

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

THURSDAY 11 APRIL 2013



GATESHEAD COLLEGE

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7
February 2013

Author: Clerk

Action: Approve

Status: Open

Present: Robin Mackie (Chair)
Rebecca Anderson
Chloe Barker
Keith Cann Evans
Catherine Dennis
Sally Hancox
Darren Heathcote
Ivan Jepson
Chris Macklin
John McElroy
David Mitchell
Vivien Shipley
Allan Steele
Mark Taylor
Richard Thorold

In attendance: Mick Brophy
Judith Doyle
John Holt
Gwyneth Jones
Emma Moody
Caroline Oliver (UK Policy Governance Association)

1720 Welcome/Apologies

Robin Mackie welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Emily Cox, Kevin Fitzpatrick and Ian Renwick.

The Chair invited members to declare any interests on any item on the agenda. No 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.

1721 Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 December 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 December 2012 were accepted as a true record.

1722 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising which were not substantive items on the agenda. A member questioned when the report on subsidiary companies would be brought to

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the Board, and the Chair confirmed that a report would be reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee before coming to the full Board at its next meeting.

1723 Training on Policy Governance/Carver

The Principal advised that the Clerk had attended a full day Carver meeting in York and had asked Caroline Oliver, UK Policy Governance Association to come along to the Board meeting to give a presentation on the subject.

Caroline Oliver explained that John Carver had helped to draft a new British Standard on Policy Governance where Governance should be seen as one step down from ownership not one step up from management. She advised that if Gateshead College was to adopt the Carver model it would be a lengthy process to introduce it and suggested that the earliest date for installation would be Autumn 2013.

The Chair commented that Governors had a broad understanding of the Carver model and invited them to ask questions. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality wanted to know about the situation regarding committees if the Carver model was adopted, in particular, would existing models need to be scrapped/revised. Caroline Oliver replied that the retention of an Audit Committee was a legal requirement. However, other committees could be reviewed with the intention of identifying which of those dealt with core governance issues and which stray into management territory. If the Board start to get involved in the fulfilment of their policies and how to deliver them, then this contradicts the Policy Governance model.

Another member asked about monitoring performance/deliverance of the policies. Caroline replied that the Board would set parameters and would monitor performance against KPIs. However those KPIs were not “owned” by the Board, the Principal would require freedom to change the KPIs if he can deliver the policies in a better way. The Principal’s view was that KPIs were jointly owned by the Board and the Principal and the Chair commented that the Board sets its policies in conjunction with the Principal.

One member said she did not see that Policy Governance would be that different to what we have now. She said that the Board would not want the detail if KPIs were being met – it should be exception reporting and therefore reports should be very short.

Caroline said that the Board would need to review what it has now and create an annual plan for what it wants to achieve – thinking about the future and overall strategy.

Members were generally attracted to the model because it encourages governors to get involved with all aspects of the College’s business and would make the College more agile.

The Principal indicated that the only college to adopt the full Carver model was Liverpool. A member said that he was not convinced that the Carver model was different from where Gateshead College was currently heading and, as the model was already 20 years old, he questioned whether it was out of date.

The Principal and the Chair agreed to do more research on the model; the Chair concluded that the College was moving in the right direction and would make a decision regarding Carver in due course. Further liaison would take place between the Chair, the Principal, Clerk and Caroline Oliver.

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Caroline Oliver left the meeting

1724 Appointment of Committee Members for 2013/Approval of Governor Appointments

The Clerk advised that following recent elections; Chloe Barker had been appointed as the 16-18 Student Governor and Darren Heathcote had been appointed as the Support Staff Governor. She also asked Governors to resolve to reappoint existing Committee members for the next 12 months.

RESOLVED

- i) to approve the appointment of Chloe Barker as 16-18 Student Governor for 2012/2013**
- ii) to approve the appointment of Darren Heathcote as Support Staff Governor**
- iii) to approve to reappointment of existing Committee members for the next 12 months**

1725 Amendments to the Instrument and Articles of Government

The Clerk advised that she had amended the Instrument and Articles of Government as per the agreement reached at the December Board meeting, with the addition of references to the College having two vice-chairs which would hopefully provide flexibility and also help with succession issues.

RESOLVED to approve the changes to the Instrument and Articles of Government

1726 Higher Education Public Information Policy

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality introduced a report on the Higher Education Public Information Policy. She explained that the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) required all institutions to take responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the information that they publish about themselves. Information needed to be current, fit for purpose and focused on the needs of the intended audience.

