



**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 21st MAY 2018**

Present: Paul Smyth (Chair), Lucky Ali, Anna Barnish, Andrew Davies, Gary Doyle, Lorraine Jones, Sue Higginson (Principal), Tim Kelly, James King, Tony Mann, Richard Mawdlsey, Joe McArdle, Jayne Winders

In attendance: Michael Norton, Deputy Principal
Maura Cummins, Vice Principal – Curriculum & Quality
Steve Cain, Assistant Principal Finance
Will Jerram, Assistant Principal MIS
Phil Jones, Assistant Principal STEM, HE and Public Services and Sport (min 265 – 276)
Alex Lang, Assistant Principal Quality (min 265 – 276)
Lynn Adam, College Manager for Higher Education and Access to HE (min 265 – 276)
Ian James, Clerk to the Governors
Louise Scott-Kelly, Administrator to the Governors

APOLOGIES

250. Apologies were received from Joanne Finnerty.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

251. Joe McArdle declared an interest in any matters relating to the University of Chester.

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

252. The Principal updated the Board about the recent review meeting with the ESFA. The College had appealed against the ESFA's decision to claw back funding for 'community' provision which included support for refugees and asylum seekers. The Principal had exhausted all procedures of appeal and despite support from local MPs and Ministers, the appeal had been unsuccessful.

253. The Board were informed that Andrew Gwynne MP, the Shadow Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government, together with Angela Eagle MP and Councillor Phil Davies, had visited the Wirral Waters campus. The purpose of the visit was to see how young people were trained to fill the current skills gap. The visit had been a success and the Shadow Secretary had commended favourably on the College's work.

254. Plans for 2018/19 were in the final stages and all timetables were due to be completed shortly. The College had received the funding allocation for the next academic year and applications were currently ahead of target for both 16-18 and adults.

SHARING RECENT SUCCESSES

255. The Board received the routine Sharing Recent Success report (copy attached to signed minutes). The Board noted its content.

JUNE STRATEGIC PLANNING EVENT AGENDA

256. The Principal presented the agenda for the half day June 2018 Governor Strategic Planning Event (copy attached to signed minutes). The event would include legal input on the governance implications of the GDPR and the advent of the insolvency regime for colleges. Also on the agenda was how the College intended to progress towards reducing the College's pay to income ratio.

BALANCED SCORECARD

257. The Deputy Principal presented the Balanced Scorecard (copy attached to signed minutes). The following six 'red' rated items had carried over from the previous Board meeting; Apprenticeship income, HE Income, Income to plan, Absence Percentage and Attendance Rates on English and Maths programmes.

258. Additionally, Commercial Income had also been flagged 'red' and was forecast £40k below plan. The Assistant Principals had reviewed the shortfall and intended to deliver more full cost provision between May and the end of July 2018. The College was also looking at potential opportunities with employers to improve commercial income. The usual exception reports were provided for each red rated item.

259. A governor requested a more detailed commentary for the sickness absence report as no impact or associated risk was included on the Exception report. Although there would be a formal report towards the end of the year, the Deputy Principal agreed to provide more information on expected impact and associated risk.

260. The Chair enquired about the 35 Out of Funding apprenticeships (OOFs) and the Deputy Principal explained that several students had achieved but were waiting for their certificate or waiting on the external verifier. The time waiting for a certificate was dependent upon the awarding body.

261. The Board also discussed the rate of Work Experience which was currently recorded at 59.26% against a target of 80% for the term. The Vice Principal assured the Board that work experience was continuing to develop. However, no work experience was scheduled during the exam period.

262. The Chair asked for feedback regarding the visit from Vice Principal of an Ofsted-rated Outstanding College who had emphasised the importance of targeting students 'at risk' of not achieving. In response to this, all members of the senior leadership team had been allocated a cohort of 'at risk' students to contact by telephone. The SLT were to remind them of their examination dates and the support available and that any 'no-shows' would be fined. The Staff Governor fed back comments from staff, who appreciated the positive impact this intervention had made. It reinforced that it was a whole organisational effort.

263. In addition, the Board were informed that at the College's Star Awards, several English and Maths staff had been nominated by their students.

HE STRATEGY & BUSINESS PROFILE

HE Strategy

264. The Vice Principal presented the HE Strategy & Business Profile for 2018-21 (copy attached to signed minutes). The Vice Principal explained the proposed HE courses, qualifications and partnerships.

265. The Board discussed the financial viability of HE. Although numbers had declined, HE was still an important element to the College as it provided the opportunity for non-traditional HE students to access HE. The College's HE fees were lower than universities, the schedule was more accessible and convenient.

266. The College's objective was to ensure inclusivity, provide opportunities and raise aspirations for all students. Over the last two years, the College Manager for HE and Access had developed access courses that enabled students to progress from FE into HE.

267. Moreover, the Vice Principal informed the Board that the College intended to market strategically to attract adult learners. The College planned to conduct adult open days, taster sessions and drop-in's to provide advice and guidance on loans, for instance.

268. The governors questioned College management in order to satisfy themselves that the HE programme proposed was relevant to employers and likely to be successful and financially viable. One concern was that the HE development and validation of HE courses was lengthy but the HE Manager explained that FE and access courses were very responsive and could adapt quickly to meet the needs and requirements. Similarly, HNC/HND units could also be modified swiftly

269. With regards to financial viability, the Assistant Principal HE explained that the College would be looking into the sustainability of HNC/HND courses. Higher Level Apprenticeships were becoming increasingly more desirable to levy paying companies, which the College also had plans to develop. In addition, savings would be made when the Level 6 BA Fine Arts studio would be relocated to one of the College campuses when the current lease expired. Further savings would be made following the full staff utilisation exercise that was currently underway.

270. The Chair requested the Board be provided with information on the number of HE applications received and the Board were assured that there was adequate internal progression and external applications to support the HE offer.

271. **Resolved** that the HE Strategy be approved

Office for Students (OfS)

272. The Assistant Principal Quality provided a report on the national changes in the regulation of Higher Education (copy attached to signed minutes). The Office for Students (OfS) had replaced the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and, in order to continue receiving funding, the College had to register with the OfS.

273. Governors were required, as part of the new process, to confirm that they were prepared to allow their personal data be shared with the OfS and to complete a declaration form that confirmed they were a 'fit and proper person.' The governors were content for their personal details to be shared with the OfS.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

274. The Assistant Principal Finance provided the Management Accounts (copy attached to signed minutes). The forecast for the year has been revised from a surplus of £10k to £25k.

The Board were informed that the Finance team had scrutinised all budgets to ensure that the end of year forecast remained accurate.

275. The Assistant Principal Finance explained that the forecast did not include any further restructuring costs. If further restructuring was necessary, it would require funding from additional savings in pay costs.

276. The Principal informed the Board that there were no plans to change the structure, but rather ensure that the curriculum model reflected the hours paid for delivery. The Principal continued to have an open approach with unions throughout the timetabling process.

PROCESS FOR APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR & VICE CHAIR

(The Chair and Vice Chair left the meeting for this item)

277. The Clerk advised that the Board needed to decide at this meeting whether or not to operate the procedure for the election of the Chair and Vice Chair prior to the formal appointment being made at the July meeting. He had consulted with the current Chair and Vice Chair who were both willing to continue.

278. **Resolved** that the formal procedure for the election of the Chair and Vice Chair not be operated this year.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE MINUTES

Board Meeting

279. **Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24th April 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 17th July 2018