



**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2018**

**Present:** Paul Smyth (Chair), Lucky Ali, Andrew Davies, Gary Doyle, Sue Higginson (Principal), Tim Kelly, James King, Tony Mann, Joe McArdle, 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 MIS  
Ian James, Clerk to the Governors  
Louise Kelly, Administrator to the Governors

#### **APOLOGIES**

133. Apologies were received by Anna Barnish, Joanne Finnerty, Lorraine Jones and Richard Mawdsley.

#### **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

134. There were no declarations of interest.

#### **STUDENT GOVERNOR**

135. The Chair welcomed Lucky Ali to her first meeting. Lucky had been nominated by the Students' Union and was studying a BTEC Applied Science level 3 Extended Diploma at the College.

136. **Resolved** that Lucky Ali be appointed as the Student Governor with immediate effect for a term of office lasting until 31 July 2018, subject to her remaining a student at the College

#### **PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE**

137. The Principal shared with the Board a message of thanks from David Clark, the previous Chair of Governors. David Clark wanted to thank the Board for their support and good wishes on his departure. He would continue to be an advocate of the College in the community.

138. The Principal informed the Board of the Visitor Economy Week that took place on 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> February. Students gained experiences in a wide range of industries supporting tourism such as hotels, restaurants, entertainment and travel within the Liverpool City Region. The Principal wanted to thank all staff and students involved. More information on the event would be provided in the Sharing Recent Successes paper at the March Board meeting.

139. The Principal informed the Board about a recent Wirral Cabinet meeting that was held at Wirral Waters. The meeting discussed the launch of a new Wirral growth company, established by the Wirral Borough Council. The growth company would provide significant opportunities for the College and for Wirral.

140. The Board were also notified that the College would be subject to a routine two day visit from the FE Commissioner early in March, as a Diagnostic Assessment.

141. In addition, the Principal also shared recent training and development exercises governors had undertaken, including:

- The Vice Chair's attendance at the College's E & D Committee
- Staff and external governors' attendance at an Education Training Foundation Governance Forum
- The Chair's attendance at the Visitor Economy Celebration Dinner

## **SHARING RECENT SUCCESSES**

142. The Board received the routine Sharing Recent Success report (copy attached to signed minutes). The Chair commended students' efforts in raising money for local charities.

## **BALANCED SCORECARD**

143. The Deputy Principal presented the Balanced Scorecard (copy attached to signed minutes) highlighting that there were four key issues assessed as 'red'; Apprenticeships, HE Income, Income to plan and Absence Percentage. The usual exception reports were submitted in relation to these areas together with reports on:

- Reputation survey
- Student engagement
- Estates & capital projects
- Sub-contractor performance

144. The College's bid to provide apprenticeships to non-levy paying employers had been unsuccessful and two appeals had also not succeeded. The College had been working on a mitigation strategy and had secured two subcontracts. For 16-18 year olds, apprenticeship starts were ahead of plan based on the same period in 2016/17 but the recruitment of adult apprenticeships had not reached the planned numbers and was showing a dip, consistent with regional and national trends.

145. HE Income was £93k behind forecast due to a shortfall in recruitment numbers and it was noted that a government review of 18+ education had recently been announced. The College was reviewing the HE strategy and the outcome would be shared with governors at the June Strategic Seminar. The Principal advised that there was a market for HE in FE colleges which provided access for non-traditional HE students that would be unable to attend University because of their circumstances. The HE Strategy would look at building the HE numbers through internal progression from pre-access and access provision, in addition to Level 3 progression. To provide assurance that the proposed new HE programmes would be utilised by learners progressing from FE to HE within the College the Chair requested projected numbers based on ILR reviews and projected grades for the May Board meeting.

146. English and maths attendance was below target and was rated amber. The Board asked for this to be examined in more detail at the next Scrutiny Group meeting.

147. Asked about the impact of the successful CHP Project bid, the Deputy Principal that advised that the College's annual energy bills could be reduced by 75%. However that had been a delay in the contract being issued, which had also caused delay in the work being done and this meant that savings would not be made until full implementation of the project.

148. Attention was drawn to the Safeguarding green rating in spite of the increase in reported safeguarding incidents. The Principal explained that the figures on the Balanced Scorecard reported the number of safeguarding cases. There was and could not be, a target and even one safeguarding issue was one too many. The green rating referred to the fact that the College was pro-actively engaging in safeguarding and that the specialist resourcing was appropriate to the current caseload. As a result of the anticipated energy bill savings, the College had recruited two additional staff within the pastoral/safeguarding area to reflect the increase in safeguarding issues.

