

## **Meeting of the Governing Board held on Wednesday 4 December 2024**

### **Present:**

David Brown – Chair of the Board  
Jim Sutcliffe – Chair of Audit  
Gillian Bardin – Vice Chair of the Board  
Karen Buchanan - Principal  
Fiona Lugiano – Chair of Curriculum and Standards  
Paul Henderson – Independent Governor  
David Tomlinson – Vice Chair of Audit  
Guy Thomas – Chair of Finance  
Steve Wilkinson – Vice Chair of Curriculum and Standards  
Vikki Goddard – Independent Governor  
Paul Ragnall – Independent Governor  
Sam Sheard – Student Governor  
Abigail Geary – Student Governor  
Richard Sanderson – Staff Governor  
David Easton – Staff Governor

### **Contributed:**

Richard Thorley – Vice Chair of Finance  
Philip Turner – Chair of HR

### **In attendance:**

Stuart Arnfield – Director of Finance and Resources  
Neil Burrows – Director of Skills, Innovation and Employer Engagement  
Sarah Crossley – Assistant Principal – Sixth Form Studies  
Charlotte Ashworth – Deputy Head of Safeguarding  
Tracy Kennedy – Head of Safeguarding  
Simone Lomas - Clerk  
Nina Parkin – Assistant Principal – Adult and University Studies  
Shannon Gill – Head of Quality

### **Apologies for Absence:**

Kate Wallace – Deputy Principal

### **Introductions to Student Governors**

- 1 Hassan Khalil and Isabelle Balfour, the potential new Student Governors were introduced to the Board. They are both A level students and represent the College's Sixth Form cohort. The decision to approve their appointment will be considered at Appendix H.

### **External Audit Requirement**

- 2 To ensure compliance with the Audit Code of Practice the audit findings are required to be presented at the Full Board. Karen Musgrave from RSM joined the meeting remotely.
- 3 Karen summarised the audit findings confirming that the financial statement opinion provides a fair view of the College's position and the College's funding and income is being used for what it is intended for. The audit was conducted professionally by all parties with support from Susan Williams and Stuart Arnfield. Karen confirmed that there had been no significant issues.

- 4 There were no questions from Governors.

### **Safeguarding Training**

- 5 Tracy Kennedy, Head of Safeguarding and Charlotte Ashworth, Safeguarding and Wellbeing Lead explained that one of the cornerstone pieces of legislation for safeguarding is Keeping Children Safe in Education. Tracy and Charlotte delivered an update, including the key changes to this legislation along with information in relation to the Prevent Agenda, looking at local referrals and priorities, highlighting the key changes with a particular emphasis on how much more schools and colleges are doing at the early stages and as and when problems emerge.
- 6 The offer for Governors to undertake the update training was made available. Simone Lomas will make the arrangements and communicate with Governors.

**Action: Clerk**

- 7 Steve Wilkinson was concerned by the number of referrals the safeguarding team deal with, he asked whether they were able to offer an effective service with the number of students they were supporting. Tracy explained that the support from external agencies for young people was reducing, with many referrals on waiting lists for lengthy periods, exasperating the position internally. The College has really good links with the outside agencies but the biggest impact that has assisted the safeguarding team is the training of cross college staff and the upskilling of the staff in the safeguarding team.
- 8 David Brown pointed out that the College continue to attend the East Lancashire Prevent Group, the details covered at the meetings are always shared at the Safeguarding meetings that the Link Governors attend.
- 9 David Brown on behalf of the Governing Board thanked Charlotte and Tracy for the update and training session.

### **Declaration of Interest**

- 10 Stuart declared an interest in relation to Agenda item I as his wife works at the College.
- 11 The SMT including the Principal also declared an interest as their pay award is subject to the College pay award being made to all staff.

### **Draft Minutes of the Board meeting held on 2 October 2024**

- 12 The draft minutes of the Board meeting held on 2 October 2024 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting, proposed by Jim Sutcliffe and seconded by Guy Thomas.

### **Matters arising from the minutes**

#### **Action Tracker**

- 13 The Clerk explained the purpose of the Action Tracker; to provide assurance that all actions are monitored and subsequently closed off and that it will be presented at all committees and Full Boards going forward.
- 14 Governors found the tracker to be a useful document to refer to.
- 15 Paragraph 14 – Tracy Kennedy confirmed that the index has now been included and the re-sequencing of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Report has been completed.

