



GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of Meeting on Thursday 1 June 2017

Present:	Mr J Kirk (<i>Chair</i>)	Chair of Governors
	Ms N Cuffy	Governor
	Ms S Gannon	Staff Governor
	Ms S Kacha	Student Governor
	Ms S Munden	Staff Governor
	Mr M Sim	Principal
	Mr H Solanki	Parent Governor
	Ms A Touseef	Student Governor
In Attendance:	Mr J Bagley	Vice-Principal Curriculum Education & Skills Funding Agency
	Ms L Hawes	Vice-Principal Resources
	Mr H Ravat	Leicester City Council Clerk
	Mr A Suddaby	
	Mr R Mansfield	

Ref.		Action
B/17/32	<p>Item 1 – Attendance and Membership Matters:</p> <p><i>1.1 Apologies for Absence</i> Apologies for absence were received from Harnish Hadani, Stephen Holderness and Margo Moore. John Kirk welcomed Lisa Hawes and Adam Suddaby to the meeting as observers. 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><i>1.3 Governor Vacancies</i> Robert Mansfield reported that there were now three governor vacancies, following the recent resignation of Jim Pain. Jim Pain's third term of office had been nearing completion and he had decided that it was time to move on. John Kirk said that he had written to thank Jim Pain for nearly twelve years of service to the College as a governor. Robert Mansfield said that he would shortly be interviewing a prospective governor. John Kirk said that he had approached two businesses with a view to securing nominations.</p>	

1.4 Feedback on Governor Training 8 April 2017

Robert Mansfield presented an analysis of the feedback received on the governor training workshop held on 8 April 2017 to improve governors' skills in asking challenging questions about quality matters. The feedback was positive or very positive, and it now remained to be seen how far governors had been enabled and empowered to provide effective challenge.

The meeting received this report.

B/17/33 Item 2 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising:

2.1 Minutes of Meeting on 6 April 2017

The minutes of the meeting on 6 April 2017 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Kirk.

2.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no actions listed in the minutes and no other matters arising that were not covered by agenda items.

B/17/34 Item 3 – Principal's Report:

Martin Sim gave an oral report on his priorities and progress in addressing them (for which his summary notes were provided for retention with the papers for the meeting).

He described his priorities as:

- implementing strategies for improvement (progress on which was regularly reported within the updates against the Post-Inspection Action Plan (PIAP)), and
- creating a sustainable model for supporting outstanding teaching learning and assessment in a positive culture.

He then reviewed the steps taken or in hand to address the second of these priorities. These centred internally round a new timetable structure with more provision for meetings, reorganization of the management structure to support teaching learning and assessment and provide more opportunity to progress, and a better managed curriculum offering with tighter control over entry qualifications and more emphasis on employability and progression. He presented charts depicting the changed organization structure that was being introduced. He was developing external partnerships with other colleges from which the college could learn and with individuals who could provide leadership support. Internal monitoring meetings were being reorganized and there would be a closer fit with the cycle of governance. He also reported on the oral feedback from OfSTED at the end of an Inspection Visit in the previous week. The Inspectors' judgment had been that there was Significant progress against actions on the theme of governance and Reasonable

progress on the other five themes in the PIAP. The key for the future was to improve teaching learning and assessment. The emphasis needed to be on support rather than punitive action where practice fell short of required standards. He also believed that the learner voice needed to be strengthened, and to be extended beyond what was a well-developed Student Executive Team.

Adam Suddaby congratulated the College on the outcome of the recent visit by OfSTED, and endorsed the view that teachers required support. He asked whether OfSTED had during classroom visits identified particular issues relating to teaching learning and assessment. James Bagley said that he had been disappointed that more progress against some concerns previously identified had not been visible: especially differentiation, and patchy quality of feedback on marked work. Consistency remained an issue, and the true impact of action taken was difficult to judge prior to the summer examination results. Martin Sim congratulated James Bagley for his excellent work as College nominee, and thanked Adam Suddaby for his input prior to the OfSTED visit.

