

SANDWELL COLLEGE

**Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting
held on Monday 7 December 2020 at 4.00pm
Virtual meeting**

Present: K Ellis (Independent) (Chair)
 A Banford (Staff – Cadbury)
 G Bassi (Independent)
 N Grace (Independent)
 S Hackett (Independent)
 N Makin (Independent)
 P Murphy (Independent)
 G Pennington (Principal)
 A Taylor (Independent)
 J Tew (Independent)

Apologies: I Ali (Student – Cadbury)
 J Francis (Independent)
 M J Uddin (Independent)

Also in attendance:

J Bailey Executive Director, Finance & Resources
 B Beaty Executive Director, HR and Organisational Development
 N Bostan Associate Principal
 P Geary Vice Principal
 S Griffiths Executive Director, Projects, Innovation & External Engagement
 D Holden Vice Principal
 A Sheridan Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Student Services
 E Scottford Clerk to the Corporation
 J Stevens Executive Director, Quality & Academic Standards, and Principal, Cadbury College

		Action
B20.91	<u>Apologies</u>	
	Apologies were received from Jayne Francis, Jalal Uddin and Israa Ali. Apologies were also received from Chris Demetrios.	
	RESOLVED THAT: apologies were approved by Governors.	
B20.92	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest beyond the standing register of interests.	
B20.93	<u>Board membership – update</u>	
20.93.1	<u>Student Governor – Cadbury</u>	
	RESOLVED THAT: Following the Student Governor election process, Governors approved the appointment of Israa Ali as Student Governor representing Cadbury College and member of the Learners Quality and Curriculum Committee (LQCC) for an 8-month term of office to 31 July 2020.	

20.93.2	Independent Governor – Paul Stanaway	
	The Chair and Principal had met with Mr Stanaway and explained his background and the skills and experience he would bring to the Board.	
	RESOLVED THAT: Governors approved the appointment on a 3-year term of office of Paul Stanaway as Independent Governor and member of the Finance & Strategy Committee.	
20.93.3	Independent Governor - vacancy	
	Update given on attempts to fill the vacancy which arose on the departure of Chief Supt Youds.	
B20.94	<u>Minutes of previous meeting – 12 October 2020</u>	
	RESOLVED THAT: the minutes of the Board meeting held on 12 October 2020 were approved as a true and accurate record for signing by the Chair.	
B20.95	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
20.95.1	Minute B20.84.5 – NM, Link Governor, Gatsby, updated the Board on his meeting with Angela Tombs, Director of Student Services. It is a Board accountability to ensure Gatsby benchmarks are built into college life. Much progress has been made in this area. A Careers Focus Group is being set up across the whole college. Full update to be given to the next LQCC meeting. Clerk to note for agenda.	Clerk
20.95.2	Minute B20.86 – Governors referred to additional funding for catch-up and Covid-19 costs and asked if the College had received such funding yet. The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, confirmed the College was exploring what additional support funding was available. The criteria is very strict but the College might be able to access some funds relating to staff absence because of Covid.	
20.95.3	Minute B20.79.12 – student voice to be involved in the Towns Funds bids – the College advised that this would need to be facilitated through the LA.	
B20.96	<u>Principal's Report</u>	
20.96.0.1	Student numbers stand at 6160, 516 higher than the same point last year. Half of the funding is usually received in-year but it is not known if that will happen this year because of national funding pressures.	
20.96.0.2	Application numbers are challenging this year as the College cannot access schools in the usual way. The last enrolment was encouraging and indicates young people want to study. There are no signs of any movement towards under-enrolment.	
20.96.0.3	The College is maximising its use of virtual recruitment systems which continue to evolve.	
	Staff absence has slightly improved to the figure included in the report.	