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Part C sets out in detail what is expected of institutions and what the indicators of sound practice are. It was noted that at the current time, Gateshead College did not have a policy that set out how it does this and so approval of the document submitted to the Board would effectively turn this current practice into policy.

RESOLVED to approve the Higher Education Public Information Policy

1727 AOC Pay Recommendations

The Principal introduced a report on Pay Recommendations. He explained that the AOC and Unions had concluded their pay negotiations for the financial year 2012/13 and their recommendation was made on the joint understanding that due to the general stringent funding circumstances across Further Education there remain issues of affordability for Colleges.

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The pay recommendation on behalf of AOC members had been made on the condition that all the Trade Unions agree to consult meaningfully with their respective membership groups. The agreed offer was:

- A consolidated salary increase of £200 for staff earning below £15,000 per annum
- A consolidated increase of 0.7% for all staff earning above £15,000 per annum

Payable from 1 August 2012. This would increase the recommended minimum hourly rate to £7.30 per hour. The recommendation had been made to all member Colleges in response to the trade unions' Living Wage campaign.

He indicated that colleges were RAG rated by the AOC and Gateshead College was currently 'green' because it consistently paid the AOC recommendation. The Director of Finance advised that there was 1% in the budgets for pay awards. The Chair commented that there could not be a pay award if staff were in dispute. The Principal replied that UCU had suspended their pay dispute pending discussion about workload management. The union would have to go to a ballot to reinstate a trade dispute. He felt the unions clearly wanted to work with the management to sort out what was going on. He advised that HR were meeting with Iain Owens, a regional union representative, on Friday 8 February 2013 to sign off.

A member enquired what was happening with pay at other colleges and the Principal replied that they were paying 0.7% for all staff as a maximum. Another member wanted to know why Governors were being asked to make a decision on pay as he felt it was a management issue. The Principal replied that it was views not decisions that were being sought from Governors. He explained that out of 216 academic staff only 25 had not signed a new contract and according to HR the figure was now less than 25 people. The members were content for the Executive Team to work within the 1% budget but recommended that the final decision should be made after the dispute is resolved.

RESOLVED that negotiations with the unions should be concluded before the pay award could be made

1728 Business, Innovation and Development Update

The Board agreed to note the Business, Innovation and Development Performance Report produced by the Managing Director, Business, Innovation and Development.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

1729 Subsidiary Companies

Following discussion at the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee on 31 January 2013 it was agreed that the report prepared by the Managing Director, Business, Innovation and Development on 'Subsidiary Companies' should be withdrawn from the agenda for the Board meeting. The paper should be referred to the next meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee on Thursday 28 February instead.

1730 Quality Improvement Plan 2012/13

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality introduced a report on the Quality Improvement Plan. She explained that she had met with the Chair of the

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Corporation and with Governor, Vivien Shipley, to discuss the Quality Improvement Plan.

She advised that the College continued to move on actions identified in both the QIP and the Post Inspection Plan. The Quality Improvement Plan was a high level College summary document which gave the more strategic actions whereas the Post Inspection Action Plan had been produced immediately after the draft Ofsted report had been published.

At the last meeting of Academic Standards Committee held on 16 January 2013 the Committee had recommended that the two 'Plans' should now be considered as one document. It was felt that there was duplication and unnecessary effort in the continued use and monitoring of two documents.

The Chair suggested moving to a more graphical representation of the information contained in the Plan. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality replied that she was working with the Principal and the Director of Finance on this possibility.

It was agreed that full Board would monitor the content of the Quality Improvement Plan as well as at the Academic Standards Committee.

RESOLVED

- i) to note the content in the Plan**
- ii) to approve the amalgamation of the Quality Improvement Plan and the Post Inspection Plan**

1731 Management Accounts: December 2012

The Board agreed to note the Management Accounts: December 2012 produced by the Director of Finance.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

1732 Key Performance Indicators

The Director of Finance introduced a report on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). He explained that the Board had asked for a range of KPIs to be developed, which would be reported on a regular basis. The report set out some potential KPIs for the Board to monitor the performance of the College. He advised that in addition to these KPIs, the following items would also be included in the future:

- Learner Retention
- Learner Attendance
- Learner Success Rates
- Learner Equality & Diversity KPIs
- Learner Satisfaction
- Learner Observation Profile

It was noted that the KPIs had also been assigned a Red, Amber, Green Rating.

