

Minute of Colleges Scotland Board of Management Wednesday 23 March 2022 (1400-1530), Double Tree by Hilton Dunblane Hydro

Present		
Waiyin Hatton (WC) (Chair)	Liz Connolly (LC)	Margaret Cook (MC)
Audrey Cumberland (AC)	Ann Landels (ALa)	Alex Linkston (AL)
Ross Martin (RM)	Janie McCusker (JMc)	Lydia Rohmer (LR)
Ronnie Smith (RS)	Shona Struthers (SS)	
In Attendance		
Gavin Donoghue (GD)	Kirstie Laird (Minute Taker)	Lesley Ward (LW) Scottish Government (item 7)
Helen Webster (HW) Scottish Government (item 7)	Andy Witty (AW)	
Apologies		
Angus Campbell (ACa)	Jen Johnstone (JJ)	Ray McCowan (RMc)
Fiona McQueen (FMc)	Caroline Stuart (CS)	David Watt (DW)

1. Declaration of Interests

Agenda Item: 1 | Verbal | Lead: WH

1.1 Discussion

The Chair requested the Board's agreement to sign off the declaration of interest register. Three board members provided amendments verbally to the Board Admin Officer.

1.2 Conclusion

The Board approved the Declaration of Interest Register as accurate with the provision of the amendments provided verbally.

2. Welcome and Apologies

Agenda Item: 2 | Verbal | Lead: WH

2.1 Discussion

The Chair welcomed the board members to the meeting and introduced Director of Employers Association, Gavin Donoghue to the Board. Each board member in attendance introduced themselves.

The Chair noted apologies from the five board members unable to attend the meeting.

3. Minute of the Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

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

3.1 Discussion

The Board reviewed the minute of the previous meeting – Thursday 27 January 2022. It was requested that the attendees record be amended to reflect all attendees who were present at the meeting.

3.2 Conclusion

The minute was approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting subject to the addition of one member to the list of attendees.

4. Board & Committee Membership

Agenda Item: 4 | Verbal | Lead: SS

4.1 Discussion

The Chair noted the appointments of the following new Board Members: Ray McCowan (Borders College, Chair); Caroline Stuart (Dumfries and Galloway College, Chair); John Henderson (North East Scotland College, Interim Chair); and Fiona McQueen (Ayrshire College, Interim Chair).

The Board were informed that a new Sector Prevent Regional Chairs Representative, Paul Hutchinson had been elected following the self-nomination process.

4.2 Conclusion

The Board ratified all newly appointed board members.

5. Strategy Review Framework – For Approval

Agenda Item: 5 | Paper No: 5 | Lead: JMc

5.1 Discussion

The Board was presented with the strategy review framework and was informed of the process followed by each subgroup and the work done to date on the framework. It was noted the Framework is the collective role of Colleges Scotland (CS) within the sector. Each subgroup lead provided information on their group's work noting the following points:

- The Framework presented is for the organisation of Colleges Scotland.
- Strategem consultants helped facilitate the development of the Framework.
- The Strategy Review Completion Group recommend a meaningful consultation period between April-May 2022 open to all members, Scottish Government (SG), Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and Scottish Funding Council (SFC).
- The caveat "The Board has the opportunity where appropriate and relevant to change priorities" is included within the Policy area of the framework.
- An Extraordinary Board meeting will be scheduled for 25 May 2022.

The Board reviewed and discussed the presented Framework agreeing to the consultation and noting the following observations/suggestions:

- The consultation period is to obtain sector backing.
- Further work on accountability of the "college family" is required.
- The Board proposed the "college family" includes student representatives.
- Governance will require reviewing including the Employers Association.
- The Think Tank if adopted, would make recommendations to the Board for approval as an advisory group allowing anyone in the sector to provide suggestions and have a voice.
- Under the Framework the Board oversee and look to ensure priorities of the sector are met.
- Some current policy work and future proposals to be curtailed.
- Anyone submitting suggestions would be invited to the Think Tank meetings to represent their idea and provide full understanding of their ask/suggestion.

The Chair noted for the record that one member unable to attend the meeting had met with the Chair ahead of the meeting and provided their support for the Consultation Document.

