

Minute of Colleges Scotland Board

Thursday 26 October 2023, Argyll Court, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4TY

| Present | | |
|---|---|--|
| Waiyin Hatton (WH) (Chair) | Alex Linkston (AL) * | Shona Struthers (SS) |
| Angus Campbell (AC) | Ray McCowan (RMc) <i>(Agenda Items 1 -10 only)</i> | Caroline Stuart (CS) * <i>(Agenda Items 1 & 2 only)</i> |
| Liz Connolly (LC) | Janie McCusker (JMc) | David Watt (DW) * <i>(Agenda Items 3 -6 only)</i> |
| Margaret Cook (MC) <i>(Agenda Items 1 -7 only)</i> | Nora Senior (NS) * | |
| Susan Elston (SE) * | Ronnie Smith (RS) * | |
| In Attendance | | |
| Gavin Donoghue (GD) | Gordon Hunt (GH) <i>(Agenda Items 1 & 2 only)</i> | Andy Witty (AW) |
| Frances Harrower (FH) (Minute) | Jen Johnston (JJ) | |
| Marie Hendry (MH) <i>(Agenda Items 1 & 2 only)</i> | Mhairi Spowage (MS) <i>(Agenda Items 1 & 2 only)</i> | |
| Apologies | | |
| Joanna Campbell (JC) | Fiona McQueen (FMc) | Laurie O'Donnell (LO) |
| Trudi Craggs (TC) | | |

* via video conferencing

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1. WH welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.

2. Strategic Stakeholder Dialogue

2.1. WH welcomed Mhairi Spowage (MS), Director at the Fraser of Allander Institute (FoA) as well as Marie Hendry (MH) and Gordon Hunt (GH) from College Development Network (CDN) to the meeting and advised that CDN part-funded the recently published research (*Economic Contribution of Colleges in Scotland*) alongside Colleges Scotland.

2.2. WH invited MS to provide the board with an overview of the key findings from the report.

2.3. Key points from the PowerPoint presentation by MS are noted below:

- The main aims of the research were to understand and quantify the college sector's contribution to the Scottish economy by upskilling the population, supporting supply chains and to the delivery of the aims of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.
- In terms of the findings around upskilling, there was significant academic evidence which demonstrated the wage premia attached to different levels of qualifications. There were however, challenges with getting hold of the right data to do this.
- In terms of upskilling the Scottish economy (GDP), findings showed that because of colleges, Scotland will be cumulatively better off by £8 billion in present value terms over their working lives, when compared to an economy without skilled graduates. This equated to a £73k boost in productivity per graduate and an uplift in productivity estimated to support over 31,000 FTE jobs.

- In terms of how the college sector supported supply chains as a significant employer and purchaser of goods and services, it is estimated that college spend supports an additional 4,400 FTE jobs which is in addition to the 10,700 staff directly employed.

- 2.4. WH commented that this latest piece of work had been a great success story for the sector and thanked both SS and MH for collaborating and commissioning the research on behalf of the members.
- 2.5. Members agreed the research clearly demonstrated the important and unique contribution that colleges play in the skills system and were pleased to see that the research has since been quoted in the Scottish Parliament but questioned how we could ensure that the sector started to get a better share of the funding, given that the pot is only going to get smaller.
- 2.6. Members agreed there was a need to showcase more examples of where colleges and universities were dividing the work and funding for degree award courses by working in partnership where students spend the first two years at college learning the technical skills and then the second two years at the university learning the academic.
- 2.7. Members agreed for the need to highlight and showcase more examples of where colleges reduce structural poverty and improve outcomes for disadvantaged communities.
- 2.8. Members agreed to align the research to each of the recommendations from the James Withers' Independent Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape to demonstrate the impact colleges can make to the recommendations.
- 2.9. Members agreed to continue to campaign both nationally and locally using key messages from the research and to use it to feed the messaging through the reform work to achieve the outcomes the sector desires.
- 2.10. MH reported that CDN would be interested in supporting any potential reform work around developing the workforce.
- 2.11. **Members agreed that AW and GH would discuss in more detail the roles Colleges Scotland and CDN could play in supporting the ongoing campaigns.**
- 2.12. **AW to start discussions with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) around what data is currently collected for the sector and what data could be collected, and how this can inform more research like the FoA report in the future.**
- 2.13. WH thanked MS for her presentation and MH and GH for their contributions. MS, MH and GH left the meeting.

