Board.

ACTION: Paul Howard (to arrange)

- (iv) The Board received the report and noted the content.

149/23 Student Union accounts

- (i) Alistair Mulvey presented the Student Union accounts for information, noting that these had also been reviewed by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 22 November 2023.
- (ii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

150/23 Quality and Standards Committee matters

Helen Broughton provided a verbal update on the business transacted at the committee's most recent meeting and a copy of the approved minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2023 had been circulated with the agenda for information.

151/23 Audit Committee matters

- (i) The Board noted that a summary of the business of the most recent meeting of the Audit Committee had been provided earlier in the meeting under minute reference 135/23 (Audit Committee annual report). A copy of the approved minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 29 June 2023 had been circulated with the agenda for information.
- (ii) The Board noted the request to amend the terms of reference for the Audit Committee and **APPROVED** the changes as set out in the report.

152/23 Update from the Principal and Chief Executive

The Board directed that this item be minuted confidentially.

153/23 Date, time and venue of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held on 12 March 2024, 5.00pm, on the Fleetwood Nautical Campus.