



GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of Meeting on Thursday 15 December 2016

Present:	Mr J Turner (<i>Chair</i>)	Chair of Governors	
	Ms N Cuffy	Governor	
	Ms S Gannon	Staff Governor	
	Mr S Holderness	Governor	
	Mr I Mattioli	Governor	
	Ms M Moore	Governor	
	Ms S Munden	Staff Governor	
	Ms S Overton-Edwards	Principal	
	Mr J Pain	Governor	
	Ms A Touseef	Student Governor	
	In Attendance:	Mr J Bagley	Vice-Principal Curriculum
		Mr N Leivas-Mistry	Vice-Principal Quality
		Mr H Ravat	Vice-Principal Resources
Mr R Mansfield		Clerk	

Ref.		Action
B/16/44	<p>Item 1 – Attendance and Membership Matters:</p> <p><i>1.1 Apologies for Absence</i> Apologies for absence were received from Savannah Kacha, John Kirk and Harshad Solanki. The meeting was declared quorate. John Turner welcomed Alishah Touseef, recently elected student governor, to the meeting. Those present then all briefly introduced themselves.</p> <p><i>1.2 Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items</i> Suzanne Overton-Edwards and Robert Mansfield declared a personal interest in item 12.3.</p> <p>Search Committee Matters:</p> <p><i>1.3 Board and Committee Vacancies</i> Robert Mansfield referred the meeting to the minutes of the meeting of the Search Committee on 3 November 2016. There were currently two governor vacancies. Efforts were in hand to find candidates with current suitable experience of further education. John Kirk had announced his intention to retire within the current academic year, though Robert Mansfield understood that this decision was for the time being 'on hold'.</p> <p><i>The meeting received this oral report.</i></p>	

B/16/45 Item 2 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising:

2.1 Minutes of Meeting on 27 October 2016

The minutes of the meeting on 27 October 2016 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Turner.

2.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising that were not covered by agenda items.

B/16/46 Item 3 – Curriculum and Quality Issues:

3.1 OfSTED Inspection Report October 2016

Naz Leivas-Mistry presented OfSTED's report on the inspection conducted in October 2016. He had expected that the College would receive a Grade 3. However the focus of the inspection had been upon value added (especially the statistics collected by the Department for Education) and student progress, and the College had been graded 'Inadequate'. The College would now be subject to close monitoring from OfSTED and the Education Funding Agency (EFA) until the next OfSTED inspection, which was expected in about 15 months. There was a need for substantial change and the Post-Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) needed to be comprehensive. External support was being obtained from Marina Gaze (former Senior OfSTED Inspector), Adam Suddaby and local universities. Morale across the College was subdued. There were early signs of progress: more homework was being set and there had been greater numbers of parents involved at the recent Parents' Evening.

He assured Jim Pain that the external support mentioned would be sustained over the period to the next inspection, and said that hopefully support from other sources would also be forthcoming. Suzanne Overton-Edwards explained that monitoring by the EFA would be monthly, and by OfSTED (nominally) quarterly. Leicester City Council was also taking a keen interest. She hoped that the various monitoring efforts would be coordinated in the interests of effective use of the time of senior staff.

The meeting received the inspection report.

3.2 EFA Visit 29 November 2016

Suzanne Overton-Edwards reported that there had been two contacts with the EFA since the inspection, the first a general meeting to describe the subsequent process and the second a full visit on 29 November 2016 when a team of four led by Peter Mucklow, Commissioner for Sixth Form Colleges, had met curriculum managers and members of the Senior Leadership Team. The College had recently received a draft report for factual checking before this was sent to the Minister for signature. The written report was significantly different from the informal feedback at the end of the visit and was very

negative. As soon as the final report had been received it would be sent to all governors electronically.