3. Ratification of New Board Member/Appointment of Vice Chair

- 3.1. WH ask members to ratify the board member appointment of JC through her new role as the chair of the College Principals' Group (CPG).
- 3.2. **The board ratified the membership of JC.**
- 3.3. WH advised that following Audrey Cumberford's resignation as chair of the CPG and subsequently as a member and vice chair of the board, this had left a vacancy for the vice chair role. WH recommended to members that as this role continued to be the chair of CPG in previous years, JC be ratified for this role.
- 3.4. **The board supported the recommendation and ratified the appointment of JC as vice chair of the board.**

4. Declaration of Interests

4.1. No conflicts were declared by members of the board.

5. Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

5.1. The draft minute of the previous meeting outlined in Paper 5.1 was noted by members.

5.2. The board approved the minute as an accurate account of the meeting.

5.3. SS provided a verbal update on the outstanding actions which were not covered on the agenda.

Board Development Day (Ref: 230126 – 13.5)

5.4. SS reported that a separate session will be arranged for a board development day during 2024 and an item will be included at a future meeting to discuss this further.

Simulation Test – Business Continuity Plan and ICT Disaster Recovery Plan (Ref: 150623 – 8.12)

5.5. SS advised that this will be arranged when the external audit work had concluded and once the new finance and HR providers have also been embedded.

5.6. The board noted that all actions marked as complete would be removed from the action log.

6. CEO Report

6.1. The CEO report outlined in Paper 6.1 was noted by members.

6.2.



6.3. SS also sought agreement from the board to share the CEO report after each board meeting with all chairs and principals to allow sector leaders to be aware of the important work being undertaken on their behalf.

6.4. The board welcomed and acknowledged the latest developments around the conference. Some members did express a desire to ensure that there was appropriate student representation and engagement taking place throughout the event.

6.5. Some members ask that other colleges, some of which are not always located in the central belt, were considered for large events in the future.

6.6. SS asked members if there were any other organisations/sectors they think it would be useful for Colleges Scotland to engage with. JMc suggested the business community.

6.7. The board agreed that the CEO reports were to be shared with chairs and principals going forward.

6.8. JJ to ensure that appropriate student representation and engagement takes place at the conference.

7. Colleges Scotland Strategy

Strategy Trackers

- 7.1. The updated strategy tracker outlined in Paper 7.1 was noted by members.
- 7.2. AW reported that as we were now in Year 2 of the strategic plan, the tracker had been updated with a summary of where activity delivery had been reached, against each individual strategic aim for Year 1 and had been shaded out, as well as a BRAG status against Year 2 activity description column included.
- 7.3. A discussion took place on how the trackers could be simplified and more clearly presented to be able to understand the work of the organisation, as well as show the impact for both the organisation and the sector, along with what aims were being achieved. WH asked members to share examples out with the meeting to support AW in this task, in particular in articulating outcomes these are not within the gift of Colleges Scotland to deliver.
- 7.4. **It was agreed that AW would use the feedback and change the way the strategy trackers are presented going forward.**

