



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2017

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8 December 2016
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Open

Present: David Mitchell (Chair)
Judith Doyle (Principal)
Emily Cox
Josh Everest
Sally Hancox
Darren Heathcote
Nick Hurn
Christine Jones
John McElroy
Chris Macklin
Mark Taylor

In attendance: Emma Moody (Clerk)
Suzanne Clark (Minutes)
John Holt
Nadine Hudspeth
John Gray
Mark Thompson
Ivan Jepson

1995 Chair's welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

Apologies were received from Robin Mackie, Ian Renwick Kevin Fitzpatrick and Chris Toon. In the absence of the Chair and the Vice Chair members agreed to appoint David Mitchell as Chair for the meeting.

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and asked Committee members to declare any interests they may have in items on the agenda. Members were reminded to declare any conflicts that arose during the meeting.

The Clerk advised that the Chair of the Corporation had appointed the Principal as his proxy and to vote on his behalf in relation to the papers/decisions put to the meeting for approval.

1996 Minutes of the meeting dated 13 October 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 October 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

1997 Matters Arising

The Clerk advised that the Governance Sub-group had not yet met. An update in relation to governance priorities will be included at the next Board meeting on 16 February 2017.

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Action: update on SSU / SSW to be provided at meeting in February 2017.

1998 Update in relation to SSU / SSW Funding

The Principal gave a verbal update.

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John McElroy arrived at 4.15pm.

The update was noted.

1999 Revised Strategic Plan

The Principal delivered a presentation following on from approval of the draft plan in October.

The Board was advised that following their comments at the meeting in October amendments have been made and an updated copy of the plan was shared. The plan gives confidence and clarity on what the College will do in the next three years. Key aspects of the plan were shared including the introduction from the Principal and forewords from the Chair of the Corporation and the Chair of the North East LEP.

The Chair felt that the new plan was exciting and inspirational. The Principal advised that there will also be a film to accompany the new plan. The Director of Marketing and Communications added that the film will be used with stakeholders, staff and as part of business presentations. Cuts of the film will also be used on the College's social media channels. A member suggested that key headlines be shared as Board members could use their own social media profiles to support the roll-out.

The Principal reported that the key themes of the plan will inform work plans across all quadrants and this will be rolled out to staff as part of the Aspire process. A discussion took place around the direction of travel in relation to changing traditional roles by using more innovative methods. The Principal confirmed that College plans are informed by the North East LEP priority areas. The Chair thanked everyone for their input into the creation of the new plan.

The Strategic Plan was approved.

2000 Finance Matters

The Deputy Principal: Operations / Finance Director presented the Internal Audit Annual Report.

It was highlighted that this report has previously been discussed by the Audit Committee. The key point to note is that the College has adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes in place. All areas have received this rating.

The Chair of the Audit Committee reiterated that the adequate and effective statement is as good as it gets in audit terms and is seen to be gold standard. There is regular follow up and monitoring of recommendations. The audit team consider Gateshead College to

be exceptional at following up on actions, in comparison to other colleges they have seen. It was highlighted that the audit work has started to look at areas that other colleges do not. It was stressed that medium risk ratings should not be viewed as a bad thing – it was good for the college to look closely at itself. The Audit Committee was very comfortable with the report. In response to a suggestion made by a member the Chair of the Audit Committee agreed that the team would investigate whether the quadrant objectives could be aligned to the work of the internal auditors so as to ensure synergies. In response to a question from the Chair, the Finance Director advised that the recommendations made in relation to IT Security were covered in more detail under agenda item 06c, Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2015/16.

The report was noted.

The Deputy Principal: Operations / Finance Director presented the College External Audit Findings Report for the year to 31 July 2016.

The Board were advised that the report has been discussed in detail at the joint meeting of the Corporate Services Committee and Audit Committee on 30 November 2016. No recommendations or issues are reported.

The Chair of the Audit Committee added that this is an outstanding result due to very high standards. It was stressed to Governors that it is very unusual to see an audit report as clean as the one presented. The letters of representation are standard text which is very normal. Governors should have confidence that mechanisms have been used appropriately and there is nothing of concern. RSM commented on the quality of the document and appreciation was given to the work of the Finance Director and his team. The Principal advised that she has an annual meeting with the external auditor to discuss all aspects of the College's finances. The meetings are challenging and feedback was very encouraging. The Chair of the Audit Committee commented that following implementation of the F&HE SORP it has become clear that some colleges have used this to give a different view of their balance sheets by revaluing their assets and it was stressed that this is not something that would be considered by Gateshead College.

