



MINUTES of the Meeting of the Board MEETING
held on Wednesday 2 April 2025 at 15.45
held at 1 Sutherland Street, Pimlico, London and via remote participation

Members present: Tiffany Hall Phil Kemp Louise Jones Zarine Kharas Gillian Lancaster (remote) Imran Razzaq Mark Smith Steven Stanley (remote) Susanna Whalley (remote)	Chair and External Member External Member External Member External Member External Member CEO External Member External Member
In attendance: Gemma Cotton Matthew Peckham Tom Fogden Tina Götschi Katy Miles Chris Payne Sarah Salimullah Dr Geoff Stevenson Chloe Tye Chris Cherry Jacky Gearey	Bain & Company Bain & Company Dean for item 3.7 Director of Curriculum and Quality for item 3.3 and 3.5 Director of External Relations for item 3.3 Interim Director of Finance and Data for item 3.8 Principal for items 3.3 Director of Degree Apprenticeships for item 3.3 Investment Director, Impetus Foundation Designate Chair on Board Clerk

Quorum 7 Members

Item	Topic	Action
	The meeting opened at 15.51 with the Chair welcoming everyone and thanking the Board for all their support for the College noting the time it takes and the challenges that have been faced. In addition the Chair introduced Chris Cherry, the designate new Board Chair.	
	Apologies for Absence 1. Amali de Alwis 2. Kathryn Skelton 3. Nick Wilcock There had been no other apologies for absence.	
	Declarations of Interest in agenda items There were no declarations of interest.	
3.0	New Strategy Update	
	The strategy project being run by Bain & Company through a designated Steering Group was in its fourth week. The presentation provided an update on the project looking at five areas, testing some emerging impressions, issues and the direction of travel. The project consisted of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 year ambition - what does success look like? • Where to play which cares should the College operate? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to win i.e. what is needed to build on the existing capabilities and which levers should the College prioritise? • Roadmap which covered flexibility; and • Marketing execution across key audiences to drive awareness and conversion and the financial profile and cash flow sustainability and the implication of a refreshed strategy. <p>Bain provided a synopsis of their findings so far highlighting that the College was mission aligned but that this in itself was a constraint as it created additional complexity compared to its competitors. Staff were highly energised. The market was challenging and complex, however the College had demonstrated its ability to win and whilst there was more to go after, this will require improvements in execution and the College is a small player in a very large market. Of note the College can also selectively play in 'close adjacencies' (the Board referenced T-Levels and discussed how to win in Manchester which was perceived to be different from London). Bain confirmed that regarding these close adjacencies there was a strong rationale based on size, attractiveness to employers and fundraising benefits mindful of the cost of complexity which was high. The Board had a robust discussion on the information presented especially on the marketing execution and the timeline.</p> <p>The Chair thanked both Gemma Cotton and Matthew Peckham for their time and for a thought provoking presentation.</p> <p>Both Gemma Cotton and Matthew Peckham left the meeting at 16.15.</p> <p>Resolved that the Bain update on the strategy project was received and noted by the Board.</p>	
3.1	Ratification of governors	
	<p>As agreed in the remote decision request of 21 February 2025, the Chair asked for formal ratification of Chris Cherry as the incoming Chair of the Board. The Board so approved.</p> <p>Further to the recent Board Membership committee meeting held 10 February 2025, the committee was recommending the re-appointment of both Imran Rassaq and Kathryn Skelton as external governors for a second term. The Board so approved.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Chris Cherry was ratified by the Board as the incoming Chair of the Board (ii) Imran Rassaq and Kathryn Skelton were re-appointed as external governors for a second term 	
3.2	Minutes of Previous meeting	
	<p>Minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Meeting 11 December 2024 (ii) Remote Decision Request 21 February 2025 <p>The Board approved the minutes of 11 December 2024 and 21 February 2025 as an accurate record of the meeting held and the decision taken.</p> <p>Resolved that the minutes of 11 December 2024 and 21 February 2025 were received and approved by the Board as an accurate record of the meeting held and the decision taken.</p>	
3.3	Matters Arising not covered by the agenda	
	<p>Item 3.12 - provide an update on sustainability in the curriculum for the next meeting - Significant sustainability strategy update in board pack, however sustainability in the curriculum strategy/approach is still to be articulated. Whilst this will be covered at the March board meeting – to be provided at next board meeting in June. Open</p> <p>Item 4.4 - complete benchmarking of ratios of learners versus number of people in the safeguarding roles – safeguarding audit underway and Validera (Internal auditor) will</p>	