Nelista Cuffy asked whether OfSTED had commented on work experience. Martin Sim said that OfSTED had been delighted that the College had exceeded its targets and with its future plans and the additional resource being applied to delivering these plans, though the impact of the College's efforts could be seen only in the light of the future progression of its learners. The OfSTED team had been balanced and fair in its approach. Martin Sim said that he recognized that there would have to be 'finite patience' with shortcomings that remained unaddressed, as the College had no choice but to meet external standards. Staff generally understood this. Nelista Cuffy asked whether staff were being clearly briefed on this point. Martin Sim said that he had now separated the briefings for teaching and corporate services staff; he believed that teachers clearly understood the situation. Nelista Cuffy asked for details of the courses that were being dropped from the curriculum, particularly as these courses might already have been chosen by students. Martin Sim asked leave to defer providing this information until he had briefed staff. Robert Mansfield said that the Standards & Quality Committee was due to receive a full report on 13 June 2017.

John Kirk asked whether there were further opportunities to improve governance arising from the new partnerships which Martin Sim was developing with other colleges. Martin Sim said he would explore this with them.

John Kirk asked whether more direct links between learners and governors should be established as part of efforts to strengthen the learner voice. Martin Sim said that he was not opposed to such a development in principle. His own contacts with students suggested that many saw the Student Executive Team as a clique that did not necessarily represent their views. There were various ways in which this might be tackled. Savannah Kacha agreed that many students felt unable to speak out to anyone other than their Progress Coach. She thought that members of the Senior Leadership Team attending learner focus groups had been an effective channel in the past. Martin Sim said that Principal's Question Time was another possible route that he had successfully used, and perhaps the best starting point. He believed that lack of a tutorial system, which he intended to reinstate, had inhibited communications with learners.

Adam Suddaby observed that structural change had created several vacancies and that a mix of internal and external candidates would no doubt be needed to fill them. He asked what was the risk that College would not be fully staffed in the coming September. Martin Sim said he recognized that structural change had involved risk, and said that he had been surprised by the number of Programme Area Managers (PAMs) opting for voluntary severance. The College was focusing on the FE sector in its search for external candidates, as the College was likely to be able to offer attractive terms and conditions to such candidates. However contingency plans had been developed should there be difficulty in filling any vacancies. He saw it as very positive that the restructuring had created 'churn' and opportunities for staff to progress.

The meeting received the Principal's report.

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Item 4 – Staff Survey Results:

Martin Sim presented the highlights of the results of the staff survey conducted in May 2017. The results had been received the previous evening, so there had been little time to review them in depth. The response rate had, despite reminders to staff, dropped to about 40%, too low to be statistically significant, and a possible indicator that staff no longer saw the issues that had originally occasioned the surveys as a high priority. The responses showed that criticism of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had become much less scathing, and there was some evidence that opinion was improving. However he recognized that respondents still felt undervalued and that this was of significance. He had been disappointed at the low scores relating to teamwork, and was putting in place measures to facilitate better teamworking. John Kirk

would provide guidance on the tone of the comments provided by respondents before any action was planned. Sarah Gannon and Shirley Munden confirmed that completing the survey had not seemed to be a priority in the current year. Robert Mansfield suggested that the low level of responses provided an unreliable base for planning further action and urged that little independent effort should be devoted to this, given the level of change already in hand.

The meeting received the presentation on the results of the staff survey.

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Item 5 – Curriculum and Quality Issues:

5.1 Notes of Meetings of Performance Improvement Group 24 April 2017 and 22 May 2017

John Kirk advised the meeting that the business conducted by the Performance Improvement Group on 24 April 2017 had all been updated at the meeting on 22 May. It was therefore agreed that he should present the notes of the latter meeting only, those of the meeting on 24 April being taken as read. He said that he had been impressed by the much more robust questioning evident in recent meetings, and he was more confident that the College was developing the information systems required.

