

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

THURSDAY 22 MARCH 2012



GATESHEAD COLLEGE

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9
February 2012
Author: Clerk to the Corporation
Action: Approve
Status: Open

Present: Robin Mackie (in the Chair)
Susan Bickerton
Kevin Fitzpatrick
Ivan Jepson
Aziz Kouame
Chris Macklin
David Mitchell
Ian Renwick
Alan Reynolds
Alex Rutherford
Allan Steele
Mark Taylor
Richard Thorold

In attendance: Mick Brophy
Jackie Doxford
Judith Doyle
John Holt
Gwyneth Jones

1598 Welcome/Apologies

Robin Mackie welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Keith Cann Evans and John McElroy.

Robin Mackie declared an interest in the Electric Vehicle Centre of Excellence and invited other members to declare any interests. No other interests were declared at this stage in the meeting; however, members noted that should the direction of debate on any item on the agenda result in a potential conflict of interest, this should be indicated during the meeting. Members were also reminded to advise the Clerk of any changes to be made to the declaration of interests.

1599 Education Act 2011

Glynne Stanfield from Eversheds gave a presentation on the Education Act 2011.

Governors were informed that if they were interested in participating in a workshop to discuss the Education Act 2011 they should register their interest with the Clerk to the Corporation.

1600 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8 December 2011 were accepted as a correct record.

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1601 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising which were not substantive items on the agenda

1602 Funding 2012/2013

The report and the record of discussion on it are 'closed to public access' until such time as they are considered to be no longer commercially sensitive

Susan Bickerton left the meeting

1603 Business, Innovation and Development

The Managing Director, Business, Innovation & Development introduced a report which provided the Board with a high level summary of the activities of the Business, Innovation and Development areas of the College.

The College remains one of the highest achieving colleges for apprenticeships and Train to Gain in the region and is significantly above national benchmarks. In 2010/11, the College achieved £863,000 in commercial income against a target of £1m at a time when economic conditions for trading were poor. Due to the shifts in the economy and the rising levels of unemployment the BID teams refocused activity to work more closely with the unemployed and assist them to gain jobs. Of 2,545 unemployed people enrolled on programmes 1,067 obtained work which equated to a 42% success into employment. The main employment areas were in manufacturing, construction, care and warehousing.

A mid-year business update showed that BID teams are currently on course to achieve business targets. 16-18 Apprenticeships achieved 57% of target by December 2011. Additional staff have been appointed to help ensure achievement of target. To date 19+ income is over £5.5m against a revised target of £15m with a planned work schedule to achieve these targets. Commercial income of £253,205 was achieved by December 2011 against a year-end target of £1 million. It was noted that attempts to make the Greenhouse Brasserie commercially successful were proving challenging in the economic downturn, with no significant passing trade.

The College will face further challenges in 2012/2013 as there will be a greater expectation on employers to pay fees for training. The SFA loans scheme for adult learners and apprentices is likely to be a major challenge in the north east where there is no history of people paying for education or training. There will be further reductions in post 19 funding which eventually could lead to most programmes of study having to be funded through students or employers paying the full cost of delivery.

In terms of Innovation and Development, the training schemes for the EV curriculum inside the factory gate and outside are almost complete and are being piloted. The College is well underway in finalising the Green Deal for construction aimed at dramatically reducing the carbon footprint of housing stock and is planning for new 'Green' construction apprentices. SASMI is beginning to develop as a regional skills centre for advanced manufacture and innovation. Several key events have really showcased the centre with employers and stakeholders. The strategy is to work with a range of partners that can help the College to drive up engagement and job creation.

The Managing Director, Business, Innovation & Development highlighted projects underway e.g. The Open Innovation Suite at SASMI aimed at providing working

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space for organisations to work together to develop products, services and processes to improve both collaboration and efficient innovation. He also referred to an emerging Interreg project where the College is involved in the development of new skills required for the expansion of hydrogen generated energy for vehicles. International partners are Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Germany and Belgium (and Aberdeen) and its value to the College will be £400,000 over 3 years.

