

St Helens College

GOVERNING BOARD

Minutes from the meeting held at the Town Centre Campus, St Helens Thursday 6 July 2023 at 3.30pm

Present:	Bill Nixon (Chair)	External Governor
	David Balsamo	External Governor
	Alison Cannon	External Governor (via Microsoft Teams)
	Liz Duncan	External Governor
	Phil Han	External Governor
	John Heritage	External Governor
	Adam Humphreys	Student Governor
	Kellie McCann	Student 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:	Paula Hastie-Roberts	Senior Manager – Curriculum & Quality
	Ian Johnson	Head of Finance
	Mark Thompson	Interim Director of HROD
	Gillian Hayhurst	Governance Director (minutes)

The Chair thanked Nick Shore for his extensive contribution since joining the College nine years ago. The Chair also thanked Adam Humphreys and Kellie McCann for their contribution over the past year.

147 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Zulakha Desai and Andrew Lang.

148 Declarations of interest

Jim Pinsent and Nick Shore for minute number 161. Gillian Hayhurst for minute number 166.

149 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the meetings held on 11 May 2023 and 25 May 2023, including the private and confidential addendum, were approved as an accurate record.

150 **Matters arising and action tracker**

RESOLVED: **The Governing Board noted the action tracker updates**

John Heritage joined the meeting.

151 **External audit planning memorandum**

The board was presented with RSM's external audit plan for the year ending 31 July 2023.

RESOLVED: **The Governing Board noted the external audit planning memorandum.**

152 **Chair's report**

The Chair advised governors that their recent involvement with the College will be fed back during the relevant agenda items.

153 **Performance and compliance update**

The report provided a summary of progress against key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the agreed approach to assurance reporting. The compliance report was also provided, along with an update of progress against the College's Operational Plan 2022/23.

The board sought assurance that achievement forecasting is more robust than the previous year. This had been considered by the Curriculum and Quality Committee at its recent meeting. Senior leaders provided an update on the improvements made to the process but noted that outcomes can be impacted by external assessment. Staff have increased support for students to prepare them for external examinations and more activity is planned through the teaching, learning and assessment process in 2023/24.

Good progress has been made in most strategic areas, despite resource implications at senior level during the year. Regarding 'employer of choice', the staff survey has provided baseline data, which will be used by the new Director of HR&OD to focus future activity. New actions will be presented at the next meeting.

The board congratulated staff on their achievements in spite of the challenges facing the College this year.

RESOLVED: **The Governing Board noted progress against the high-level KPIs and targets for 2022/23.**

The Governing Board noted the compliance report.

The Governing Board noted the intention to provide an updated College Operational Plan for 2023/24 at their next board meeting in October 2023.

154 **Curriculum update**

The report presented the merged College's Post-Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for consideration. An update against actions was also provided.

A successful continuous professional development day was held last week, including a guest speaker from the Teaching and Learning Academy. Each curriculum area took part and the content included training on feedback and starting points. Feedback from staff has been very positive. A staff wellbeing day was held on 2 July 2023, which was also well received. This included long service awards, wellbeing activities and a staff sports day. A further wellbeing session is planned prior to Christmas.

With regard to work experience, governors were informed that the original target for every student to undertake a placement was ambitious. All mandatory work experience has been undertaken and aspirations targets will be reviewed for next year.

An update on how the College will manage attendance from induction onwards was provided. Progress Coaches will review attendance at week four and registers will be checked for the first 10 weeks.

With regard to cultural change, the teaching, learning and assessment reviews will be undertaken four times per year. These will focus on staffing, recruitment, retention, attendance, etc. to ensure early intervention. The Curriculum Area Reviews will deep dive into each school and follow a similar format to Ofsted inspections. Senior leaders will be clear on expectations, quality and consistency and performance will be managed through the new framework.

RESOLVED: The board approved the Post-Inspection Action Plan/Quality Improvement Plan.

155 **Accountability agreement statement 2023/24**

The report presented the College's accountability agreement statement for Governing Board approval.

The annual strategic conversation with the Education and Skills Funding Agency and Further Education Commissioner has been held. It focused on how the College is responding to the government's skills priorities.

The Local Skills Improvement Plan has been published. It did not include requirements relating to health and social care, which was unexpected, however the College continues to be committed to making an impact on provision in the borough. The College does not need to address all of the skills priorities but provide a high-level response to local, regional and national need. The accountability agreement will be shared with the Liverpool City Region but no feedback will be provided. The document will be used a tool to support discussions with stakeholders.