The Chair requested an explanation of the Red Amber Green Rating and the Director of Finance replied:

- Green – on track to achieve target

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- Amber – reasonably on track to achieve target but risk
- Red – behind target; reasonable risk of not achieving target but Action Plans in place

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality suggested that further KPIs could be developed which were very precise such as percentages and numbers. A member commented that she had found the information really useful but wants further analysis to be carried out. She questioned whether the format should be the same for Learner Satisfaction and Learner Observation Profile because these were not easily measured as they were raw pieces of data.

The Director of Finance replied that the KPIs were work in progress and welcomed the feedback from Governors. A member commented that the KPIs were a great development and would help Governors to further understand the performance of the College. He suggested extracting an executive summary on 'red' issues.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

1733 Student Experience

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality introduced the Student Experience report which would show what was going on in the College. She explained that this item had been carried forward from the December Board meeting.

Mark Taylor (19+ Governor) reported that he and Rebecca Anderson (Sabbatical President) had attended a Student Governor Forum in London a couple of weeks ago. The event had included a series of short workshops and having met with fellow student governors from around the country, he was confident that the future life of colleges was in safe hands. He explained that he had completed three years at Gateshead College as a degree student and was now studying a PGCE. Outside of College, he ran a small music business where he had employed two graduates. However, one had now secured a full-time teaching post and the other had become an entrepreneur setting up their own business. He had recently secured a position as a teacher at Gateshead College. The Chair commented that this was very positive news and thanked Mark for his contribution.

Rebecca Anderson (Sabbatical President) reported that she had attended conferences including the National Union of Students Conference in November 2012. She advised that her role was to discuss issues affecting students and to give them support.

Chloe Barker (16-18 Student Governor) reported that the Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Transgender Alliance had been launched at the Greenhouse Brasserie, Gateshead College. She had been involved with the process of getting 80 people to email the local MP lobbying to get Gay Marriage legalised. She had been pleased with the recent successful vote to legalise gay marriage in the House of Commons.

The Chair commented that the student voice played a large part in what the College did. Mark Taylor enquired whether the proposed Carver model would still include Student Governors and was advised that it would.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

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1734 Principal's Report

The Principal presented a report on a number of key areas of FE which had been discussed at national and Government level.

Ofsted Annual Report

Ofsted had produced their Annual Report for 2012 which said the quality of provision in Colleges was not improving and teaching was 'still not good enough'. The Report had many inaccuracies and opinions (as opposed to evidence) that were too numerous to list and the AOC is challenging the conclusions robustly but in a measured way.

Enrolment of 14-16 year olds

He explained that after much lobbying and significant work behind the scenes especially by Mike Hopkins, Principal of Middlesbrough College, the Minister for Skills, Matthew Hancock MP had confirmed on 6 December 2012 that from September 2013 Colleges would be able to directly enrol 14-16 year olds and get funding for them. There were specific criteria that had to be met before commencing enrolment and at this stage only a few colleges were considering enrolling in September 2013.

The Chair commented on the potential synergy with other Colleges and the Principal replied that Gateshead College should work closely with Middlesbrough College and Liverpool College.

The Teaching Staff Governor enquired whether 14-16 year olds would come into College on a full-time basis or as they did now. The Principal replied that they would come into the College full-time but advised that Gateshead College would not be enrolling students in this age group for the time being. The Principal would continue to share knowledge with the Principal at Middlesbrough.

The Principal concluded by saying that there would be safeguarding issues to think about if the College was entering into more partnerships with schools. He would present a paper on this later on in the year.

Apprenticeships

The Richard Review had been published in November 2012 and Colleges were singled out as 'world leaders' and 'innovating in the delivery of apprenticeships'. Doug Richard echoed many of the College's concerns including about the way in which the FE brand had been stretched beyond what was reasonable in recent years and the lack of good information available for school pupils about apprenticeships. Around the same time the Commons Select Committee covering Business Innovation and Skills had published their report on Apprenticeships.

Chartered Status for FE Colleges

During the AoC Annual Conference in November 2012, BIS launched a consultation on Chartered Status for Colleges. AOC has now responded to the consultation and supports the proposal, in principle, because it provides legal protection to the Colleges who use 'chartered' in their title.

