

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2017**

<b>Present:</b>	Karen Banks	External
	Jeannette Brady	Staff
	Jayne Caslin	Staff
	Sarah Hardman	Student
	Sue Hopper	External
	Neil McGrath	External
	Tom McInerney	External
	Mary Murphy	Principal
	Lynn Pegler	External
	Wesley Rourke	External
	Ben Smith	Student
	Susan Smith	External
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Thalia Bell	Deputy Principal
	Leeann Bellfield	Assistant Principal
	Alan Brown	Assistant Principal
	Julie Holland	Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources)
	Lesley Venables	Clerk to the Governors

**PART ONE**

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1 Apologies for absence were received from Valerie Allen (External Governor) and Tony McDermott (External Governor).

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

2 No declarations of interest were received.

**ANNUAL REPORT & UPDATE ON STRATEGIC ISSUES**

3 The Principal presented the Annual Report for 2016/2017 and an update on strategic issues in both the internal and external environments.

4 Governors were advised that all targets for quality and finance had been met or exceeded for 2016/2017. The College continued to have a strong reputation in the FE sector for its provision and had been invited to participate in projects such as the “Girl Tech” initiative by the Association of Colleges (AoC).

5 A summary of current external factors was provided, including the possible implications for the further education budget of £1.3bn additional funding for schools, a reducing cohort of 16-18 year old learners and the delay in implementation of the devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the LCR Combined Authority.

6 A good level of progress was being made on preparation for introducing 'T' or Technical Level qualifications, but detailed policy guidance was only being released slowly. Positive progress had been made on Pre-Advanced (GCSE & Functional Skills) English and maths provision, which had levels of attainment in excess of the national averages for GCSE maths.

7 The College had completed an Invitation to Tender for supporting smaller companies which were not required to pay the Apprenticeship Levy.

8 Guidance was awaited from the Department for Education on the development of qualifications at Levels 4 to 6 and Institutes of Technology.

9 The Association of Colleges was campaigning nationally for fairer funding rates for FE, through an increase of £200 per student added to the funding rate received for 16-18s (currently £4000) to close the gap with school funding levels. The Principal and Vice-Chair had signed a letter to the Prime Minister, along with 135 other colleges.

10 An overview of the College's local environment was given by the Principal, including progression of the Area Based Review outcomes, recent and imminent mergers between colleges and local demographic trends.

11 Governors noted the College's strategic priorities for 2017/2018 contained in the Quality, Efficiency and Growth Plan. Enrolments for the 16-18 cohort were broadly in line with the same point in 2016/2017.

12 The Principal reported that the College would exceed the planned surplus for 2016/2017. Future financial planning would need to take account of any decisions announced in the Autumn Budget for 2017 in November 2017. Governors were advised that against all five key financial performance indicators of the Area Based Review process the College was rated as 'green'.

13 In 2016/2017 levels of achievement for adult programmes had improved and 16-18 outcomes were higher than in 2015/2016.

14 Apprenticeship enrolments had increased significantly, against a background of a 61% decrease in starts nationally.

15 Preparations were underway for the expected follow-up visit from Ofsted in 2018/2019, and a report on this item would be submitted to the next Quality & Standards Committee meeting.

16 The outcomes of the latest staff survey had indicated high levels of satisfaction, which was particularly impressive given the workload undertaken by staff.

- 17 **Resolved -**
- 1 That the Annual Report for 2016/2017 be approved
  - 2 That the revised Quality-Efficiency-Growth Plan for 2017/2018 be approved, subject to some amendments to the format being made

## RESULTS REPORT 2016/2017

18 Overall achievement rates had increased, with the most significant improvement at 19 plus. Both areas were significantly up compared to the national average.

19 The majority of Sector Subject Areas had performed above the national benchmark.

20 All qualification levels had exceeded the national average, with the exception of Level 3.

21 Pre-advanced maths and English outcomes indicated significant improvements in 2016/2017. Pass rates for Functional Skills had far exceeded national benchmarks for both 16-18 and 19+ learners.

