



**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2017**

Present: David Clark (Chair), Andrew Davies, Gary Doyle, Lorraine Gardner, Sue Higginson (Principal), Tim Kelly, James King, Tony Mann, Joe McArdle, Paul Smyth, Jayne Winders

In attendance: Michael Norton, Deputy Principal
Maura Cummins, Vice Principal – Curriculum and Quality
Steve Cain, Director of Financial Services
Will Jerram, Director of ICT & MIS
Ian James, Clerk to the Governors
Louise Kelly, Administrator to the Governors

APOLOGIES

1. Apologies were received by Anna Barnish and Richard Mawdsley.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

2. Tim Kelly declared an interest in Merseyside Superannuation scheme referred to in minute 35.

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

3. The Principal reported on a recent Support and Challenge meeting with Ofsted. The College was working well towards strengthening self-assessment and improving the quality of teaching and learning to ensure learners were challenged, learners' progress was rigorously monitored and attendance improved. Also, ensuring that apprentices who stayed on their programmes made good progress and achieved their qualifications.

4. The Principal commented on the emerging outcomes from 2016/17 and the next steps to creating the SARIP, ensuring the sustainability of quality and improvement.

5. The Principal reported on the outcome of a recent audit of MIS conducted by the ESFA. The feedback was extremely positive and governors were pleased to hear the auditors' findings:

- the EFA audit resulted in a 1.77% error rate with potential to change to zero as the College was in the process of retrieving more information.
- the SFA, apprenticeship and bursary audits had all resulted in a 0% error rate.

6. The Principal wanted to record formally her thanks to the Director of MIS for his work during the audit which had led to this outstanding result. In turn, the Director of MIS referred to the support of his team and he would pass on thanks to them.

SHARING RECENT SUCCESSES

7. The Board received the routine report on the College's recent successes (copy attached to signed minutes). The Board noted its content.

2017/18 TARGETS

8. The Principal provided the Board with focused objectives proposed for the 2017/18 academic year (copy attached to signed minutes). The Principal asked governors for their thoughts and input.

9. The Chair suggested that the targets should contain an explicit teaching and learning objective. Governors also suggested that more information be included on the strategic partnership with Peel and that an objective be included on the plan to target business growth.

10. **Resolved** that, subject to the changes above, the targets for 2017/18 be approved and that termly progress reports provided.

BALANCED SCORECARD – CLOSEDOWN 2016/17

11. The Deputy Principal presented the closedown of the 2016/17 Balanced Scorecard (copy attached to signed minutes). He explained that sickness absence was 2.4% higher than target, but this was considered to be as a result of the emphasis on capability.

12. A governor enquired about the data on the exception report regarding the shortfall in HE income. The figures compared to national trends reported by UCAS in January 2016 and the Principal agreed to obtain more information from UCAS regarding this trend.

13. The Chair enquired about the Reputation Survey Evaluation and suggested the College gain feedback from parents/carers which the Board agreed would be beneficial.

14. A governor queried the quality assurance arrangements with Sub-contractors and the Vice Principal assured the Board that Sub-contractors were required to comply with the College's quality assurance arrangements and their staff were required to attend College Staff Development days.

15. In addition, the Vice Principal explained that Learning Walks were for developmental purposes rather than for them to be graded. The College was aiming for 1500 Learning Walks to be carried out in 2017-18.

BALANCED SCORECARD 2017/18

16. The Deputy Principal provided the Balanced Scorecard targets for 2017/18 (copy attached to signed minutes).

17. **Resolved** that the Balanced Scorecard targets be approved

CURRICULUM STRATEGY

18. The Vice Principal presented the updated Curriculum Strategy for 2017-18 (copy attached to signed minutes). She explained that the latest Curriculum Strategy clarified the impact of the new GCSE grading system and whether students embarked on Functional Skills or GCSE English and math courses.

19. Governors asked if the Assistant Principal Student Support and Foundation Learning could attend the next Board meeting to report on maths and English provision.

20. **Resolved** that the Curriculum Strategy be approved

REVISION OF QUALITY POLICY FRAMEWORK

21. The Vice Principal presented the revised Quality Framework for 2017/18 (copy attached to signed minutes). Asked why it appeared there was little activity for July-August on the Quality Calendar when there were activities during that period, the Vice Principal responded that, during July-August, the main focus was on confirming achievements, analysing data and undertaking curriculum planning for the new academic year. However, other work relating to quality issues was undertaken during that period and she agreed to make a reference to the July-August activity on the Quality Calendar.

