

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation Held on Monday 27 November 2017 at 4.45 pm

at Somer Valley Campus, Wellow Board Room

Carole Stott	Chair
Andy Furse	Vice-Chair
Laurel Penrose	Apologies
Teixeira Baber	
Victor da Cunha	Apologies
Erica Draisey	
Jane Shaw	
Gary Waylen	
Neil Wilson	(from item 5)
Julian Young (by phone)	(to item 10)

In attendance

Heather Cross	Clerk to the Corporation
Jayne Davis	Deputy Principal
Rachel Hepworth	Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Barbara Owen	HR Director
Simon Bracken	HE Manager (for items 5 and 6)
Michael Magri	Estates Consultant, GSS Architecture (for item 5)

- 1. Apologies** **ACTION**
Apologies were received from Victor da Cunha and from Laurel Penrose, Principal, who was unwell.
It was noted that Adam Reed had resigned his position at the college and his position as staff governor was now vacant. A recruitment process was underway for a new staff governor.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
None
- 3. Confidentiality of Items**
Item 5 on the Outline Estates Strategy was confidential at this early stage of concept discussion.

4. Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 9 October 2017 and any matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting which had been circulated previously were accepted as a true record.

It was noted that the Risk Register which was discussed last time was to be subject to an updating process and would be an item at the next Corporation meeting.

5. Confidential – Outline Estates Strategy

See separate confidential minutes

6. HE Assurance Statement

The proposed HE Assurance Statement due to be submitted shortly to the HEFCE to confirm quality assurance for HE delivery had been circulated. Requirements had not been changed from the previous year.

It was **agreed** that the Accountable Officer be authorised to sign the annual return with Board approval.

7. Self-Assessment Report 2016-17

The draft Self-Assessment report had been circulated. The document had been reviewed prior to this meeting by the Quality Working Group and the comments and observations made by that group were reflected in the circulated document.

A summary of the proposed grades was presented. It was noted that the College was assessed as good overall and the following components contributing to that were as follows: -

- College achievement rates are above national average for similar Colleges and are in the top 8% in England when measured on employer and learner satisfaction
- 16 to 18 progression and adult progression in employment was good
- Most learners achieve their qualifications
- There has been successful management of change
- Teaching, learning and assessment across the College is good
- Provisions for learner without English and Maths level 2 is outstanding
- A well-developed curriculum meets local employer needs
- Learners develop their employability skills well
- Support for students is good
- Achievement gaps are closing
- Governors and leaders have set clear strategic priorities in line with local and regional market needs.

Apprenticeships requires improvement. Governors discussed the focus on apprenticeships and the need for improvements in internal verification and performance management. A more innovative approach to IT was being targeted. Management's focus on learner

outcomes being tied in as the most important thing in an academic appraisal was strongly supported.

The College position in the recently published College satisfaction survey was welcomed, which in effect was fifth in the country. Employer satisfaction was a key component of this and the college's success in this area was welcomed.

Governors considered that the Self-Assessment Report had been put together very well, presenting a well-balanced, well-judged and clear report.

The Self-Assessment Report for 2016-17 was approved.

8. Management Accounts October 2017

The management accounts for October 2017 had been circulated previously and were received.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services reminded the meeting that a deficit budget had been set but the position reported was currently below the budget position. There was a forecast deficit position of £1.4 million on current performance whereas the budget was for a deficit of £600K. 3 factors were identified as making a contribution to this worsened position – an under-recovery of income, against which a prudent approach to reporting was being taken, variance on Love to Learn programmes where less front loading was taking place than had been anticipated in the pattern expected and an overspend on premises maintenance due to a number of factors.

Governors asked a series of questions concerning these, the first management accounts received in the current year, including what the best expectation for the coming year would be. It was noted that Heads of Department were now being provided with full income and expenditure information. It was commented that a prudent approach to receipt of income was sensible, and judging this would be a delicate balance, but management needed to feel comfortable about the approach taken. After discussion it was decided that it was too soon to be considering a re-forecast but careful examination of the position would be necessary at the next meeting in order to consider what actions if any may be needed at this point.

A healthy cash balance of £4.3m at the end of October 2017 was noted.

9. Key Performance Indicators

The latest quality dashboard had been circulated previously and was reviewed. Governors in particular noted that attendance performance was lower than in the previous year but retention was higher. There was a conversation in particular relating to English and Maths attendance and the choice in placing students on foundation skills or GCSE and the effect that this sometimes was thought to have had on attendance.