	Fewer staff and students are self-isolating now. The College has coped well with the situation. Resilience committees are in place and are effective.	
20.96.0.4 NFP		
20.96.0.5	Complimentary letter received from James Morris, MP, in which he recognised the College's support of his recent virtual jobs fair.	
20.96.0.6	T levels update given and issues and concerns highlighted. The College is to be a pilot for T levels. The College has briefed the local MP who is keen for T levels to develop. Concern had been expressed at the Department's recent comment that colleges did not want T levels. Challenging questions will be asked of the Civil Service. The Permanent Secretary from the DfE has been invited to the College. Principal's paper to be considered in detail at the next LQCC meeting. Clerk to note for agenda.	Clerk
	GB arrived	
20.96.0.7	Governors referred to the MD, Skills and Innovation, senior management vacancy and asked where this fitted into the College's plans. The Principal advised that the College was now using an agency to try to identify a higher calibre field of applicants. This was a new role which would have a close link with adult skills work and complete what the College has been working towards for a while. The College needs to increase its employer engagement but it is challenging to find candidates with the suitable skill set. Governor involvement in the process was welcomed. Alan Taylor, Governor, had been involved in the recruitment process as a local employer and business ambassador.	
20.96.0.8	Governors found the case studies useful and noted the College had supported its Free School Meals (FSM) students over the last holiday. The Principal advised that Sandwell LA had been supportive of the College's Covid approach and the College had a particularly good relationship with the Director of Education.	
20.96.1	Covid-19 update	
	The Principal's update was noted.	
20.96.2	Projects update	
	Governors thanked the Executive Director, Projects, Innovation & External Engagement, for all his hard work. Governors requested that additional information be attached to the cover report as appendices as the links in reports did not always work.	

96.2.1	Cadbury Science City procurement	
96.2.1.1	The Cadbury Science City project was time critical. The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, advised that some of the funding had now been received and a decision was expected w/c 14 December on the next tranche of the funding.	
96.2.1.2	The project is now imminent. An action plan and programme with timings and design pack were provided. There is a very short window to deliver on the programme due to the LEP funding timescales. There is an amount of building work which needs to be completed by the end of March which is a challenge.	
96.2.1.3	The use of frameworks is not unusual for this type of project. AA Projects advise this approach is compliant with public sector procurement.	
96.2.1.4	The Financial Regulations were included to demonstrate the College is able to follow this procurement process via a framework with Board approval. The College was confident the approach would deliver the same value for money objectives as if a tender process was followed.	
96.2.1.5	Governors were satisfied the cover paper was clear on the proposal and asked when the project would start under this arrangement. The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, advised the College anticipated approval of the LEP funding in the next few days. If approved the project would move to the next stage of involving a principal building contractor, and a firm overview of costs presented to the January Board meeting for the work to start in January. If not approved, the College would bring its contingency plan to the January Board meeting.	
96.2.1.6	Governors asked if there was an urgency driving the request for the Board to take an alternative approach to the Financial Regulations. The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, explained the College wanted to make sure the LEP funding was secured but the money had to be spent within the LEP timeframe.	
	AT arrived	
96.2.1.7	Governors asked how much money the College expected to spend by March to meet the requirement. The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, explained that AA Projects, the Principal Designer, thought it was achievable to spend the £1.7 million LEP funding by March.	
96.2.1.8	The Executive Director, Projects, Innovation & External Engagement, advised the LEP was fully on board with the College's proposal and suggested approach. This approach is not unusual and has been used by other educational institutions for this type of work and funding.	
96.2.1.9	Governors asked what were the risks of following LEP advice and proceeding with the project in this way. The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, confirmed that the College had received £150k of the LEP funding upfront to pay for the professional costs of the building services contractor. These costs will	

	not have to be paid if the project does not proceed. If the project does not deliver on time, it may have to be scaled back. It is a £3.3 million project. The College is working with a Project Manager from the LEP on this project to ensure it meets their requirements and have checked if this will create a risk for the College.	
96.2.1.10	<p>Eversheds have also reviewed the documentation provided by AA Projects.</p> <p>The Principal advised there was no financial risk at present. The decision required to move to Phase B will probably be needed in January by which time it will be known if the LEP funding has been awarded to enable the project to proceed as planned. The College was therefore alerting Governors to the necessity to take a particular route which was necessary because of the timeframes as some money has to be committed and spent by end March 2021.</p>	
96.2.1.11	The College stressed the procurement route suggested was well documented and considered, and appropriate legal advice had been taken. It was no different to a tender route because the preferred company would obtain competitive quotes for various aspects of the project.	
96.2.1.12	<p>Governors sought clarification that the plan was to select Wilmot Dixon using this procurement route.</p> <p>The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, confirmed this was likely, there was no commitment to them at present but it allows the College to pursue the framework route. By the January Board meeting, Wilmot Dixon will have had an opportunity to compile the financial details to enable the College to appoint them. Wilmot Dixon sub-contract out packages of work under the procurement process.</p> <p>Governors were satisfied with the explanation.</p>	
96.2.1.13	Governors noted that legal advice had been taken from Eversheds to take this route and the proposal was to use the framework route as outlined in paper of the Executive Director, Finance & Resources, to proceed with this project.	
96.2.1.14	<p>RESOLVED THAT: Governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received the project update on Cadbury Science City • Approved the College's proposed procurement strategy, being that advised by AA Projects to undertake a Design and Build approach and appointment of a principal contractor via a Framework as an approved departure from college Financial Regulations as allowed under paragraph 1.2.6 	
96.2.2	Right Time Recruitment	
96.2.2.1	The Executive Director, Projects, Innovation & External Engagement, apologised for the late issue of the paper re. contracted activity with Right Time Recruitment. It was taken under Projects Update because it proposes to improve and enhance the College's ability to engage with employers. The recommendation and action for Governors was to approve the contracted activity. Detailed outputs and financials and risk mitigation were included in the paper.	
96.2.2.2	Governors commented that the Right Time document did not reflect diversity and mainly focused on white young men which did not reflect	