Jim Pain asked whether there was not truth in OfSTED's criticisms. John Turner confirmed that there was, but said that on this occasion there also appeared to be a lack of the balance evident in previous inspection reports: almost all positives had been ignored. Steve Holderness said that he found the OfSTED report most unsatisfactory in that much of it was negative opinion not substantiated by evidence. He accepted nonetheless that this did not affect what now had to be done. Jim Pain felt in retrospect that the College had been too ready to blame OfSTED, and that the criticisms made needed to be more fully investigated. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that the College fully accepted the agenda for improvement. Steve Holderness asked how the Board would know that the required improvements were being implemented. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that there would be reporting to governors against the PIAP, and this underscored the need for governors with appropriate educational experience. John Turner said that the EFA would need to approve an amended version of the PIAP, and that the College would find itself under unprecedented scrutiny. All governors should receive copies of the PIAP once finally approved.

RM

The meeting received the oral report on the EFA monitoring visit.

B/16/47

Item 4 – Student Issues:

4.1 Student Matters

Alishah Touseef reported that the Student Executive Team and the Student Affairs Committee had been concentrating on issues raised in the OfSTED inspection report. She gave oral feedback regarding issues discussed at the latest Student Executive Team meeting where SLT members had been in attendance. The matters considered had been student attendance, enrichment activities, teaching staff numbers and work placements. Investigation had shown that attendance was improving, although because of timetabling differences like-for-like comparisons were complex. Hamid Ravat had explained that enrichment activities were provided except where student numbers were too small to warrant doing so. Hamid Ravat had explained that the College had recruited additional teachers, but that some of the extra funding received for higher student numbers had to be spent on administration and management. James Bagley had explained that, as the supply of meaningful work placements locally was limited, the College was giving priority to students seeking apprenticeships and jobs as a next step rather than university.

Nelista Cuffy asked, given that OfSTED had identified work experience as an area requiring improvement, whether the

College was doing enough in this regard. Naz Leivas-Mistry said that staff were working on a revised work experience strategy under the guidance of Marina Gaze. The strategy would be brought to the Standards & Quality Committee.

The meeting received this oral report.

B/16/48 Item 5 – Finance & Estates Matters:

5.1 Estates Issues

Hamid Ravat reported that the main item of current significance relating to the College's estate was the disposal of the Blackbird Road land. It was expected that this would be considered by Leicester City Council's Planning Committee in January 2017. He advised John Turner that the Land Agent believed that some form of planning consent would be granted within the current fiscal year.

The meeting received the oral report on estates issues.

5.2 Annual Health & Safety Statistics

Hamid Ravat advised the meeting that there were no significant issues relating to safety.

The meeting received the annual health and safety statistics.

5.3 Learner Numbers and Funding Report

Hamid Ravat presented the learner numbers and funding report. The report showed that the College had exceeded its recruitment targets by 103 students. This was projected to create a net increase in funding in 2017/2018 of £265K, after adjustments including the ending of formula protection. John Turner said it was to be expected that the EFA would cap recruitment for 2017/2018 at around the number of the College's present roll.

The meeting received the learner numbers and funding report.

5.4 Operating Results

Hamid Ravat presented the highlights of the operating results to November 2016. The operating surplus was £28K below the revised budget approved at the previous meeting. Income was £15K ahead of budget. Pay expenditure was £55K above budget, mainly because additional teaching staff had been engaged to cope with higher student numbers; he anticipated that by the year end there would be an adverse variance of £200K. The outturn for the year was now predicted as a deficit of £150K to £200K.

The meeting received the operating results.

B/16/49 Item 6 – Marketing Issues:

6.1 Marketing Update

James Bagley presented the marketing update. He summarized recent progress as follows. The policies displayed on the website were all the latest versions. Various actions had been taken to strengthen management of the College

brand. There had been four positive articles in *The Leicester Mercury* and small increases in followership on *Facebook* and *Twitter*. Attendance at the Open Day had been excellent and as a result there had been an increase of 200 in the number of students who had been registered.

The meeting received the marketing update.

B/16/50 Item 7 – Staffing Issues:

7.1 Staffing Report

Naz Leivas-Mistry presented the main points of the staffing report for November 2016. There had been four leavers, all of whom had been replaced. John Turner questioned why it had been necessary to engage seven extra teachers to cope with an increase of 100 in student numbers. Hamid Ravat said that the figure included cover for three teachers currently on maternity leave. Steve Holderness said that it would be helpful if future reports identified the numbers of full-time and part-time staff.

