

Riverside College

Widnes & Runcorn

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON 18TH DECEMBER 2017

Present:	Valerie Allen	External	
	Karen Banks	External	
	Jeannette Brady	Staff	
	Jayne Caslin	Staff	
	Sarah Hardman	Student	
	Sue Hopper	External	
	Tony McDermott	External	
	Neil McGrath	External	
	Tom McInerney	External	
	Lynn Pegler	External	
	Wesley Rourke	External	(Chair)
	Ben Smith	Student	
Susan Smith	External		
In Attendance:	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

43 Apologies for absence were received from Mary Murphy (Principal).

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

44 Declarations of interest were received from Tony McDermott in respect of minutes 102 to 106 and from Wesley Rourke in respect of minutes 102.

UPDATE ON STRATEGIC ISSUES

45 The Deputy Principals provided governors with an update on current strategic issues.

46 The Autumn Budget had not implemented any increase in the funding base rate, which was the subject of a national campaign by the Association of Colleges. An uplift in funding had been announced for Level 3 Maths courses, however, the details of this strategy were not yet available.

47 Recent publication of the Government's Industrial Strategy had not included any clear focus on opportunities for 16-18 education to fill future skills gaps. However, the areas of growth identified in the Strategy aligned closely with the College's existing curriculum.

48 Applications were currently being invited for Institutes of Technology (for which it was hoped a bid from a Liverpool-based provider would be successful) and there was a consultation on the introduction of T Levels.

49 Regular meetings of the Liverpool City Region's Strategic Group took place. The Borough of Knowsley was reviewing its policy decision not to offer A Levels.

50 It was noted that a significant amount of external funding had been obtained through grant applications in 2017/2018.

51 Governors were provided with an update on progress against each of the strategic priorities. The Self-Assessment Report for 2016/2017 had graded provision overall as 'good', with 8 strengths and 3 areas for improvement.

52 Additionally, 3 strategic priorities had been identified for 2017/2018.

53 The College's performance in 2016/2017 meant that it was placed 6th out of 202 colleges in the UK.

54 The College had reported an operating surplus of £1.031K and the Education & Skills Funding Agency had recently graded the College's financial health as 'outstanding' against a number of criteria.

55 Governors were reminded of the two current property-related projects.

56 A bid for non-Apprenticeship Levy funding had been successful. The College had met its 16-18 funding target for 2017/2018, applications for 2018/2019 had increased and the number of apprenticeships had grown.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016/2017

Audit Committee's Annual Report

57 The Chair of the Audit Committee presented its Annual Report to the Board, which had been prepared in line with the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice and the English College's Code of Good Governance.

58 On the basis of the auditor's reports on the Financial Statements and Extended Assurance, the Committee's opinion was that the College's systems of internal control and arrangements for risk management, control and governance framework and processes for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness were adequate and effective in 2016/2017.

59 **Resolved -** That the Audit Committee's Annual Report for 2016/2017 be noted.

Financial Statements 2016/2017

60 The Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources) presented for approval the Financial Statements for 2016/2017, together with the Financial Statements' Auditor's Management Letter, the Audit Committee's Annual Report and the Internal Auditor's Annual Report. The Financial Statements had been reviewed by both the Audit Committee and the Finance & Resources Committee and were recommended for approval.

61 The College's financial health rating remained as 'outstanding'.

62 **Resolved-** That the Financial Statements for 2016/2017 and the Letter of Representation be approved and signed by the Chair and the Principal

AUDIT COMMITTEE – 27TH NOVEMBER 2017

63 The Chair of the Audit Committee gave a verbal report on the meeting held on 27th November 2017.

64 The Committee had received for information the draft Financial Statements for 2016/2017 and supporting documentation, which had been recommended for approval by the Board. The Committee's Annual Report to the Board for 2016/2017 had been discussed under a separate agenda item.

65 As a result of the work undertaken by the Extended Assurance Auditor three recommendations had been made in 2017/2018 and progress against these was being monitored by the Committee.

66 All risks in the risk register had now been mapped to the sources of external assurance.

67 The Committee's terms of reference had been reviewed by the Clerk to ensure that they aligned to the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice.

68 **Resolved -** That the Audit Committee's terms of reference be approved

QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 28TH NOVEMBER 2017

69 The Chair of the Quality & Standards Committee provided a verbal report on the meeting held on 28th November 2017.

70 Governors had received a presentation from the Head of the Construction Department, which provided useful background information on the College's performance in this area of provision, including the new curriculum and staffing profile

71 The Self-Assessment Report for 2016/2017 and the Quality Improvement Plan for 2017/2018 was recommended for approval by the full Board. Progress against each element of the QIP would be reported to each future Committee meeting.

72 The annual report on equality and diversity issues had highlighted any gaps between various groups of learners in terms of pass rates, retention and achievement levels.

73 A policy on Teaching, Learning & Assessment was approved and a further policy on Learner Involvement was recommended for approval by the Board.

74 **Resolved -** That a revised policy on Learner Involvement be approved

SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2016/2017

75 The Assistant Principal presented the draft Self-Assessment Report for 2016/2017. The Report would be forwarded to Ofsted, who would use it as part of its risk assessment process and planning of inspection visits.