The Regional Growth Fund (RGF) project is £6.3m and its purpose is to support a range of companies to create employment through skill development. RGF is a major element of the College's apprenticeship growth leverage. It was noted that many of the projects listed in the report would be supported through the RGF project.

2011-2013 will be very challenging in terms of both the economy and the College's funding grants; however, there will also be major opportunities to capitalise on developments and networks to capture work and income and further increase the College's reputation.

RESOLVED to note the contents of this report

1604 International Strategy Update

The Principal introduced a report which informed the Board of the progress in the development of the International Strategy. The paper also outlined a programme of planned activities including a proposed pilot programme of market testing in Europe.

Recent activities have included further discussions with key stakeholders and potential funders and detailed examination of the areas identified for development is proceeding to enable more comprehensive business plans to be produced. A detailed business plan is expected in Quarter 2; however, to ensure that momentum and opportunities are not lost, a limited pilot programme of activities will be initiated. Visits to meet with potential international partners will also be undertaken.

The decision to proceed with the Strategy which entails direct exporting by the College, building on its strengths in low carbon and its investments has been welcomed by stakeholders and potential funders. It also entails facilitating others, particularly SMEs, to develop their own international activity. BIS and UKTI are supportive of the College's ambitions and are likely to support the plans.

Increasing attention is being focused across Europe on the development of skills and the establishment of more liberal European labour markets. These developments are being seen as key to reinstating growth and reducing youth unemployment. Major initiatives are planned with substantial funding attached. Such actions will include the greater exchange of students and staff, harmonisation and mutual recognition of qualifications, and the development of trans-European apprenticeships.

The College is in discussions with European organisations concerning participation in programmes to expand trans-European vocational education and training, to increase the numbers of young people with skills suitable for growth sectors, such as low carbon, and to increase the capacity of young people and their employers to work across Europe. It is clear that developing such activities offers the opportunity to extend the skills and experience of Gateshead students. It is anticipated that the Government will support such activities. Funding from the European Union will also be deployed to support such activities, and the College is well placed to access ESF and other grants.

The proposed Centre of Excellence with Nissan, and investments from TADEA and TRL, will enhance the College's expertise and reputation in the Electric Vehicle

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market. Key business partners, such as Nissan and SEV are developing rapidly and successfully in these international markets and working with them is an effective way of accessing new opportunities.

European exchanges for Gateshead students will involve participation in study and work exchange elsewhere in Europe. Students will develop new skills by experiencing similar types of work in different countries. The exchanges will be aimed primarily at employed students, particularly apprentices, and costs will be met by the employer, education foundations, and EU and UK Government programmes. Students, employers and the College will benefit from the College's involvement in such activity with the College building experience and understanding in such areas as the European Qualifications Framework and the European Credit Transfer System.

Support to internationalising SMEs will focus on the development and marketing of innovative low carbon products and services and will provide training and practical assistance to regional companies seeking to develop wider European business. It would be funded primarily by businesses themselves, supported by UKTI and ERDF.

Facilitating training and education in Europe will involve both Initial Vocational Education and Training, and Continuing Vocational Training. It will involve working with Colleges and Trainers to deliver relevant programmes, including apprenticeships and will be funded largely by businesses and user organisations in receipt of the training. Additional support is anticipated via ESF and national/regional authorities.

The College is intending to undertake further development work in these three product areas, to enable business planning. A limited pilot programme with a restricted budget of £100,000 is planned to take place over the next six months. This will enable the College to make a detailed examination of what is entailed in delivering such activity, including content, costs, potential revenue, sources of funding and potential partners.

The establishment of a network of similar providers of Vocational Education and Training in other European countries, such as Colleges, Universities and specialist providers of low carbon training would facilitate the College's plans. Such a network would provide the capacity to deliver the product areas identified above, and would also enable joint programme development, staff development and shared marketing.