## **ANNUAL HR REVIEW**

149. The Deputy Principal presented the Annual HR Review (copy attached to signed minutes). The report set out the progress made against the 2016/17 priorities and provided specific data relating to case management & leavers and sickness.

150. The governors discussed the continuing relatively high levels of sickness and were advised that there were ongoing issues with sickness absence related to capability. There were now fewer cases although each took more time than previously due to changes in the tribunal procedures and Equality Act. It was suggested that in the sickness data would be more helpful if it was expressed as days lost per employee rather than total days lost as this would enable the identification of trends.

151. The Deputy Principal was asked about the appraisal process and agreed to do an interim report at a later Board meeting. Priorities for 2017/18 were the streamlining of HR procedures in relation to case management and creating a more fit for purpose HR strategy, underpinned with legal advice.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

152. The Vice Principal provided a report on staff development activities in 2016-17 (copy attached to signed minutes). Staff had engaged in over 50 different activities and events provided both internally and by external contributors. The impact of this had been to significantly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and this was evident from the recent Ofsted Inspection. There had been positive feedback from staff who acknowledged the College's investment. At present, themes for staff development 2017-18 were emerging from the programme of learning walks.

153. In addition, the governors were pleased to hear that the College had been reaccredited for the new standard, Investors in People Award. The Principal was grateful for the efforts of the staff in achieving the award.

## **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

154. The Deputy Principal discussed the Management Accounts which incorporated the mid-year financial update (copy attached to signed minutes). The College had taken a prudent approach and adjusted the year end forecast to a reduced surplus of £10k from the original £40k.

155. Non-pay costs were below plan as managers were becoming more prudent with their budgets. Controls were tighter and all managers were expected to complete a checklist before spend was approved. The process had proven to be working well.

156. **Resolved** that the mid-year budget update be approved

## **COLLEGE RESPONSE TO ESFA LETTER**

157. The retiring Chief Executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency had written to all FE colleges advising Boards to review areas where gaps in information may signal a deeper financial issue or risk. The letter had been reviewed at the Governance & Search Committee meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018, who had requested that a detailed response be provided to the Board. This was now received and the Board were content with the information provided (copy attached to signed minutes).

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

158. The Deputy Principal provided a Health & Safety update (copy attached to signed minutes). A total of 23 accidents had been reported to date, which marked a 28% decrease compared to 2016/17. The Health & Safety Policy was also reviewed and the Board noted that no material changes had been made to the previous version.

159. **Resolved** that the Health & Safety Policy be approved

## **PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF QUALITY & STANDARDS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

160. The Board received a report presenting a proposal from the Governance & Search Committee that the work of the Scrutiny Group be continued by the establishment of a standing committee proposed to be called the Quality & Standards Scrutiny Committee (copy attached to signed minutes).

161. The G&S Committee and the members of the Group felt that the challenge the Group had provided to management over the period of their operation has been of significant benefit in taking forward the improvements required to move the College from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Good'.

162. If this proposal was to be agreed, it would mark a change to the Board's current governance model as it would be a departure from the so-called 'Carver' model that had been in operation since 2010/11. It was acknowledged that, if an essential element of scrutiny was to be delegated on a permanent basis, the number of Board meetings could be reduced and this would also reduce the administration on management of supporting the governance of the College.

163. The Vice-Chair suggested that, if the number of Board meetings was reduced, the induction arrangements for new governors may need developing and attendance allowed at the QSS Committee as observers. This was not seen as a presenting any difficulty.

164. The governors were supportive of the proposal to establish the QSS Committee and it was -

165. **Resolved**

1. to establish a Quality & Standards Scrutiny Committee with the constitution & terms of reference set out in Appendix 1 to the report with effect from 1 September 2018
2. that the Scrutiny Group continues its work for the remainder of this academic year
3. to instruct the Clerk to amend Standing Orders to reflect the establishment of the new Committee on the agreed date
4. to reduce the number of formal Board meetings from eight to five per annum to reflect the delegation to the Committee
5. to undertake a full review of committee memberships for 2018/19 following the current recruitment exercise for new governors
6. to approve the schedule of meetings for 2018/19 submitted with the report

## **BOARD AND COMMITTEE MINUTES**

### **Board Meeting**

166. **Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

### **Governance & Search Committee**

167. The Board received, for information, the minutes of the Governance & Search Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018