Naz Leivas-Mistry advised the meeting that staff sickness absence to date was in line with the national rate for sixth form colleges.

NLM

The meeting received the staffing report.

7.2 Staff Survey Action Plan

Suzanne Overton-Edwards provided an oral update on progress against the staff survey action plan. The plan had been rolled forward from the previous academic year. Efforts to keep staff better informed had focused upon the Area-Based Review. Future presentations on this subject would be coordinated between the three Leicester sixth form colleges. She confirmed to John Turner that another edition of the Staff Bulletin would be issued after Christmas.

Steve Holderness said that governors needed to have ongoing feedback in the wake of the OfSTED inspection report on the reactions, ideas and actions of staff. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that she felt that staff had been very engaged; staff were being involved in the redrafting of the PIAP, as a greater focus on teaching, learning and assessment was required. It was essential that staff were 'on side', and there would be 'checks and balances' on progress. The next Training Day would be used as an opportunity to exchange further information. Steve Holderness repeated that governors needed to be informed of the reactions of staff, any difficulties that they expressed and the solutions to those difficulties. Naz Leivas-Mistry said that Marina Gaze had provided a reality check to Programme Area Managers on their Self-Assessment Reports and action plans. Corporate staff were also involved.

SOE

SOE

The meeting noted this oral report.

7.3 Teaching Staff Pay Award

Hamid Ravat presented a late paper on the recently negotiated national pay settlement for teaching staff. This settlement provided for a 1% increase in salaries effective from 1 January 2017. The College had budgeted for an increase of 1% to all salaries. He advised the meeting that an increase of 1% had been accepted by unions representing non-teaching staff, but was currently subject to consultation with members. He expected that the settlement date for teaching staff would revert to 1 September in 2017/2018.

The Board endorsed payment of the 1% national increase in teaching staff salaries from 1 January 2017.

B/16/51

Item 8 – Governance Issues:

8.1 Annual Report and Accounts 2015/2016

Hamid Ravat presented the annual report and accounts for 2015/2016. These had been considered and commended by the Audit Committee and the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee. He summarised the highlights as a surplus of £25K (the underlying operating surplus was £229K), a strong balance sheet and a healthy cash position following a further positive cash flow. Jim Pain then proposed and Nelista Cuffy seconded the approval of the report and accounts.

The meeting unanimously approved the annual report and accounts (the student governor abstaining as required).

8.2 Letters of Representation

Hamid Ravat advised the meeting that RSM Tenon Audit had, as reported in their audit findings report, found no evidence of irregularities or deficiencies in control systems. The Audit Committee and the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee had therefore recommended that the letters of representation for the Financial Statements and Regularity Audits should be signed. Harnish Hadani then proposed and Nelista Cuffy seconded the approval of the letters of representation. John Turner thanked Hamid Ravat and his team for their excellent work in producing an unqualified set of accounts.

The meeting unanimously approved the letters of representation (the student governor abstaining as required).

8.3 Redundancy Policy

Hamid Ravat presented the redundancy policy. This was a new policy that had been considered by the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee and scrutinized by the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee. It was largely based upon the redundancy guide prepared by the Sixth Form Colleges Association, and included some suggestions from the professional associations.

The meeting endorsed the redundancy policy.

8.4 Health, Safety and Fire Policy

Hamid Ravat said that the previous health and safety policy had been reviewed by the College's Health & Safety Adviser, Harry Wheatcroft, who had noted that it contained little reference to fire safety. With substantial help from Harry Wheatcroft a substantial section on fire safety had been prepared and the policy renamed the health, safety and fire policy. John Turner asked that the thanks of the Board should be conveyed to Harry Wheatcroft for his assistance.

The meeting endorsed the health, safety and fire policy.

8.5 Bursary and Discretionary Funding Policy.

Hamid Ravat presented the bursary and discretionary funding policy. In describing the contents, including an appeals procedure, he paid tribute to the work of Shirley Munden in developing and administering the policy. In answer to questions Shirley Munden said that about 50% of students applied for the funds, but that there were very few formal appeals as problems were generally resolved through collaboration. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that there was sometimes very considerable pressure of work in achieving the timely processing of applications.