In parallel with work in Europe, the College is undertaking further development and analysis in its other priority markets. In the medium to long term, it is envisaged that the greatest part of the College's growth will emanate from Hong Kong, mainland China and USA. Work is ongoing with UKTI and other partners in respect of specific opportunities, such as planned infrastructure projects in Hong Kong. Discussions are continuing with the Vocational Training Council of Hong Kong and plans are in hand for the Principal to meet the Chairman and Chief Executive of VTC, and potential partners in the Shanghai area as well as those in Singapore and Dubai. The Managing Director, Business, Innovation and Development is to participate in a UKTI organised Trade Mission from the North East to rapidly growing interior regions in China. A specific focus of this mission is low carbon technology. Detailed analysis of specific opportunities in the USA is also proceeding.

Members noted that good progress is being made with detailed planning and implementation of the International Strategy. The timeliness of the intended international development is welcomed by key stakeholders and customers and the potential for additional support for the activities including funding sources is being examined.

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RESOLVED

- i) to note the overall activities to take forward the International Strategy, including the detailed business planning and exploration of funding sources**
- ii) to approve further development work in the priority markets, including the proposed European pilot programme at a cost of £100,000, to enable a multi-stage business plan to be produced that reflects the extent and nature of the Strategy**

1605 Entrepreneurial College

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality gave a presentation updating the Board on the Entrepreneurial College and outlined the agreed principles for the Model. These include creating a range of learning opportunities at different levels; increasing learner input into the shape of programmes; increasing the focus on individualised outcomes rather than narrow qualification pathways; restructuring College curriculum areas to remove 'silo mentality' and create synergy between related areas whilst fostering cross-discipline collaborative projects; and a systematic review of College systems for planning, implementing and monitoring curriculum which will involve key staff from the systems team in these development events which will help to make the paradigm shift required in this area.

Other activities include membership of North East Entrepreneurship Forum, networks, student mentorship and attendance at high profile events. Recently, 60 groups of learners from Gateshead College participated in 'Market Makers' developing products to take to market and in competition with other colleges; Gateshead College was successful in winning the competition.

The Chair of Governance and Search Committee expressed his thanks to the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality for her work on the Entrepreneurial College. She replied that the project will give the College a unique selling point for 16-19 but it is a radical development.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the presentation

1606 Electric Vehicle Centre of Excellence

Robin Mackie and Kevin Fitzpatrick declared an interest

The Board agreed that this item should be considered out of sequence on the agenda

The Principal introduced a paper which sought approval for development and agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding with Nissan concerning a potential 'Centre of Excellence' for Electric Vehicle Technology.

Nissan's European Zero Emissions Business Unit has approached the College with a view to establishing a Joint Venture to create a Centre of Excellence for Electric Vehicle Technology, specifically a range of technologies that are not part of the vehicle itself, but are of importance in the success of Electric Vehicles. The Zero Emissions Business Unit is based in Paris and is responsible for the successful market introduction of Nissan's Electric Vehicles in Europe. It is envisaged that the Centre will build upon the College's existing relationship with Nissan, and recent successes in the region. It will enable the College to support this key partner and regional employer, and further enhance the College's market position in respect of

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Low Carbon Vehicles. Nissan intends that the Centre should be market leading in Europe, and at the cutting edge of global technologies.

The key requirement now is to undertake detailed analysis and planning, in conjunction as appropriate with Nissan. This work will identify detailed resources requirements, costs, risks, returns, facilities, structure, IPR and implementation, and will enable decisions to be made as to how the partnership should be taken forward. In order to enable this work to be undertaken, it is proposed that a Memorandum of Understanding be established between the College and Nissan International. It is proposed that this MOU will be agreed and announced in February 2012.

Thereafter, the timescales will be to agree a way forward in March 2012, with a view to assembling resources and commencing training, including in Japan, in Quarter 2, and commencing operations in Quarter 3, if confirmed. Initial scoping for the Battery 4R project has indicated that this project will require 3 technical staff and a commercial person for the first 6 months, indicating the relatively low level of resources envisaged initially.

The College has an opportunity to develop an important Centre of Excellence for Electric Vehicle Technology with Nissan. This Centre would be largely based on technology initially developed by Nissan and its partners, including Renault. The Centre will develop these technologies into products and services suitable for market introduction in Europe. It will incubate new businesses to take forward these technologies on a commercial basis, and will normally spin-off these businesses. It is considered that the development of this Centre will be of considerable benefit to a key partner and customer, and will enhance the College's capacity to develop its own ambitions.