- 16 Paragraph 17 – Sarah Crossley confirmed that safeguarding will be a refresher topic for second year students next academic year and that there will a focus in PPD sessions over the next few weeks.
- 17 Paragraph 19 – It was confirmed that key information will now be displayed on the back of visitor badges in event of any safeguarding or critical incident.
- 18 Paragraph 20 – Tracy Kennedy confirmed that the Filtering and Monitoring Statement is now signed and dated.
- 19 Paragraph 21 – Simone Lomas confirmed that the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is now published on the College website.
- 20 Paragraph 25 – Simone Lomas confirmed that the meetings included in the attendance metric have been agreed and will be used to measure governor attendance going forward.
- 21 Paragraph 37 and 38 – Stuart Arnfield explained that in the instance of a major cyber-attack incident that there will be agreed offline protocols that will be rolled out to all staff with designated staff to lead the appropriate areas.
- 22 Paragraph 41 – Neil Burrows confirmed that the outcome of David Shorrocks' report is in his report at Appendix E and will be presented at this evenings meeting.
- 23 Paragraph 48 – Karen Buchanan confirmed that Goal 2 relating to Value Added has been updated to provide a clear narrative of the position.
- 24 Paragraph 53 – Simone Lomas explained that she is currently drafting a training plan and will share it with governors at the Search and Governance Committee and subsequent Board meetings.
- Action: Clerk**
- 25 Paragraph 55 – Karen Buchanan confirmed that she will include the percentages of pay awards in the Remuneration papers next August.

**Action: Principal**

## **Minutes of the Committees**

### **Safeguarding Minutes – 9 October 2024**

- 26 Gillian Bardin explained to Governors that they were considering the implementation of a PowerBi and dashboard to monitor trends. The dashboard will assist in understanding whether the growth in student numbers is attributing to the increase in referrals. Gillian announced that there is a mental health review currently being undertaken.
- 27 Vikki Goddard asked about whether the mental health review will include adult and HE learners. Nina Parkin explained that the review will include HE and adult learners and will be considered collectively. Stuart Arnfield explained that the service is already available, the review is about how we change the strategy to engage the learners.

### **Draft Academic Board – 9 October 2024**

- 28 Sarah Crossley advised of the three items discussed at the Academic Board: Safeguarding Policy and Prevent Action Plan, Staff Survey and Learner Voice. All three reports were extremely positively received.

### **Draft Search and Governance Committee – 9 October 2024**

- 29 Gillian Bardin advised Governors of the new appointments and of the new governor attendance measures.

### **Draft Human Resources Committee – 9 October 2024**

- 30 Jim Sutcliffe explained how the situation relating to the Pay Award had been a key agenda item, with the outcome being discussed this evening in Appendix I. Jim also highlighted the discussion relating to part-time hourly paid staff and whether they receive the same amount of rigor when Return to Work meetings (RTW) are conducted. Jim had been assured that they take place but are undertaken differently.
- 31 Vikki Goddard referred to the Key Performance Indicators, asking Jim whether the HR Committee consider the protected characteristics. Jim provided examples of when and how they were considered.
- 32 Philip Turner via email also noted that the results of the Staff Survey still remain very positive.

### **Draft Curriculum and Standards Committee – 6 November 2024**

- 33 Fiona Lugiano advised Governors of the Learning Walks presentation they had received and of the achievement rates that would result in the College being the Number 1 College for a further year. One of the main focuses is on attendance rates and the actions being taken to increase it from 89%.
- 34 David Brown asked how Abigail and Sam had found the Curriculum and Standards Committee. Both Abigail and Sam had found it enlightening and reassuring, they have both really valued their time on the Governing Board.

### **Student Executive Board – 7 November 2024**

- 35 Sarah Crossley advised that the request made by Abigail Geary at a previous Board meeting to increase the number of meetings has resulted in them now taking place on a monthly basis, there is also an increased level of membership with over 40 students from across the College attending.
- 36 At the meeting the students considered the Careers Advice, Guidance and Activity, the PLZ Plans and Developments and the Activities throughout December across the campus. They were actions from each of the topics that will be considered and implemented where appropriate.

