

# BOARD OF GOVERNORS

TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2014



GATESHEAD COLLEGE

**Report:** Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10 July 2014

**Author:** Clerk

**Action:** Approve

**Status:** Open

**Present:** Ivan Jepson (Chair)  
Keith Cann Evans  
Rachel Clark  
Judith Doyle  
Sally Hancox  
Darren Heathcote  
Chris Macklin  
John McElroy  
David Mitchell  
Mark Taylor

**In attendance:** Mick Brophy  
John Gray  
John Holt  
Nadine Hudspeth  
Gwyneth Jones (Minutes)  
Emma Moody (Clerk)  
Mark Thompson

## 1853 Welcome/Apologies

Ivan Jepson took the chair in Robin Mackie's absence and welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular, Rachel Clark, the new Sabbatical President who had recently taken over the role.

Apologies for absence were received from Emily Cox, Catherine Dennis, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Nick Hurn, Robin Mackie and Simone Wood.

The Chair reminded Governors that there would be a Teaching and Learning presentation at the end of the meeting which was expected to last for an hour.

## 1854 Conflicts of Interest

No other interests were declared at this stage in the meeting; however, members noted that should the direction of debate on any item 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 declaration of interests.

## 1855 Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 May 2014 (closed)

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 May 2014 were accepted as a true record.

**Agenda No: 2**

**1856 Matters Arising**

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

The Principal advised that Chris Toon would be commencing his role as Deputy Principal of Curriculum and Quality on 1 September 2014.

David Mitchell advised that a visit by HMI had been put in place. The Principal confirmed that Malcolm Fraser would be coming to speak to a group of Governors on 29 July 2014.

**1857 Quadrant Committees and Terms of Reference**

The Clerk gave a verbal report on Quadrant Committees and Terms of Reference. She indicated that she had circulated the Terms of Reference to the Chair and the Executive Lead for each Committee.

She advised that a Governance and Search Committee would be taking place at the end of the month to agree the Terms of Reference. She also mentioned that a template for Board reports had been agreed at the last Committee meeting in June.

The notional deadline for the Terms of Reference would be the end of next week. The Chair said it would be important to get the timetable of meetings out to Governors.

**RESOLVED to note the contents of the report**

**1858 Annual Safeguarding Report**

John Gray (JG), Strategy Manager, Learner & Customer Services, presented the annual monitoring report concerning the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy.

*Sally Hancox joined the meeting at 12.50pm*

JG indicated that HMI were confident that the College was doing a good job and he thanked David Mitchell, the designated Governor for Safeguarding, for his contribution.

In terms of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, all the Governors had been through the process. Any concerns are reported to the Principal, to Mark Thompson, Director of People and Organisation Development and to David Mitchell to ensure that a member of the Governing Body is informed as a situation arises.

David Mitchell explained that it was the strategic responsibility of the Board to ensure the College has appropriate arrangements in place. The designated Governor's role was to take an interest in this but not to get involved in the detail. From his perspective, the College staff did a thorough job and he thought credit should be given to John Gray and Mark Thompson and their respective teams.

The Chair commented on the results of an initial student survey completed by 3,529 students which showed that 97% felt safe in the College and the follow up done with the 3% who did not feel safe. JG said that he had rewritten the 'Learner Voice

## **Agenda No: 2**

Strategy' as he felt it needed to reflect the student voice. Rachel Clark, Sabbatical President, confirmed that everyone knew the procedure to go through.

The Principal thought that it was interesting for the Board to be aware of the security of the College and the multi-access points. Security guards and swipe cards were in operation within some colleges but they had chosen not to do that. Students are given a framework on how to report incidents and be aware of their own health and safety. This process was continually risk assessed.

JG said that Ofsted do not tell you how to do Safeguarding they just inspect the arrangements in place.

The Chair thought the results spoke for themselves and that it would be a sad day if Gateshead College had to resort to the arrangements found in other colleges.

### **RESOLVED to note the contents of the report**

#### **1859 College Performance Report and Ofsted update**

The Principal introduced a report which provided Board members with information that would allow them to monitor the quality of the learning experience provided for students on publically funded college-based courses.

The report set out Long Level 16-18 Provision and the predicted success rates up to 6 June 2014 which showed 91.2% for Long Level 1, 93.7% for Long Level 2 and 88.4% for Long Level 3 which were all improvements in comparison to the previous Academic Year.

*John McElroy joined the meeting at 1.10pm*

19+ Long Level 3 is an area which has been impacted upon by legacy provision and it has a predicted success rate of 74.6%.

Overall Attendance is up on last year and those students who stay at home are supported by the College via texts and telephone.

In terms of Value-added, the score the College is measured on is whether students achieve targets. Huge numbers of students are on target, some are below target and some are expected to exceed due to high grade workshops, coaching and 1:1 support. The College is in a very good position and significantly better than in 2012/2013.