The quality dashboard was **received**.

10. Quality Improvement Plan

The latest update to the Quality Improvement Plan had been circulated previously. The areas which were 'amber' on the plan were discussed and noted – QA processes and assessor performance scrutiny for apprenticeships; the effective use of the Adult Education Budget with minimal subcontracting; the diversity of teaching, learning and assessment staff; better planning of additionality; the use of assistive technology; the use of ProMonitor for HNC/HND courses; better capture of informal sharing of good practice; functional skills outcomes; tackling under-performance in curriculum areas including Level 3 Sport and level 3 engineering and Business Level 2 certificate – and the standardisation of work experience.

Governors encouraged managers to work hard in securing the improvements identified in the Plan.

11. Equality and Diversity Annual report

The Equality and Diversity Annual report had been circulated previously and the HR Director spoke to the meeting about the key aspects.

It was noted that the report largely focussed on staff issues. The gender balance remained largely the same. Posts which were harder to fill tended to be recruited from industry. The college's age profile was broadly similar to that of other colleges. It was expected that it would reduce as more innovation was introduced. Ethnicity figures were broadly similar to the local profile. Recruitment showed a reduction in applicants. Governors commented that the college could benefit from exploring the use of mobile technology and social media for staff recruitment which would have an impact on current paper-based processes.

A report on gender pay gaps would be reported to the Board as required in the Spring.

12. Financial Health Assessment letter from ESFA

The letter recently received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency providing the college's financial health assessment was considered. The College continued to be in 'early intervention' as the assessment was at 'weak satisfactory' as the current and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) ratio was less than or equal to 80 points.

This position was disappointing, but it was noted that the college had continued to keep the ESFA closely advised of the position; the agency was satisfied with the college's actions.

13. Membership Issues

The Clerk reported that an arrangement was being made to interview a new governor and it was hoped that a recommendation would come to the Board shortly. Interviews had been taking place earlier that day for a new staff governor, the sequence of which would be concluded in time to make a recommendation to the next Board meeting.

It was further reported that two temporary appointments were needed for the next Audit Committee meeting. Jane Shaw and Neil Wilson were thanked for agreeing to join the committee for the next meeting.

14. Letter from Chief Executive of ESFA

A letter which the retiring Chief Executive of ESFA was sending to all Chief Executives had been circulated for information. In response to a question as to whether the college was able to provide assurance on all of the matters he was raising, it was felt that there was good coverage. It was suggested that some of these might helpfully be included in the developing finance dashboard and it was further suggested that staff utilisation should be one of the factors included.

15. GDPR Briefing

A briefing paper by the Association of Colleges on this topic had been circulated.

Governors asked who had been appointed as the Data Protection Officer – this was currently under discussion. An action plan for this key area of work had been prepared.

It was agreed that the action plan be presented to the next Board meeting on 18 December and may continue to be reviewed on a regular basis subsequently.

16. Facility Letter from Barclays

It was reported to the meeting that for the avoidance of doubt an amendment was required to the facility letter with the bank, to make it clear that July management accounts could be received by the bank up to 90 days after month end and that there was no requirement to deliver management accounts in respect of the month of August. The changes to the facility letter reflected practice which had been acceptable to the bank.

There was produced to the meeting a letter of variation (the Letter of Variation) from Barclays Bank PLC (the Bank) to the College setting out the amendments to a facility agreement dated 4 March 2011 pursuant to which the Bank has offered the Borrower (as defined in the Letter of Variation) the Facility (as defined in the Letter of Variation)

IT WAS RESOLVED

1. That the amendments set out in the Letter of Variation are in the interests of and for the benefit of the College and are most likely to promote the success of the College for the benefit of the members as a whole and that such terms and conditions of the Letter of Variation be and are approved and accepted.
2. That Laurel Penrose and Jayne Davis are authorised to sign the Letter of Variation on behalf of the Company to indicate acceptance of the terms and conditions.
3. That the Bank is authorised to act in all manners concerning the Facility as amended by the Letter of Variation upon instruction from the College, in its capacity as Borrower of the Facility, signed in accordance with the Bank's

mandate for any of the accounts of the Company held with the Bank current from time to time.

17. Any Other Business

18. Date of Next meeting

This was noted as Monday 18 December 2017 at 4.45 pm