

## GOVERNING BODY

### Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held in Room LSF24 at 17:00 on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at North Devon Campus

- Present:** Kevin Finan (Chair), Stuart Brocklehurst, David Chalmers, Ro Day, Diane Dimond, David Gibson, Kelvin Mackenzie, Karen McElfrick, Rob Malcolm, Iain Springate, Lindy Stacey, Lee Thommen, Jenny Wallace, Ruth Williams
- In Attendance:** Bill Blythe, Jane Hanson and Sheena Murphy-Collett
- Observer:** Chris Williams
- Governance Advisor:** Bettina Walker

## MINUTES

### 1. MEMBERSHIP AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE 17FGB15

#### 1.1 Chair Succession Planning

- a) Andrew Chapple had indicated his wish to step down as the Chair of the Governing Body from the end of December 2017, for personal availability reasons. Andrew had stated that he was open for consideration to continue as a Governor.
- b) The Board noted that a call for nominations for Chair would be made in the next few days, with the aim to appoint a new Chair at the December Governing Body meeting, to be in post from 1 January 2018.
- c) There was an awareness that a large number of current governors had joined only in the last twelve months, including those who could be potential chairs of the future, but may not yet feel ready to be nominated because of their limited experience to date on the College's Board.
- d) If this proved to be the case, the current Vice Chair, Kevin Finan, indicated his willingness to be nominated as Chair for a limited period of one year in order to give time for succession planning for a future chair.

#### 1.2 Appointment of Student Members

- a) The Board ***noted the appointment of Karen McElfrick as the Student Sabbatical Officer for 2017/2018. The Board appointed Karen McElfrick as a Student Governor for the 2017/2018 Academic Year.***

- b) Following a call for nominations for a Mid Devon Student Governor in October, one nomination had been received by the time of the closing deadline, and that was for Nikki Chubb. The Board **appointed Nicola Chubb as the Mid Devon Student Governor for for the 2017/2018 Academic Year.**

### **1.3 Apologies for Absence**

- a) Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Chapple and Steve Richardson. Kevin Finan, Vice Chair, chaired the meeting.
- b) The Chair welcomed Chris Williams, potential governor, to the meeting.

### **2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None of the Members present had any conflicts of interest to declare relating to agenda items.

### **3. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

It was agreed that items 12 and 13 would be confidential items without staff and students present.

### **4. BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIR**

There was no business brought forward by the Chair.

## **STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **5. QUALITY, CURRICULUM AND LEARNER REPORTS 17FGB16**

#### **5.2 2016/2017 Learner Outcomes**

- a) The Vice Principal Quality, Curriculum & Learners reported that the updated provisional results for all provision, all durations, all ages for **13,936** learners was **85.3%** overall achievement compared with 15,078 learners with a 82.9% overall achievement in the previous year and the National average of **82.1%**.
- b) For **16-18 Long** qualifications, excluding Functional Skills, representing **7875** learners, the overall achievement was **87.5%**, compared with 8006 learners with 85.0% overall achievement in the previous year. The National average was **79.1%**
- c) Following a focus on 16-18 provision during 2016/2017, the Board was pleased to note very strong achievement for Levels 1, 2, and 3.
- d) The Board was also pleased to note the significant progress being made by students in achieving GCSE English and Maths.
- e) For **19+ Long** qualifications, excluding functional skills, representing **1347** learners, the overall achievement was **78.8%**, compared with 1447 learners with 80.5% overall achievement in the previous year. The National average was **86.1%**.

- f) The Board noted level 2 19+ overall achievement was strong and above national average. 19+ short and very short achievement was 87%, improved on last year and 2.5% above benchmark (3326 learners). 19+ level 2 long that is below average, and identified as an area for improvement.
- g) The Board noted that the College's provision profile had a higher level of 19+ long courses compared with other colleges, and that the achievement rates should be viewed in this context: it was generally more difficult to achieve a long qualification than a short one.
- h) The Board noted the slight drop in achievements at A' Level, which was thought to be due to the new linear approach to the qualification with examinations held after the two years of study, and the phasing out of AS levels. The College's results were close to national averages, and well above average in mathematics and STEM subjects.
- i) The Apprenticeships final showed that overall achievement was down slightly on 2015/16 at 69.3%, but 4.4% above national averages. Retention was a factor and the Board discussed the difficulties that could be encountered when students lost their employment and could not find another placement.
- j) For Higher Education Final Year Foundation Degree and HNC achievement representing **190** learners there was a **93.1% pass rate**, compared with , 187 learners with 92.7% overall pass rate in the previous year.
- k) Governors ***noted the updated achievement rates for 2016/2017 with a 2.5% overall better achievement rate than last year, and congratulated staff and learners on an excellent outcome for the year.***

## **5.2 Quality Improvement Plan Final Update on 2016/2017 Progress 17FGB17**

- a) The Board ***was pleased to note that the majority of actions in the Quality Improvement Plan for 2016/2017 had been completed, with some still in progress and only a few not achieved.***
- b) Highlights included the work undertaken to improve workforce development, safeguarding practices, development work for study programmes and Higher Education. The new processes for Teaching and Learning observations had also worked well.
- c) The work still in progress included improvements to the access to Higher Education programmes, and there was a significant plan in place to achieve these during 2017/2018.