The SFA

The Principal highlighted that Lord Heseltine had been asked by the Prime Minister to "report on how we might create wealth more effectively in the UK". His report published in November 2012 made 89 recommendations including a proposal that the Skills Funding Agency SFA) is closed in 2015 and its budget transferred to

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Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs),

Further Education Minister

The Further Education Minister (Skills and 16-19), Matthew Hancock had made a number of announcements about 16-18 education. He said he wanted to see a “new traineeship” comprising a rigorous core of work preparation, work experience, Maths and English. It was proposed that the first traineeships would be available from September 2013. He also announced that there would be a cull of what were perceived to be lower value 16-18 vocational qualifications.

International Developments

AOC and India

The AOC had recently travelled to India with the Minister, Matthew Hancock, to open AoC India a separate subsidiary company with 30 College members.

Hong Kong and China

Discussions were continuing with VTC of Hong Kong who had recently sent a delegation across to visit Gateshead College’s facilities. They had been very impressed and were keen to focus on Apprentices, Automotive and Hairdressing and had requested that the College puts together a proposal with its costs to deliver that work in Hong Kong. They were also keen to work with the College in its specialist areas and had formally requested that staff travel across to China to meet partner colleges to progress further collaborative initiatives.

Malaysia and Iskandar

The COO of Educity in Iskandar had been in contact to say that they were preparing an MOU for the College to jointly sign that will enable progress to be made to the next stage. This would enable the College to prepare a commercial business case for the potential Iskandar development. The development of the business case is currently out to tender.

Singapore and Indonesia

Work with the Indonesian education section was progressing well especially since the Indonesian culture launch which was a huge success for the College. To enable the College to further develop the opportunities that had been identified it had been invited by Margot James MP, Chair of the Trade and Investment All Party Parliamentary Group and PPS to Lord Green, to attend a trade mission to Singapore between 9 and 16 March 2013.

Update on Gazelle Global Ltd

The Directors of Gazelle Global Ltd had met a number of times over the last few months to discuss and develop a more appropriate legal vehicle for its activities. A note from the CEO of Gazelle Global Ltd was attached to the report and indicated the advice of the College’s lawyers and also explained the next steps which needed to be taken to achieve what was recommended. The current operating model was being reviewed to ensure that it met Gazelle’s needs for the future development of the organisation. The advent of a proposed agreement with Pearson had focused the need to create a new operating model. The Chair of the Corporation, the Principal and the Director of Finance would be attending discussions in London on 11 February 2013 along with the other 5 Colleges involved.

The Chair advised that the International Strategy would require funding outside of central Government and suggested that a report should be brought back to the Board which could be scrutinised by the Director of Finance.

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Ofsted

The Chair wants to see an improvement from the last OFSTED report. He commented that he was not worried about Gateshead College being 'outstanding' or 'good' but the important factor was student improvement. A member indicated that she had found the report very helpful and that the Gazelle Global update sounded great.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

1735 Health and Safety Annual Report 2011/2012

The Board agreed to note the Health and Safety Annual Report 2011/2012 which had been produced by the Director of Human Resources and the Health & Safety Manager.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

1736 Minutes of Committees

The Board received the minutes of the following Committees:

Governance & Search Committee held on 24 May 2012

Audit Committee held on 13 June 2012

Academic Standards Committee held on 19 September 2012

Academic Standards Committee held on 14 November 2012

Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 27 September 2012

Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 31 October 2012

Joint Finance & General Purposes and Audit Committees held on 1 December 2011

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

1737 Any Other Business

The Chair advised that a letter from Dickinson Dees had been produced regarding small payments or gestures to the Board. If a Governor wanted to make a payment for something such as a College meal then they should make a contribution to the Gateshead College Foundation.

The report and the record of discussion on it are 'closed to public access'.

1738 Date of Next Meeting

The Clerk indicated that the next Board meeting would be need to be rearranged to either Friday 8 March or Thursday 11 April 2013 and that she had sent an email to Governors on the subject.

1739 Chair's Review of Business

- Quality Improvement – Learner achievement was now out in the open and it would be addressed.
- The Remuneration Committee had discussed a Performance Related Pay Scheme and this was related to the Strategic Plan.
- Gateshead College still had high standards to set.
- The Chair expressed his personal thanks to the Principal for his work at

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Gateshead College and indicated that he was looking forward to working with him on the transition plan over the next few months.

The meeting then closed