

CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on Wednesday 29th March 2017 commencing at 9.30am in the Room SC109, Easton Campus, Easton, Norfolk

Present

S Bendall	SB	Independent Member & Chair
D Henley	DH	Principal
F Baugh	FB	Independent Member
B Feltwell	BF	Independent Member
M Coleman	MC	Independent Member
S Dinneen	SD	Independent Member
C Hard	CH	Staff Governor
M Pendlington	MP	Independent Governor
G Pilcher	GP	Independent Member
D Redhead	DR	Independent Member
P Richardson	PR	Independent Member
R Sheasby	RS	Independent Member
E Sweetman	ES	Staff Governor
P Thirkettle	PT	Independent Member
J Whyman	JW	Independent Member

In Attendance

R Robson	RR	Director of Governance
C Dyble	CD	Director of Enterprise and Marketing
B Jones	BJ	Interim Director of HR
D McAuley	DM	Director of HE
C Nix	CN	Director of Estates
R Storer	RS	Director for Services to Business
J West	JWe	Director of Funding, Reporting Services and IT
M Wilkinson	MW	Director of Finance
L Wilson	LW	Curriculum Director

Action

Prior to the commencement of the agenda the Corporation received two presentations.

The first presentation was from Rob Storer and Mark Stead of the Work Based Learning Curriculum Business Plan 2017-2018. A copy of the presentation slides are in the minute book. Members raised queries on the differentials on funding, focus on recruitment, cost and use of Golley Slater, availability of assessors and instructors, progressing/developing construction and employer relationships. It was highlighted to Members that the implementation of Curriculum Business Planning allowed staff to understand the full picture when planning including the costs of providing the curriculum.

The second presentation was of the Higher Education Review Report from Kevin Kendall (external consultant). A copy of the presentation slides are in

the minute book. Members sought clarity on the rates of internal progression, reasons for students leaving before completing their courses and the analysis, and subsequent application, of this information.

1. PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

SB welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from Daniel Noble, David Nunn, Deanna Provis and Malcolm Ferguson.

Timing of Agenda and items of Urgent Business

1.2 The Agenda was accepted and no additional items were received.

1.3 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were declared:

- PR in relation to Morley
- GP in relation to RNAA
- DR in relation to Tex Holdings Ltd

No other declarations were received in relation to items on this Agenda.

1.4 Minutes of the previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2017 were **confirmed** as a true record of the meeting for signature by the Chair.

1.5 Actions and Matters Arising

There were no outstanding open actions.

One matter arising from the previous meeting was brought to the attention of the Corporation; JWe confirmed that since the last meeting NCC Professional made the decision not to continue with the contract. Alternative arrangements have been made for the students involved. JWe further advised that a quarterly report on sub-contracts will be brought to the Corporation.

2. GOVERNANCE BUSINESS

2.1 Report on Use of College Seal, RIDDOR and other matters

Members noted that the College Seal had not been used since the last meeting. One RIDDOR incident was reported. It was noted a potential insurance claim has been received.

2.2 Link Governor Reports

The Reports of visits undertaken since the last meeting were received.

2.3 College Complaints

SB confirmed a recent complaint had been addressed to governors, she further advised that, on this occasion, the College had responded swiftly to the complainant with a good explanation of events. In essence the issues at

the root of this complaint were a matter of misunderstandings rather than any fault of College processes. However, SB confirmed that on previous occasions she had been concerned that complaints had not been answered in a timely manner and the responses had been very defensive of the College position. DH confirmed that this had led to an initial review of the College Complaints Policy, this was considered to be in need of review and a revised policy would be brought to Corporation for approval after Easter.

CD

SB asked that any governor who receives complaints verbally directs the person making to the complaint to the Policy on the website, noting that this will be revised shortly.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING

3.1 Monthly KPI Report for February 2017

DH referred members to the Report and invited comment and questions.

FB and PR left the meeting.

A member sought clarity on the increasing mental health concerns in College. M confirmed that this is in line with a national trend being seen within the FE sector. DH advised that College staff are working hard on these issues and on developing strategies on coping with and avoiding hazards on social media into study programmes. He also highlighted the need to ensure the wellbeing of the staff dealing with these issues and cited work developed by another local college on this being shared as good practice.

The student satisfaction KPI was challenged by a member; why was there a perceived acceptance within the KPI as set that some students not being satisfied was agreeable, was the College sufficiently stretching itself with this KPI. DH reflected that there would always be a level of dissatisfaction with students, nationwide the benchmark within the sector was lower than the KPI target. He confirmed that the decrease in satisfaction this month was disappointing and that the reasons behind this are being investigated. SB requested that governors be given the opportunity to see the questions asked to give the KPI additional context. A member suggested that a RAG rating for KPIs may help with the addition of an acceptable tolerance level. MW advised that the existing system could be altered if that was what was wanted. Discussion took place on the KPIs included in the Report and the aims behind them. SB noted that these would be reviewed in the summer term as agreed when they were set.

RR

The attendance and retention data in the report was discussed. A member asked if there were noticeable trends in withdrawals and what was done about this. LW confirmed that withdrawals and attendance were monitored and where necessary steps were being taken to confirm reasons and to address issues in order to prevent further withdrawals. The importance of ensuring appropriate IAG was highlighted.

3.2 Monthly KPI Report for HE February 2017

DM presented the Report to the Board.

3.3 Monthly KPI Report for Apprenticeships February 2017

The Corporation noted the Report.