The meeting endorsed the bursary and discretionary funding policy.

B/16/52 Item 9 – Consent Agenda:

John Turner introduced the following items in turn, inviting major comments or questions only.

9.1 Minutes of the Finance, Staffing and General Purposes Committee 3 November 2016

9.2 Minutes of the Student Affairs Committee 21 November 2016

9.3 Minutes of the Standards & Quality Committee 29 November 2016

9.4 Minutes of the Audit Committee 1 December 2016

9.5 Minutes of the Finance, Staffing and General Purposes Committee 1 December 2016.

The meeting received in turn the minutes of committees as listed above.

B/16/53 Item 10 – Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Robert Mansfield advised the Board that an additional meeting would be required in January 2017 to consider the EFA visit report and the PIAP. He would advise members of the date as soon as was practicable. If, as seemed likely, changes to the scheme of governance were required he would bring a paper on this matter to the next meeting.

B/16/54 Item 11 – Any Other Business:

11.1 Resignation of Chair of Governors

John Turner announced with sadness that he had decided in the light of recent events that the College would be best

served by his resignation. He was therefore resigning from the Board with effect from midnight on 16 December 2016. John Kirk would be taking over his responsibilities. Robert Mansfield said that John Kirk would as Vice-Chair automatically become Acting Chair. Robert Mansfield advised the meeting that he would organize a formal election for the role of Chair, and should John Kirk then be appointed, an election for the role of Vice-Chair. Suzanne Overton-Edwards thanked John Turner for his service to the Board. He had led the Corporation through a very challenging period and had provided an excellent example at all times through his thorough personal preparation for meetings and his commitment to the College. She also thanked him for his personal support to her.

11.2 Retirement of the Principal

Suzanne Overton-Edwards announced that she had in the circumstances decided that she should retire as soon as an interim successor could be engaged and an appropriate handover completed. The post was to be advertised shortly. She apologized for the situation in which the College now was. The priority was to return the College to its previous good standing. No-one else had been informed of her decision and she asked that this be held in strict confidence until she had been able to inform staff the following morning.

11.3 Governor Training

Nelista Cuffy asked why, given the serious position in which the Corporation now found itself, the governor training session planned earlier in the day had been cancelled. John Turner and Robert Mansfield explained that the topic to be covered was no longer appropriate, given the College's current priorities, and the session had therefore been indefinitely postponed.

B/16/55 Item 12 – Confidential Items

Robert Mansfield advised the meeting that items 12.1 and 12.2 were confidential to the Board and had been classified as confidential because they contained references to confidential discussions with other local sixth form colleges relating to the Area-Based Review. Item 12.3 would normally have been considered in the absence of senior staff, and the staff and student governors, but on this occasion contained nothing of sensitivity.

12.1 Minutes of the Search Committee 3 November 2016

The meeting received the minutes of the Search Committee.

12.2 Notes of the Strategy Working Group 17 November 2016

The meeting received the notes of the meeting of the Strategy Working Group.

12.3 Minutes of the Remuneration Committee

The Principal, the Clerk, staff and student governors and senior staff took no part in the discussion of this item.

John Turner presented the minutes of the meeting of the Remuneration Committee on 17 November 2016. The Committee had recommended that the salaries of the Clerk and the Principal should be increased effective from 1 August 2016 by the percentage agreed nationally for teaching staff.

Eligible members of the Board approved an increase of 1% to the salaries of the Principal and the Clerk effective from 1 August 2016.

12.4 Area-Based Review Update

Suzanne Overton-Edwards reported that the next meeting of the Steering Group for the Area-Based Review would take place on 12 January 2017. At this meeting future options would be declared. The process would conclude on 6 February 2017. Jo Nowacki from the EFA was now advising the College on matters relating to the Area-Based Review.

Thereafter an Implementation Group would oversee the implementation of recommended actions. John Turner said that the EFA expected the College to have returned by 2018 to a 'Good' grading by OfSTED, after which its future could be determined. Jim Pain said that it had been a very sad evening and offered his personal thanks to John Turner and Suzanne Overton-Edwards for all that they had done.

The meeting noted this update.