

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held in LSF24 at 16:00 on 12th November 2019

Present: Kevin Finan (Chair), Sam Bryant-Jones, David Chalmers, Harrison Edwards, Sean Mackney, Lena Marvão, Maxine Padgham, Steve Richardson, Mark Rogers, Iain Springate, Lindy Stacey, and Lee Thommen

In Attendance: Bill Blythe via video link for items 6 and 9 only, Jane Hanson, Sheena Murphy-Collett

Governance Advisor: Jane Barton

The meeting commenced with comprehensive Governor Development presentations by the Departmental Assistant Principals and the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) leads. The presentations summarised the key changes, developments and challenges within the curriculum departments and the EIF areas in 2018/2019.

Governors welcomed the presentations; asked a number of probing questions and recognised that all the presentations celebrated achievements, recognised areas for change and development; demonstrated sound knowledge of the curriculum, the needs of learners and the challenges faced. The commitment and passion for the learners and the drive to improve quality year-on-year was much-admired.

Governors were also given the opportunity to submit questions through to the Governance Advisor – she in turn would forward these on to the relevant senior manager and report back.

Items 6 through to 9 were taken first on the agenda.

6. Strategic

19FGB14

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources fed back to the Board the matters discussed at the recent Strategic Review Working Group which included the draft minutes from that meeting. Given the confidential and business sensitive nature of the discussions; it was noted that this item be considered as 'Commercial in Confidence'.

As part of the planned review of the Committee structure, the Board approved the re-designation of the Strategic Review Working Group (SRWG) as a full Committee, the dissolution of the Tenders and Contracts Committee, the updated Terms of Reference and the change in title of SRWG to the Strategic Review Committee.

The Board considered and approved the renaming of the SRWG to the Strategic Review Committee, the amendments to the Terms of Reference to incorporating the key functions of the dissolved Tenders and Contracts Committee.

9. Finance and Resources Report

Office for Students – Compliance with Regulatory Deadlines

19FGB17

The OfS is the regulator for Higher Education replacing the Higher Education Funding Council but with a different and broader remit. As a new regulator it has different timelines, processes and deadlines for returns and payments. The Vice Principal Finance and Resources explained to the Board that the College had recently missed two payment deadlines which resulted in a strong letter from the OfS to the Chair and the Principal and CEO requiring the college to assure the board, and the OfS that all necessary processes and procedures are in place to ensure full compliance going forward.

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources assured the Board that the College has now put in place comprehensive systems that will ensure no future deadlines are missed.

The Board noted the letter from the OfS and were assured that to alleviate their concerns all necessary steps to ensure future compliance were being taken.

Action:

The Governance Advisor will confirm to the OfS, that the matter has been discussed that that Governors were assured that processes were now in place to ensure no future omissions would occur.

Update on Funding and Learner Numbers

19FGB18

The paper provided an update on the College's 2019/2020 learner enrolments and their impact on funding and the challenges expected in 2020/2021.

Draft Month 12 Management Accounts for 2018/2019

19FGB19

As previously reported to the board the College achieved a year end operating surplus of £162k (this represents the position prior to provisions for the Local Government Pensions Scheme) which is lower than the £208k forecasted at M10. Cash balances at £4.13m reflected an improvement against the forecasted cash figure of £3.60m at Month 10. The Funding Audit has not led to any changes to the year-end outturn.

The AEB Allocation will be subject to a clawback of c£200k. This was primarily as a result of distance learning recruitment reducing in the latter quarter of the year, lower retention and achievement on some larger funded AEB courses such as construction; and underachievement of Additional Learning Support (ALS) targets in some faculties.

The current ratio and cash KPI's were adversely affected by a delay in asset disposal which had, at the time of the 2018/2019 budget being prepared in May 2018, been anticipated for July 2019. This receipt is now not expected for some time. The class size of 11.2 (target 14) reflects learner numbers declining without consequent reductions in curriculum scale. This is actively being reviewed for 2018/2019 and in business planning for 2019/2020.

Education and Skills Funding Agency Financial Assessment

19FGB20

The Board noted the letter from the ESFA confirming their assessment that the College continues to maintain Good financial health.

At this point the Vice Principal Finance and Resources left the meeting and the agenda resumed.

1. Membership and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed Student Governor - Harrison Edwards – Student Union President to his first meeting of the Governing Body.

Apologies were received from Chris Williams and Jenny Wallace

2. Declaration of Interests

No declaration of interests were declared.

3. Confidential Items

The Ofsted feedback is confidential. Item 6 – feedback from the Strategic Review Working Group should be considered ‘Commercially Confidential’. Part of item 7; the re-appointment of two External Governors, would be taken as a confidential item without the two External Governors present.

