

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 15th June 2015 at Barnstaple Campus

Present: Paul Petrides (Chair), Jeff Andrew, Martin Chance, Shaun Cooper, Ro Day, Diane Dimond, Laura Elliott, David Gibson, Lee Norburn (Items 1-10), Andrew Pierce (Items 1-10), Joanna Prylinska, Paula Stein (Items 1-17(b)) and Eirene Williams.

In attendance: Neil Hookway, Susan Lewry and Pené Prior.

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Martyn Gimber, Andrew Mosedale and Ollie Tuck.

2. Confidential Items

2.1 It was agreed that part of Item 4 (Confidential section of the minutes of 7th May 2015), Item 8 (Safeguarding Annual Report), Item 10 (Curriculum/HR Review) and Item 17 (Campus financial analysis section) would remain confidential to the Governing Body for the time being.

3. Declaration of Interests

3.1 Andrew Pierce declared an interest in relation to Item 16, as Chair of the Three Valleys Learning Co-operative.

4. Minutes

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 7th May 2015 were confirmed and signed.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

5.1 **Item 15.4 - Estates Strategy** - Governors sought clarification of the target figure of £30-50k for sponsorship given at the last meeting. The Director for Resources advised that this figure was in relation to the CCIF project only, not for the organisation as whole. The Director for Resources reported that he had researched the area of sponsorship and gifts and donations with other colleges and external organisations; the fees being

quoted by external organisations, who would support colleges with identifying sponsorship opportunities, being quite high.

- 5.2 Governors were advised that the College would be concentrating on CCIF at the present time, via gifts and donations, but that opportunities in other areas can, and do, arise such as the £90k which was secured from The Savoy last year.
- 5.3 In response to a question raised, Governors were advised that organisations would be acknowledged, as appropriate, in relation to the level of donation received.

6. Business brought forward by direction of the Chair

- 6.1 There was no business brought forward by direction of the Chair.

7. Cycle of Business 2015/16

- 7.1 Received considered and approved the Cycle of Business for 2015/16. Governors acknowledged that this is a working document and that items could be added or removed as business dictates throughout the forthcoming academic year, and particularly in the light of the strategic review currently in progress.

8. Safeguarding Policy

- 8.1 Received and considered the Annual Report on how the College has discharged its responsibilities for safeguarding and the Safeguarding Policy for approval.
- 8.2 The Director for Quality and Performance appraised Governors of the work that had been undertaken throughout the year to safeguard learners. Governors noted that the number of cases being recorded are increasing year on year, particularly in the category of emotional abuse, and were advised that this is due to growing expertise in diagnosing and more general public awareness of young people's issues. The Director for Quality and Performance advised of the role of the Enhanced Bursary Mentor who worked directly with learners deemed as vulnerable, and who would be entitled to an enhanced bursary. Governors were mindful of the impact that young peoples' and vulnerable adults' issues could have on their learning but were advised that there is no benchmarking data available to underpin the college's work.
- 8.3 Governors were advised that the Safeguarding Policy had been updated to include the requirements for the prevention of violent extremism, the 'Prevent Agenda', and Governors were reminded that a training event would be taking place on Tuesday 23rd June for both Governors and the senior management team. It was noted that some Governors are also attending the briefing, using the same external trainer, at the AoC event on 30th June.

- 8.4 Governors sought clarification on the arrangements for new staff and any delay in receiving clearance from the DBS. It was reported that no significant delays were being experienced and that the college undertook its own risk assessment and that new staff were not left unsupervised until DBS clearance had been received.
- 8.5 Governors approved the Safeguarding Policy for adoption but requested that the title 'Outdoor Learning' in Appendix 5, be reconsidered, as the text was not specific to outdoor learning.

9. Redundancy/Settlements Policy

- 9.1 Received and considered the Redundancy and Settlements Policy which had been amended following the discussions at the last Governing Body meeting.
- 9.2 The Director for Resources highlighted the changes that had been made and Governors approved the policy for adoption.
- 9.3 Governors discussed the opportunity for those electing to take voluntary redundancy seeking to be appointed to a role at the College in the future, and the time period that should elapse before re-appointment. The Director for Resources reported that there is no legislation in this regard but that the advice from Clarke Willmott was that there should be a break of one month. The letter to staff taking VR made this stipulation. The Director for Resources outlined the processes in place when considering re-appointing an ex-member if staff who had sought voluntary redundancy. He advised that each application for VR was considered individually and there were safeguards in place to ensure no-one was accepted for VR, unless the post was no longer required. Governors queried what would happen in an area where lecturers had been accepted for VR but that learners on the course were going into the second year and the Director for Resources advised that it was ensured that expertise was available from continuing staff to deliver the curriculum.
- 9.4 The Clerk advised the Governing Body that she had sought the view of the auditors, Mazars, with regard to this matter. Whilst it is accepted that there is no legislation with regard to the timeframe, there was an requirement with regard to evidencing the proper use of public funds, value for money and the efficient and effective use of resources, if someone who accepted VR, receiving a tax free lump sum, was re-appointed to any role at the college a short time later. A response from Mazars was still awaited and would be reported to the Board in due course.

