

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the Corporation
held on Thursday 28 September 2017 in Room CG-3.E07, College Green Campus
6:00pm - 8:30pm

Committee Members present Peter Rilett (Chair)
Geoff Channon
Richard Gaunt
Zahid Gill
Daniel Howarth
Paul Jacobs
Lee Probert (Principal and Chief Executive)
David Williams

Also in Attendance: Becky Edwards, Executive Director Finance
Cliff Shaw, Deputy Principal (left the meeting before Item 60)
Lizann Lawson, Assistant Principal Further & Higher Education
Paula Brown, Director of Human Resources &
Organisational Development (attended for
Confidential item 72 only)

Jeannette Walsh, PA to the Principal & Chief Executive
- Note-taker

Joanne Ward, Clerk to the Corporation (designate) - observer

Min. No.

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

The Chair thanked Cliff Shaw for his hard work, loyalty and achievements in the 4 ½ years with the College.

60 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

60.1 Apologies were received from Lis Anderson, Zoe Taylor, Martina Veale, Letisha Christopher.

60.2 The Governors welcomed Joanne Ward, newly appointed Clerk to the Corporation, who would be joining the College, officially, from 2 October 2017 and was attending the meeting as an observer.

61 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS IN ANY OF THE ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

61.1 The Chair reminded members of the Committee to declare at the start of the meeting interests held in any matters to be discussed.

Min. No.

61.2 David Williams' possible trading relationship was **NOTED**.

The Clerk would add to the Register of Members' Interests. **ACTION: Clerk**

62

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2017

62.1 The Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

63

MATTERS ARISING

A. SUMMARY REPORT OF ACTIONS

63.1 Governors **NOTED** the summary of actions.

64

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

64.1 The Principal outlined the key issues to note from his Report to the Governors:

- Further Education Commissioner's (FEC) stock take visit scheduled for 8 November 2017, could be a significant milestone in the College's recovery and mark a move towards the end of the Administered status for the financial position. The Governors **NOTED** that the College could secure a "satisfactory" outcome and a recommendation from the FEC to the Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills to conclude the Administered status.

In light of the improved trading position, the College was already working with the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) who are willing to take the College's case to the panel for manual moderation of the College's financial health to Satisfactory.

The Executive Director of Finance explained that the auto-scoring process is fundamentally affected by the borrowings to income ratio and that it had been acknowledged that the underlying trading position is satisfactory, taking into account the delay in the sales of assets and the repayment of the debt.

The Governors **NOTED** that, if a successful outcome was achieved, the intervention process begun in February 2013 could end in full early in 2018.

- Soundwell Centre the first part of this item is recorded as a confidential minute

Governors **NOTED** the recent change in planning law regarding Vacant Building Credit (VBC), which could see the value of the site increase, given the site has been vacant for more than two years.

Min. No.

Governors **NOTED** that the College had received interest from a third party, which was currently being scrutinised and would be reported to the Board in due course.

- Strategic College Improvement Fund (Change Funding), available to colleges whilst in the intervention process, to support the drive for improvements. There is some opportunity to influence the administration of the funding received and it was acknowledged that the College's preference would be that the criteria for any partnering should not be limited to Ofsted grades, or the FE sector.
- Governors **NOTED** the up-to-date student recruitment numbers.

The Chair reaffirmed that, compared to last year, the position is an improvement and the associated risk lowered.

65

PARTNERING PRIORITIES

Governors **DISCUSSED** the College's existing key partnerships and proposals to enhance these further with other employers, both locally and nationally, whilst maintaining the aims of the Strategic Plan: to be anchored in the City and meeting the needs of employers.

It was **AGREED** that there was potential for further national and local pairing, particularly in such sectors as health and social care; digital and data; finance and law; ports and logistics, where classroom delivery given directly by employers could offer greater confidence, both to students and the employers, in terms of the relevance of the curriculum offer.

Governors **AGREED** it was important to look closely at the curriculum plan and employability strategy, together with market intelligence already available within College to clarify the issues facing employers, before deciding which partnerships to explore.

66

DEVELOPING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

The Assistant Principal for Further and Higher Education outlined the report and the on-going work to develop students' employability skills.

Governors **NOTED** the new requirement for three months of work placement, going forward, which amounted to a significant amount of time and would depend upon strong partnerships with employers.

Governors **NOTED** the proposed initiative of an Employability Passport, to give clarity for both students and employers.

The Principal and Chief Executive emphasised the need to fully engage with the employers' voice, inviting them into College, to develop close working relationships and bring coherence to the complexities of qualifications and work experience.

Min. No.

67 **CURRICULUM PLANNING: BUILDING THE VISION AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

The Assistant Principal Further and Higher Education outlined the paper and the work already done with external support.

Governors **NOTED** that, during the planning process, the College looked at the Skills Plan, the LEP plan, gaps in provision and where opportunities were for the College.

The curriculum development was a 10 year project, also looking at the synergy between the College's FE and HE offers and improving students' progression from FE to HE.

Governors **NOTED** that some 33% of the College's students are at Level 1 and need to gain English and maths qualifications. It was important that the development of the skills pathways, starting at Level 2, would need to be mindful of the offer for those students.

The Chair highlighted the benefits of moving toward a closer relationship with a local university partner and complimentary curriculum routes, as indicated in the paper.

Governors **AGREED** the suggested timescale of end of 2017 for discussions to have taken place.

The Chair commended the report and the helpful move forward in long-term curriculum planning.

68 **ACHIEVEMENT UPDATE**

The Assistant Principal for Further and Higher Education outlined the Achievement Update paper, highlighting the significant improvements in higher grades in GCSE English and maths, which were at least 10% above the national rate.

Governors acknowledged the higher grade results and congratulated the staff and teams instrumental in working together to drive these improvements and **NOTED** this was due, in particular, to the work done on improving attendance.

69 **FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2016-2017**

This item is recorded as a confidential minute.

70 **FRESH START MONITORING**

Governors **NOTED** the most recent monitoring report to, and the response from, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

71 **GOVERNMENT BORROWING**

Min. No.

The Executive Director, Finance, outlined the current position with the College's BIS loan and the application for restructure funds from the Transaction Unit (TU).

It was **NOTED** that the TU application is being reviewed and that due diligence has been requested to be completed by mid-October.

It was **AREED** that a virtual/conference meeting, of Governors or Committee Chairs could be convened to make a recommendation once an outcome is known.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

72

The proposals to the senior leadership structure were discussed and recorded separately as a Confidential Minute.

73

AOB & CLOSE

74.1 There being no further business, the Chair thanked Members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8:15pm.

J Walsh
PA to the Principal & Chief Executive

Signed as a correct record on (Date)

..... (Chair)