

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 6 December 2019 in the Boardroom, Hele Road, Exeter College

Present	David Allen	Chair
	Bindu Arjoon	Vice Chair
	Sue Clarke	
	Chris Hoar	
	John Laramy	Principal
	Tom Matthew	
	Jo Matthews	
	Matt Roach	
	Tim Rutherford	
	Toby Smith	
	Emma Webber	
	Cassandra Wood	
	Heather Ancient	
	Stewart Noakes	
Observers	None	
Apologies	Sarah Brampton	
	Dave Underwood	
	Glenn Woodcock	
	Sonja Longmore	
In Attendance	Rob Bosworth	Vice Principal Schools, Partnerships and Curriculum
	Steve Champion	Vice Principal Finance and Business Operations
	Jade Otty	Vice Principal Performance
<i>Item 6.2 only</i>	Dee Rowett	Head of Faculty
	Alison Layton-Hill	Clerk to the Corporation

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

Action

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the first Board meeting of the academic year.

Apologies were received from Sarah Brampton, Dave Underwood, Sonja Longmore and Glenn Woodcock.

Declarations of Interest

Bindu Arjoon, Director, Exeter City Council declared an interest in any items relating to planning.

Chris Hoar, Partner Michelmores, declared an interest in any items relating to the Institute of Technology and Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

David Allen declared that he has been professionally acquainted with Professor Sir Steve Smith (item 3.1) and Professor Tim Quine (item 4).

2. Minutes of Meetings

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2019, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2019, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Patron

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

4. Governor Appointment

The Board received the biography of Professor Tim Quine, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) at the University of Exeter and considered his appointment as a Governor. The Principal and the Clerk had met with Professor Quine and recommended his appointment to the Board.

The Board approved the appointment of Professor Tim Quine as a governor for four years with effect from 3 February 2020.

The Board approved that Professor Tim Quine is appointed to the Quality and Standards Committee.

5. Corporation Chair's Report

The Chair referred to the letter to Chairs and Principals from Lord Agnew and Richard Atkins, which had been circulated with the papers.

The Chair updated the Board following his attendance at the AoC National Conference. Due to General Election purdah, Ministers and officials were absent, however it was noted that the conference had been worthwhile. The Chair, referring to a presentation at the Conference from the Director of the Institute of Fiscal Studies, suggested that caution should be exercised in terms of potential additional public funding and that there may be limited fiscal headroom for investment.

The Chair and the Principal had also attended the AoC South West Principals and Chairs meeting. Richard Atkins had attended and spoke about the number of colleges that are requiring intervention. He highlighted the importance of the Treasury being confident that colleges are well-run and that additional funding can be managed appropriately. Steve Frampton, the AoC President had advised delegates that he believes there is a willingness from the DfE to work with the AoC to co-create policy.

All governors were encouraged to attend the 50th Student Awards Celebration event on 24 January 2020.

Governors were reminded to advise the Clerk if they are unable to attend the Board Residential in Torquay on 20 and 21 March 2020, to enable final numbers to be confirmed to the venue.

6. **Strategic Matters for Discussion**

6.1 Principal's Strategic Report

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

6.2 SAR/QIP – "what got us here won't get us there"

The Board received a presentation from the Vice Principal Schools, Partnerships and Curriculum and the Vice Principal Performance.

The Board noted that the College had assessed itself as 'outstanding' in all curriculum areas except for 19+ provision, which was assessed as 'good'. The College was assessed as 'outstanding' in all four Ofsted Common Inspection Framework elements: Outcomes; Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare; Leadership and Management. The Vice Principal Performance gave an overview of the previous year's achievements and areas for improvement that are identified in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2019/2020.

The Vice Principal Schools, Partnerships and Curriculum shared with Governors the College's strategy for maintaining momentum and meeting the requirements of the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF). There is a new focus on curriculum intent (purpose) and the importance of adopting a common language across the College was noted. All aspects of the curriculum must have a line of sight, credibility and added value.

The Board was advised that the new EIF will test the College through 'Deep Dives'. Ofsted will have strategic discussions with leaders in terms of the offer and its purpose. They will then choose a number of subjects for 'deep dive'. All evidence will be collected on the ground through discussions with middle leaders, in the classroom and with learners, with and without teachers present. They will also talk to students in less formal spaces to establish what and why they are learning.

The Board noted that the strategic plan will reflect the new language, however questioned how the language will permeate across the College. The senior leadership team is undertaking more learning walks in the Ofsted style and governors were encouraged to engage with learners when on site.

The Board questioned whether the presentation could be brought into tutorials to give students an insight into why there is this new approach. There was caution that students engaging with Ofsted need to be credible and natural, however the new Personal Development Plan is feeding through the message.

The Board sought reassurance that consideration is given to the intent for all students, not only those that are high performing. The QIP includes provision to ensure all vulnerable learners are visible. Gaps have been identified in terms of economically vulnerable students and support is being provided through the PDP.