	<p>conduct review as part of internal audit in Spring 2025. To be provided at next board meeting in June. Open</p> <p>Item 2.3 - reformat strategic risk register graphically – see item 3.9.</p> <p>There were no other matters arising.</p> <p>Gillian Lancaster left the meeting at 16.27</p>	
3.4	<p>CEO's Overview, Board KPIs & Recent Sector Developments</p> <p>Strategic Priorities</p> <p>CEO provided updated the Board on the 6 strategic priorities which remain aligned to the 'Evolving to Ada 2.0' strategy defined in September 2022 through to Summer 2025 while work is ongoing on a new strategy to commence from September 2025. The six priorities were RAG rated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green - Quality of Teaching, learning & Assessment: Peer Review Scheduled for early November 2025; staff turnover and/or lack of capacity is still a concern • Green – Digital Transformation: CRM build underway; new website funding; governance software purchased. • Green – Student Progression & Impact: Alumni Steering Group established but it remains challenging to get the Alumni to events and to obtain survey data i.e 80% data where the alumni are; and c. 15% of sixth formers hope to progress to Ada apprenticeships above target of 10%; • Amber – Apprenticeship Volume Growth: high volume of new employers training small volumes; PwC – will need to complete competitive RFP in Spring 2025. • Amber - Improved HR Function – HR team restructure to include new HR placement up at Manchester; .updated recruitment and retention strategy drafted. • Amber - New Programmes – see update under item 3.7. <p>Reference was made to the sixth form application volumes which were down 25% on last year, however the quality of the applications was better, and a number of offers had been made so far. The Board discussed the possible reasons for this which included demographic changes, the College's relocation. the competitor landscape, the diversification of courses, the need for enhanced marketing and 16-18 funding. Of note the Principal confirmed that the Foundation Pathway had been a success.</p> <p>The CEO referenced Manchester Sixth Form T-Level saying that whilst good progress has been made in some areas, recruitment of both sufficient number of students and teachers had been challenging and the target number of students has not yet been reached - covered under item 3.7</p> <p>Fundraising update – £997k so far achieved, with new income coming from Centerbridge and Inflexion, both of whom were co-investees via Impetus. £528k is committed towards 25/26 and at least £200k of likely additional income has already been identified.</p> <p>Marketing and Communications – referencing the Bain strategy project which is reviewing this and improving marketing awareness. New website to go live for next academic year.</p> <p>Sector Developments - CEO asked for the paper outlining the following to be taken as read: Post 16 Education and Skills Strategy; Funding Updates (In-year Growth, Course Rates and Adults Skills Fund); and Curriculum and Strategic Developments (T-Levels, BTECs, new Ofsted Framework and Curriculum and Assessment Review).</p> <p>Resolved that CEO's Overview, Board KPIs & Recent Sector Developments were received and noted by the Board</p> <p>Geoff Stevenson and Katy Miles left meeting at 16.53</p>	

3.5	Quality Improvement Plan Update & Peer Review Overview	
	<p>The Quality Improvement plan outlines the process to achieving, assuring, maintaining and improving the outstanding quality in education in both the 16-19 and Apprenticeship programmes informed by the curriculum intent. In order to validate the quality improvement plan, a Peer Review is to be conducted to provide the College with feedback. NCG has offered to carry out the review which will now take place in early November, giving the College more time to recruit to empty academic roles and ensure this quality work with new staff is embedded from the beginning. The Chair of Education committee said that this had been discussed at length at the recent meeting and in particular reference to the need for improved line managers.</p> <p>Resolved that Quality Improvement Plan Update & Peer Review Overview was received and noted by the Board</p> <p>Tina Götschi left the meeting at 17.00</p>	
3.6	Safeguarding and Prevent Update	
	<p>The CEO asked that the paper be taken as read, reassuring the Board that the full report had been presented and discussed at the Education committee on Monday 31 March 25. The Board noted the issue of Sixth Formers using VPNs to bypass Smoothwall filtering in unstructured times. The CEO said that this was being monitored and IT were currently in the process of identifying and implementing technical solutions to prevent the use of VPNs recognising that any implemented solutions should not only be effective but also did not negatively impact legitimate online activities.</p> <p>The Chair of the Education committee also updated the Board on the new safeguarding lead, which was now Alice Ward, the co-opted member on the Education committee, who had recently had a comprehensive handover.</p> <p>Resolved that the Safeguarding and Prevent Report was received and noted by the Board</p>	
3.7	New programme development update	
	<p>Dean provided the following update:</p> <p>Manchester Sixth Form T Level. T Level Digital Design Development and Production has now been renamed Software Development. As mentioned under the CEO's overview, recruitment of both sufficient number of students and teachers have been challenging and the target number of students has not yet been reached. Following an Open event 1 May 25 should there still be insufficient students enrolled after this time, then a decision will have to be made at the next Education committee meeting regarding whether to go ahead with the T-Level at this time. The Board re-iterated its comments made under item 3.4.</p> <p>Loan Funded Courses - BSc in Digital Innovation. At the end of November the Office for Students (OfS) halted the College's submission citing that due to the poor financial performance by many universities they were going to pause the registration process until August 2025. It is hoped that when registration reopens, the College will reapply with much of the work already completed. Dependent on the outcome of the strategy discussions, a decision will be taken whether to prioritise this application.</p> <p>Short Courses King's Trust (previously Prince's Trust) 7 week course The College has been contracted to deliver a 7 week short course in Digital Marketing & AI, starting on 31 March 2025 with 25 students.</p> <p>King's Trust Digital Partner An RFI to be a Digital Partner in London and Manchester to deliver the same 7 week programme multiple times in both locations and a number of shorter digital sessions has been completed. The College is awaiting the outcome.</p>	