	<p>the demographic and location of the College.</p> <p>The Executive Director, Projects, Innovation & External Engagement, explained that the document provided was an internal document and reassured Governors that the marketing campaign would meet the College's requirements regarding its demography and locality.</p>	
96.2.2.3	Governors believed the proposal further supported the engagement of an MD, Skills and Innovation, and the Gatsby standards.	
96.2.2.4	Governors noted the number of different avenues the College was seeking business support and asked if the management team had the resources to manage all strands in a coherent way.	
96.2.2.5	<p>Governors asked if Right Time provided good value for money.</p> <p>The Principal explained that the company was owned and led by James White, winner of The Apprentice 2017, and involved Alan Sugar and as such the corporate style was evident. The College was looking to work with Right Time, particularly in the IT sector which is a niche sector and it is challenging to find work placements as many companies are quite small and difficult for the College to engage with them effectively.</p> <p>The project links with Cadbury in the City and Young Professionals but the project is open to all students. It should provide a sense of the College's strategy on employment and engagement. The College is working with a number of organisations to generate more work placements.</p>	
96.2.2.6	Moving forwards, this is a pilot which will ultimately fall under the remit of the new MD, Skills and Innovation, role. The College needs leadership at the right level and needs to appoint the right person to the role.	
96.2.2.7	The Principal agreed to provide a paper on the strategy behind this proposal to the next LQCC meeting.	Principal
96.2.2.8	<p>Governors asked for clarification of how much the retainer would cost.</p> <p>The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, confirmed it was £4k and £9k per month to secure placements and marketing activity, i.e. £156k per year but if Right Time do not deliver the outputs, the contract allowed for the College to discontinue the arrangement. It could double the College's apprenticeship provision.</p>	
96.2.2.9	<p>Governors clarified this was the total anticipated amount. The paper suggests this approach is better value rather than having dedicated employed staff to support this activity.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the cost is offset by not having in-house personnel. Right Time have a call centre arrangement. The College has run down its employer engagement section due to the difficulties created by the Covid-19 situation.</p>	
96.2.2.10	<p>Governors assumed Right Time had talked to the College about case studies to demonstrate their competence and success.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the College would not proceed with the arrangement without undertaking due diligence. The paper was to alert</p>	

	the Board to the College's plans and financial protection has been built in.	
96.2.2.11	Governors noted that KPIs would be in place throughout the contract.	
96.2.2.12	Governors noted that this was an area the College had found challenging so this was a strategy worth pursuing.	
96.2.2.13	The Executive Director, Projects, Innovation & External Engagement, explained that the timescale for annual review was a full calendar year with a formal review at 6 months. Monthly informal reviews were also built in.	
96.2.2.14	Governors asked for an update at the next meeting.	Exec Dir, P, I & EE
96.2.2.15	Governors accepted the Principal's offer to report back on the College's strategy including an overall strategic review and updates on progress and timelines on the various strands and initiatives, given that the Governors Annual Strategy Day had had to be cancelled because of Covid. This would help Governors to understand where all these projects fit into the overall strategic vision. The Principal confirmed he had produced interim reports in between meetings and the new Finance & Strategy Committee would be kept apprised of projects.	
96.2.2.16	Governors noted the College was hugely ambitious, extremely successful and recognised the need to be forward-thinking but queried if there were too many projects underway and upcoming to manage effectively. Governors believed that using Right Time Recruitment to generate results would be helpful so supported their appointment subject to due diligence.	
96.2.2.17	RESOLVED THAT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to due diligence, Governors approved the College to enter into a contract with Right Time Recruitment for an initial 12-month period (from January 2021) for the delivery of the activity, outputs and financial arrangements described above. Update to be given to the next meeting. 	Exec Dir, P, I & EE
B20.97	<u>Teaching & Learning Report</u>	
	Key points were highlighted:	
B20.97.1	Final results had been confirmed and had been submitted to the funding body. There were few changes to the previous report.	
B20.97.2	Curriculum update outlined changes this year. The main change has been a wholesale change to L3 with the change from the QCF to RQF framework which involves external exams and are more rigorous qualifications.	
B20.97.3	The impact of Covid-19 on teaching and learning (T&L) delivery. The College is in a Tier 3 area. Its delivery methods range from 50:50 online and face to face learning, to 100% face to face, with nothing below 50:50. A number of changes have been made to the curriculum	