RESOLVED: The board approved the draft budget for the year ending 31 July 2024 subject to the agreed amendments.

158 **Estates update**

The report presented a list of capital bids for 2023/24 for consideration and recommendation.

The board and senior leaders acknowledge the need to review the Estates Strategy in light of available resources. There has been no clarity from central government on what arrangements will replace private loans following the reclassification of further education colleges by the Office for National Statistics.

[REDACTED]

With regard to capital expenditure, the board noted that most bids were focused on St Helens. A review had been undertaken following a request at the Finance, Resources and Commercial Committee meeting. It has been established that less investment is required at Stockbridge Lane as the facilities remain fit for purpose. Large scale work is more resource-intensive due to the PFI agreement. IAMTech has little opportunity for growth due to its location.

The board queried the outcome of the structural survey of the SKB Building. A visual survey has been completed and there is no evidence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). Once the board has agreed its new estates strategy, intrusive structural surveys may be required.

RESOLVED: The board noted the estates update.

The board noted the capital expenditure bids for 2023/24.

The board ratified the decision taken between meetings by the Chair and Vice Chair to approve £193,000 capital bids expenditure during 2023/24 in order for the procurement processes to begin ahead of the financial year.

159 **Corporate risk register**

The board was presented with proposed amendments to the corporate risk register for consideration, which were previously considered by the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED: The board approved the risk register.

160 **Environmental Sustainability Strategy**

Following the work of the Environmental Sustainability Working Group, the board was presented with a draft strategy for consideration.

The board requested that governor training is included within the action plan for year one. The road map should also include the establishment of a lead governor for sustainability.

RESOLVED: **The Governing Board approved the Environmental Sustainability Strategy subject to consultation.**

The board noted that the Road Map and action plan will be developed following approval of the strategy.

161 **Governance update**

The report provided an update on governance activity within the College since the last meeting.

Nick Shore and Jim Pinsent left the meeting for this item.

An update was provided on the Waterside governance arrangements. The College can appoint a further director to the board as Mark Doyle was not formally appointed as Director at Companies House.

RESOLVED: **The board noted the governance update.**

The board approved the merging of actions 10 and 19 on the governance action plan.

The board resolved that Jim Pinsent continue as governor for a further year to July 2024.

The board resolved that Nick Shore, Keith Sanderson and Julia Callaghan continue to serve as the College's nominees on the board of Waterside Training Limited.

Nick Shore and Jim Pinsent rejoined the meeting.

162 **Policy update**

The report presents updates to the following policies for consideration:

- Financial Regulations
- IT Disaster Recovery Plan (appendix 4 of the Emergency Plan)
- Health, Safety and Environment Committee (included within the Health and Safety Policy)

The report also provided an update on the following documents:

- Instrument and Articles of Association
- Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation

in addition to those that have been approved by committees under the scheme of delegation.

The Board requested that reference to the Higher Education Committee is removed from the Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED: The board approved the revised Financial Regulations as recommended by the Audit Committee, subject to the agreed amendment.

The board approved the revised IT Disaster Recovery Plan (Appendix 4 of the Emergency Plan), as recommended by the Audit Committee.

The board approved the revised terms of reference for the Health, Safety and Environment Committee (within the Health and Safety Policy), as recommended by the Finance, Resources and Commercial Committee.

The board noted that no amendments are required to the:

- Instrument and Articles of Government
 - Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation
- and that these will reviewed again in one year, or sooner if required.

The board noted the updates on the following policies:

- Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy.
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy
- Pensions Tax Policy – Lifetime and Annual Allowances

163 **Committee minutes and verbal update from committee chairs**

The Governing Board was presented with the approved committee minutes and updates from committee chairs.

RESOLVED: The Governing Board noted the committee minutes and verbal updates from chairs.

164 **Verbal report of Link Governors**

Verbal updates were provided by the Link Governors.

RESOLVED: **The Governing Board noted the Link Governor updates.**

165 **Any other business**

The board asked that their thanks and best wishes be passed on to Tracey Turner's student who had shared their student journey with governors.

Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.

Mark Thompson joined the meeting. Jen McGill, Tracey Turner, Kellie McCann, Adam Humphreys, Paula Hastie-Roberts and Ian Johnson left the meeting.

166 **In camera session: senior post holder update**

An in camera session was held. A private and confidential minute is available from the Governance Director.

Simon Pierce and Mark Thompson left the meeting.

167 **In camera session: senior staffing update**

An in camera session was held. A private and confidential minute is available from the Governance Director.