RESOLVED to approve

- i) that the Executive of the College should develop and agree a Memorandum of Understanding with Nissan to enable a study of a 'Centre of Excellence' for Electric Vehicle Technology**
- ii) the establishment of a 'Centre of Excellence' for Electric Vehicle Technology, if supported by and in accordance with analysis and findings of the study.**

1607 Tyneside Training Services Ltd

The report and the record of discussion on it are 'closed to public access' until such time as they are considered to be no longer commercially sensitive

Kevin Fitzpatrick left the meeting

Muriel Callaghan joined the meeting

1608 Students Union Constitution

The Director of Student Services introduced a paper to the Board which sought approval for amendments to the Students' Union Constitution and for the appointment of a Sabbatical President. The updated Constitution was attached to the report with proposed amendments tracked and shown in red. The paper also sought approval of the Returning Officer for elections.

It was noted that Finance and General Purposes Committee had agreed to the establishment of the post of Sabbatical President. Once elected by students, the

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Sabbatical President will become a College employee. A key part of the role of Sabbatical President is to be a Student Governor and to represent the learner voice at Corporation meetings. The Constitution of the Board of Governors will require review in order to accommodate the Sabbatical President.

Members noted that the Union Parliament had considered and approved amendments to the Constitution and the appointment of the Returning Officer for elections.

RESOLVED

- i) to approve the amendments to the Students' Union Constitution including the appointment of a Sabbatical President**
- ii) to approve the appointment of the Learner Services Manager as Returning Officer for Students' Union elections**

Muriel Callaghan left the meeting

1609 Board Constitution and Membership

The Clerk introduced a report which advised the Board on changes required to the composition of the Corporation and Board membership consequent upon the approval of amendments to the Students' Union Constitution to include the appointment of a Sabbatical President. One of the key responsibilities of the Sabbatical President is to be a Student Governor and attend Corporation meetings. The current composition of the Corporation as determined in 2008 is 18 members comprising: 13 Members appointed under the terms of Clause 2(1)(a) of the Instrument and Articles of Government; 2 Staff Members; 2 Student Members and the Principal.

There are three options available to the Board to accommodate the Sabbatical President within the membership. Option 1: increasing the number of Student Governors to 3 to include the Sabbatical President (ex officio) in addition to the 16-18 and 19+ Student Governors; and revising the rubric to '*The Sabbatical President of the Students' Union (ex officio), one Student Governor to be nominated by and elected from the full-time 16-18 year old learners and one Student Governor to be nominated by and elected from the 19+ Adult/HE learners (both part-time and full-time)*' and increasing the Board Membership to 19 and the quorum to 8. Option 2: retaining Board Membership at 18 with 2 Student Governors and revising the rubric for the appointment of Student Governors to '*The Sabbatical President of the Students' Union of the College (ex officio) and one Student Governor nominated by and elected from the learners at the College (both part-time and full-time)*'. Option 3: increasing the number of Student Governors to 3 to include the Sabbatical President (ex officio) in addition to the 16-18 and 19+ Student Governors, reducing 13 members appointed under Clause 2(1)(a) to 12 and retaining Board Membership of 18.

The Principal expressed the view that the third option of increasing the number of Student Governors to 3 and retaining the Board Membership of 18 was his preferred option. Board Members agreed to support the third option.

RESOLVED to approve a change in the constitution of the Board to increase the number of Student Governors to 3 to include the Sabbatical President (ex officio) in addition to the 16-18 and 19+ Student Governors, and to reduce the number of members appointed under Clause 2(1)a of the Instrument and Articles of Government from 13 to 12, retaining Board Membership of 18

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1610 College Fees Policy

The Director of Finance introduced a report which set out the Fees Strategy and Policy to be adopted for 2012/2013. In 2011/2012 the College expects to generate fees of £2,150,000 comprising: Higher Education £500,000, Further Education £700,000 and Full Cost Work £950,000 (including Amacus).