4. ENSURE CONTINUED FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF THE COLLEGE

4.1 Management Accounts

MW presented the accounts. He confirmed that there was no significant movement from the previous accounts; these are in line with the revised forecast. Work remains ongoing with the banks. GP confirmed that he had attended the meetings with the banks. He advised that the eventual agreed resolution of matters with the banks would need to build in some robustness around covenants moving forwards to ensure there were no continual ongoing breaches.

4.2 Update on Strategy Event Outcomes

DH confirmed that work on this was ongoing. The agreed outcomes are being progressed and tracked. A full report will be presented at the April meeting.

DH

4.3 Report on the use of External Consultants

SB advised that she had requested DH to prepare this report in response to comments made at the recent strategy event. The Report set out the use, impact and cost of the consultants engaged by DH since February 2015. DH confirmed that the College does not have all the capacity and experience in-house to drive the improvements required. A member queried whether this included the cost of Golley Slater referred to in the pre-meeting WBL presentation. CD confirmed that this was an operational cost not a consultancy cost and was therefore not included here.

A member reflected that there had been a need for specific interventions but that there was now a need for internal business improvement, rather than a continuous need for initiatives.

5. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

5.1 QIP Update

SB confirmed that the review by the Board of progress against the QIP needed revision. She proposed that initially a task and finish group be established to scrutinise this and report back to the May meeting. In addition to scrutiny on progress a simplified form of report on progress would be agreed by the group to enable the Board to effectively track and challenge progress made. This will be presented to the Board at each meeting following the annual review and approval of the SAR. MC, PT and SB confirmed their agreement to participate, PR to be asked if he is able to take part. RR to progress the meetings required.

RR

Resolved: to establish a task and finish group for the purposes of scrutiny and challenge on progress against the QIP and the form of report to the Board **Unanimously agreed** by all

5.2 Termly Safeguarding Report

MP guided members through the Report. She confirmed that there is a focus on how to make students more resilient, looking at how alerts are reported

and trying to intervene earlier. She confirmed that staff were now receiving monthly updates on Prevent and Safeguarding issues.

A member expressed concern in the police attitude to drug related issues as highlighted in the report. MP confirmed that in an intervention the day before the meeting the police had been involved. SB confirmed that if the level of police engagement sought is not forthcoming the Police Commissioner will be informed. A member requested that reasons why these matters were happening were explored and acted on. MP confirmed that one of the students involved in the incident the previous day was already in receipt of counselling.

5.3 Equality and Diversity Report and Policy Update

BJ presented the paper containing the Equality and Diversity Policy, Statement and the College response to the Equality Act 2010 to the Board. She confirmed that the Board's responsibilities under the legislation, how these can be measured by KPIs and reports to the Board.

Resolved: to approve the Equality and Diversity Policy, Statement and College Response to the Equality Act 2010 **Unanimously agreed** by all

5.4 Whistleblowing Policy Review

BJ explained the amendments required. After discussion it was agreed to remove the 'Statement' and to amend the 'Scope' on page 1.

Resolved: to approve the Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Whistleblowing) (as amended) **Unanimously agreed** by all

5.5 HE

5.5.1 Minutes of the Joint Board of Study

The minutes were noted.

5.5.2 Widening Participation Report

DM explained the widening participation category to the Board; 80% of HE students enrolled in 2016/17 were in this group. In terms of the ethnicity of students enrolled the majority were white British which is reflective of the local population. A member asked if the College is taking any action to increase applications from other ethnic groups. DM confirmed that the College continued to endeavour to promote the courses offered widely. DH advised that the majority of applicants are local/regional, he shared his previous experience of targeting minority groups to increase participation. The positive potential for minority groups and the College in further widening of participation was noted.

6. NEEDS OF RURAL BUSINESS

This was covered under the presentation prior to the start of the formal agenda

7. AREA REVIEW

7.1 ABR Recommendation for Easton and Otley

DH confirmed that the last steering group meeting was taking place later in the day; prior to that meeting the Corporation was required to consider the recommendation for the College and decide whether or not to ratify that decision. He emphasised that the recommendation to continue to stand alone encompassed several additional aspects that the Corporation would effectively be agreeing to if it ratified that recommendation. In addition to maintaining a focus on land-based subjects and paying attention to improve financial efficiency and quality, these are to collaborate with City College Norwich and to work with Suffolk New College. A member commented that such collaborations were timely, he sought confirmation that the exact nature of the projects to be agreed would come back to the Board for specific approval. This was confirmed by the Chair. The positive impact of the process to date was commented on by another member, collaboration would be in the best interests of students and the colleges.

Resolved: to ratify the ABR recommendation for Easton and Otley College in full **Unanimously agreed** by all

7.2

ABR Recommendations for the area

The Chair took members through the recommendations common to all Colleges. DH highlighted to members the potential risks to the College if a change in the transport arrangements lead to a decrease in the travel to learn time, the College draws from the area as a whole and many students travel in excess of 30 minutes. DH also drew members attention to a proposal from West Suffolk College, together with Suffolk New College and The College of West Anglia, to become an Institute of Technology, this is beyond the remit of the ABR. Discussion on this subject concluded that a collaborative approach from all the colleges was the best way forward for the whole area, and EOC, and should be progressed post ABR. The SEND recommendation was viewed as positive but a member expressed caution in terms of cost.

8. **AOB**

The Chair confirmed that the appraisal process for the Principal was progressing and the formal appraisal meeting has been arranged for early April.

9. **Date of the next Meeting**

The next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 26th April 2017 at the Otley campus with a 5.00pm start time.

The Chair closed the non-confidential agenda at 11.45am