

St Helens College

GOVERNING BOARD

**Minutes of the meeting held at the Town Centre Campus, St Helens
Thursday 12 January 2023 at 4.00pm**

Present:	Bill Nixon (Chair)	External Governor
	David Balsamo	External Governor
	Alison Cannon	External Governor
	Zulakha Desai	External Governor
	Liz Duncan	External Governor
	Phil Han	External Governor
	Adam Humphreys	Student Governor
	Andrew Lang	External Governor
	Jen McGill	Staff Governor
	Alun Owen	External Governor
	Simon Pierce	Chief Executive/Principal
	Jim Pinsent	External Governor
	Nick Shore	External Governor
	Tracey Turner	Staff Governor
In attendance:	Rav Garcha	Chief Financial Officer
	Nick Gribben	Vice Principal – Higher Education and Further Education
	Gillian Hayhurst	Governance Director (minutes)

The meeting opened at 4.00pm.

96 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from John Heritage, Debbie Calderbank and Kellie McCann.

97 Declarations of interest

All staff for minute 103.

It was noted that Adam Humphreys may not cast a vote for items within the estates masterplan update (minute 102) and the 2022/23 pay proposal (minute 103) under paragraph 13.7 of the Instrument of Government.

98 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2022, including the private and confidential addendum, were approved as an accurate record, subject to amending 'impacting on' to 'affecting' at minute 85.

99 Matters arising and action tracker

The Governing Board noted the action tracker updates.

100 Performance and compliance update

The senior leadership team have reviewed the current Human Resources metrics and a slight improvement has been noted in turnover. The majority of sickness absence is long-term and not related to stress or mental health illness.

RESOLVED: The Governing Board noted the performance and compliance update.

101 Finance update

The Governing Board were provided with an update on the changes to the management accounts since October 2022. Following a request from the Finance, Resources and Commercial Committee, the forecast now assumes under-delivery of the Adult Education Budget and subsequent clawback in 2023. Proceeds from disposals have also been included and the forecast assumes that all vacancies have been filled. Additional remission has been included in next year's forecast for vacancies that have not yet been approved internally.

A discussion was held on rising energy costs and what mitigations are in place. Consideration is being given to the installation of solar panels but the feasibility of this will depend on the outcomes of structural surveys.

RESOLVED: The Governing Board noted the financial update.

102 Estates Masterplan update

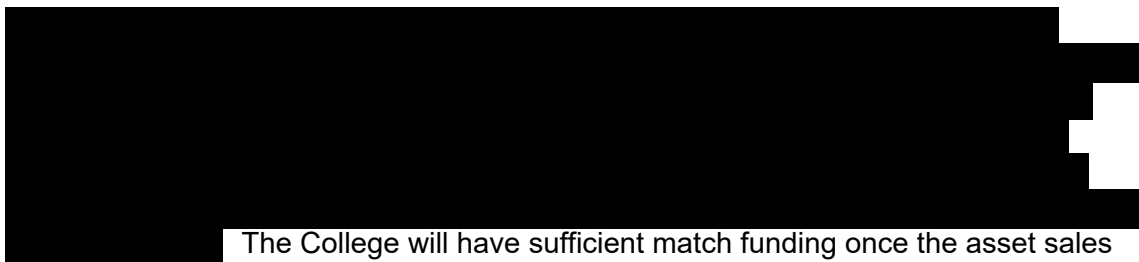
The report presented the Governing Board with an update on estates matters and progress made in the implementation of the College's Estates Masterplan, including an opportunity to apply for a T level capital fund.

With regard to the T6 application, the Governing Board noted that the grant funding bid only relates to the first part of the project. Further funds will need to be obtained to demolish the SKB building and erect additional sections to the T6 building.

The Governing Board questioned where animal management will be housed once the STEM lease-back period has finished. A separate site is being considered, which links to a working farm. Although the plan is to lease back STEM for five years, it is expected that a full decant will take place before this deadline. The option to remain at STEM and invest in the building was discussed. Roof repairs will cost approximately £2-3m and,

while investment has been made on the internal facilities, the layout is not appropriate and running costs would be much higher than those of a new development.

Regarding Project Decant, the move from the SKB building will be completed by December 2023 with the majority of curriculum areas moving into the Town Centre building. The College may need to consider other options for business support. The Governing Board noted the complexities of the project, with different parts of the Town Centre building being affected at different times. Risk management is being undertaken by the Project Decant team. The College was unable to secure a contractor last year, which was part of the reason for the delay. Funding is secure for Project Decant costs due to £688,000 grant funding. Disposal proceeds may be used for projects like this if needed.



The College will have sufficient match funding once the asset sales have completed and governors were given assurance that the College will be able to demonstrate best value.

The Governing Board was provided with an update on the location of the T6 building, within the car park at the Town Centre campus. Senior leaders are updating the pension fund company that owns the car park covenant so they understand that there will be a period where the number of car park spaces are reduced until the SKB building is demolished. Governors advised the College to ensure that any agreements are made in writing.

In response to a query on whether external support could strengthen the College's Wave 5 grant funding bid, the Governing Board was informed that most agencies can support with the estates and finance elements but not the educational case. The Chief Financial Officer and Vice Principal – Further Education and Higher Education are reviewing the educational case and enhancing the original Wave 4 bid prior to submission.

Consideration was given to the impact that delivering the Estates Masterplan may have on staff and governors requested that an update is provided to all staff.

