



GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 28 June 2016

Present:	Mr J Kirk (<i>in the chair</i>)	Vice-Chair of Governors
	Ms N Cuffy	Governor
	Ms S Gannon	Staff Governor
	Mr H Hadani	Governor
	Ms L Hammond	Governor
	Mr S Holderness	Governor
	Ms G Mistry	Student Governor
	Ms M Moore	Governor
	Ms S Overton-Edwards	Principal
	Mr N Unadkat	Student Governor
In Attendance:	Mr J Bagley	Vice-Principal Curriculum
	Mr N Leivas-Mistry	Vice-Principal Quality
	Mr H Ravat	Vice-Principal Resources
	Mr R Mansfield	Clerk

Ref.		Action
B/16/20	<p>Item 1 – Attendance and Membership Matters:</p> <p><i>1.1 Apologies for Absence</i> Apologies for absence were received from John Turner, Ian Mattioli, Shirley Munden, Jim Pain and Harshad Solanki. The meeting was declared quorate.</p> <p><i>1.2 Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items</i> There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.</p> <p>Search Committee Matters:</p> <p><i>1.3 Board and Committee Vacancies</i> Robert Mansfield advised the meeting that after the recent retirement of Karl Brown there was one vacancy on the Board. The Search Committee had advised that no effort be made to fill this vacancy until the results of the Area Based Review were known, unless there was a candidate of outstanding merit. The meeting received this oral report.</p> <p><i>1.4 Appointment of Clerk</i> Robert Mansfield withdrew from the meeting.</p>	

Suzanne Overton-Edwards presented a short paper proposing that Robert Mansfield should be appointed to serve as Clerk to the Governors for the academic year 2016/2017. This was unanimously agreed.

Robert Mansfield returned to the meeting and was congratulated upon his reappointment.

The Board endorsed the reappointment of Robert Mansfield as Clerk to the Governors for the year to 31 August 2017.

B/16/21 Item 2 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising:

2.1 Minutes of Meeting on 2 June 2016

The minutes of the meeting on 2 June 2016 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Kirk.

2.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2.3 Matters Arising from the Minutes of Meeting on 24 March 2016 (held over from previous meeting)

Robert Mansfield confirmed that committees' terms of reference had been amended to reflect the changes in size of memberships approved by the Board.

Suzanne Overton-Edwards reported that national benchmark data for 2014/2015 academic results were still not available. It was agreed not to pursue this item further in view of the time that had elapsed.

Discussions with BBC Radio Leicester about providing a link to an interview with a College alumna had proved fruitless.

Jade Walsh had now received governors' photographs and pen portraits and was taking appropriate action to display them.

Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that the future provision of study space for students was to be addressed under item 5.5. The capital budget would cover the proposed installation of a mezzanine floor. Nishil Unadkat asked what action had been taken in response to the request to release classroom space in the learning pods. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that the mezzanine floor should provide a solution in 2016/2017.

Hamid Ravat confirmed that the teachers' pay award had been implemented.

Robert Mansfield confirmed that the terms of reference of the Audit Committee had been amended in line with the wording in the Joint Audit Code of Practice relating to fraud.

B/16/22 Item 3 – Curriculum and Quality Issues:

3.1 Quality Manual

Naz Leivas-Mistry presented an overview of the main changes to the Quality Manual. The manual had been updated to reflect the new OfSTED grades, which included an additional grade for Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare. There was stronger emphasis on employability. The manual

contained the Self-Assessment Reports (SARs) and guidance on best practice in preparing them. There had been a meeting earlier in the day with a senior, highly respected former Inspector who had been engaged to work with the College in October 2016 on preparing for inspection.

The meeting received the Quality Manual.

3.2 Quality Improvement Plan Summary

Naz Leivas-Mistry presented a summary of the quality improvement plan. This focused on the high-level, cross-College actions generated via a 'bottom up' process from the individual faculty SARs. It was noted that it would be necessary to provide 'top up' PREVENT training for staff, students and governors early in the next academic year.

The meeting received the quality improvement plan.