22. **Resolved** that, subject to the amendment above, the Quality Policy Framework be approved

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

23. The Director of Financial Services presented the Management Accounts to the end of July 2017 (copy attached to the signed minutes). The accounts showed an operating deficit of £343k against a forecast deficit of £350k. The deficit included costs of £315k resulting from the recent staff restructuring.

24. The draft financial health assessment was currently "Satisfactory" and the forecast for 2017/18 showed financial health returning to "Good." A full reconciliation of any changes in the figures would be provided with the final accounts when presented for approval at the December Board, subject to adjustments relating to any external audit findings and to final calculations.

STANDING ORDERS FOR CONTRACTING AND PURCHASING CARD POLICY

25. The Director of Financial Services delivered a report on updates made to the College's Standing Orders (copy attached to signed minutes). In addition, following a request at the July Board, a formal Purchasing Card Policy had been provided as an addition to the Financial Policies and Procedures.

26. **Resolved** that the revised Standing Orders for Contracting and the Purchasing Card Policy be approved

ANNUAL STUDENT SUPPORT RETURNS 2016/17

16-19 Bursary

27. The Deputy Principal presented the review of the use made of the 16-19 Bursary Fund in 2016/17 (copy attached to the signed minutes). The allocation methodology for 2017/18 would follow the same as the previous year, with an expectation of attendance of 90%, and with payments made on a four weekly basis, to better support student need.

28. In addition, all 16-19 students living more than two miles away from their campus of study would receive 100% of their travel costs.

29. **Resolved** that the Policy and Procedure for the 2017/18 Bursary Fund be approved

Learner Support Funds (LSF)

30. The Deputy Principal presented a report reviewing the operation of the LSF in 2016/17 and proposed the updated policy and procedures for distribution of the Funds for 2017/18 (copy attached to the signed minutes).

31. **Resolved** that the Policy and Procedures for the allocation of the Learner Support Funds for 2017/18, including the proposed appeals mechanism, be approved

INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2017/18

32. The Board received the Internal Audit Plan for 2017/18 which had previously been recommended for approval by the Audit Committee (copy attached to signed minutes).

33. **Resolved** that the Internal Audit Plan for 2017/18 be approved and that authority be delegated to the Committee to make changes to the Plan during the year should the need arise

COMPLIANCE WITH FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

34. The Director of Financial Services provided a paper reminding the Board that the Financial Memorandum governed the relationship between the College and the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and explaining changes made by the ESFA in respect of the monitoring of financial solvency by the Board of Governors (copy attached to signed minutes).

35. The ESFA had distributed to all colleges a checklist for use by governors when reviewing the Financial Plan Commentary and this had been completed by the Deputy Principal for the Board's consideration and assurance. The Board were satisfied with the information presented and no issues were identified as causing concern or requiring attention.

MERSEYSIDE PENSION FUND

36. The Deputy Principal delivered a report on the recent discussions with the Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) who were requiring the College to address the pensions deficit (copy attached to signed minutes). This had come about because central government had advised

pension funds that, under a new insolvency regime to be introduced for colleges, pension funds would not be compensated for any loss resulting from the bankruptcy of a college. The College had been presented with two options with a decision required by the deadline of 30th September:

- Option 1 - The College to pay the deficit over nine years instead of 19.
- Option 2 - Offer the MPF security over certain College's assets.

37. The report identified a third option which involved offering security over College assets as in Option 2 but coupled with an ability to make ad hoc payments towards the deficit if and when the College's financial position allowed.

38. **Resolved** that the third option identified in the report, as outlined above, be pursued with MPF

STRATEGIC PLANNING EVENT OUTLINE

39. The Principal presented the outline for the governors' Strategic Planning Event to be held on 13 October 2017 (copy attached to signed minutes). It was noted that the Audit Committee had recommended a briefing for all governors on the audit process and the role of the Committee and it was suggested that such a session might be provided at the start of a Board meeting. A similar session on safeguarding was also proposed.

RISK REGISTER AND RISK MANGEMENT POLICY

40. The Deputy Principal introduced the Risk Register which had been updated with comments from the Audit Committee (copy attached to signed minutes).

41. The Audit Committee had reviewed the Risk Management Policy, which had no material changes to the previous version, but had updated job titles. The Committee had recommended that the Board approve the Policy.

42. **Resolved** that the Risk Management Policy for 2017/18 be approved

BOARD AND COMMITTEE MINUTES

Board Meeting

43. **Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Audit Committee

44. The Board received the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 6th September 2017 for information (copy attached to signed minutes).

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 18th October 2017