	to ensure T&L is delivered in a Covid-safe way.	
B20.97.4	<p>Governors noted the significant amount of work on catch-up with individual students and asked if the College had had to recruit staff to assist.</p> <p>The Vice Principal, Curriculum, advised that the effectiveness of T&L was good and students and teachers were happy. Next year's results will be a measure of its success. Government catch-up funding is useful. Academic mentors are being used at Cadbury and Central St Michael's, who are newly qualified graduates, and have been effective. Vocational mentors have been introduced at Central campus and are also working well.</p>	
B20.97.5	<p>Governors noted the College had had to put extra resources into pastoral support for learners facing blended learning to ensure they stayed on track and in touch.</p> <p>The Vice Principal, Curriculum, clarified that no student was 100% online. More resources have also been put into safeguarding. Students are confident in raising any personal issues with teachers and the Safeguarding team.</p>	
B20.97.6	In answer to a Governor's query, the Vice Principal, Curriculum, advised that the College was providing more face to face delivery than other organisations. This has been the theme throughout Covid. The College was one of the few who delivered in person teaching before the summer. Enrolment was also conducted face to face as was the majority of teaching. Other colleges have taken a different approach with some operating a rota system. Funding authorities are questioning the effectiveness of this approach.	
B20.97.7	<p>Governors stated the College should be proud of itself and what it had achieved and how it had supported the students, and noted it had not taken the easy route.</p> <p>The Vice Principal, Curriculum, agreed to pass on Governors' thanks to staff.</p>	VP, Curr
B20.97.8	The Vice Principal, Quality, advised that the full draft Executive summary of College SAR was attached to DH's report and the SAR would be presented for Governors approval in January.	VP, Qual
B20.97.9	<p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors received the Teaching & Learning report. • The Vice Principal, Curriculum, would pass on Governors' thanks to staff. • the College SAR would be presented for Governors approval in January. 	VP, Curr VP, Qual
B20.98	<p><u>Policies</u></p> <p>RESOLVED THAT: Governors approved the following policies:</p>	
B20.98.1	IT Security	
B20.98.2	Password	
B20.98.3	Penetration Testing	

B20.98.4	Social Media Governors asked how easy the policy was to police. The Vice Principal, Quality, confirmed the College had a number of systems applications in place which identified when and which staff accessed inappropriate material. The policy set professional standards.	
B20.98.5	Acceptable Use	
B20.98.6	e-Safety Governors noted these were detailed policies and contained many acronyms and asked that a glossary be provided in future.	
B20.99	<u>Student Union Accounts 2019/20</u>	
B20.99.1	The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, advised that there was a slight surplus this year because of the Covid-19 situation.	
B20.99.2	Governors asked if the debts were audited by the College. The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, reiterated that the debtor of £7,600 is made up of £6,721 owed by the College, and related to a timing issue when the College put money into the account, and a prepayment of £880 to the Awards Scheme by the Student Union.	
B20.99.3	RESOLVED THAT: Governors received the Student Union accounts 2019/20.	
	<u>**CONFIDENTIAL SESSION**</u>	
B20.100 NFP		
B20.101 NFP		
B20.102 NFP		
B20.103 NFP		
B20.104 NFP		
B20.105	<u>STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL ITEM</u>	
B20.106	<u>Any Other Business</u> There was no other business.	
B20.107	<u>Determination of Confidential Business</u> Minute Nos. B20.96.0.4, B20.100, B20.101, B20.102, B20.103, B20.104, B20.105	
B20.108	<u>Date and time of next meetings</u> Monday 18 January 2021, 4.00pm – **SPECIAL BOARD MEETING** Monday 8 March 2021, 4.00pm	

Meeting ended at 6.00pm