Governors were also reassured that the proposed actions are not being done for Ofsted specifically and that there is a commitment to maintaining integrity and listening to College communities.

The Board thanked the presenters for their presentation

Dee Rowett, Head of Faculty joined the meeting for item 6.3 only

6.3 Personal Development Plans

The Board received a presentation from the Head of Faculty outlining how the new Personal Development Plans (PDPs) help to protect and preserve the College's pastoral care. It was noted that personal development is a key area of the new EIF and that Gatsby benchmarks indicate a requirement to increase the consistency of the learner experience and the alignment of pastoral care and curriculum.

The Board was advised that the next steps in the implementation are:

- Auditing processes including learning walks
- PREVENT tutorials
- Enhancement of the personal development plan log
- Development of a year 2 Scheme of Work
- Formulate learner focus groups

The Board challenged how a student would articulate the purpose of the PDP. It was confirmed that the language of the new EIF is adopted and students might refer to 1-1s or group tutorials, however there is more work to do.

Governors suggested that there needs to be a link into the strategic plan to enable an evaluation of the success and impact that PDPs are having. It was also agreed to communicate with students further to establish how they

would like to engage in the process. The Principal acknowledged that more can be done in terms of attitude and behaviour and that there is a focus on creating a professional environment for the learners.

The Board thanked the Head of Faculty for the presentation

7. Learner and Student Voice update

7.1 College News

The report was received and taken as read. The Board particularly noted that the College had reached the finals of the Association of Colleges Beacon City & Guilds Award for Engagement with Employers.

The Board noted the report

7.2 Learner and Student Voice Report

The report was received and taken as read. The Principal acknowledged that the College is currently short of social and café space and there is a commitment to make improvements as part of the new evolution of the estate.

The board agreed that hygiene factors are important to the student experience and encouraged the senior leadership team to re-arrange learning spaces and provide lockers where possible.

JL

The Board noted the report

7.3 Student Governor Reports

The Student Governors gave a brief overview of their reports, which were welcomed by the Board.

The Board questioned whether the Student Governors were offered options for continued education whilst at school. It was confirmed that the outreach from Exeter College was effective.

Part 2 REPORTS FOR NOTING/APPROVAL

8. Recommendations from Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

8.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 18 November 2019.

The report summarising the key issues considered by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting held on 18 November 2019 was received. Jo Matthews highlighted the key issues.

It was confirmed that the audit had been concluded well and the auditors had complimented the finance team.

8.2 Terms of Reference

The Board received the revised Terms of Reference which had been updated to include reference to the fact that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee is responsible for assurance in terms of GDPR.

The Board approved the updated Terms of Reference

8.3 Risk Register

The Board considered the risk register, which had been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Board was advised that Deep Dive presentations to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee were linked to high risks with the purpose of ensuring mitigating factors identified on the risk register are effective. Any issues are passed back to the relevant Committee. It was agreed that there would be further discussion about the Risk Register and how the Business Services and Quality and Standards Committees feed into the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at the Board Residential. Feedback from non-committee members who attended the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Deep Dive was positive.

It was confirmed that the senior leadership team will redefine some risks following feedback from the committees.

SC

The Board approved the Risk Register

8.4 Risk Management Annual Report

The Board considered the Risk Management Annual Report which summarised the activity relating to risk management for the preceding year.

The Board approved the Risk Management Annual Report

8.5 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report

The Board considered the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report which assured the Board that the Committee is satisfied with the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's systems of internal control.

Further discussion was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

The Board approved the Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report

8.6 Key Issues Discussion Document

The Board considered the Key Issues Discussion Document which confirmed a clean audit. There had been no change to the agreed plan, no significant findings and no override of manual controls. Assumptions made were appropriate and the Financial Statements represented a fair view of the College's position. Progress in terms of the fixed asset register was particularly pleasing. There was a question as to how the staff bonus was

accounted for and a suggestion that it should not have been recognised in the accounts as the announcement to staff had not been made at that stage.

The Board approved the Key Issues Discussion Document

8.7 Regularity Self-Assessment

The Board considered the Regularity Self-Assessment, which had been reviewed by the Committee.

The Board approved the Regularity Self-Assessment

8.8 Letter of Representation

The Auditors require the Board to confirm its understanding of its responsibilities by signing the Letter of Representation before the accounts are finalised.

The Board approved the Letter of Representation for signature by the Chair

9. **Recommendations from Business Services Committee**

9.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 25 November 2019.

The report summarising the key issues considered by the Business Services Committee meeting held on 25 November 2019 was received and noted. The Committee Chair highlighted some key elements of the meeting.

The Committee endorsed the approach of exploring a flexible revolving credit facility. There had also been a discussion around the imminent construction works and the actions taken to mitigate the significant disruption to students and visitors.