8. College Sector Reform to 2026

Colleges Scotland Priorities

- 8.1. AW introduced a draft Reform to 2026 plan outlined in Paper 8.1.
- 8.2. AW advised that the draft plan had been considered and discussed at various Colleges Scotland board committees and advisory groups throughout October 2023, and was now being presented to the board for final endorsement of the priorities and timescales outlined.
- 8.3. AW advise that the plan captured all of the suggested work areas for completeness, however, as they cannot all be undertaken at once, three proposed priority themes (Apprenticeships, Funding and Infrastructure, and Workforce) have been agreed by the College Chairs' Group (CCG) and College Principals' Group (CPG) for further development by Colleges Scotland. AW advised that the draft plan was an internal working document and would not be shared wider until the board had agreed it. AW also advised that following approval, it was envisaged that Reform Work Groups would be established to take forward the key priority areas.
- 8.4. RS advise that while he was happy to support the key priority areas as presented in the Reform to 2026 plan, he was still keen to have a wider discussion with chairs around the current structure and set up of further education and colleges in Scotland to establish if there was any merit in pursuing other delivery models. Given some comments that the focus should be on the three priorities already agreed by CCG and CPG for board approval and progression, RS suggested that the discussion should be a 'coalition of the willing'. RS undertook to host a discussion and WH offered Colleges Scotland to send RS' invitation to chairs on his behalf.
- 8.5. **The board approved the Reform to 2026 plan as outlined, including the three priority themes (Apprenticeships, Funding and Infrastructure, and Workforce).**
- 8.6. **RS to host discussion of chairs around the current structure and set up of further education and colleges in Scotland. Colleges Scotland to send out RS's invitation on his behalf.**

9. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Risk and Regulatory Update

- 9.1. The Risk Register outlined in Paper 9.1 was noted by members.
- 9.2. SS advised that members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee considered the updated risk register remotely and approved it being presented to the board for further consideration and agreement.

9.3.



- 9.4. The board agreed the risk register as presented.

Committee Membership

- 9.5. FH reported that there remained one board member vacancy on the committee as no self-nominations had been received by the deadline.
- 9.6. FH advised that she had received one self-nomination for the co-opted committee member vacancy and would work with the chair of the committee to take this forward.

10. Finance and General Purposes Committee

CS Board Governance Review Workplan Update

- 10.1. An update on the activity being take forward in relation to the Governance Review workplan outlined in Paper 10.1 was noted by members.
- 10.2. FH sought agreement from the board to the proposed revisions outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) and Governance Code's Scheme of Delegation.
- 10.3. FH provided the board with a brief update on the progress around the external review of the board's advisory groups and advised that a copy of the full report on the external review of the advisory groups by Professor Ron Hill was available to view on the Members Area of the Colleges Scotland website.
- 10.4. **The board agreed to the revisions to the ToR as presented subject to a revision under 2.1, with the text to be amended to “*The F&GPC will have no fewer than seven members of whom, including the committee’s Chair, will be members of the Board and will include the following positions*”.**

Fit for Purpose Accommodation

- 10.5. SS introduced Paper 10.2 which set out a timeline of discussions and agreements since March 2022 by the board and the Finance and General Purposes Committee on the future fit for purpose accommodation for both Colleges Scotland and College Employers Scotland.
- 10.6. SS advised that the paper provided recommendations and rationale by the Executive Team on each of the remaining four options which had been assessed against the criteria previously set by the board.

- 10.7.** SS reported that that the Executive Team had recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the business remained as per Option 1 - Argyll Court, Stirling - South (Office) and West (Conference) Wings with Sub Tenants for the next 3-5 years. This option would produce savings over the lease period. SS advised that the committee unanimously supported this recommendation and was now being put to the board for final agreement.
- 10.8. The board unanimously approved the recommendation by the Finance and General Purposes Committee in that the accommodation remains as per Option 1 for the next 3-5 years.**

Communications and Public Affairs Plan 2022-2026

- 10.9.** The plan outlined in Paper 10.3 was noted by members.
- 10.10.** JJ provided an overview of the additional engagement undertaken and highlighted the new Summer Blog series.
- 10.11.** WH thanked JJ and her team for their continued hard work.
- 10.12.** The board agreed with the Finance and General Purposes Committee in that the budget allocation of only £7k was not adequate to be able to deliver on all the areas outlined in the plan.
- 10.13. It was agreed that JJ would speak with NS to discuss how best to make use of the communications and public affairs resources available.**

HR/Health & Safety Update Report for the Period 1st February to 31st July 2023

- 10.14.** The update on HR, health & safety data and policies for the organisation outlined in Paper 10.4 was noted by members.

