

APPROVED Minute of Colleges Scotland Board of Directors Meeting Thursday 25 June 2020, Argyll Court, Stirling, FK9 4TY

Present	
Ken Milroy (KM) (<i>Chair</i>)	Janie McCusker (JMcC)
Hugh Carr (HC)	
Liz Connolly (LC)	Ross Martin (RM)
Margaret Cook (MC)	Lydia Rohmer (LR)
Michael Foxley (MF)	Ronnie Smith (RS)
Ann Landels (ALd) (<i>Observer</i>)	Shona Struthers (SS)
Alex Linkston (AL)	Carol Turnbull (CT) (<i>Vice Chair</i>)
Willie Mackie (WM)	David Watt (DW)
Angela McCusker (AMcC)	
In Attendance	
Michelle Brand (MB)	Heather Stevenson (HS)
Jackie Henry (JH)	Andy Witty (AW)
Will McLeish (WMcL)	
Apologies	
Elaine Acaster (EC)	Waiyin Hatton (WH)

1. Declaration of Interest Register – Sign Off

Agenda Item: 1 | Paper No: 1 | Lead: KM

Paper 1 was noted.

Since this paper was circulated several members have advised of changes of their Declaration of Interests. KM requested members provide all updates in a timeously manner directly to MB to allow this to be updated and uploaded to the website.

2. Welcome and Apologies

Agenda Item: 2 | Paper No: Verbal | Lead: KM

KM welcomed members and advised of the following:

Apologies

KM advised that apologies had been received from WH Regional Chair, West College Scotland and KM welcomed the attendance of Jackie Henry, Vice-Chair as their representative, and EA, Interim Regional Chair, Borders College, Observer).

In camera session

KM invited the board members to attend an ‘in camera’ session at the end of the formal meeting.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Agenda Item: 3 | Paper No: 3 | Lead: KM

3.1 Discussion

Paper 3 was noted.

KM invited the board to consider and agree the minutes from the previous meeting. In terms of matters arising KM alerted members to the draft remit for the governance review which had been circulated ahead of the meeting for consideration and discussion.

Employers' Association has not been included within the remit as it has already been through a review and restructured and is in a settled place now.

KW attended the CPG and gave further clarity around the staged timings of the SFC review which will be a 3-stage report:

1. August 2020 – focus on the immediate issues for academic session 2020-21;
2. December 2020 – further report; and then
3. Early 2021 – next 4-years and beyond.

Having more insight into the SFC review and the timing of Colleges Scotland review may allow consideration of a wider review and remit to secure what is best for the sector.

3.2 Decision

The board agreed the minutes from the meeting on Thursday 29 January 2020 as an accurate record of the meeting and approved the minutes to be uploaded to the Colleges Scotland website in their unredacted form.

Members agreed for the need to undertake a review and agreed now is not the time. Members agreed to pause to gain clarity on what the landscape of the sector will look like post the SFC review. Members agreed to keep this on the agenda.

4. Chair's Business

Agenda Item: 4 | Paper No: 4 | Lead: KM

4.1 Discussion

Paper 4 was noted.

All Chairs' Engagement

The feedback received has been positive that the Chairs' engagement with Minister Richard Lochhead during this pandemic has been helpful keeping consistent messaging between the CPG and Chairs'.

Following on from the meetings with the Minister it was agreed to establish two short-life working groups looking at:

- Community, Inclusion & Learner Journey – first meeting 2 July. AL will lead with DN leading on the Learner Journey discussions; and
- Economic Recovery – first meeting 7 July. WM will lead this group discussion.

It was agreed to ensure close linkage with the CPG that CT and Audrey Cumberland (AC) as chair and vice-chair of the CPG have agreed to attend these meetings and any actions would be reported through the normal governance routes of the CPG or direct to the Colleges Scotland Board where decisions are being sought. It was agreed to organise a further all Chairs' meeting to help support each other during this time. It is anticipated that these groups will meet once or twice and thereafter report on their findings.

Benny Higgins Report

The Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, led by Benny Higgins, was tasked with recommending solutions to ensure transition towards a greener, net-zero and wellbeing economy, and to advise on measures to address different challenges the economy will face as Scotland recovers from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. AC and Paul Little had the opportunity to feed into the report. As part of the response to this report the CPG has been working on an 'Investable Proposition' paper which will provide a series of short sharp courses for those looking to retrain and alternative provision for young people which may include pathways to apprenticeships, unemployment programmes and a digital academy to focus on meta skills. Once this has been signed off by CPG this will be shared with members and submitted as part of the sector response to the report. The report, ['Towards a Robust, Resilient Wellbeing Economy for Scotland'](#) which lays out 25 recommendations to be considered by the Scottish Government was published on 22 June 2020.