SOE

B/16/23

Item 4 – Student Issues:

4.1 Learner Voice

Naz Leivas-Mistry reported that the College had used a new provider for the Student Survey in 2015/2016, moving from Easiquest (which was no longer available) to QDP. QDP was able to provide comparisons against its own benchmark of results from other sixth form and further education colleges. The response rate from College students had been poor (43%), though SLDD students had undertaken a different survey of their own. Nevertheless certain issues had emerged clearly as of concern: lessons not starting on time, lessons not seen as interesting, and students not feeling fairly treated and not feeling safe in College. Naz Leivas-Mistry said that it should be borne in mind that the comparator colleges had all been using the QDP survey for some years and therefore might be viewed as having a 'head start'. The issues highlighted would shortly be considered at a training day. Nishil Unadkat expressed his own disappointment at the low level of response, as he had seen at first hand the impact of student opinion on the running of the College. He thought that it would have been better to run the survey in January, as response rates should be improved and there would be more time to act upon the results. Naz Leivas-Mistry concurred.

The meeting received this report.

4.2 Student Matters

John Kirk invited the Student Governors to comment on recent events and matters of interest.

Nishil Unadkat said that examinations had of course predominated student life recently. After AS level examinations had been completed, there had been plenty of space available for study. In this regard the issues raised had been addressed.

Gayatri Mistry said that the Choices Day, held earlier that day, had gone extremely well. Suzanne Overton-Edwards agreed

and thanked all staff and students who had been involved in the event.

Nishil Unadkat reported that a very good Progress Coach Award Ceremony had been held, at which he had thanked all Progress Coaches on behalf of the Student Executive Team. Nelista Cuffy commented on the very high standard of the annual Art Exhibition.

The meeting noted these oral reports.

B/16/24 Item 5 – Finance & Estates Matters:

5.1 Estates Issues

Hamid Ravat presented an oral report on estates matters. Barratts were awaiting Planning Consent for the Blackbird Road site. In the meantime meetings to resolve detailed issues were taking place between Barratts, Innes England and Leicester City Council with the aim of ensuring that the planning application had the support of Planning Officers. The programme of summer works included the creation of a Study Centre above the canteen, the costs of which were set out in the capital budget (to be considered under item 5.5). This development would accommodate 60 students and allow the creation of 5 additional proper classrooms in the learning pods. Nishil Unadkat asked how many students could be seated in the new classrooms. Hamid Ravat said that total study space would be increased to about 10% of the total student roll; he believed this compared favourably with many other colleges.

The meeting received the report on estates issues.

5.2 Health & Safety Statistics 2015/2016

Hamid Ravat presented the health & safety statistics to 7 June 2016. These had recently been considered by the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee. There had been 62 reported incidents, of which 19 were classed as accidents. Over half of the accidents were sports-related. The figures were slightly higher than those of preceding years. There was no evidence of concerning trends.

The meeting received the health and safety statistics.

5.3 Operating Results 2015/2016

Hamid Ravat presented an overview of the operating results to May 2016. The accounts showed a surplus of £97K (£104K less than budget). Income and pay expenditure had been close to budget. Operating expenditure was £111K above budget; an overspend of £150K on supply staff (occasioned by exceptional maternity cover and higher recruitment of students) had been partly offset by reduced spending elsewhere. The forecast for 2015/2016 had reduced to a surplus about £100K. There were no matters to report in respect of the balance sheet, cash-flow or the financial ratios.

The meeting received the operating results.

5.4 Learner Numbers and Funding 2016/2017

Hamid Ravat reported that the College would need to enroll about 1700 students in order to achieve its target of 1620 at the first census. The learner numbers and funding report showed that the funding would reduce by 1% even though the College's target was to recruit 4% more students.

The meeting received the learner numbers and funding report.

5.5 Budget 2016/2017

Hamid Ravat presented the highlights of the budget for 2016/2017. This had been scrutinised and commended by the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee. The budget projected an operating deficit of £75K, the first time in six years that a deficit had been forecast. Steve Holderness asked whether the deficit could be averted by deferring expenditure on the mezzanine floor. Hamid Ravat explained that the mezzanine floor was classed as a capital item, to be depreciated over 20 years. As the capital cost was estimated at £130K, its deferment would make little impact on the projected deficit. The aim was to ride out the period through the Area Based Review until the future of the College was clearer. Steve Holderness asked how long the College could incur deficits before it was in breach of its bank loan covenants. Hamid Ravat replied that a breach would occur if the College operated in deficit for three years. John Kirk said that the College's loans might well have to be renegotiated after the Area Based Review. Robert Mansfield advised the meeting that in the event that the cost of the mezzanine floor exceeded the provision in the budget, urgent action might be needed to approve the additional cost. The Board might therefore wish to recognize in advance that Chair's action could be necessary. Nelista Cuffy then proposed and Harnish Hadani seconded the approval of the budget, subject to this proviso.

