

## MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018

<b>Present:</b>	Valerie Allen	External
	Karen Banks	External
	Jeannette Brady	Staff
	Jayne Caslin	Staff
	Sarah Hardman	Student – minutes 135 to 196
	Tony McDermott	External
	Tom McInerney	External
	Mary Murphy	Principal
	Lynn Pegler	External
	Wesley Rourke	External (Chair)
	Ben Smith	Student
Susan Smith	External – minutes 138 to 196	
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Ben Barton	Deputy Head of Cronton Campus
	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

130 Apologies for absence were received from Sue Hopper (External Governor) and Neil McGrath (External Governor).

#### DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

131 A declaration of interest was received from Tony McDermott in respect of minute 173.

#### UPDATE ON STRATEGIC ISSUES

132 Governors received a report on strategic issues, which included College performance to date and a summary of local and national policy issues that impacted on its activities.

133 A new Secretary of State for Education had been appointed recently and it was evident that the importance of further education colleges in delivering the Government's Technical Level qualifications had been recognised. Post-18 education was currently the subject of a national review, encompassing the role of colleges in raising the level of higher education participation.

134 The 26% reduction in apprenticeship starts since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy had been widely reported nationally. However, the College had exceeded its 2016/2017 position in the current year for the 16-18 age group. Achievement of the 19+ targets remained challenging.

**Sarah Hardman joined the meeting.**

135 The Principal had been invited to participate in one of 15 route panels for the Institute of Apprenticeships.

136 The College had last been inspected by Ofsted in September 2015 and, under the current 3 year cycle, would be due for a visit in the Autumn Term. Preparations were already underway and would be a continuing theme over the next few months.

137 Governors were advised that the Merseyside Colleges' Association was actively engaging with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. It was vital that this was maintained and developed as the Adult Education Budget would be devolved to the Authority in 2020.

**Susan Smith joined the meeting.**

138 Discussions had commenced within the Borough of Knowsley on the re-introduction of A Level provision.

139 The College was a member of a group established by the Halton Education Strategic Partnership on behaviour management.

140 Safeguarding issues continued to increase both in number and complexity. A significant amount of resource was allocated to this area by the College due to funding cuts in external agency provision, including addressing needs associated with mental health issues.

141 Governors were provided with an update on progress against each of the strategic priorities and noted that the College was on track to achieve or exceed all of its main targets.

142 In the Department for Education league tables published in January 2018, the College was placed in the top 10% nationally for 8 performance measures and was 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 190 FE colleges for vocational performance.

143 The Quality Monitoring Review of vocational provision had not identified any actions or recommendations.

144 Overall retention levels had increased by 1% compared to 2016/2017. Analysis by management indicated that there may be another increase in achievement rates. A report on programmes within the College's internal "special measures" initiative was discussed at each meeting of the Quality & Standards Committee.

145 In terms of efficiency, the College had experienced significant growth of 16-18 student numbers. Additional adult funding had been received from the ESFA to support over-delivery against the identified target for 2017/2018.

146 In line with the recommendations resulting from the Area Based Review, the College was projected to make a 3 to 5% surplus at the end of 2017/2018. Significant investment had been made in the College's accommodation.

147 The Principal reported that the College had achieved its growth target and it was projected for this to improve further by 2020.

148 Offers for 2018/2019 courses were currently ahead of 2017/2018 and HE numbers had increased.

## **REVIEW OF VISION, VALUES AND AIMS FOR 2018/2019**

149 In line with the approved strategic planning process, the Board reviewed the current Strategic Objectives to ensure that these were appropriate for 2018/2019. Any further feedback would be forwarded to the Principal and fed into the strategic planning process for 2018/2019.

## **QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018 (INCLUDING CURRICULUM REPORT)**

150 The Deputy Principal (Curriculum & Quality) provided a verbal summary of the Quality & Standards Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

151 The Committee had received a presentation on the College's Digital Strategy, the development of which was a key priority in the current and in future years. Governors had also participated in a practical demonstration of virtual reality software.

152 A detailed update on programmes that had been placed in the College's "Special Measures" initiative had enabled governors to monitor progress of those areas identified at the November meeting and to ask questions about progress of those areas that were part of the scheme.

153 The Committee had considered information on the College's place in the National League Tables published recently by the Department for Education. It was noted that performance was strong in the majority of areas and levels and that the Qualification Achievement Rates data validated any internal judgements that had been made previously. This information would be used in any future Ofsted inspection.

154 Progress on the Great Teaching Initiative had been noted, which had been designed to enable the College to improve its teaching and learning.

155 A comprehensive report on Safeguarding had highlighted the increase in the number and complexity of cases. Governors were also advised of the higher number of Educational Health & Care Plans in 2017/2018, together with behavioural complexities of learners.

156 Information was received on performance against the retention rates between groups of learners with various Protected Characteristics and those without. Any gaps identified were small and there were no concerns resulting from the data.

157 Governors had been advised that retention was currently strong for the majority of levels and age groups (ahead of this point in 2016/2017).

158 Attendance had decreased slightly overall compared to the same time in 2016/2017.

159 The Committee had received information on the number of high needs learners by campus, together with the large increase in Examination Arrangement Assessments, for which specialist resourcing and staffing may be required.