10. Curriculum/HR Review - Confidential

- 10.1 Received an update from the Deputy Principal/Director for Quality and Performance and the Director for Resources on the progress of the Curriculum/HR Review.

11. Sub-contracting Supply Chain Management Fees and Charges Policy

- 11.1 Received and considered the annual report on the management of sub-contracting and proposed revisions to the Sub-contracting Supply Chain Management and Fees and Charges Policy 2015/16.
- 11.2 Governors approved the revised policy for adoption.

12. Petroc Student Union (PSU)

- 12.1 Received and considered proposed revisions to the PSU Constitution and Code of Practice. Governors were advised that the proposed revisions had been drawn up in consultation with both branches of the PSU and agreed by them.
- 12.3 Governors approved the proposed Constitution and Code of Practice for adoption for review in June 2018, or earlier, if circumstances necessitate a change.

13. HR Strategy

- 13.1 Received and considered the revised HR Strategy 2014-17 for approval.
- 13.2 In response to a question from Governors, the Director for Resources outlined the current salary sacrifice initiatives available to staff.
- 13.3 Governors were keen to understand the HR resources in place to deliver the strategy and the Director for Resources provided verbal details of the staffing structure and the budget for professional development. However, for benchmarking, and to inform KPIs, it was agreed that it would be useful to have a breakdown of the costs of HR, and a matrix of the interconnecting processes of appraisal, disciplinary, grievances. The Director for Resources also agreed to provide a report giving the breakdown of the internal and external costs of HR, the professional development budget (the prioritising rationale and the numbers that had accessed it) with three year trends and a précis of the overall role and functions of the team, to a future meeting of the Governing Body.

14. PSU Branch Annual Reports

- 14.1 Received and consider the annual reports of the two branches of the PSU, presented by the Student Sabbatical Officer.
- 14.2 Governors were pleased to note the extensive range of activities taking place at both campuses. Governors wished to pass on their thanks to both branches for providing such comprehensive reports on the Board.

15. Key Performance Indicators

- 15.1 Received the termly monitoring report for the KPIs. The acting Principal highlighted, in particular, the decline in the 16-18 learner numbers. In response to a question raised, Governors were advised that the final

enrolment numbers for 2015-16 would be available for the November Governing Body.

- 15.2 Governors suggested that, going forward, staff satisfaction be reported as a KPI on the dashboard. Governors discussed the CPD spend and, in response to a question raised, the Director for Resources advised that there is no ceiling on what can be asked for and that each application is looked at individually. Governors also discussed the appraisal completion rate figure and were advised that this is being followed up with Managers to ensure a high level of completion.
- 15.3 It was suggested that, when the targets are set for next year (in December), a presentation is given on the rationale for the targets the Governing Body are asked to approve.

16. Quality and Performance

- 16.1 Received and considered the Quality Report from the Deputy Principal/Director for Quality and Performance.

16.2 a) Learner involvement in quality assurance and enhancement

Governors noted that the first year of the revised strategy has now been completed. During the year there had been a number of new initiatives, many led by the new Student Sabbatical Officer, which had proved beneficial in hearing the learners' voice. Governors received a detailed report against the actions identified in the 2014-15 plan, which culminated with the Student/Staff/Governor quiz last week, which, it was agreed, was very successful.

- 16.3 Governors were advised that the calendar of events for next year was currently being planned.

16.4 b) FE Choices

Governors received a summary report on the outcomes from this year's FE Choices Survey. Governors were asked to note that completion this year was significantly down on last year and, from investigation with students, it was established that the FE Choices website was experiencing problems, which may have been a factor in the lower completion rate.

- 16.5 The Deputy Principal/Director for Quality and Performance reported that next year the college would be reinstating its own internal survey of students to support and balance the external survey.