The audit findings for the year ended 31 July 2016 were approved.

The letters of representation in respect of the Audit of the Financial Statements and Regularity Audit for the year ended 31 July 2016 were approved for signature by the Chair and the Principal.

The Deputy Principal: Operations / Finance Director presented the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2015/16.

The Board were advised that the report pulls together work of the Audit Committee over the last 12 months. Audit Committee had confirmed that there are strong systems in place, the College remains in good financial health confirmed and there are no concerns.

The Chair of the Audit Committee commented that the report was very reflective of activity and took the opportunity to thank other members of the Audit Committee for giving good and proper challenge. Governors were assured that adequate and effective systems are in place in relation to risk management, control and governance processes. A member added that this was a fantastic result and felt there was a need to ensure succession planning was in place (at team and committee level) to enable this work to continue. The Director of People and Organisation Development confirmed that he had recently met with members of the Senior Management Team and work in relation to this is progressing. The Chair of the Audit Committee advised that the College's Financial Controller had recently attended the Audit Committee meeting and is developing his understanding of this so would be able to deputise for the Finance Director in the future if required. The Clerk stressed the importance that this is completed at Governor level too and confirmed it would be considered as part of the Governor appraisal process.

The report was approved.

The Deputy Principal: Operations / Finance Director presented the Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2016.

It was reported that the main change in the College's accounts is in relation to changes in pension contributions.

In response to a question from a member, the Finance Director confirmed that this would not cause any issue in relation to the College's banking covenants. In response to a further question from the member in relation to the pension deficit the Finance Director advised that there was recently a review of the Local Government Pension Scheme and they have reduced their timetable for repayment from 11 to 9 years. The Board were advised that unfortunately the Teachers Pension Scheme does not give this level of detail in relation to the funding of its scheme. The Chair of the Audit Committee advised that this was a very big unknown and that auditors understand that the true liability is not quantifiable. A member commented that there are also very big discrepancies in these figures within schools (and indeed across different local authority areas). The Chair commented that this was a very strong and encouraging report. The Chair of the Audit Committee did highlight that the College had not yet received the final SFA reconciliation although the Finance Director has had a telephone conversation which indicates there is confidence in the College's submission. Confirmation is expected on 12 December 2016. The Chair paid tribute to the work of the Corporate Services Committee, Audit Committees, the Finance Director and his team.

The report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2016 were approved.

2001 Self-Assessment Report 2015/16

The Principal presented the report on behalf of the Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality.

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2002 Prevent Awareness Training

The Director of Student Experience delivered a presentation to update the Board on the Prevent duty.

Governors were advised that specific training for members of the Governing Body will be made available in the coming weeks; all members will be notified by email. The presentation set out the three specific strategic objectives of the 2011 Prevent Strategy. An overview was given of the impact of not meeting the requirements of the duty. A timeline of activity that has been undertaken was shared with the Board.

The Principal advised that there have been a number of issues highlighted which are investigated swiftly to ensure any necessary action is taken and that FE learners are considered to be high risk in terms of radicalisation. The work undertaken in relation to Prevent is particularly important to ensure the safeguarding of learners. A member asked for the presentation to be circulated so that Governors can use it for reference. The Chair reminded Governors that it is a statutory obligation that Governors undertake the online training and asked that all complete this.

Action: Director of Student Experience to circulate presentation to all members.

The presentation was noted.

2003 Chair's review of business

The Chair closed the meeting and commented on the positive, fabulous success in terms of additional funding which highlighted the strong position of the College and puts the College in a very strong position in terms of the Area Review process. The Chair thought the Strategic Plan was inspirational and commented that the financial management reports show how secure the College's financial status is. Teaching and Learning outcomes are as good as they possibly can be. The Prevent presentation had clearly set out the risks associated with managing Prevent in College. The Chair took the opportunity to thank the Principal, Executive team and members of the Board for their focus in maintaining the College's high standards and advised that he was looking forward to an outstanding 2017.

2004 Any other business

The Principal thanked all members for their contribution towards the success of the College. The Principal wished all members a very happy Christmas.

2005 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 16 February 2017 at 12.30pm.