The meeting unanimously approved the budget for 2016/2017, recognising that Chair's action might be required if the cost of the mezzanine floor exceeded the contractor's estimate in the capital budget.

5.6 Two-year Financial Forecast 2016/2018

Hamid Ravat presented the highlights of the two-year financial forecast 2016/2018. This had been scrutinised and commended by the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee. The College's self-assessed rating of financial health, based upon the criteria set by the Education Funding Agency, showed a decline from Outstanding to Good. Deficits of £75K and £70K were projected for the next two years. Cash-flow should remain positive over both years, by a narrow margin. Hamid Ravat also drew the attention of the meeting to the contents of the checklist appended to the

forecast. Lesley Hammond then proposed and Nelista Cuffy seconded the approval of the two-year financial forecast. John Kirk thanked Hamid Ravat for the hard work and skill involved in the preparation of the budget and the financial forecast, given the unpromising outlook.

The meeting unanimously approved the two-year financial forecast 2016/2018.

B/16/25 Item 6 – Marketing and Promotional Issues:

6.1 Marketing Update 2015/2016

James Bagley presented the highlights of recent progress against the marketing plan for 2015/2016. The College had met the targets for on-line activity. There had been excellent recent coverage of the end-of-year Art Show in *The Leicester Mercury*. The Next Steps Day had been extremely successful, and many positive comments had been received. James Bagley thanked all staff members and students who had been involved. John Kirk asked that the thanks of governors should be passed on to all those concerned. James Bagley reported that plans to increase the number of alumni were in hand.

The meeting received the marketing update.

6.2 Student Applications

James Bagley presented the latest dashboard data for student applications for 2016/2017. These showed a year-on-year increase of about 100 applications. The current year 1 cohort was large, and many of these students were expected to return. The increase in applications appeared to be evenly spread across the College's feeder schools. John Kirk asked why there appeared to have been a lag in the profile of applications, as compared with previous years. James Bagley said that he believed this was attributable to various changes in timetabling at the College and in schools.

The meeting received this oral report.

B/16/26 Item 7 – Staffing Issues:

7.1 Staffing Report

Naz Leivas-Mistry presented the main points of the staffing report to 8 June 2016. As was usual for the time of year, there had been considerable seasonal movement. He was pleased to report that all substantial vacancies had now been filled. Some supply teachers had been appointed to vacant posts. He advised the meeting however that it was becoming increasingly difficult to fill teaching managerial posts. The turnover of College staff was below national benchmarks. The sickness absence of teaching staff remained below national benchmarks, but there was work to be done to reduce sickness absence in corporate services.

SOE

B/16/27

The meeting received the staffing report.

Item 8 – Governance Issues:

8.1 Risk Register

Suzanne Overton-Edwards reviewed recent changes to the risk register. She recorded her thanks to those staff who had worked hard to increase the study programmes of those students who had initially had programmes smaller than 540 hours. Retention had emerged as a risk of greater significance. The College continued to attach a high score to the risk of cyber-bullying. The need for change at GEMEG had been fully understood, as had the need for effective support to be provided by the College.

The meeting requested that a reference against 'failure to embed quality systems' should be amended to read: 'All other City colleges ...'

The meeting also asked that the scores and RAG rating for sickness absence should be reviewed and reduced.

The meeting received the risk register.

SOE

SOE

8.2 Fees Policy 2016/2017

Hamid Ravat presented the fees policy for 2016/2017. The main change related to students aged 19+ with a full level 3 qualification, who were no longer eligible for state funding. Nelista Cuffy advised that students in this category who lacked grade C English and Mathematics GCSE would still be eligible. It was agreed that this point should be reflected in the policy.

The meeting unanimously approved the fees policy, subject to the amendment noted above.

