

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation Held on Monday 26 February 2018

at Somer Valley Campus, Wellow Board Room

Carole Stott	Chair
Andy Furse	Apologies
Laurel Penrose	Principal
Victor da Cunha	
Erica Draisey	Apologies
Tesh Baber	
Paul Blenkinsopp	
Paul May	Apologies
Jane Shaw	Apologies
Gary Waylen	
Neil Wilson	Apologies
Julian Young	Apologies

In attendance

Heather Cross	Clerk to the Corporation
Jayne Davis	Deputy Principal
Rachel Hepworth	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Heather Cross	Clerk to the Corporation

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| 1. | Apologies
Apologies were received from Erica Draisey, Andy Furse, Paul May, Jane Shaw and Neil Wilson. | ACTION |
| 2. | Declarations of Interest
The staff present declared an interest in the item on the agenda concerning staff pay. | |
| 3. | Confidentiality of Items
The staff pay award item was confidential until the decision was communicated to staff. | |
| 4. | Minutes of the meeting of the Board awayday held on 26 January 2018 and any matters arising
The minutes of the Board awayday held on 26 January 2018 which had been previously circulated were accepted as a true record. | |

Matters arising –

Additional subcontractors

It was noted that following the agreement at the January awayday that additional subcontractors be engaged, Premier (extension to current contract) and ICCA (new) having been proposed, that this action was being taken in order to help address the AEB budget shortfall and overall projected deficit. The Principal commented that the deficit figure reported at the January meeting of £547K built in the assumption that subcontracting would be making a contribution to this position.

DP

Estates Strategy

It was confirmed that the next steps indicated to GSS was that they would present to management by mid-March concerning accommodating the catering footprint and the costs of this. The result of this would be discussed by the Finance and Estates Working Group in due course and a recommendation be made to the Board.

Dir F & CS

Policy updates

Noting that governors had welcomed receipt of the recent policy update, the Chair reminded that regular policy updates could be provided from the AoC and suggested that the Chief Executive's letters could be circulated to those governors who were not already signed up to receive them, together with the governance briefing which was issued once a month.

Clerk

5. Governance Action Plan

The Governance Action Plan resulting from the exercise at the awayday in January had been circulated previously. There were four areas identified – fostering teaching and learning; financial sustainability; responsiveness to workforce trends and the student voice.

The actions identified towards fostering teaching and learning in the report were agreed. Those in relation to financial sustainability were generally agreed, with the dashboard welcomed.

Responsiveness to workforce trends was especially discussed. It was agreed that this area of work did not appear sufficiently on Board agendas currently and that labour market intelligence should come to the Board, with discussion about this aspect when the curriculum plan was presented. It was noted that a customer relations management system was being developed centrally which would provide much improved information. Where governors could assist with contacts this would be followed up. Invitation dinners were suggested whereby governors brought business contacts and friends who had not visited the college before.

Student Voice – Tesh commented that she could meet with the Clerk more frequently and feedback on activity but in discussion it was agreed that the process should not be reliant mainly on her input. The Deputy Principal would work with the SU President on a regular report.

A Board Skills plan could be developed as a result of the various actions highlighted. It was agreed that the Search and Governance Working

Clerk

Group should look in more depth at an overall action plan and for a meeting to be convened as soon as possible to discuss this.

6. Ofsted Inspection Report and Ofsted Action Plan

The Ofsted inspection report as now published, had been circulated. The Chair commented on how positively the report read and said well done to managers. It was very pleasing that the inspection result had been picked up and reported by FE Week. The many positive quotes would be used for publicity purposes regularly. It was very pleasing that the strong remarks from students had been cited in the Report.

There had been discussion at the Quality Working concerning the Ofsted Action Plan and it had been decided that the summary of the action plan be reported to governors, with the full document as an annexe, which would be discussed in more detail by the Working Group. Key actions related to learner voice and safeguarding and Prevent. The Quality Working Group had discussed in some detail the college's further work on stretch and challenge and theory work. It was agreed that these areas would be included in learning walks. The student governor was also asked to gather inputs from students about improvements made in these areas. Improvements would be indicated by the rag- rating changing to green. It was also agreed that where an action required from an inspection comment had been taken that these would be specifically flagged.

DP

7. Quality Dashboard

The revised quality dashboard had been circulated previously. Governors welcomed the clarity from the simplified approach being taken to this.