22 In response to questions from governors, the Assistant Principal reported that the College's aim for this academic year was some improvement in 16-18 and a consolidation of 19+ outcomes. The data outputs indicated an equivalent of the 'outstanding' Ofsted grading.

23 The funding target would be more difficult to achieve in 2017/2018 due to some groups such as ESOL learners, who would need additional time to complete their qualifications

## AUDIT COMMITTEE – 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017

24 The Chair of the Audit Committee presented a summary of the main items of discussion at its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

25 Governors had considered the annual Risk Management Review for 2016/2017 and recommended the Risk Management Policy for 2017/2018 for approval by the Board.

26 The annual Accountability Review document had been completed for 2016/2017 and would be used as the basis for any review of the College by the Skills Funding Agency's Provider Financial Assurance Team, even though this was no longer a regulatory requirement.

27 The Committee had received the self-assessment of controls on fraud and irregularity and individual governors were required to complete a fraud/irregularity questionnaire, prior to the Chair signing a letter of representation at the December Board meeting to accompany the Financial Statements for 2016/2017.

28 The Board noted a number of proposed amendments to the Committee's terms of reference. The most significant of these were the change in the constitution from six governors to five and the amendment of title to the "*Post-16 Audit Code of Practice*".

29 A short training session on the role of the Audit Committee and the audit framework had been delivered by KPMG prior to the meeting.

- 30 **Resolved -**
- |   |                                                                                             |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | That the Risk Management Policy for 2017/2018 be approved                                   |
| 2 | That the annual Accountability Review documentation be approved                             |
| 3 | That the Regularity Self-Assessment (Annex C of the Post-16 ACOP) for 2016/2017 be approved |

- 4 That governors complete the fraud and irregularity documentation as soon as possible
- 5 That the Committee's revised terms of reference be approved

## **SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2017**

31 The Chair of the Board presented a verbal report on the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017.

### **Committee's Annual Report for 2016/2017**

32 Governors received for information an annual report for 2016/2017, which covered the areas of attendance, membership (including appointments, re-appointments and resignations), recent and planned governance developments, an equality and diversity profile and succession planning.

33 The final percentages for attendance at Board (including special meetings) and committee meetings was 83%, compared to 73% in 2015/2016.

34 The majority of governors had met or exceeded the target attendance levels. There were no ongoing concerns about attendance in 2017/2018 and it would continue to be monitored systematically.

35 Currently there was a vacancy for an external governor and a search process was underway to identify potential candidates with experience in finance, audit or risk management.

### **Committee Memberships**

36 The schedule of committee memberships was discussed in light of recent appointments. It was noted that a new chair of the Finance & Resources Committee would need to be appointed at its first meeting in November.

37 External governors were asked to consider joining the Remuneration Committee, on which there was one vacancy, and to inform the Clerk of their intention. It was agreed that the role of co-opted non-governor on the Finance & Resources Committee would be removed.

### **Reclassification of Confidential Minutes**

38 The Committee had discussed proposals made by the Clerk on the reclassification of confidential minutes relating to the 2016/2017 academic year.

### **Standing Orders**

39 The Clerk presented a revised set of Standing Orders, which had been amended to reflect current practice and the requirements of the English Colleges' Code of Good Governance and other regulations.

40 **Resolved -** That the following items be approved by the Board:

- 1 Schedule of committee memberships

- 2      Reclassification of confidential minutes for 2016/2017
- 3      Revised Standing Orders

## **MINUTES**

- 41      **Resolved -**      That the minutes (Parts 1 and 2) of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

## **MATTERS ARISING**

- 42      Governors received a progress report on the actions identified at the previous meeting. It was noted that all of these issues were either in progress, had been completed or were featured on the agenda.

## **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

27 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2017	6.00 p.m.	Audit Committee
28 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2017	5.00 p.m.	Quality & Standards Committee
29 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2017	5.30 p.m.	Finance & Resources Committee
18 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2017	5.00 p.m.	Board