9.2 Exeter College Financial Statements

The draft accounts for Exeter College for the year ended 31st July 2019, which had been reviewed by the Business Services Committee and recommended for approval, were received.

The Board noted the end of year surplus of £61k, which included the provision of a staff bonus. Following the committee meeting, a narrative qualifying the cash position was added to reflect the major capital investments made in year. The Board noted that the financial health of the College is very good.

The Board approved the Exeter College Financial Statements and authorised the Chair and Principal to sign them

9.3 A Plus Training Ltd and Exeter College Services Ltd Financial Statements

The draft accounts for A plus Training Ltd and Exeter College Services Ltd for the year ended 31st July 2019, which had been reviewed by the Business Services Committee and were recommended for approval, were received. The Board noted that although Exeter College Services Ltd is currently a dormant

company this will see some activity in the coming year in terms of the delivery of the existing nursery provision and Owlets, the new nursery.

The Board approved the A Plus Training and Exeter College Services Ltd Financial Statements

The Board extended its thanks to the Vice Principal, Finance and Business Operations and the wider finance team.

10. Recommendations from the Quality and Standards Committee

- 10.1 Executive Summary from Committee meeting on 2 December 2019. The report summarising the key issues considered by the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 2 December 2019 was received and noted. The Committee Chair highlighted the key issues.

The Committee had discussed a regulatory letter which had been received from the Office for Students (OfS). The College had not met a regulatory deadline as it was two weeks late in settling an invoice for the amount of £5,000 to cover the designated quality body's fees. It was noted that the College was one of 73% of providers that missed the same deadline. The Committee confirmed to the Board that it was assured that action had been taken to prevent a re-occurrence. The College has made these regularity deadlines a higher priority and provided additional resource towards compliance processes. The Board recognised that the additional demands made by the OfS are having an impact on resources.

10.2 Safeguarding Report

The circulated annual report was received, which had been scrutinised by the Quality and Standards Committee. The Safeguarding Governor endorsed the report and noted that there was good awareness of the areas of concern, which included an increasing demand associated with mental health and wellbeing. The new Director of Student Experience had presented his reflections, in particular noting the high level of reporting, which was not unusual when new systems are introduced. The Board noted that there would be more staff awareness training to give confidence to record incidents appropriately.

The Committee was reassured that, although the number of individual staff involved in safeguarding had decreased, the number of hours in terms of dedicated safeguarding staff had almost doubled.

The Committee was particularly pleased to note that 9.3% of Looked After Children and Care Leavers progressed to university from the College, which is 6% above the national benchmark.

The Board raised that with the emphasis on wellbeing for young people, the hours allocated to staff are focusing on more complex and urgent cases. The

role of the tutor in terms of wellbeing needs to be considered, which will be supported by the personal development plans.

The Board approved the Safeguarding Annual Report and thanked the Safeguarding team

10.3 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The Board noted the Committee's approval of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- 10.4 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2018/2019 outcome
The completed QIP for 2018/19 was received by the Quality and Standards Committee and recommended for Board approval. All actions were completed or had been carried over to the 2019-20 QIP.

The Board noted the positive progress that had been made, as well as areas to roll forward to the QIP 2019/2020.

The Board approved the QIP 2018/2019 outcome

- 10.5 Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2018/2019 and QIP 2019/2020
The SAR for 2018/2019 and the Quality Improvement Plan for 2019/20 were received and considered.

The Board noted the assessment grade of 'outstanding', although there are still improvements required in terms of attendance. The Quality and Standards Committee will also be focusing on progress for disadvantaged students.

The Principal thanked the Vice Principal Performance for developing a comprehensive SAR and QIP. The outcome supports a consistently outstanding College.

The Board approved the SAR 2018/2019 and QIP 2019/2020

10.6 Balanced Score Card 2019/2020

The Board noted the balanced score card targets

PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

11. **Reports**

The following reports were **received and noted.**

- 11.2 Opportunities and Development Risk Register
- 11.3 Management Accounts (September 2019)
- 11.4 ESFA Financial Health Letter

- 11.5 ESFA Finance Dashboard
- 11.6 OfS Regulatory Deadlines Letter
- 11.7 Governance Report
- 11.8 Sealings Report

12. **Minutes**

The following minutes were **received and noted**.

- 12.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee minutes 18 November 2019 *Draft*
- 12.2 Business Services Committee minutes 25 November 2019 *Draft*
- 12.3 Quality and Standards Committee minutes 2 December 2019 *Draft*

13. **Confidential Minutes**

The following confidential minutes were **received and noted**:

- 13.1 Business Services Committee Confidential minutes 25 November 2019 *Draft*

14. **Dates of scheduled meetings for 2018/2019**

Friday 7 February 2020

Friday 8 May 2020

Friday 3 July 2020

The Chair encouraged governors to complete the safeguarding declaration and to inform the Clerk of events attended at, or on behalf of, the College.