The Chair requested the Board's approval for the following:

- Strategy Review Framework paper goes to Consultation between 4 April – 6 May 2022.
- A single item agenda Extraordinary Board Meeting be scheduled for 25 May 2022.
- Board members share the Framework with their own board/college colleagues.
- The Consultation Document is issued to Scottish Government, SFC, SDS reiterating the first part of the Review was complete with the Statement of Ambition for the sector which is available on the CS website.

5.2 Conclusion

The Board endorsed the following:

- Strategic Framework Document opens for consultation between Monday 4 April - Friday 6 May.
- Consultation will be open to all Chairs,' Principals,' SG, SDS and SFC.
- A single item agenda Extraordinary Board meeting be scheduled on 25 May 2022.
- The Framework be shared with their own Board/College colleagues.
- Following the consultation period, two active student presidents should be co-opted to ensure a learner focus.
- The Governance Group revisit the governance surrounding the strategic review and fit the work already done around the Framework.

6. Argyll Court Lease – For Approval

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

6.1 Discussion

The Board reviewed the Paper, proposing a two-year extension to the current lease at Argyll Court. The current lease is for ten years with a break clause at year five (due to end December 2022). If the extension offer is rejected, CS are required to evacuate the premises by the end of December 2022 incurring any dilapidation costs of the building.

The Board discussed the proposal of the Chairs' Committee and the practicalities of finding alternative premises at the end of this year. Three board members felt they were unable to support the proposal on the basis colleges are currently looking to make cost savings and the lack of options appraisal and costs-benefit analysis provided in the paper. The Chairs' Committee confirmed they believe by agreeing to the two-year extension allows time for the Board to complete a full options appraisal. Considerations and comments discussed by the Board in great depth included:

- Staff preference for human interaction and returning to a physical workplace due to unsuitable environments at home and their mental health wellbeing.
- The requirement of a physical hub for comparable visibility to Universities Scotland and the ability to host visits, meetings, and events at its own premises to strengthen the profile.
- Options of alternative premises suitably equipped for CS requirements of conferencing and multiple meetings taking place at the same time.
- The Board considered the practicality and suitability of colleges accommodating CS at no cost.
- Premises location, with the consensus being the location should remain central to staff and members.
- The opportunity of letting the current premises out to members and non-members to raise income from the facility (CDN have already expressed interest in using facilities).
- The impact to current subtenants (Energy Skills Partnership and WorldSkills) who provide income of £22,000 per annum to off-set the current rent of £56,040 plus VAT.
- The time required to fully review the requirements of the premises and benefits of keeping or surrendering the lease.
- The requirement for an options appraisal.

The Chair summarised the consensus of the group that the practical way forward is to extend the lease by the offer of two years, with executive completing an options appraisal.

6.2 Conclusion

The Board agreed to the following:

- Two-year extension to the lease for Argyll Court.
- An options appraisal to help inform a decision to be made within a realistic timeframe given current workload with the aim to inform the 2023 budget setting.
- The options appraisal must include alternative accommodation options that are accessible for staff and members, space specification requirements, full costings of moving premises, current dilapidation costs, income generation, network moving costs, impacts of hybrid working to the business and staff, any potential risk areas and mitigations that may be required to be put in place.
- Staff consultation be conducted on any changes of Terms and Conditions of employment.

7. Discussion with Helen Webster and Lesley Ward

Agenda Item: 7 | Verbal | Lead: WH

7.1 Discussion

The Deputy Director for Reform / Directorate for Advanced Learning and Science, Helen Webster joined the meeting accompanied by Lesley Ward, Reform Division.

Introductions were exchanged between the guest speakers and the board members. Helen updated the Board with the following key notes of the strategic intent:

- Liz Hawkings will join the directorates Insight Unit in April when everything will be pulled together.
- The SFC Review, and response tasked the Scottish Government to develop the strategic intent for tertiary education with the purpose of establishing a coherent narrative and evidence base to prevent rework of existing research exercises and to bring the data together to understand what is required/wanted from the education skills system.
- The directorate is looking to set the purpose of what this means for making coherent decisions around future policy and decisions.
- Scottish Government is keen to see education and skills as one which is pivotal to influence the future direction of policy.
- The directorate is working closely with SFC and SDS on skills alignment and their aim is to recognise the complexity to create something that can be further developed.

