

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 23rd February 2016 at Barnstaple Campus

Present: Paul Petrides (Chair), Jeff Andrew, Charlie Curzon, Ro Day, Diane Dimond, Laura Elliott, Kevin Finan, David Gibson, Martyn Gimber, Andrew Mosedale, Andrew Pierce and Lee Thommen

In attendance: Jane Barton (Items 1-14), Neil Hookway (Items 1-14), Susan Lewry, Alex Mullen (Items 1-12) and Pené Prior (Items 1-14).

The Chair welcomed Kevin Finan and Alex Mullen to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Amy Bayet, Martin Chance, Andrew Chapple, Shaun Cooper, Paula Stein and Eirene Williams.

2. Confidential Items

2.1 It was agreed that the confidential section of the minutes of the last meeting (Item 4), and those annotated on the agenda, Items 13-15 would remain confidential to the Governing Body, for the time being.

3. Declaration of Interests

3.1 No declarations of interest were made in the items that follow.

4. Minutes

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 21st January 2016 were confirmed and signed.

4.2 The Clerk apologised for the omission of one of the confidential minutes, an oversight on her part, and advised that it would be circulated the next day. A Governor expressed concern over the number of items being marked confidential by the Governing Body. The Clerk agreed with this observation but advised that the nature of some of the discussions currently taking place necessitated this. Governors were reminded that annually the papers and minutes that were designated confidential are reviewed by the Chair, Principal and Clerk and those no longer deemed confidential are referred to the Governing Body for approval to release from the confidential file.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

5.1 **Item 14.3 – Estates** – The Director for Resources confirmed that practical completion was on target for the end of this month.

5.2 **Item 14.5 – Brannams** – The Director for Resources reported on his recent meeting with PAL Properties and advised that there would be a follow-up meeting in few weeks' time.

6. Business brought forward by direction of the Chair

6.1 The Principal briefed Governors on the success of the Stakeholders' Events.

7. Annual Reports of the Petroc Student Union

7.1 Received and considered the annual reports of the two branches of the Petroc Student Union (PSU).

7.2 Alex Mullen, President of the North Devon Branch of the PSU presented their report and Charlie Curzon presented the report on behalf of the Mid Devon Branch.

7.3 Governors were very pleased to hear of the extensive range of activities taking place at both campuses, particularly the charitable fundraising and joint activities that had taken place.

7.4 Governors wished to pass on their thanks to both branches for providing such comprehensive reports on the Board

8. Quality Report

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

8.2 (a) Early Leavers Report

Governors noted the report and were advised that research was taking place as to whether the requirements for Maths and English has impacted on the number of early leavers, together with the enhanced requirements for study at Level 3, where a number of withdrawals have been seen.

8.3 (b) Value Added

The Deputy Principal/Director for Quality and Performance reported on the positive value added scores for learners completing A levels and BTEC Level 3 published on the DfE Performance Tables 2014/15 and the successful use internally of the Advanced Level Performance System (ALPS) the college introduced last year, which has supported the improvements.

8.4 Governors were pleased to note that the College is now showing in the top 9% of Colleges nationally in the DfE tables.

8.5 (c) Higher Education Update

Governors received and noted the HE update from the Deputy Principal/Director for Quality and Performance.

8.6 In response to questions raised, Governors were advised that whilst some students who obtain Foundation Degrees follow on to full Honours, others, mainly those who are funded by their employers, cease their studies at the Foundation Degree level. However, the College had recently engaged with 'Think Alumni' to survey the learners who stop their studies at Foundation level and they will report back to the College in due course on those among them who have expressed an interest to further their studies. However, it was reported that other means of re-engaging students to continue learning are via the HE Expo events the College holds.

8.7 With regard to the Quality Report overall, the Deputy Principal/Director for Quality and Performance advised:

- Whilst 16-18 Study Programme quality is high overall, the College is always looking for marginal gains in every area of the curriculum; which is done, for example, by interrogating the withdrawals data; running an effective lesson observation scheme; and, for last year and future years the effective use of the ALPS data.
- There is a strategic focus on apprenticeships both to raise success rates and to maximise the College's market share, and the College have recently invested in a system which gives access to detailed LMI data, currently being used by the various departments, to see where improvements and gains can be made. Governors were keen to see Higher Apprenticeships develop at the College to the benefit of both the College and the local communities.

8.8 Governors were pleased to see the year on year improvements and congratulated management, staff and learners.

9. Finance Report

9.1 (a) Management Accounts

Received and considered the Month 5 Management Accounts.

9.2 Governors noted the pressure on the budget at the current time, particularly the cash-flow and enquired regarding the minimum cash balance days. The Principal reported on the differing opinions between the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) recommendation and that recently being advised by the Association of Colleges (AoC). Governors were advised that the finance team track the cash very closely, and had highlighted that March 2016 and March 2017 would be pinch-points when profiling the budget last year. Governors were reminded that the £3M loan, taken in 2010, will be repaid in 2017, which will help with finances going forward.

9.3 In response to a question raised, Governors were advised that the Treasury Management Policy did not need revising at the moment, but close monitoring was in place.

9.4 It was suggested that the Strategic Investment Working Group (SIWG) revisit the capital expenditure allocations at their next meeting.

9.5 **(b) Course Fees Policy**

Received, considered and approved the Course Fees Policy for 2015/16.

10. Sub-Contractor Activity Annual Report

10.1 Received and considered the Sub-Contractor Activity Annual Report from the acting Director for Finance and Funding.

10.2 Governors noted the decreasing amount of work sub-contracted, with more delivery in-house.

11. Staff Survey

11.1 Received and considered the summary report and action plan, which builds on the 2013/14 action plan, following the recent Staff Survey. Governors were advised that a SMT HR Working Group were monitoring the action plan.

11.2 Governors were pleased to note that the survey had been hosted externally and the high number of staff that participated. Governors asked to view the underlying report, which had been shared with staff (Clerk to circulate).

11.3 Governors discussed the survey outcomes in considerable detail and, in particular, setting targets for outcomes with individual managers at all levels in the College. Governors were advised that the action plan has not yet been made available to all staff and sought assurance that staff are consulted on the action plan, to ensure that it captures the outcomes from the survey and the actions meet the needs. Governors were advised that some forums for discussing the action plan had already been identified by management (Support Staff Development Day in March) and others will be planned.

11.4 Governors were keen to support the management team in delivering improvements.

12. Marketing Strategy

12.1 Received and considered an update on the Marketing Strategy from the Director for Resources.

12.2 Governors discussed the process for continuing a dialogue with learners who have finished their course, to encourage them to continue with their learning. The Director for Resources advised on the limited capacity of the College's current CRM system, which did not lend itself to re-engagement with learners, but management agreed that staff themselves should be encouraged to recognise that they all have a role in marketing the College; it was confirmed this message was being given by the Principal in her meetings with staff.

12.3 Some Governors fed back anecdotally to management on their recent experiences and it was stressed Governors are keen to support management in increasing student numbers and providing for community needs.

13. Mid Devon Campus - Confidential

14. Emerging Funding - Confidential

15. Remuneration Committee/Selection Panel - Confidential

The meeting ended at 7.15pm