	<p>PWC</p> <p>The company has approached the College regarding the provision of short courses especially for graduate apprentices focusing on AI. This is being considered and will be a competitive process.</p> <p>Other Prospective Programmes being considered included Westminster Digital Dash, Foundation Apprenticeships, Adult courses, New Level 4 Apprenticeship and Lambeth Council Digitals Skills Carousel.</p> <p>The Chair that it will be interesting to see how these 'close adjacencies' progress.</p> <p>Resolved that the New programme development update was received and noted by the Board</p> <p>Tom Fogden left meeting at 17.06</p>	
3.9	<p>Strategic Risk Register Summary</p> <p>The FD advised that the strategic risk register had been reviewed by the Audit committee and that no new risks had been added but to be mindful that this will change after Bain has completed their work on the new strategy. Of note the following had been discussed: Risk 8 be removed as this was a duplication of Risk 23. Risk 10 the emerging risk around recruitment to Manchester Sixth Form has been included under a broader sixth form recruitment risk covering both sites (similar to apprentice recruitment). Risk 23 has been reworded to reflect that the risk will apply to the new emerging strategy as opposed to Ada 2.0.</p> <p>Of the 24 strategic risks, one has moved in a positive direction (fundraising), one negatively (T-Level work placements) and the remainder no change. The one risk with a red residual risk rating concerned apprenticeship volumes which had been discussed previously.</p> <p>The FD confirmed that the risk register would be reviewed again when the strategy had been finalised and would include the risk appetite.</p> <p>Resolved that the Strategic Risk Register was received and noted by the Board</p>	
3.10	<p>Environmental Sustainability Update</p> <p>The newly formed Sustainability Working Group (SWG) met in March 2025, and this was their second meeting. The 24/25 actions were highlighted in the paper presented together with the targets which included new recycling bins across both campuses, a wider sustainability awareness programme across the College including action days and participation in national/international sustainability events and finalise learner initiatives. CEO said that a lot of progress had been made in a short amount of time cognisant that more still needs to be done. The Chair that this was a very positive step forward especially as the Board had made reference in their annual board self-assessment to the need for a more focussed approach to environmental sustainability.</p> <p>Resolved that the Environmental Sustainability Update was received and noted by the Board</p>	
3.11	<p>Chairs of Committees Summary Reports</p> <p>Each of the committee chairs had presented summary reports from their respective meetings, much of which had been discussed at this meeting. There were no further comments or questions from the Board and no approvals apart from those under item 3.12.</p>	

	Resolved that the Chairs of Committees Summary Reports were received and noted by the Board	
3.12	Document Approvals	
	<p>The Chair of the Board Membership committee advised that the following documents had been reviewed at the previous committee meeting and were all recommended for approval. Changes were highlighted by the Clerk and included:</p> <p>Standing Orders Amendments made to clauses were mainly associated with the student member under clauses 2.2, 9.6 and Appendix III Clause 16.</p> <p>Governor Induction booklet Amendments to clause 8 and inclusion of a new clause 16 covering a governor's commitment statement.</p> <p>Code of Conduct for Governors Changes included addition of College Funding Framework, and reference to the abolition of the ESFA under Appendix 1.</p> <p>Calendar of Meetings for 2025-26 – of note dates can be subject to change</p> <p>The Board approved the above documents.</p> <p>Resolved that the following documents were received and approved by the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Orders • Governor Induction booklet • Code of Conduct for Governors • Calendar of Meetings for 2025-26 <p>Susanna Whalley left meeting at 17.51</p>	
3.13	Forward Agenda Items	
	There were none.	
3.14	Any Other Business	
	<p>Board Portal Update The Chair advised that board portal software had been purchased to facilitate Board Members access to papers. It is intended that this be up and running for the summer term with training provided for board members.</p> <p>Departing Governors The CEO on behalf of the College made presentations to the departing governors expressing his thanks to each for their help and support over the years. In particular mentioning: Phil Kemp who had been the Chair of the F&R committee and as such had provided balanced insight into the finances of the College and immeasurable support with the Manchester Ancoats campus; Tiffany Hall, the departing Board Chair who had taken over the reins as Board Chair at an incredibly challenging time for the College, both financially and most importantly, amidst discussion and decisions regarding relocation of the London Campus to Victoria and then the set-up of the Manchester campus and its subsequent relocation.</p> <p>The Board Members endorsed these sentiments. There was no other business.</p>	
3.15	Date of Next meeting: 25 June 2025	
	Close of meeting	
	Meeting closed at 18.05	