### **Draft Audit Committee – 13 November 2024**

- 37 Jim Sutcliffe was pleased to note that the Committee were continually updated on the position in terms of Cyber Security. The internal and external audit reports provided assurance that the College was well managed. Jim referred to the Risk Register; that the Committee had requested Stuart Arnfield to review the register in terms of format, making it easier to navigate and be more of a working document.

### **Draft Finance Committee – 20 November 2024**

- 38 Guy Thomas advised Governors of the presentation the Committee had received relating to Student Support and Experience; that he had been encouraged by the amount of support individual students received he asked that the presentation is delivered to the Full Board.

**Action: Clerk**

- 39 Guy explained that the Financial statements and the pay review are on the agenda at the meeting this evening and that a discussion had taken place about the situation being presented in terms of the cashflow.

#### **Audit Committee Annual Report to the Governing Board 2023/2024**

- 40 Jim Sutcliffe presented the report confirming that the report is in line with the requirements of the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice and confirmed that the data demonstrated a positive position. He reported that the College has positive audit opinions and that the Committee had reviewed their Terms of Reference and agreed that there were no changes necessary.
- 41 Areas of improvement have been identified in the Self-Assessment and the appropriate action taken. One of the committee members is a qualified accountant, which is now included in the Self-Assessment. The risk posed by potential cyber attacks and the emphasis being given to Governor training will also be included in the Audit Committee's Self-Assessment report.

**Action: Finance Director**

- 42 The content of the report was summarised with the overall conclusions being that the College continues to offer value for money.
- 43 The Board unanimously accepted and approved the contents of the annual report, proposed by Guy Thomas and seconded by Paul Henderson.

#### **Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2023/24**

- 44 Gillian Bardin referred to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and asked whether the College's surplus could disappear. Stuart advised that he had not heard anything that could lead to the LGPS disappearing but that the guarantee will be put behind our pension scheme resulting in the government taking over the risk.
- 45 The Board considered and approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the College for 2023/24, proposed by Jim Sutcliffe and seconded by Fiona Lugiano.
- 46 David Brown thanked SMT for how well they had managed the challenging circumstances and are still able to report a surplus.

#### **Corporate Performance 2024 & 2025**

- 47 Karen Buchanan clarified that the report provided an overview of the strategic management cycle and results and a summary of the goals and the progress towards each one, presented to Governors three times a year and to staff twice a year.
- 48 Karen informed Governors of the current position in relation to each of the goals explaining that the data provides headline achievements against the goals for the last 3 years.
- 49 Karen referred to Goal 2; Value Added, there will be a national rate published in March 2025 to measure and benchmark the College against. Until then the report has been amended to provide an accurate reflection of the current position.
- 50 David Easton referred to staff turnover, he asked whether we compare positively to other colleges. Karen confirmed that Burnley College compares positively to many other colleges both locally and nationally. Karen provided examples of the actions and activities being undertaken including the videos that have been developed as part of a staff recruitment campaign.

- 51 Jim Sutcliffe referred to Goal 3, in particular the learning visits, he was not comfortable that tutors could arrange their visit and would subsequently be aware and prepared for when they would be observed. Sarah Crossley explained that alongside learning visits there are learning walks, where classes are observed on a drop-in basis; the tutor would not have any prior knowledge of the visit. Karen explained that the College's practice now reflects Ofsted practices and that this practice has resulted in some staff requesting observations to glean advice and ideas from the experts to improve their lessons further.
- 52 Vikki Goddard referred to Goal 9, Vikki understood why figures are not included in the Goal but wondered if data could be pulled through from the staff survey to corroborate the work being undertaken. Vikki offered to have a conversation to suggest ways to enable how equality and diversity is measured.

**Action: Assistant Principal Adult and University**

- 53 The content was noted.

#### **Update on Governance Issues for Autumn/Winter term 2024/2025**

- 54 Simone Lomas presented the report requesting Governors' consideration of the draft redacted minutes attached to the report. Governors unanimously approved them for publication on the Colleges website.

**Action: Clerk**

- 55 Governors noted that the College Seal had not been used.
- 56 Simone advised Governors that there are three external Business Governor vacancies on the Board based on our Board membership of up to 20 members, although the appointments being discussed in Appendix H would change this position if approved.
- 57 Simone informed Governors that Paul Henderson had accepted the long-standing independent Governor vacancy on the Search and Governance Committee and that David Tomlinson had accepted the Vice Chair position on the Audit Committee.