The first strategic dialogue meeting between the Chair of SDS, Frank Mitchell and Colleges Scotland takes place 26 June, KM, SS, CT and AC will be attending. It is hoped this will be the start of regular dialogues at this level between SDS and Colleges Scotland.

KM decided to reorder the agenda for the meeting to help the flow of discussions.

SFC Review

This is the biggest review to affect the college sector; we have had good engagement with the SFC including Mike Cantlay joining the Chairs' at their meetings with the minister and Karen Watt (KW) attending the CPG. KW explained to the CPG that there will be a project group and a board established to drive the review and widespread engagement will take place. KW also alerted the CPG that this review was as much about the SFC structure and processes as it was about the sector.

Discussion took place about how the internal mechanisms of government have been changed to support regional development and we need to ensure during the regional discussions that take place to help maintain relevance at a national level, we use the mechanisms in place to keep each other advised via the CPG, Communications Group, and the Chairs' group.

Public Affairs and Communications Update

WM gave an overview of the extent of our sectoral engagement. The sector had devised a stakeholder engagement plan which had been approved by principal's, chair's and communication and marketing teams and ready to approach implementation when Covid-19 hit; however, a lot of this work has been deployed throughout the sector during this pandemic to secure consistent messaging. The engagement plan has worked as we have already had 14 ministerial meetings which equates to 1 per week including Richard Lochhead, the DFM and Jamie Hepburn. Weekly stakeholder engagement has been undertaken throughout this time with SFC, SDS, SQA and others. We have worked closely with the Scottish Government to get Richard Lochhead's opinion pieces mirroring our key messages and narrative around colleges being vital at the economic revival and social inclusion activity.

Significant social media activity, six principals gave informal evidence at the Education & Skills Committee which has generated a lot of written parliamentary questions. Progress is being made but there is still more work to be done to ensure the outcomes impacting, influencing and shaping the direction of education. Collaborative working is the key to achieving a national sector wide approach.

Policy Update

AW updated members on the whole host of policy areas that have needed renegotiating and a large amount of hard work between policy and communication teams. Early we recognised the need to breakdown focus into the immediate and long-term approaches. Weekly we update and circulate our one-page high-level summary showing the Colleges Scotland and Principal leads within each area and establishing these lead principal's has allowed us to react at speed and gain early engagement with SFC about immediate issues and get a relaxation, some flexibility and commitments around cashflow to colleges.

Continued engagement with SFC and SDS around co-creation and repurposing of monies where there are existing budgets, positioning ways in which the college sector can lead.

Work continues with the managing agents and work continues to maximise and protect apprenticeships going forward. Colleges collectively work with over 100 awarding bodies. LC is lead principal for the 'New Academic Year' and that group have been working closely with government on the guidance about reopening colleges.

Engagement around digital poverty continues and meetings have taken place including, with some of the broadband providers looking to get free access and improved connectivity for learners. CDN – the role of colleges in tackling poverty and deprivation via the Access and Inclusion Network IPPR through the Covid lens.

Members acknowledged and thanks the staff of Colleges Scotland for all their hard work across the broad policy area.

College Principal's Group

Immediate – we still have no guarantee of any further or additional income for 2020-21 and one of the key papers will be the mid-year FFR which has now turned into a 3-year financial forecast which SFC have asked for. It is important to note the significant part of these forecasts is the narrative around the figures. The narrative will explain the mitigating actions and assumptions required to be taken/applied to produce a balanced budget and are the key messages which need to be put forward to the SFC. This information will highlight any deficits and it does not include the resource or capacity to delivery any of the Investible Propositions proposal of delivering short courses.

Significant number of students who will have been deferred or have been unable to complete their course and have not received their qualification. It is only college students who are being disadvantaged in this way. School and university students have not been disadvantaged as they have been certificated. This is a message that should continue to be included within the sectoral briefing note and key messaging.

New Academic Year

Colleges are now receiving enquiries about when they will be opening and returning to face-to-face teaching. A real impact for consideration will be the lack of connectivity of public transport in some of the more rural areas. The Scottish Government guidance which is being prepared has been on collaboration with college and union representatives.