Committee Membership

- 10.15.** FH asked the board to ratify the membership of JC on the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 10.16. The board ratified the membership of JC.**

11. College Sector Finances Committee

Scottish Government Draft Budget 2024-25 Submission

- 11.1.** The Draft Budget Submission for 2024/25 outlined in Paper 11.1 was noted by members.
- 11.2. The board approved the submission as presented.**

Committee Cycle of Business for 2023/24

- 11.3.** The College Sector Finances Committee's draft cycle of business for 2023/24 outlined in Paper 11.2 was noted by members.
- 11.4.** AW reported that the draft annual cycle of business was considered by the College Sector Finances Committee at its meeting on Wednesday 4 October 2023 and is now being recommended to the board to endorse.
- 11.5. The board endorsed the committee's annual cycle of business.**

Committee Membership

- 11.6.** AW asked the board to ratify the membership of JC and David Patterson, Principal at UHI Moray Campbell as a 2 year extension to his membership on the committee.
- 11.7.** AW reported that there remained one board member vacancy on the committee has no self-nominations had been received by the deadline.
- 11.8. The board ratified the membership of JC and David Patterson.**
- 12. College Employers Scotland (CES)**

College Employers Scotland Assurance Reports

- **National Bargaining**

- 12.1.** GD provided the board with a brief update on matters relating to National Bargaining.

- **Job Evaluation**

- 12.2.** GD provided the board with a brief update on matters relating to the Job Evaluation Project.

13. Any Other Competent Business

- 13.1.** There was no further business discussed.
- 13.2.** WH advised that JMc's public appointment as chair of the Glasgow Colleges Regional Board was due to come to an end in early January 2024 and therefore this would be her last board meeting. WH thanked JMc for her contribution to the board and the sector over the years.

14. Date of Future Meetings

- 15.** WH advised that the board was scheduled to meet again on Thursday 25 January 2024.

NB: Bolden text are decisions and actions which are captured in the action log.

Action Monitoring Log

| Actions from 15 June 2023 Meeting | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------|----------|--------|
| Action Ref | Action | Owner | Due Date | Status |
| 150623 – 8.12 | SLT to carry out a simulation test to check that the Business Continuity Plan and ICT Disaster Recovery Plan is effective and report back to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. | SLT | TBA | |
| Actions from 26 October 2023 Meeting | | | | |
| Action Ref | Action | Owner | Due Date | Status |
| 261023 – 2.11 | Andy Witty and Gordon Hunt to discuss in more detail the roles Colleges Scotland and College Development Network could play in supporting the ongoing campaigns in relation to the Fraser of Allander report (<i>Economic Contribution of Colleges in Scotland</i>). | SLT | Feb 24 | |
| 261023 – 2.12 | Andy Witty to start discussions with SFC around what data is currently collected for the sector and what data could be collected, and how this can inform more research like the Fraser of Allander report (<i>Economic Contribution of Colleges in Scotland</i>) in the future. | SLT | Feb 24 | |
| 261023 – 5.3 | A separate session to be arranged for a board development day during 2024 and an item will be included at a future meeting to discuss this further. | WH/FH | Mar 24 | |
| 261023 – 6.7 | The October 2023 CEO report to be shared with chairs and principals. | SLT | Nov 23 | |
| 261023 – 6.8 | Jen Johnston to ensure that appropriate student representation and engagement takes place at the conference. | SLT | Mar 24 | |
| 261023 – 7.4 | Andy Witty to use the feedback and change the way the strategy trackers are presented going forward. | SLT | Jan 24 | |
| 261023 – 8.6 | Ronnie Smith to host discussion of chairs around the current structure and set up of further education and colleges in Scotland. FH to send out the invitation on his behalf. | RS/FH | Nov 23 | |
| 261023 – 10.4 | FH to make further revisions to the Terms of Reference for the Finance and General Purposes Committee under 2.1, with the text to be amended to <i>“The F&GPC will have no fewer than seven members of whom, including the committee’s Chair, will be members of the Board and will include the following positions”</i> | FH | Nov 23 | |
| 261023 – 10.13 | Jen Johnston to discuss with Nora Senior how best to make use of the communications and public affairs resources available. | SLT | Jan 24 | |