- d) Also identified for further improvement was attendance for English and Maths: this was a challenge experienced by colleges nationally. Learning Walks had shown that students in Maths and English classes were engaged, but a further drive was needed to improve attendance.

## **6. ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORTS 17FGB18**

### **6.1 Assistant Principal and Managers' Presentations**

- a) The Board received presentations from the Assistant Principals and Managers who were leads for the various types of provision in the College. The presentations covered their provision's self-assessment for 2016/2017 and the focus of their Quality Improvement Plan for 2017/2018.
- b) The presenters responded to a range of questions from Governors and, in particular, Governors noted and discussed:
- The work underway to bid for apprenticeship contracts, not just for generic qualifications, such as Accountancy and Business Administration, but also with specific employers, such as Wessex Water.
  - The success of the 16-18 Academies, providing enrichment, and work placements with links to apprenticeships.
  - The significant increase in the number of Higher Apprenticeships, with the appointment of a Curriculum Leader for Apprenticeships to improve employer satisfaction levels. Employer satisfaction for 2016/17, which included many SMEs increased to 93%
  - The success of schemes such as MOT training which was now generating repeat business as learners came back after taking their initial qualification, to take refresher courses.
  - The College's success in achieving a TEF Silver Award, which, with improvement in student retention and progression should improve to a Gold Award in the future.
- c) The Governors thanked all the Presenters for their informative presentations and the results that had been achieved. They wished to thank and congratulate the Assistant Principals and their teams for their hard work and commitment.

### **6.2 The Board's Role in HE Quality Assessment**

- a) The Vice Principal Quality Curriculum & Learners informed Governors that from December 2016, as part of the Annual Provider Review, each Further Education college directly or indirectly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) needed to complete an Annual Quality Assessment return.
- b) The Annual Quality Assessment return included a role for the Board in providing assurances about the quality of higher education provision at the College, and the submission of a signed template which gave assurances regarding the continuous improvement of the student experience, student outcomes and the reliability of our degree standards.
- c) The College was expecting some further information from HEFCE, and would then be able to provide Governors with a brief report summarising the key measures and processes in place at the College for the assurance of the quality of the HE provision.

- d) Following these considerations the Board agreed that the information should be circulated for comment to Governors. The Board gave delegated authority to the Chair to ***approve the signing of the Annual Quality Assessment Return by the 'Accounting Officer' (Principal), and noted that this document needed to be with HEFCE on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017.***

**7. FUNDING AND LEARNER NUMBER UPDATE FOR 2017/2018 Verbal (Confidential)**

**MATTERS FOR REPORT AND APPROVAL**

**8. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING 17FGB19**

- a) The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting of the ***Governing Body held on 27 September 2017 were confirmed as a true record of the meeting.***

- b) **Matter arising Minute Reference 5.2d)** – Small classes did at least cover the immediate costs of the class, even if there was no net contribution. The normal viable class size at the College was 16 to 18 learners.

- c) **Matters arising Minute Reference 10.1 a)** – Allowing governors to join meetings by technological facilities needed a more detailed two part discussion:

- Firstly the technology hardware to be involved i.e. by what means governors joined a meeting and
- Secondly, governance considerations, for example governor attendance targets by various means:

This was referred to the Search & Governance Committee for further consideration and reporting back.

**9. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT 17FGB20**

- a) The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development presented the Annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Report for Staff, and reported that declarations levels in the protected characteristics had generally been very good.

- b) The College workforce profile showed that:
- Gender – the College closely correlated with the FE workforce data for England profile.
  - Disability – the College profile was lower than the FE workforce data for England comparator in the sector.
  - Ethnicity – the College was below the FE workforce data for England comparator for the sector. However, it was above the Devon census 2011 data set.
  - Age – the College closely matched the South West profile.
  - Sexual orientation – the College was below the Office for National Statistics data and the FE workforce data for England comparator for the sector. Furthermore, the declaration of this data in the College was currently at 90%.

- Religion or Belief – the College had some correlation with the Devon census 2011 data set. There was no data provided in this area in the FE workforce data for England. However, the declaration of this data in the College was currently at 56%.
- c) The Board noted the Action Plan to encourage better declaration levels for Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief. Also, to convey in staff EDI training that the College took the needs of various groups seriously. A new “Dignity at Work” Policy would be created to encompass policies such as the current harassment policy.
- d) Governors noted that the College was reviewing where it stood in terms of pay inequality, following recent national reports for the country on this. The results would be made available to Governors.
- e) Governors noted the continuing focus on staff mental health, and the various services available to staff.

**10. FINANCE REPORT 17FGB21**

- a) The Board ***was pleased to note that the Month 12 Management Accounts for 2016/2017 financial year was better than original forecast with a surplus of £331,000 on core activity.***
- b) The Board noted the need to change signatories, and ***approved the revised signatories to the College’s Barclays account.***

**MATTERS FOR REPORT AND NOTE**

- 11. EFSA FINANCIAL HEALTH RATING (for information only) 17FGB22**  
 The Board noted that the Education and Skills Funding Agency’s assessment of the College’s Financial Plan 2016-17, and was pleased to note that the ESFA’s financial health rating of the college remained “good”.

*Confidential Minutes for item 12 and 13, without staff and students present, were kept under separate cover.*