The Skills Funding Agency has made a number of significant changes to the funding of 19+ learners. For 2011/2012 onwards the funding of fee remission is restricted to those seeking employment and those undertaking a first full Level 2 or a first full Level 3 (age 19-24). In 2013/14 SFA funding for Level 3 and above will be removed for 19+ learners and replaced with loans as in Higher Education to cover the current SFA funding and tuition fees. All other learners including those on income support, pension credits and housing benefit will be expected to pay fees as the SFA will only fund them at 50% of the full rate (co-funded rate). The FE sector is also expected to charge fees for work for employers, and this presents a major challenge to all colleges. However, the threat to remove funding from providers who do not charge fees seems to have been dropped.

It was noted that the Foundation has contributed £66,449 and the Learner Support Fund £52,633 of the 2011/2012 FE fees collected by the College to date. At present the College is collecting roughly 80% of the level of funding expected by SFA which is based on £4.50 per taught hour for part time courses. It is proposed to increase this to £5.00 per taught hour with moderation to ensure Gateshead College is competitive with neighbouring colleges. Gateshead College currently charges £595 for full time programmes whilst main competitors such as Newcastle College charges £925 and New College Durham charges £350. It is proposed to increase Gateshead College full time fees to £695.

The full time fee proposed for new starters to HE programmes is £5,800 which is just under the maximum allowed of £6,000 without an Access Agreement. In 2012 the new fees regime will start and many HE Programmes will become self funded. The proposed level of fees is in line with its main competitors, City of Sunderland College and Newcastle College. The College proposes to increase its current fees for 2nd and 3rd year students by 10% to £1,475 for full time courses. For part time courses the proposal is to set the fee at £2,900 for new starters with the provision to moderate it if exceptional circumstances apply. Existing part time students will be charged £1,095 again with the provision to moderate it if exceptional circumstances apply.

For full cost programmes the underlying principle is that all programmes should cover their direct costs as a minimum; the fee should be set at the level the market will bear; provided it is greater than that required to cover the direct cost of delivery so as to make a contribution to overheads.

The Board noted that promotions and staff discounts should be allowed if approved by the Director of Finance and the Director of Marketing & Communications.

All fees proposed by Heads of Department will be reviewed and approved by the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality, Director of Finance and the Director of Marketing & Communication in accordance with the approved policy. The overall target is to raise fee income from the current level of £2,150,000 to at least £2,800,000 next year once the impact of higher HE fees for 1st year students is taken into account.

RESOLVED to approve the Fee Policy for 2012/2013

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1611 Risk Management Policy

The Director of Finance introduced an updated Risk Management Policy which has been reviewed by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the College's Internal Auditors. The Policy has been updated to include further guidance on the nature of risk, linkage to Corporate Governance and guidance on the Risk Register.

RESOLVED to approve the Risk Management Policy

Chris Macklin left the meeting

1612 Equality and Diversity Policy

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality introduced a paper which highlighted progress against the College's Equality objectives in 2010/2011 and identified priorities for the coming year.

The paper referred to an amended Equality and Diversity Policy which was not appended to the paper and discussion was deferred to the next meeting of the Board.

1613 Business Plan Update 2011/2012

The Principal introduced a report which summarised the College's progress against the agreed Strategic Plan and also provided Governors with a dashboard of KPI's.

The report outlined progress in Curriculum, Quality and Learner Services, set out the ways in which the Student Services strategic objectives are being met, provided a summary of activity in Marketing and Communications, reported on developments in Human Resources and Health and Safety and outlined Financial and Capital Developments.

The 'Governors' Dashboard' set out learner numbers, learner success, teaching and learning observation grades, budget and staffing statistics showing 2011/2012 target, actual to date and 2010/2011 information in tabular format.

RESOLVED to note the report on progress against the Strategic Plan and the Dashboard on KPI's

1614 Property Strategy

The Director of Finance introduced a paper which updated the Board on progress with the Phase 2 Property Strategy. It was noted that the final account for SASMI had been agreed with Mansell Construction at £4,810,976 plus VAT against an original contract sum of £5,167,962 plus VAT giving rise to a saving of £356,986 plus VAT. In addition further savings had been made with £24,109 on equipment taking the overall cost to £7,982,788 (budget £8,435,280) a saving of £452,492 which is higher than previously reported. The finished building is performing well with no significant issues identified.

