

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

Held on 31 October 2023 at 5.00pm

By videoconference

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							50%
Mark Chapman	Student Member	✓	✓							100%
Jane Cole	Independent Member	✓	A							50%
Alun Francis	Principal and Chief Executive	✓	✓							100%
Chris Holt	Independent Member	A	✓							50%
Suzy Layton	Independent Member	✓	A							50%
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 and Planning

116/23 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.

117/23 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received as shown in the attendance table above.

118/23 Declarations of interest

- (i) Note was made of the fact that Martin Long held an interest in minute reference 119/23 (membership matters) and it was agreed that he would withdraw from the meeting during consideration of that item.
- (ii) Given the progress that had been made with respect to contract negotiations, the Chair confirmed that Antony Lockley was no longer conflicted in relation to Multiversity as a result of his employment with Blackpool Council and advised that it would no longer be necessary for him to leave meetings for associated discussions.

119/23 Membership matters

- (i) Martin Long withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item and Paul Howard presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to set out the recommendation of the Search Committee which had met on 17 October 2023. He noted that Martin's first term of office had come to an end and that he was both eligible for reappointment and had confirmed his willingness to continue as a member of the Board. Confirmation was provided that the Search Committee considered that Martin had added significant value to the college during his first term of office and that the Search Committee had no hesitation in recommending his reappointment.
- (ii) On the recommendation of the Search Committee, the Board **REAPPOINTED** Martin Long as a Corporation Board member for a second term of office, to run consecutive to his first term of office, from 22 October 2023 to 21 October 2027.
- (iii) Martin Long returned to the meeting.

120/23 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes and the confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 September 2023 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

121/23 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.

122/23 Principal and Chief Executive's report

- (i) Alun Francis presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda, to provide an update on the consultation process around the new strategic plan and to identify a number of areas for improvement that had been identified. The report also updated the board on forthcoming staffing changes as well as providing an update on local developments as well as on national policy and recent funding announcements.
- (ii) With regard to the strategic plan consultation, he reminded the Board of his intention to bring a more detailed paper to the next meeting for discussion. With regard to the action from the previous meeting around the Board's understanding of the role of apprenticeships on the college's overall strategy, he confirmed that this would be included within the December paper and that it could also be discussed at the January strategy session if the Board felt that more time was required.
- (iii) Board members discussed the importance of a positive culture within any organisation and Alun Francis commented on the importance of all leaders within the college role modelling the expected behaviours in order to embed the right culture at all levels. He noted that one of the college's many strengths was its access to data, but noted that the focus of Ofsted inspections had moved away from being data-driven and towards the learner experience. As a result, he and the executive team were working on developing programmes to ensure this is better captured but iterated the importance of committing to any agreed outcomes by ensuring staff time is freed up to allow them to participate.
- (iv) Sandy Lee commented that the workshop she had recently attended with the Principal and Chief Executive had been well received and that all participants had found it useful. Jagjit Walia endorsed this view and noted that wider members of her curriculum team had made similar comments.
- (v) The Board received the report and noted the content.

123/23 Period 2 finance report

- (i) Alistair Mulvey presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise the financial position as at 30 September 2023, which he noted was the first financial statement of the new academic and financial year and that, as a result, some elements continue to be firmed up as learners complete enrolments, move between courses and potentially withdraw. He confirmed that this was the case each year and noted that the Period 3 review process was about to commence, after which there would be greater certainty around the income and expenditure assumptions made.
- (ii) Steve Fogg asked how the Period 3 review process would provide evidence-based assurance, to which Alistair Mulvey responded that the same process had been operated for the past few years and that it involves a line-by-line review of the assumptions made by curriculum areas in setting their income and expenditure budgets. He further noted the expectation that any movement against budget would take place in Period 3 to provide sufficient time for any necessary mitigation to be put in place, rather than waiting until later in the year.
- (iii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

124/23 Procurement matters

The Board directed that this item be minuted confidentially.

125/23 Performance against the 2022/23 operational plan

- (i) Alistair Mulvey presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to provide the Board with an update on progress against the 2022/23 operational plan. He confirmed that the operational plan is reviewed by the Senior Management Team on a monthly basis throughout the year to ensure continued focus.
- (ii) In response to a question from Chris Holt about objectives that are not achieved, Alistair Mulvey advised that a review is undertaken to understand the reasons for this and where appropriate the objectives are rolled forward, noting that some of the targets had intentionally been set at an aspirational level.
- (iii) In response to a suggestion from Sandy Lee around the use of interim targets rather than simply having a year-end target, Alistair Mulvey noted that phased targets had been incorporated into the 2023/24 plan.
- (iv) Chris Holt also noted the importance of celebrating the areas of the plan that had been delivered and cautioned against being overly critical of areas that had not been delivered, noting that if everything is achieved within a plan then the plan may not have been ambitious enough to start with.
- (v) The Board received the report and noted the content.

126/23 Major projects update

The Board directed that this item be minuted confidentially.

127/23 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) The Board received the report and noted the content.

128/23 Consideration of the establishment of a Finance Committee

- (i) Alistair Mulvey presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to set out as a discussion document the potential benefits and drawbacks of establishing a Finance Committee, as had been suggested in the recent external review of governance. Alun Francis noted his wider review of the college's approach to key matters that was currently underway and suggested that, notwithstanding the fact that he personally supported the establishment of a Finance Committee, the discussion should form part of the wider paper that he would be bringing to the Board at its next meeting. He also suggested that the scope could be extended to consider any additional support that is required to be provided to the quality agenda too.

- (ii) The Board agreed to defer consideration of the establishment of a Finance Committee, pending discussion at its next meeting.

129/23 Board members' forum

- (i) Board members took the opportunity to share any College-related activities since the last meeting. Particular note was made of the fact that Helen Broughton and Andrea Challis had attended curriculum-level HE Self-Evaluation Document panels since the last meeting.

130/23 Quality and Standards Committee matters

- (i) Helen Broughton, as Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee, provided a verbal update on the business transacted at the last meeting of the committee and a copy of the approved minutes from the meeting on 9 May 2023 had been circulated with the agenda for information.

131/23 Date, time and venue of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held on 5 December 2023, 5.00pm, on the Bispham Campus.