160 Figures for achievement would improve by the end of the year and would be monitored closely at the Committee's next meeting.

161 Retention for HE programmes was currently high and significantly above that of 2016/2017. However, there was a small number of courses that were causing concern.

162 The Committee had noted that there was very little difference between the data in the QAR and that held on the College's learner records system.

### **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

163 Governors received an updated policy on Complaints, which now reflected the change in the name of the new funding agency (ESFA).

164 **Resolved -** That a policy on Complaints be approved

### **FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018**

165 The Committee chair gave a verbal summary of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

166 The termly report on HR issues had been noted. Governors had received information on the College's Gender Pay Gap. Further analysis would be undertaken by management once all organisations published data on their websites and this would be submitted to a future Committee meeting.

167 The Health & Safety report for the year to date showed that there had been no reportable accidents and 47 minor accidents compared to 27 at the same point last year. The Committee had asked for further awareness-raising and reporting of near misses to be undertaken and submitted to future meetings.

168 An update on Property and the Mid-Year Review were discussed and appeared under later agenda items.

169 The Committee had noted the levels of performance on Partnership Provision contracts and recommended for approval the extension of contracts with Power in Partnership and The Skills Network. As reported earlier, there would be an increased focus by Ofsted on this area of College provision.

170 Policies on Fees for 2018/2019, Staff Grievance & Freedom of Information were recommended for approval by the Board.

- 171 **Resolved -**
- 1 That a revised schedule of partnership provision contracts be approved for 2017/2018
  - 2 That a revised policy on Fees for 2018/2019 be approved
  - 3 That a revised Staff Grievance Procedure be approved

## **MID-YEAR REVIEW 2016/2017**

172 The Deputy Principal presented for information the Mid-Year Review for 2017/2018, which included the management accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.

173 The operating surplus was in line with the original budget. There had been over-recruitment against target for the 16-18 age group and a bid had been submitted for additional apprenticeship funding. The projection for 16-18 funding in 2018/2019 included lagged growth funding.

174 It was anticipated that targets for high needs learners, higher education and fee income would be achieved prior to the year end.

175 An amount for investment in the College estate had been incorporated in the projections to 2020, with no additional loan funding to be sought. Applications for 2018/2019 were currently strong.

176 The latest information received about Budget levels in 2018/2019 was that the extent of funding cuts would not be as severe for 2018/2019, although detailed information had not yet been published.

177 **Resolved -** That the content of the Mid-Year Review be noted

## **NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

178 Governors were reminded that this meeting was the point at which they were asked to consider the process to be used for the nomination and election of the Chair and Vice-Chair for the following academic year.

179 The Clerk advised that there were 2 possible routes for the appointments: a) formal – where nominations were invited and an electronic ballot undertaken if there was more than one candidate; or b) informal – where nominations would be made verbally at the July Board meeting.

180 The Board's Standing Orders allowed for the formal process to be waived for a maximum of 2 years, but then required that the formal process was operated for the third year. The appointments of the Chair and Vice-Chair had been undertaken through the formal process for 2017/2018.

181 Due to changes in the membership of the Board over the past year it was felt appropriate for there to be a formal nomination and election process for both roles. The Clerk would circulate nomination papers shortly and oversee the election process (if more than one candidate emerged for each role). Governors were asked to check in advance that any nominee was willing to serve as Chair or Vice-Chair. It was noted that the staff and student governors and the Principal were ineligible for both roles.

182 **Resolved -** That the formal process for the nomination and election of the Chair and Vice-Chair be implemented for the 2018/2019 academic year

## OFSTED PREPARATION

183 The Clerk referred to the content of the Principal's report earlier in the meeting, which highlighted the likelihood of an Ofsted inspection in the Autumn Term 2018. The impact of governors on raising standards and the level of support and challenge of management would be key themes for inspection and would continue to be give a high profile.

184 So that governors were fully prepared, a programme was being devised to include:

- Summary information on the College's strengths and areas for improvement (which is included in the Self-Assessment Report)
- Possible questions that could be asked by inspectors and how these could be answered, which would be provided by the Clerk
- What outstanding governance looks like and what needs to be done to achieve it, which would be prepared by the Assistant Principal (Quality)
- Key features of governance in colleges graded as outstanding, which would be provided by the Clerk

and will be dovetailed into existing practices eg as part of the Q&S Committee papers there may be a list of potential questions that governors could ask to improve the level of challenge.

185 Additionally, on-line training modules would be completed by all governors on topics such as safeguarding, Prevent and equality and diversity.

186 All governors were encouraged to engage fully with this strategy to maximise their contribution to the overall inspection process.

## MINUTES

187 **Resolved -** That the minutes (Parts 1 and 2) of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

## MATTERS ARISING

188 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

Audit – 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018, 5.00 p.m.

Q&S – 26<sup>th</sup> June 2018, 5.00 p.m.

F&R – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018, 5.00 p.m.

Board – 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018, 5.00 p.m.

189 **Resolved -** That the schedule of meetings for 2018/2019 be approved, subject to any further requests for amendment