#### **Health and Safety Report Update for 2024/25**

- 58 David Tomlinson requested that the inherent risk be included in table 4, asking whether the deep dives include health & safety aspects as part of the exercise. Sarah Crossley confirmed that Health and Safety is included and reported on in all deep dives.
- 59 Richard Sanderson asked whether there would be an appetite for David Shorrocks to conduct totally unannounced visits particularly in the high risk areas of the College.
- 60 Paul Ragnall believed that the College should not be as reliant on David Shorrocks and that the recruitment of specialised staff would reduce the dependency on him. Unannounced visits should be conducted internally.

**Action: Director of Skills, Innovation and Employer Engagement**

- 61 Guy Thomas believed the issue to be a culture shift with staff taking the initiative to deal with any unsafe practice or process, he provided ideas on how to operate a process to monitor any occurrence.
- 62 The report was noted.

## **Governors Strategic Planning Overview Document**

- 63 Karen Buchanan introduced the paper and invited Governors to raise questions and comment on the set paragraphs which had been highlighted with the relevant senior managers' name.
- 64 Karen focused on the 23% increase in school leaver applications at the same point last year which this year converted to an extra 500 students enrolling.
- 65 Karen referred to point 32; that David Lord had taken an active role on encouraging all students across College to be involved in the World Skills event, this subsequently resulted in the College winning 5 awards.
- 66 David Tomlinson referred to point 24 explaining that there is a public report on the OfS website relating to the specific breach, he asked whether there is another sub-committee that is looking at the issue. David Brown confirmed that the Curriculum and Standards Committee had discussed and considered the breach. Nina Parkin advised that discussions continue with the College's Higher Education partners. As a consequence of this, decisions have been taken to not run certain courses because of their impact, there is data to provide assurance to Governors that corroborates the effect on the College.
- 67 Jim Sutcliffe asked why E-sports isn't included in the document. Karen agreed that there should be a 'Leading Edge' report and that SMT would consider the best way to present the information.
- Action: SMT**
- 68 Governors noted the report.

## **The College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2023/24**

- 69 Shannon Gill advised that the College's overall SAR is a key component of the College's quality cycle. The SAR is one vehicle for evaluating College performance and provides a mechanism for identifying areas for further development/improvement. It is internally validated through divisional and support area reviews comparing performance against national averages and College targets. Shannon explained that the College was Self Assessing as grade one, with results remaining at outstanding, although there are still some actions that continue to be worked on.
- 70 David Easton asked how the A Levels division have increased their Value Added score. Shannon explained that they have gone back to basics and focused on learning and teaching, providing examples of their delivery models and their assessment strategies.
- 71 Jim Sutcliffe referred to the 'Contribution to Meeting Skills Need' is scored as Strong, why is it not 'Outstanding'? Shannon explained that Strong is the highest score as skills are graded differently.
- 72 David Brown noted that the SAR demonstrated a really good snapshot of what the College is all about, he thanked Shannon on behalf of the Board.
- 73 David Tomlinson asked about the scope of the SAR, is there anything we need to improve. Shannon explained that the College has a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) that is formulated from the Divisional QIP's. Ofsted will be provided with the QIP detailing the trajectory, improvements and progress that has been made.

## **Governor Appointments**

- 74 After a rigorous interview process, a recommendation to approve the appointments of Independent Governors, Sharon Roscoe and Lukman Patel and Student Governors, Hassan Khalil and Isabelle Balfour to the College's Board was made.
- 75 The recommendation to approve the Independent and Student Governors was unanimously approved, proposed by Sam Sheard and seconded by Abigail Geary.

## **Governors Residential**

- 76 Karen Buchanan advised of a proposal to postpone the Governors residential providing the reasons for the decision.
- 77 The suggestion to review the format of the Governors residential was made by Karen with a request to Governors to make their suggestions of the event going forward.  
**Action: Governors and SMT**
- 78 Karen advised of the plan to host an Ofsted Preparation meeting to support Governors to be ready for the inspection. Governors will be advised of possible dates.

Approved by Chair, David Brown

Signed: David Brown

Date: 18 March 2025

NOTE: Final approval of the minutes will be at the following sub committee meeting.