Good progress is continuing on the Construction Centre Phase 2 project with fractional completion being achieved on the hub building on 16 January. The building is currently being commissioned and it is expected that staff and students will move w/c 13 February in order to start lessons from w/c 20 February. The Modular Building will be decommissioned between 20 February and 24 March with Phase 3 of the project running from 5 March to 26 March to remove the concrete pad and complete

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the access road. Phase 4 fit out of the workshops will commence at the end of March and continue until late June, in time for the new academic year. Figures summarising the current financial position of the project accompanied the report and showed that expenditure is in line with the budget.

The College is currently in negotiation over the lease for the accommodation within the main Stadium building at the Academy for Sport and it is hoped that this will be settled shortly.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

Nadine Hudspeth joined the meeting

1615 Marketing

The Director of Marketing and Communications introduced a report which highlighted a sample of the marketing and communications activities undertaken in the first academic term, the marketing strategy going forward and the priorities for the Marketing Team.

Highlights included a very broad range of activity from high profile events, sponsorships and campaigns, to a highly effective media relations strategy which has achieved £240,000 worth of coverage from September 2011 – December 2012 (36% increase on the same period last year) and is enabling the College to raise its profile and reputation. A new website and course builder/business planning tool has been launched. Key performance indicators and an overarching plan are to be developed for corporate social responsibility with some excellent initiatives taking place including HR's work on wellbeing and the primary school partnerships. In light of the increasing competitiveness and funding challenges, the priority is to create a strong student benefit package and effective, targeted marketing campaign which gives Gateshead College the edge. The brand strategy is also being reviewed. Key projects currently ongoing include a Stakeholder Engagement Project and the roll out of a communications strategy for the Entrepreneurial College.

The Director of Marketing and Communications explained that in terms of recruitment whilst the College has always operated in one of the most competitive areas for education, this is now intensifying. Cuts in funding are seeing competitor colleges and schools becoming more aggressive in a drive to hang onto every student. A Member commented that it was important to maintain a professional relationship with local schools. The Managing Director, Business, Innovation and Development reminded members that the school leaving age would be increasing to 17 and then to 18 so Gateshead College would be losing potential students. The Director of Finance commented that only 16-19 apprenticeships has scope for growth and if the College cannot capture the market it will fail to meet its targets.

The Chair commented that the Director of Marketing and Communications and the Marketing Team had done a phenomenal job in promoting Gateshead College.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

Nadine Hudspeth left the meeting

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1616 North East Apprenticeship Company

The Director of Finance introduced a paper which updated the Board on NEAC. At the meeting on the 8 December 2011 the Board approved the continuance of the North East Apprenticeship Company either in its existing form following the resignation of Gateshead Council as a member and the resignation of the Council Directors or as a new company if the former was not possible.

A special NEAC Board Meeting took place on 25 January 2012 and Gateshead Council formally resigned as a member and the Council's Directors also resigned leaving the College as a sole member and three Directors from the College: John Holt, Judith Doyle and Keith Cann Evans. The Company is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Gateshead College.

In order to strengthen the relationship between the College apprenticeship delivery and NEAC the Board was requested to approve the appointment of Mick Brophy as a Director of the North East Apprenticeship Company Ltd.

RESOLVED

- i) to note the contents of the report**
- ii) to approve the appointment of Mike Brophy as a Director of the North East Apprenticeship Company Ltd**

1617 Gateshead College Foundation

The Director of Finance introduced a report which updated the Board on Gateshead College Foundation's position covering finances, awards and fund raising. The Foundation has expended £98,153 against its budget for the year of £440,000 with £63,660 spent on adult tuition fees and £29,250 for support. In addition, £70,000 is committed to be paid in terms two and three. Expenditure has been lower than expected at this point because the College has prioritised the Discretionary Learning Support Fund for both 16-18 and 19+ both of which have now been exhausted. Demand on the Foundation is expected to increase significantly over the next few months. Net assets of the fund stand at £838,000 once committed spend is taken into account. It was noted that the College has not yet made its contribution to the Foundation for 2011/2012.