4.2 Decision

KM agreed to arrange a further meeting of all Chairs' and include an agenda item 'What does tertiary look like in your region?'

5. Colleges Scotland Draft Remit, Chair's Committee

Agenda Item: 5 | Paper No: Verbal | Lead: KM

5.1 Discussion

Paper 5 noted

Discussion took place about the remit and workings of the proposed Chairs' Committee. It was agreed to refine the remit to ensure the board retains the overall strategic direction and the Chairs' Committee oversees the practical day-to-day operations, working with the Colleges Scotland Executive. It was confirmed that Colleges Scotland Executive members may attend as required in an advisory capacity with no voting rights. In keeping with the other sub committees of the board remits there is the option to co-opt additional expertise.

5.2 Decision

It was agreed to refine the remit, strip out the strategic elements and update with the operational matters and circulate for electronic approval by members.

6 Colleges Scotland Draft Budget 202-21 and High-level Commentary

Agenda Item: 6 | Paper No: 6 | Lead: SS

6.1 Discussion

Paper 6 was noted.

SS prepared a single slide to highlight the key points of the draft budget for 2020-21. AW gave members some background and context to the draft budget explaining the variances between last year and this year. The forecast ending 31 July 2020 is showing a small surplus due to saving on travel and hospitality. Included within the budget are funds to ensure there is capability to make any adaptations that may be necessary should we return to office working in Argyll Court.

During discussion members asked for clarity around the increased staffing costs. Members discussed in depth the subscription charges and acknowledge the board agreed to this year 1 increase. Members agreed to speak with their principals to encourage payment.

Members discussed the review of the Colleges Scotland estate and understand there is currently a lease agreement with a further 2 years remaining. Prior to any decision about the estate it was agreed that a full cost benefit analysis would be required around the way staff work going forward.

The monitoring of the budget would sit with the Chairs' Committee and then recommend to the main board for approval.

6.2 Decision

Members agreed the draft budget subject to clarification around the increase in staffing costs which was agreed to be circulated electronically.

Members agreed the monitoring and oversight of the budget will sit with the Chairs' Committee who would then make a recommendation to the board for approval.

Members agreed to have the discussion with their principal around the membership subscriptions to encourage payment.

7 Employment Service Team

Agenda Item: 7 | Paper No: 7 | Lead: AL/HS

7.1 Discussion

Job Evaluation Update

Paper 7.1 was noted.

HS provided an overview of the paper and asked the members to note the progress and revised timeline. HS highlighted that the project was slightly delayed in starting in terms of getting the analyst in place. This is a project that is being run in partnership with the staff side unions. We now have 21 analysts and the pairings are working well and since putting in necessary measures the pace has picked up.

The Implementation Stage 3, is not there yet, as not all colleges have returned the pay data. One college has formerly advised that they will not be submitting the full data set. We would welcome

help from chairs and principals to get this data across to the Employers' Association. It has been confirmed by the Data Protection Officer that there is no legal impediment to release of the data however there is no requirement to do so.

Although not received at this time it is expected that we will receive year-2 funding from the SFC before the end of July.

AL thanked HS for the fulness of the report. It should be remembered that the Employers' Association offered a national job evaluation project and the government have funded this.

General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), Professional Registration Business Case

Paper 7.2 was noted.

HS provided an overview and some background to the business case. This case has already been discussed at the Audit Committee and the Chairs' Committee. Members are asked to approve the establishment of a small steering group to ensure we get value for money from this project and they would report back to the board.

The Deputy First Minister wrote to Colleges Scotland and asked that the board of Colleges Scotland establish value for money and put in place robust monitoring mechanisms.

During discussion it was agreed that AL would be the chair of the project steering group.

7.3 Decision

Job Evaluation Update

It was agreed that Employers' Association would write to the specific colleges who have as yet to release the pay data.

General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), Professional Registration Business Case

Members agreed to establish a project steering group with AL to lead the group.

8 Schedule of Key Meetings 2020-21

Agenda Item: 8 | Paper No: Verbal | Lead: KM

8.1 Discussion

Paper 8 was noted.

8.2 Decision

Members accepted the schedule of key meetings.

9 Policy Update

Agenda Item: 9 | Paper No: Verbal | Lead: AW

9.1 Discussion

This discussion was brought forward and covered under item 4.

10 Public Affairs and Communications Update

Agenda Item: 10 | Paper No: Verbal | Lead: WMcL

This discussion was brought forward and covered under item 4.