The Board questioned how the CS Statement of Ambitions was being accounted for, particularly in terms of timeframe and if the Statement of Intent would feed into the next budget. Members emphasised the reform of the Education Sector is a key part of moving forward and were interested to see if a fresh look is being taken.

The Board noted its concern on the timeframe and hoped the use of the existing evidence already gathered will help the college sector gain recognition for the full scope of what colleges deliver. It was noted how the college sector has the biggest reach but the smallest voice which leads to short term funding decisions.

The Deputy Director for Reform/Directorate for Advanced Learning and Science confirmed she understood and heard the need for the Scottish Government to understand the full scope along with the need for the sector to be heard to influence government decisions/policy.

8. Colleges Scotland Finance

Agenda Item: 8 | Info Paper No: 8 | Lead: AW

The Chair noted the management accounts with a half yearly position available online.

9. HR and Health & Safety Update

Agenda Item: 9 | Info Paper No: 9/Verbal | Lead: WH

The Chair noted that the Chairs' Committee review all policies and when complete they are available online to review.

10. Committee & Advisory Group Minutes & Workplans (For Info Papers)

Agenda Item: 10 | Info Paper No: 10 | Lead: SS

The Chair noted all board, committee and advisory group minutes were available to view as information papers using the link provided within the Board papers and on the CS website.

11. Board Cycle of Business

Agenda Item: 11 | Info Paper No 11 | Lead: SS

The Chair referred the Board to the CS Schedule of Meetings for 2022/23, which was reviewed and agreed by the Chairs' Committee and available online using the link provided. The Chair asked for any amendment requests to be passed to the Board Admin Officer.

12. AOCB

Agenda Item: 12 | Verbal | Lead: WH

There was no other competent business.

13. Date of Future Meetings

Agenda Item: 13 | Verbal | Lead: WH

An extraordinary meeting is agreed to be held Wednesday 25 May 2022. The date of the next full Board meeting is Thursday 23 June 2022.

Board of Management Action Log				
Meeting Date/Ref	Action	Date Due	Lead	Progress
23 March 2022 Item 1.2	The Register of Interest is to be updated RM - no longer the IDS Advisor ALa - now Chair of Apex Scotland and not Vice Chair LR - no longer vice principal of tertiary	March	KL	Complete March 2022
23 March 2022 Item 5.2	The Board endorsed the Strategic Framework document for a consultation period between Monday 4 April to Friday 6 May for all Chairs and Principals including Scottish Government.	April/May	Board	Complete May 2022
23 March 2022 Item 5.2	The Board agreed a single item agenda Extraordinary Board meeting on 25 May 2022.	May	Board	Complete May 2022
23 March 2022 Item 5.2	The Board agreed each member would share the Framework with their own Board/College colleagues.	April/May	Board	Complete May 2022
23 March 2022 Item 5.2	The Board agreed following the Consultation period CS approach two active student presidents as co-opted members.	June	Board	Ongoing
23 March 2022 Item 5.2	The Governance Group are to revisit the governance surrounding the Strategic Review and fit the work already done around the framework.	May	AL	Complete
23 March 2022 Item 5.2	AL will consider governance on co-opting of active students is fundamental to our desired outcome.	TBC	AL	Ongoing
23 March 2022 Item 6.2	An options appraisal to help inform a decision to be made within a realistic timeframe given current workload with the aim to inform the 2023 budget setting.	March 2023	SS/ Exec	Ongoing
27 January 2022 Item 6.2	The complete Framework is to be presented to the Board at the March meeting for sign off.	March	Board	Complete March 2022
27 January 2022 Item 7.2	EA to review Governance to ensure it is fit for purpose.	TBC	EA	Ongoing
24 June 2021 Item 5	The Chairs' Committee to continue to progress further options surrounding Members Liability, in parallel with the College Scotland Board Governance Working Group, and with input from JMcC and WH.	TBC	SS/KM	Ongoing