4. Business brought forward by the Chair

Welcomed Harrison Edwards, the Student Union President and the new Student Governor to his first Board meeting.

Ofsted feedback: Confidential

The Vice Principal Quality Curriculum and Learners provided feedback on the recent Ofsted:

She reported back on the two very intense but productive days spent with the Ofsted Inspectors. Our staff and students were brilliant! Ofsted inspectors spent most of the time at the North Devon Campus, but did short visits to observe learning at Mid Devon and Brannams Campuses.

The feedback received from Helen Flint Lead HMI and Andy Fitt HMI Leadership and Management – included many very positive comments.

Under Ofsted rules we can't share the 'outcome' until it has been through Ofsted quality process and report published (approx. 6 weeks). However – if we were due to be Outstanding – or Requires Improvement Ofsted would be returning.

The Vice Principal thanked Governors for the work they had put into preparing for the inspection, in the end the HMI wanted a very small group of governors, so additional thanks were extended to those who attended the HMI meeting for demonstrating how well they knew the College's strengths and areas for improvement.

Governors welcomed the feedback and extended their thanks and congratulations to the Vice Principal and all the staff involved in the Ofsted.

5. Matters for Report and Approval:

19FGB13

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Monday 7th October 2019 were approved and signed by the Chair. One correction was noted – David Chalmers proffered his apologies to that meeting.

There were no Matters Arising not covered within the agenda.

Action: The Governance Advisor to circulate a list of the questions asked, together with the responses, in the Governors Leadership and Management session. **COMPLETED**

Action: The Governance Advisor to work with the SU to facilitate the election of the Student Governor. **COMPLETED 3 nominations have been received, elections will take place shortly.**

Action: Thought needs to be given to the method used to Self-Assess Governors – this will be undertaken by the Governance Advisor. **Ongoing.**

7. Governance:

Governance Matters:

19FGB15

Updated Standing Orders

The Board considered the suggested changes to the Standing Orders and were happy to endorse all the updates. The Board also considered a further change to Governors attendance at meeting using technology such as video conferencing functionality. It was recognised that video conferencing technology now had advanced making remote attendance much more interactive.

The proposal is to remove the third paragraph in Quorum section which reads:

‘The Instrument and Articles allow for Governors to attend by technological facilities. However, this should only be used in exceptional cases, where a governor is unable to attend the meeting in the main room for the meeting. Governors would normally be expected to attend in the main room for the meeting, and only use remote access in exceptional circumstances.’

The amended statement reads:

‘The Instrument and Articles do allow for Governors to attend by technological facilities and remote access can be made available; whilst this remote attendance at the meeting is supported the preference is that, whenever possible, Governors attend in the main room for the meeting.’

The Board approved the changes to the Standing Orders.

Membership Matters:

Maxine Padgham and Mark Rogers left the meeting to allow the Board to consider their re-appointment for a further 3 year term of office. The Board were happy to ratify the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee to re-appoint both for a further 3 year term of office.

The Board approved the re-appointment for a further 3 year term of office for Maxine Padgham and Mark Rogers.

Mark Rogers and Maxine Padgham re-joined the meeting.

8. Quality, Curriculum and Learners

19FGB16

The Board received the Final Achievement Outcomes for 2018/2019; in considering this report Governors recognised that the headline data informs one of the many strands that feeds into the assessment of the quality of curriculum provision. Other strands include progress, progression,

feedback and destinations; although these strands aren't covered in this report they will be addressed in the 2018/2019 Self-Assessment Report.

The Board also received and acknowledged the end year update of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2018/2019. The Board scrutinised the report and discussed in detail the impact the improvements detailed within the QIP for 2018/2018 had made; the Board also noted the areas that require further improvements.

The Board noted the Final Achievement Outcomes for 2018/2019 and the updated end year QIP 2018/2019 and recognised that the Self-Assessment Report 2018/2019 together with the QIP for 2019/2020 will be reported to the Board at the December meeting.

10. Our People

Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Report

19FGB21

The Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development presented a comprehensive and detailed annual EDI report. In doing so she expressed her thanks to External Governor David Chalmers as the link Governor for EDI for his invaluable input and support.

The Board received the annual EDI report; noting the work of the EDI committee and the college's commitment to ensuring that its staff team be a reflection of the community it serves.

The Board expressed its thanks to the Director for Human Resources and Operational Development and the College for the proactive commitment to all areas of equality, diversity and inclusivity at Petroc.

The Confidential minutes of the meeting held on the 7th October were confirmed as a true and accurate record of events.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 11th December 2019 at 5.00 pm – North Devon Campus.