The report indicated that the Foundation had made the following awards for fees as of 24 January 2012: the total number of awards made: 93 and the total amount awarded: £66,449. For Personal Grants the total number of awards made: 5 and the total amount awarded: £2,920; types of awards given: 3 sports students representing national teams in international competitions and 2 to support costs of attending University open days. For 16-18 Course Costs the total number of awards made: 261; total amount awarded: £61,850; total number of refusals: 195. Reasons for refusals include: household income over means test, already in receipt of 16-18 Discretionary Bursary, in receipt of EMA, part time students who live within 3 miles. For 19+ Course Costs the total number of awards made: 169; the total amount awarded: £37,363; total number of refusals: 26 Reasons for refusals include: within 3 miles for travel support, household income over means test and already in receipt of an award from 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund.

At the meeting of the Foundation Board meeting on 1 February 2012 consideration was given to a fundraising plan based on an effective and robust Alumni Relations Strategy. The Director of Finance highlighted that former Deputy Principal, Kim

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Davies is to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in aid of the Gateshead College Foundation and invited Governors to support his efforts via the JustGiving website.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

1618 Principal's Report

The Principal presented a report which advised the Board on recent developments in the College and highlighted items of particular interest. Over the last two months the Principal had attended a number of Gazelle Group meetings where progress with the Entrepreneurial College initiative has continued. He had visited South West College for three days during January 2012 to discuss potential collaborative initiatives. He had met with UKTI to discuss various possible international collaborations and trips and they are currently working up a potential schedule for the College centred around EV and low carbon technologies.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

1619 Report of the Clerk

The Clerk introduced a routine report which advised the Board of Governor activity since December 2011. It was noted that Abdul-Aziz Kouame had attended the national NUS Student Governor Forum in London on 25 January 2012; Aziz commented on how much he had enjoyed the event. Mark Taylor and Abdul-Aziz Kouame continue to work through the NUS Student Governor Support Programme. A very useful development session involving Mark, Aziz, Alex Rutherford, Support Staff Governor, supported by Darren Heathcote and Emily Sergeant from Learner Services and the Clerk was held on 6 December 2011.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

Mick Brophy left the meeting

1620 Minutes of Committees:

The Board received the minutes of the following Committees:
Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 3 November 2011
Special Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 8 December 2011

1621 Governance Healthcheck and Board Improvement Plan

The Clerk introduced a paper about the Governance Healthcheck and Board Improvement Plan. The Board had considered the outcomes from the interactive Self Assessment exercise held on 13 October 2011 at the meeting on 8 December 2011. There was discussion on how the Board should take the findings forward and the general view was that this should be an in year process with progress reviewed at each Board meeting and a summary report on the status of the plan at the year end. Members agreed to look at the findings after the meeting and to provide the Clerk with suggested actions to bring about improvement for inclusion in the Quality Improvement Plan. The Chair had suggested that there should be a debate about Governors' Self Assessment at the next Board meeting on 9 February 2012.

The Clerk indicated she had received suggestions for inclusion in the Quality Improvement Plan from two Governors. Keith Cann Evans had suggested visits to other colleges and for Governors to have more contact with support staff and

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students. Alex Rutherford had suggested Governors having more contact with students especially those studying business subjects where Governors could act as mentors.

The Clerk explained that during the recent Corporate Governance Audit PriceWaterhouseCoopers had requested sight of the Quality Improvement Plan when completed and there were still gaps to be filled to address those areas where Governors had indicated a significant level of dissatisfaction.

RESOLVED that the Clerk should recirculate copies of the Quality Improvement Plan to Governors incorporating suggestions received by the end of the meeting and inviting the addition of further comments on how issues should be addressed

1622 Any Other Business

There was no other business

1623 Date of next meeting

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday 22 March 2012 commencing at 12.30pm.

1624 Chair's Review of Business

The Chair commented on the challenging times facing the College and the need to move forwards to take advantage of the new freedoms available to the FE sector from 1 April 2012. He expressed the view that the Entrepreneurial College was going to move into the foreground and play an important part in leading the development of the curriculum over the next three years.