The Chair commented that the improvements in success rates and attendance were a good thing but wondered how accurate the predictive process was. The Principal replied that it was a rolling process and 95%-98% of predictions were 'spot on'. They used a degree of professional judgement and made sure the College did what Ofsted expected.

The Principal said some people were coming in with a grade profile at a particular level. Young people may have sat the exam a year before entry to the College; she was confident that the College will be where it was last year.

## **Agenda No: 2**

She commented on the impact English and Maths Functional Skills will have on Success Rates. Students need to sit a test and they were adapting the strategy to get more from learners, as advised by Ofsted.

Achievements are low for Maths and there are a range of strategies in place including boot camps, 1:1 resource, vouchers, on-line resources and more teachers. If students want to come back for a second year they need to have a Maths qualification. College data always excluded Functional Skills but next year this will be added in the data.

A Governor commented that for some employers Level 3 Functional Skills was no longer the norm and it was now Level 2. He thought that if Gateshead College could pull off its plans it would become a unique selling point.

The Principal said they were building it into a strategic selling point with work experience, qualifications and an opportunity to do very well at English and Maths. Political will was not just Functional Skills qualifications but at the end of the year doing a GCSE.

The Chair referred to funding streams and the potential change of Government in May 2015 and thought the focus on English and Maths seemed the right thing to do. A Governor commented that rather than thinking of funding there was a need to think about what it will cost to deliver to the students.

The Principal replied that they would have to resource it in a very different way. It was a high performance set of data but there was an issue with Level 1.

The Chair concluded that there was a relentless focus on improvement and it was fantastic to see the set of data coming through.

### **RESOLVED to note the contents of the report**

#### **1860 Management Accounts to end of June 2014**

John Holt (JH), Director of Finance, presented the Management Accounts for May 2014 and advised that they had been reviewed in detail by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 3 July 2014.

It was noted that revenue in May was down significantly on April at £3,263,000 which was a reduction of £905,000. The reduction was in the areas of Adult Single Budget, Project revenue and Skills Support for the Unemployed.

The full year out-turn was now forecast to be £46,054 an increase of £60,000 on previous predictions, after allowing for an increase in the shortfall on Apprenticeships where the College is now expected to fall short by £750,000 with more withdrawals on Nissan apprenticeships.

Pay expenditure was under by £28,000 and down by £8,000 on April. The underlying trend was a fall of £16,000. After taking account of the £25,000 increase in monthly pension costs and restructuring, the underlying monthly spend is down by £46,000. Natural wastage and ending fixed term contracts will reduce expenditure and the amount set aside on pensions is likely to be lower.

## **Agenda No: 2**

A surplus of £38,000 was generated in May which reduced the year to date deficit to £530,000.

The Balance sheet continued to remain strong and cash held increased in May by £1,463,000 to £7,296,000 as a result of receiving the final £500,000 of RGF funding for Barmston Court and lower payments to partners and trade creditors.

A Governor commented that given the tight position, the FRS17 issue had become quite important and enquired what the timelines were. JH replied that last year they had found out in the middle of August and presumed it would be the middle to the end of August this year. They could go back and challenge up until October.

The Chair asked whether JH had discussed with the bank about the impact of FRS17 and he replied that they discounted its impact so the College was still in surplus. A deficit for one year was allowed but not for two years.

A Governor mentioned the rationale with the bank and asked if it was non-cash backed. JH replied that it was non-cash backed; they entered into loans with Barclays. The Tyne and Wear Pension Fund was not able to predict the data. It had changed three or four years ago and he had not been able to record it into the accounts.

The Principal said that the issue was about the bank's perception and they were looking at how they were picking up funding at different levels. There would be slight tweaks in the way the data was presented.

A Governor thought the College should not be too precious about making a surplus; as long as they were not breaking the covenants what were the risks? JH indicated that they would have to have a reasonably big deficit to move down to the next level. Every manager was responsible for their own budget and at least once a term the manager would have to feed back to the Executive Team.

The Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee said that two meetings ago, they had asked JH to tighten up as much as he could.

### **RESOLVED to note the contents of the report**

#### **1861 Budget 2014/2015**

**The record of discussion 'is closed to the public' until such time as it is considered to be no longer commercially sensitive**

#### **1862 College restructure and response to 2014/2015 funding allocations**

**This record of discussion is "closed to the public" until such time as it is no longer commercially sensitive**

#### **1863 Gazelle Update**

**The record of discussion is 'closed to the public' until such time as it is considered to be no longer commercially sensitive**

**Agenda No: 2**

**1864 Any Other Business**

There were no items for discussion.

**1865 Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

[The date of the Board meeting was later confirmed as Tuesday 14 October 2014 at 4.30pm]

**1866 Chair's Review of Business**

The Chair commented that it was a challenging time for the Executive Team. He thought that cost expenditure and income would and should come from the development of the quadrants. There were many challenges especially with funding hence the need to diversify.

However, there was a positive note on Safeguarding with Gateshead College being a safe college; he thanked David Mitchell for his work in this area.