Governors discussed the dip in attendance since Christmas and commented that attention should be continued in this area as an indicated 7% drop was not sustainable and would impact in future on funding for 16 to 18 and immediately for adults. Hairdressing was a particular risk area. An at risk flag was being considered for the electronic records of students who were at risk of leaving or failing. The Board would continue to receive a monthly indication of figures and governors could challenge the assumptions built into the budget. The staff governor commented that in his team attendance was discussed and reviewed at least once a week.

English and Maths attendance had dipped but management were taking steps to address it.

8. Management Accounts

The Management accounts as at the end of January had been circulated previously. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services introduced the key points. The deficit was still significant but it had reduced from £846K to £693K. More subcontractor work was being introduced and with the actions identified the AEB budget would be close to being achieved.

It was noted that some love2learn courses were being examined for viability. Governors suggested that because of the contribution they made to the community, slight losses on some courses might be acceptable and requested that principles to inform considerations on closure be brought to the Board.

DP

Premises maintenance had experienced some unbudgeted costs including some associated with boiler repairs, but the estates manager was undertaking some scenario planning for the rest of the year.

On pay there was an overspend on teaching - where there was overstaffing this was being examined. It was acknowledged that action was needed in order to avoid permanency by default. It was agreed that the overall employment offer would benefit a review by the Board and the People Plan would be presented to the Board.

It was agreed that next month's meeting would look carefully at the cashflow forecast. A sensitivity analysis on achieving the £432K budgeted deficit would be prepared for the next meeting.

Dir F & CS

9. Finance Dashboard

The proposed finance dashboard had been circulated.

Governors asked what the target for financial health needed to be – the score was satisfactory, but profitability was the key. This should be at 45% whereas at present this was at 39%. The College was planning to visit Dudley College of Technology which was an outstanding college and was very economical in its delivery – their teaching costs were 50% of income which was very low in comparison to the sector.

Governors welcomed the dashboard but suggested it would be helpful to have a key and for the most important features to be identified clearly.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services and her team were thanked for their work in developing the dashboard.

10. Risk Register

The risk register had been previously circulated. There were two new risks which had been added – GDPR and Cyber security. There was to be a report to the Board on progress towards GDPR readiness to be made to the Board at the next meeting.

Cyber security was briefly discussed – the college had been sound in its response when there had been national cyber attacks recently but this was to be reviewed as part of the audit plan in the coming year.

11. Gender Pay Reporting

A report had been circulated stating the gender pay gap position for the college.

Barbara Owen introduced the report and explained the requirement was to publish by 30 March 2018 on the position as at 31 March 2017. There was an issue concerning term time only staff whose work was for 8 months but whose pay was spread over 12 months and no adjustment seemed to be able to be given for this, but advice was being sought.

In discussion it was decided that equalities issues should be placed on a people dashboard and that this be given strategic consideration in future.

12. Staff Pay Award Strategy 2017/18

A paper concerning considerations about staff pay had been circulated. The recommendation taking into account the financial situation was that no pay award be paid in the current year.

It was noted that the AoC negotiated a pay recommendation, but this was non-binding.

Governors considered the position and whether also a non-consolidated bonus could be paid if the deficit was reduced. Given that staff had not received a pay award for some time and some posts were proving difficult to recruit to, it was a matter of regret that the college was not in a position to make an award at present.

It was decided that management be asked to examine the introduction of a one-off cash bonus, profiled so that lower paid staff received more and this proposal be examined more carefully and brought back to the Board as soon as possible, at the latest by June.

**Dir F &
CS**

13. Membership of the Audit Committee

The Clerk reported that there was a vacancy on the Audit Committee but Paul May had agreed to join the committee, if appointed. The Board **agreed** his appointment.

14. Minutes of the Quality Working Group

The minutes of the meeting held 19 2 18 were laid on the table and were received.

15. FE Commissioner's Annual Report and Winter Letter

The FE Commissioners annual report and winter letter which had been circulated previously were noted. The College was potentially in line for FE Commissioner review given the financial position. The Principal reported that she had contacted the Commissioner in the summer and had explained the actions being taken. Monthly meetings with the ESFA would continue this year and the key consideration would be the position reached by year end to determine if the Commissioner became more involved. It was agreed it had been the right thing to contact the Commissioner.

16. Any Other Business

In response to a query from the Clerk about whether key college documents were loaded on to MinutePad as yet, the Clerk said this would be tackled as soon as possible.

17. Date of the Next Meeting

This was noted as Monday 26 March 2018. It was requested that the meeting be moved to City Centre campus and that given more governors lived closer to the city centre that the Somer Valley Campus be used more for meetings in the summer months.