HR

8.3 Treasury Management Policy

Hamid Ravat advised the meeting that the College now had freedom to borrow without the prior approval of the Education Funding Agency. In other respects the treasury management policy was unchanged

The meeting received the treasury management policy.

8.4 Fraud Policy

Hamid Ravat presented the fraud policy.

The meeting received the fraud policy.

8.5 Staff Recruitment Policy

Naz Leivas-Mistry advised the meeting that the College had in response to a request from the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee agreed to introduce a recruitment policy. This had been agreed with the professional associations. The policy adhered to Sixth Form Colleges Association guidelines and the teachers' 'red book', and addressed some subtle issues of balance between support and fairness.

The meeting received the staff recruitment policy.

8.6 Strategic Plan Targets 2016/2017

Suzanne Overton-Edwards described the process by which targets for the strategic plan for 2016/2017 had been developed in consultation with the Strategy Working Group. She highlighted the changes and additions made to the targets for the current year.

The meeting received the strategic plan targets for 2016/2017.

8.7 Standing Orders

Robert Mansfield presented the standing orders, which he had recently reviewed. He recommended that the latest timing for the distribution of papers should be restated as 'seven days' before each meeting. This was in accordance with the College's practice and avoided placing unrealistic demands upon the authors of papers. This was agreed.

The meeting ratified the standing orders as amended.

8.8 Cycle of Meetings for 2016/2017

Robert Mansfield presented the cycle of meetings for 2016/2017. This was the result of extensive consultation with the College and senior governors. He believed the cycle represented a practical starting point, but advised the meeting that the Area Based Review might well give rise to the need for some changes.

The meeting received the cycle of meetings for 2016/2017.

8.9 Committee Terms of Reference

Robert Mansfield advised the meeting that a change was required to bring the terms of reference of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee explicitly into line with Financial Regulations, as regards the approval of certain expenses for foreign travel. Otherwise he was aware of no reason to change the terms of reference of committees.

The meeting endorsed the proposed change to the terms of reference of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee.

B/16/28

Item 9 – Consent Agenda:

John Kirk introduced the following items in turn, inviting major comments or questions.

9.1 Minutes of the Student Affairs Committee 18 April 2016

9.2 Minutes of the Audit Committee 11 May 2016

Harnish Hadani asked the meeting to note that new internal auditors (ICCA-ETS) had been appointed.

9.3 Minutes of the Finance, Staffing and General Purposes Committee 26 May 2016

9.4 Minutes of the Finance, Staffing and General Purposes Committee 16 June 2016

9.5 Minutes of the Standards & Quality Committee 21 April 2016

9.6 Minutes of the Standards & Quality Committee 9 June 2016

John Kirk asked the meeting to note that the Performance Improvement Group had reported to the Committee that the Group had been happy to see the improvement in English, and that GEMEG was now clear about the nature of the improvement that was required.

9.7 Minutes of the Search Committee 7 June 2016

The meeting received in turn the minutes of committees as listed above.

B/16/29 Item 10 – Date and Time of Next Meeting:

The date and time of the next meeting were confirmed as Thursday 27 October 2016 at 5.30 p.m. at the College. (This would be after the first meetings of the Area Based Review.)

B/16/30 Item 11 – Any Other Business:

There was no other business.

B/16/31 Item 12 – Confidential Items

12.1 Notes of the Strategy Working Group 19 April 2016

The meeting received the notes of the meeting of the Strategy Working Group on 19 April 2016.

12.2 Notes of the Strategy Working Group 14 June 2016

The meeting received the notes of the meeting of the Strategy Working Group on 14 June 2016.

12.3 Minutes of the Confidential Session on 2 June 2016

The minutes of the confidential session on 2 June 2016 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Kirk.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

John Kirk, on behalf of John Turner and himself, thanked all governors for their hard work during the year. He felt the College was well-placed to face the challenges ahead. He commended especially Gayatri Mistry and Nishil Unadkat for their exemplary service and invaluable input as Student Governors, and wished them well on behalf of the Board. Gayatri Mistry and Nishil Unadkat in turn thanked the Board for their experience as members of the governing body. Nishil Unadkat said it had been an honour to serve. The Student Governors had been heard invariably with respect, evidence of what he believed was a College strength.