16.6 c) Teaching and Learning Team Report and Lesson Observations Summary

The Deputy Principal/Director for Quality and Performance responded to a number of Governors questions on the summary report, in particular regarding Grade 4 assessed lesson observations, which Governors

acknowledged were minimal, and the processes in place to ensure staff receive support from the Learning and Performance Coaching Team.

16.7 **d) Ofsted Dashboard**

Governors discussed the Ofsted Data Dashboard summary report for Petroc and the comparative benchmarking data for other local South West colleges. Governor's attention was drawn to the Apprenticeship achievement, which for Level 2 increased by 10% but for Level 3 was lower. However, as Governors were aware, the underlying analysis of this data, which was related to Petroc Direct, had already been reported to Governors and measures are in place to improve outcomes for 2014-15.

16.8 The Deputy Principal/Director for Quality and Performance reported that English and Maths was proving to be a National issue for Colleges. It was reported that most South West Colleges were following the Certificate in English qualification but, unfortunately, there was no alternative to the GCSE Maths qualification.

16.9 **e) Three Valleys Partnership**

Governors noted an update on the first year of the Three Valleys Partnership

16.10 The Deputy Principal/Director for Quality and Performance was thanked for her comprehensive Quality Report.

17. Finance Report

17.1 Received and considered the Finance Report from the acting Principal.

17.2 **a) Management Accounts: Month 9**

It was reported that the College was still in line with forecast, although the full year forecast is currently being reviewed in the light of the restructuring costs. Governors were advised that for Month 10 Accounts, pay will be re-based as a percentage of income, following discussions with JCC, which would show a figure of around 68%.

17.3 The acting Principal reported that the College had been advised that all grant bid applications have currently been suspended by the new Government, but that more information should be available at the next meeting.

17.4 **b) Campus Analysis**

Governors noted the improved data but were advised that it was still a difficult task to accurately capture staff who worked across the campuses. The acting Principal particularly highlighted:

1. The deterioration in the Mid Devon and Brannams operating surplus;

2. That a specific cohort of Creative Industries students had to be moved back to the Barnstaple site from Brannams;
3. A small decrease in Petroc Direct, due to a decrease in franchising and the Adults Skills Budget cuts in 2014-15; and
4. The strength of Projects. – to note the improved performance against profile.

17.5 The acting Principal responded to a number of questions from Governors, in particular regarding the difficulty of allocating the HE budget between Brannams and Barnstaple sites, but it was acknowledged that the majority of HE delivery was from the Brannams site.

17.6 b) Project Performance

Received and considered the annual report on Project performance from the acting Principal.

17.7 Governors were pleased to note that Projects are generating a significant surplus for the College this year. The acting Principal reported on the difficulties with the Government wanting to pass ESF funding through the LEPs, which was not recognised by the EU; delays in rectifying this anomaly could have implications for both business and those staff on fixed term contracts.

18. Marketing Strategy

18.1 Received and considered an updated report from the Director for Resources on the Marketing strategy.

18.2 The Director for Resources drew Governors attention to the applications data in Appendix 1. Governors questioned whether there should be targets set for Apprenticeships and the Director for Resources advised that the College was committed to increasing all apprenticeships and that whilst there was a target for finances, the numbers would be dependent on the apprenticeship framework the learners were studying.

19. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

19.1 Received and considered the annual EDI report from the Deputy Principal/Director for Quality and Performance. Governors noted the report included a summary report against the Equality Objectives set by the Board.

19.2 Governors were pleased to note the summary report.

20. Governance

20.1 a) Confidential papers

Received and noted the recommendations of the Chair and acting Principal regarding the release of papers previously designated as confidential by the Board, and concurred with the decisions made.

20.2 **b) Governance Improvement Plan**

Received a year end update on progress made against the actions identified in the Governance Improvement Plan. Governors approved the removal of all items assessed as complete. Governors were reminded that a new plan would be presented to the Board, following consideration by the Search and Governance Committee, in the Autumn term.

21) Joint Working Group

- 21.1 Received a verbal report on the recent Joint Working Group meeting with Governors from Exeter College. The minutes of the discussions would be available for the next Board meeting.
- 21.2 Governors were reminded of the joint full Boards meeting scheduled for Monday 20th July, 5.00pm at Mid Devon Campus, where the main topic on the agenda would be receiving a presentation on the Strategic review and identifying the shared vision and priorities.

The meeting finished at 7.43pm

The above minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the Governing Body. In the meantime, action can, and should, be taken on the decisions made.