11 Committee Activity

Agenda Item: 11 | Paper No: Paper 11 | Lead: WMcL/SS

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee: Risk Register

11.1 Discussion

Paper 11 was noted.

WM provided an overview on the recent audit activity. The risk register has been updated and it reflects the key risks of the organisation. SS highlighted the summary sheet for members ease of reference. WM raised the fact that the audit committee is 1 member short. During discussion it was agreed that HC would join the Audit committee.

11.2 Decision

Members noted the updated risk register and welcomed the new format. It was agreed that HC would join the audit committee.

12 Committee Minutes

Agenda Item: 12 | Paper No: 12 | Lead: KM

Paper 12 was noted for information.

MF commented on the CPG minute of 9 June and added that JM on behalf of MF and RS wrote to Mike Cantlay to request that there was Regional Strategic Body and UHI representation on the SFC Advisory Group that was recently established. The request included the ask that Lydia Rohmer and Martin Boyle be added to this grouping to ensure full representation across the sector.

13 AOCB

Agenda Item: 13 | Paper No: Verbal | Lead: KM

No other business was noted.

14 Date of the Next Meeting

Agenda Item: 14 | Paper No: Verbal | Lead: KM

The date of the next meeting was noted as Thursday 15 October 2020, at this time it is expected this meeting will take place via Zoom.

Signed _____

Date _____

Colleges Scotland Board Action Monitoring Log

Meeting of Thursday 25 April 2019				
Agenda Item	Action	Date	Owner	Status
5	Ensure strong sector representation on the Scottish Government's Infrastructure Commission.	June 2020	AW	Completed
Meeting of Wednesday 26 June 2019				
Agenda Item	Action	Date	Owner	Status
7	Review and update all other committee remits for presentation to the board for consideration and agreement.	January 2020	SS	Ongoing
Meeting of Thursday 31 October 2019				
Agenda Item	Action	Date	Owner	Status
5	Chairs' Committee to be established and membership populated as a short-term solution to the current governance structure of the organisation while the wider review of the organisation's structure is ongoing.	January 2020	SS	Complete
7	Seek clarity on the governance protocol for agreeing the proposed recommendations of the Working Group and bring regular updates to the board in relation to National Bargaining – Principals and Senior Staff	January 2020	HS/AL	Ongoing
11	WMcL to advise board members how best board members can provide input to Colleges Scotland's Stakeholder Engagement Plan.	January 2020	WMcL	Complete
Meeting of Wednesday 29 January 2020				
Agenda Item	Action	Date	Owner	Status
4	A strong communications message to be delivered simultaneously, in relation to the governance review when informing members of agreed subscriptions increase for 2020/21.	February 2020	SS	Complete
4	Review of subscription increases in future years beyond 2020/21 once the governance review of Colleges Scotland has been undertaken.	June 2020	SS	Ongoing
6	Sign the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 st July 2019 on behalf of the Colleges Scotland board.	January 2020	SS/KM	Complete
6	Sign the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Colleges Scotland board.	January 2020	SS/KM	Complete
6	Publish the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 on the Colleges Scotland website.	January 2020	SS	Complete
6	Executive to draft a plan for circulation to the board outline the key groups and individuals charged with coordinating a collective response to the FFR data by the Regional Chairs.	12 February 2020	SS	Ongoing
6	Discuss the draft plan on the collective response of the Regional Chairs to the FFR data in further detail at the March 2020 event.	March 2020	SS	Ongoing
7	Present to SFC the Revised Business Case for the Continued Funding of the Employment Services Team.	February 2020	SS/AL/HS	Ongoing

11	Raise with the senior sector marketing and communications representatives their concerns in relation to the level of detailed data required to support the propose Colleges Scotland Stakeholder Engagement Plan.	January 2020	WMcL	Complete
Meeting of Thursday 25 June 2020				
Action		Date	Owner	Status
4	A further meeting of all Chairs' to be arranged and include an agenda item 'What does tertiary look like in your region?'	July-Aug 2020	KM	Complete
5	It was agreed to refine the remit of the Chairs' Committee, remove the strategic elements and update with the operational matters and circulate for electronic approval by members.	July 2020	KM	Complete
6	Members agreed to have the discussion with their principal around the membership subscriptions to encourage payment.	July 2020	ALL	TBC
7	<u>Job Evaluation Update</u> It was agreed that Employers' Association would write to the specific colleges who have as yet to release the pay data.	July 2020	HS	Complete