James Bagley then presented the highlights of recent developments to improve quality by reference to the latest update of the PIAP. The continuing input from Marina Gaze, on the back of her work with the PAMs, had been most helpful in preparing for the recent OfSTED monitoring visit. Grade Book data had shown an apparent improvement in value added. Quality Monitoring Meetings had been restructured and were now focused on priorities for improvement. There had been a substantial increase in the number of classroom observations, learning walks etc. and every teacher was now working on a personal development action plan. He summarised the outcomes of lesson observations. Key performance indicators for reporting to governors on educational matters had been agreed.

Student attendance during the previous week showed a 1.3% year-on-year improvement. John Kirk said that there were differences in the targets and reporting protocols used by colleges, and these were complicating the setting of student attendance targets for the College. James Bagley said that a more nuanced approach was under consideration.

James Bagley reported that structures and resources to support teachers in the next year were under active consideration. Work placements for 2016/2017 were ahead of target and well above those achieved in 2015/2016. There

was still some way to go. Destination data for 2016 leavers had been received from Connexions. He confirmed that the College now had in place robust processes, through exit interviews and the link with Connexions, for capturing the destinations of future leavers. There would be checks to compare data from exit interviews with actual destinations. John Kirk gave a brief update on governance. The recent governor training had been well received, but governors had still to find out how to interrogate the data that they would actually receive from CEDAR, Goldmine and the Grade Book. Further training might be needed.

Nelista Cuffy asked whether any teachers had entered capability proceedings. James Bagley described the steps that applied if teachers were found to be underperforming. These steps had not yet been exhausted with any individual.

The meeting received the notes of the meetings of the Performance Improvement Group.

B/17/37 Item 6 – Finance and Staffing Issues:

6.1 Minutes of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee 18 May 2017

In the absence of Steve Holderness, Hamid Ravat presented the draft minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee on 18 May 2017. The key points were as follows.

Estates Matters

The College had retained its five-star rating after a recent visit by Environmental Health Inspectors to the canteen. The sale of the Blackbird Road site looked likely to be completed in the current month. The College's share of the proceeds would be £4.4 million, all of which (after retention of approved marketing expenses) was due to be remitted to the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The programme of summer works was likely to include full conversion of the temporary science laboratory, extension of the mezzanine floor (subject to structural feasibility) and the replacement of IT equipment including 'thin client' devices. The Committee had received a review of independent study space. Although the College apparently provided relatively more independent learning space than the other Leicester sixth form colleges, action was to be taken to enhance the space available.

There had been a small year-on-year rise in reported health and safety incidents. The rise was attributable to health-related incidents and there were no underlying concerns.

Finance Matters

The accounts showed an adverse variance of £487K (275K worse than budget) in the income and expenditure account,

largely attributable to pay costs, especially those of teachers and agency staff. Voluntary severance costs would also be incurred 'below the line' as a consequence of the restructuring currently being implemented. The College remained very solvent and the balance sheet was sound. Steve Holderness had stressed the need for the College to return to breakeven or better in 2017/2018.

A report on course sizes and programme efficiencies had shown that too many students were on small programmes, mainly because they had dropped enrichments that had originally counted towards their learning hours. The practice of including enrichments as part of study programmes was to be discontinued.

Staffing

The staffing report showed that FTE numbers were four above budget. Sickness absence levels continued to be above sector benchmarks. It had been anticipated that the filling of some vacancies with staff of the required quality might prove challenging.

Marketing

The marketing update had reported on press coverage and activity on social media. Student applications for the next year showed no evidence of year-on-year decline. The positive outcome of the OfSTED Monitoring Visit should be helpful for recruitment.

The meeting received the minutes of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee.

B/17/38 **Item 7 – Student Issues:**

Savanna Kacha said there was little to report on behalf of students, except that an end-of-year outing to Alton Towers had been organized. John Kirk wished students well in their examinations.

The meeting noted this oral report.

B/17/39 **Item 8 – Date and Time of Next Meeting:**

The date and time of the next meeting were confirmed as Tuesday 4 July 2017 at 5.30 p.m. at the College.

B/17/40 **Item 9 – Any Other Business:**

There was no other business.

Staff and Student Governors and senior members of staff then left the meeting, which remained quorate, prior to consideration of the minute of a confidential item from the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee. This is recorded separately as confidential minute B/17/41 (Conf.)