David Balsamo left the meeting for a short period.

The Governing Board requested that a summary of all estates projects is provided to the Estates Working Group on 1 March 2023 including their status, financial position and any interdependencies.

RESOLVED: The Governing Board noted the progress made in the implementation of the Estates Masterplan.

The Governing Board approved an application to the Department for Education for £4m of funding via the T level capital fund (wave 5).

The Governing Board approved £4m of capital investment to match the T level capital fund application, subject to the availability of funds.

The Governing Board noted that the T level match funding will be funded by the disposal of Bobbies Lane.

103 2022/23 pay proposal

The report set out proposals for a staff pay award in 2022/23, following the previous discussion in December 2022.

The Governing Board was advised that, since the ONS reclassification, the funders are no longer seeking a change to the banking covenants.

A discussion was held on the options and whether the recommendation will impact on the College's adherence to its Post-Intervention Monitoring Support plan. The Department for Education and ESFA have been informed of the pay award proposal and approval will not consciously impact on the health score based on current modelling. The ESFA may wish to refer the proposal to its Provider Market Oversight Unit for a second opinion, however the Governing Board are not prevented from taking decisions.

The ESFA have confirmed that they are content with the College's treatment of Stockbridge Lane if RSM, the College's external auditors, are in support. This has been referred to RSM's technical team for confirmation that the auditor's original position remains.

It was confirmed that the modelling for the next financial year assumes that all vacancies have been filled and the pay award applied to all posts. The Governing Board commented that the additional increment for teaching staff may help reduce the risk of staff turnover.



Tracey Turner and Alison Cannon left the meeting for a short period.

- RESOLVED:** The Governing Board approved in principle, the following pay award package for discussion with trade unions and subject to further advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency:
- Award a 4% consolidated increase for staff earning below £25,500 per annum
 - Award a 3% consolidated increase for staff earning above £25,500 per annum
 - the merger of the bottom two pay points on the business support scale to a single point at the equivalent of £10.50 per hour to address the increase of the National Minimum Wage
 - The removal of some scale points to retain a suitable gap between different grades on the business support scale; and,
 - The addition of a further increment for teachers at the top of the pay scale from August 2023.

The Governing Board approved in principle, a pay award package for Senior Post Holders to mirror that of all staff.

Nick Gribben joined the meeting.

104 Careers Strategy

The Governing Board was provided with an overview of the importance of an appropriate Careers Strategy, including updated regulatory requirements and the role of link governors.

The strategy supports the College's Strategic Aim of ensuring an outstanding student experience. It aims to ensure that careers support is embedded consistently across the College, within the curriculum, to prepare students for work.

The Governing Board queried whether there is differentiated careers advice across the educational pathways provided by the College. Once the strategy is approved, senior leaders will develop an action plan that will provide detail on roll out in further education, higher education and apprenticeships. The College have a Careers Team to provide independent and impartial advice for all students and the Progress Coaches are being trained to support classroom-based learners. Advisors are not currently attached to external careers panels.

The Governing Board acknowledged the need to ensure that the strategy is deliverable as this will be tested by Ofsted. Future ambitions, such as training for all Progress Coaches, is included within the strategy. A final review of the strategy will be undertaken to ensure that the language is clear, the College has the appropriate resources in place and that it can demonstrate how the strategy is being achieved.

Governors suggested that senior leaders engage with WorkingOptions, a charity that sends speakers from different career backgrounds to inspire 16-18 year olds. The charity also provides industry links that support work placements.

Consideration was given to reporting against the strategy. In addition to the annual report to board, governors requested that the Curriculum and Quality Committee monitors delivery of the Careers Strategy action plan on a termly basis. The committee's terms of reference will be updated to reflect the change.

RESOLVED: The Governing Board approved the Careers Strategy.

THE Governing Board delegated authority to the C&Q Committee to monitor the delivery of the strategy on a termly basis with an annual report to board.

Nick Gribben left the meeting.

105 Risk register review

The Governing Board was asked to consider whether any of the discussions have resulted in changes to the risk register.

RESOLVED: The Governing Board noted that the discussions had not resulted in any changes to the current risk register.

106 Any other business

The Governing Board was informed that the away day is being postponed from 2 February 2023 to facilitate an external curriculum review. A revised date will be agreed with governors.

The Student Governor provided anecdotal feedback that some individuals were not feeling as safe on campus since the removal of the security guards. This matter had been discussed at the last Curriculum and Quality Committee and governors were given an update on actions being taken to address this concern. These actions include re-establishing security guards until more permanent action can be taken at each campus. This has been delayed due to the unavailability of external security guards resulting in internal appointments. Long-term security measures includes the introduction of turnstyles as part of Project Decant. Duty Managers and business support staff patrol reception areas at the start of the day and during break times and access through internal doors is prohibited without an access pass. The Chief Executive Officer/Principal has been liaising with the police to increase patrols in the area and designate an officer to the Town Centre Campus. The Governing Board requested that weekly updates are provided to the Chair of Governors until such time as security guards have been recruited and are on site.

Rav Garcha, Jen McGill, Tracey Turner and Adam Humphreys left the meeting.

A private and confidential discussion was held. A copy of the addendum to the minutes is available from the Governance Director on request.

Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Governing Board will be held on Thursday 16 March 2023 at 4.00pm.

The meeting closed at 6.20pm.