76 **Resolved -** That the Self-Assessment Report for 2016/2017 and the Quality Improvement Plan for 2017/2018 be approved

REPORT ON CURRICULUM ISSUES

Achievement 2016/2017

77 Achievement rates had improved for both 16-18 year olds and 19+ learners, which exceeded the national averages.

78 Performance levels in most Sector Subject Areas of apprenticeship provision had exceeded the national average.

Retention & Pass Rates

79 Retention and pass rates showed a strong 3 year trend for each age group.

80 Positive trends were also visible for BTec and A Level courses over a three year period.

Destinations

81 The majority of students had progressed to positive destinations, with a significant proportion moving to higher education (either at the College or at university).

Pre-Advanced Maths & English

82 GCSE maths results had followed a 3 year trend of improvement for 16-18 learners. The percentage of adult students achieving a grade C had declined in 2016/2017.

83 For Functional Skills the outcomes were exceptional, particularly for 19+ learners.

84 Attendance was still a concern, particularly since learners were now expected to attend twice weekly instead of one 3 hour session. However, this strategy had brought about improvements in behaviour.

85 Value Added progress for 16-18 year olds was expected to improve significantly 2016/2017 and the un-validated data supported this projection for both maths and English.

Enrolments 2017/2018

86 Enrolments were broadly in line with 2016/2017

Retention & Attendance 2017/2018

87 Governors were advised that retention in most areas was 100% and remained strong. Attendance levels had improved on all programmes with the exception of GCSE maths and English, which remained a challenge due to student engagement and the size of the cohort.

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 29TH NOVEMBER 2017

88 The newly-appointed Chair of the Committee (Tony McDermott) provided a verbal report on the meeting held on 29th November 2017.

Human Resources Annual Report 2016/2017

89 The Committee had received the annual report on human resources for 2016/2017, including sickness absence levels, staff turnover and utilisation.

Tom McInerney left the meeting at this point.

Health & Safety Annual Report 2016/2017

90 It was noted that the total number of minor injuries was 56, compared to 49 for the same period in 2015/2016. There were no discernible trends in the accident figures, either by department, campus or type.

91 All accidents were investigated to determine whether any changes were necessary to the College's processes and procedures. Management felt that the relatively low number of accidents was attributable to improved awareness of safety issues and the high level of staff training undertaken.

92 There had been no reports of any 'near misses' or 'incidents' and there had been no RIDDOR reportable incidents.

93 A number of training and awareness-raising events had taken place in 2016/2017, including enhanced evacuation procedures, fire risk assessments and first aid for staff and students.

94 The Committee had been reminded that the College's insurance arrangements were due to be renewed in preparation for 2018/2019. Work would commence shortly on the re-tendering process, with a recommendation brought to the Board for approval.

95 **Resolved -** That the Health & Safety Statement of Intent for 2017/2018 be approved

Property Update

96 Governors had received a detailed report on property issues,.

Partnership Provision

97 The Committee had received a report on performance against partnership provision contracts in 2016/2017, together with proposals for 2017/2018.

98 All partnership organisations had been RAG rated in the report according to the level of risk and it was noted that the majority had been assessed as 'green'.

99 **Resolved -** That the list of partnership contracts for 2017/2018 be approved

Policies

100 **Resolved -** That a revised Policy on Supply Chain Fees & Charges be approved

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

101 Governors noted that the key risks associated with the management accounts were the achievement of the full-time learner numbers target and the current uncertainty of the external environment. The College's own internal systems indicated that the profiles outlined in the agreed budget would be met.

102 At the end of September 2017 there was a forecast surplus of £888K, with an additional £1.2m in the College's funding allocation. It was on target to meet its funding and learner numbers targets by the end of the academic year. Adult funding levels had remained static for 2017/2018.

103 The Deputy Principal advised that the College's financial health rating remained at 'outstanding' for 2017/2018 and this had been formally confirmed by the ESFA. Compared to the targets in the finance dashboard, the College was performing at a slightly higher level than planned against all key indicators.

104 **Resolved -** That the management accounts to 30th September 2017 be accepted

ANNUAL WHISTLEBLOWING REPORT 2016/2017

105 Governors were reminded that it was considered to be good governance practice for the Board to receive an annual report on Whistleblowing.

106 In line with the College's Whistleblowing Policy, any instances were channelled through relevant line management. Issues concerning the Principal or an individual governor would be directed to the Clerk to the Governors and issues relating to senior management or the Clerk were forwarded to the Principal in the first instance.

107 The College's Policy included a detailed procedure for dealing with whistleblowing cases. This complied with current legislation (The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, The Bribery Act 2010 and The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013). The Policy was reviewed annually, with any recommended changes submitted to the Audit Committee prior to approval by the full Board.

108 The Board noted that there had been no instances of whistleblowing in 2016/2017.

MINUTES

109 **Resolved -** That the minutes (Parts 1 and 2) of the meeting held on 16th October 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

MATTERS ARISING

110 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.

111 Under minute 35 the Clerk reported that there was still a gap in the Board's overall skills profile for an individual with financial/audit/risk management experience. An extensive search process had proved unsuccessful to date, but further options would be explored.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

5th March 2018 Audit
6th March 2018 Quality & Standards
6th March 2018 Finance & Resources