

Preston's College

Minutes of the Board meeting held on 15th December 2016 at 5:00pm in the Board Room at Preston's College.

Present:

Ms L Hornsby (Chair)

Mr E Bassa
Cllr R Boswell
Mr J Boydell (in part)
Mr S Browne
Mr M Driver
Ms D Hemsley
Ms L Hornsby
Dr A Jones
Ms B Kay
Mr P Kennedy
Ms A Markland
Mr M Mallam
Cllr J Morgan (in part)
Mr T Readett
Dr E H Smith
Mr J Taylor (in part)
Mr J Wilson

In Attendance:

Mr S Fell (Clerk to the Corporation)
Mr P McMellon (Assistant to the Clerk)
Mr S Nixon (Executive Director of Resources)
Mr C Speight (Vice Principal (Enterprise and Engagement))
Mr M Noblett (Assistant Principal - Excellence & Learning)
Mrs M Haworth (Assistant Principal – Excellence & Learning)
Ms G Thornton (Head of H.R.)
Mrs R Paley (Principal's Secretary)

205. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs L Butler.

In the absence (at the beginning of the meeting) of the Board Chair (Mr J Boydell), Ms L Hornsby (Vice Chair) chaired the meeting.

206. Declarations of Interest

The Board again noted the previous and long standing declarations from Dr A Jones,

Mr S Fell and Mr P McMellon given their status as employees of the University of Central Lancashire but agreed that, with regard to the matters reported under Items 209 and 215 below, there was no need on this occasion for those individuals to leave the meeting for those discussions.

207. Minutes of the Meetings

Resolved: That the:

- i) Draft Minutes of the HR and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 15th November 2016;**
- ii) Draft Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 23rd November 2016;**
- iii) Draft Minutes of the Quality & Standards Committee meeting held on 24th November 2016;**
- iv) Draft Minutes of the Business Planning Committee meeting held on 1st December 2016 and**
- v) Written Resolution of the Board (HE AQA Return) dated 29th November 2016**

be received for information.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Board meetings held on 27th October 2016 and 15th November 2016 be agreed as true records and signed by the Chair.

208. Matters Arising

Mr S Browne indicated that, in due course, he intended raising again the issues covered under Item 203 (AOB – Management Restructure – Excellence & Learning) of the Minutes for the Board meeting on 15th November 2016.

209. Principal and Chief Executive's Report

The Principal and Chief Executive presented a report updating the Board on various activities within the College including the following:

- (i) Area Review Progress**

The College's meeting with the FE Deputy Commissioner and UCLan senior management would take place on 9th January 2017. It was expected that this meeting would contribute to the formulation of recommendations under the Area Review.

Full documentation relating to the Area Review was available on the Governor's Portal.

(ii) OFSTED Inspection

Dr Smith confirmed that, although OFSTED's final Report was still awaited, it was clear to College Management as to what action they now needed to follow, and that an action plan has already been devised in response to the findings. The anticipated Grade was, without doubt, disappointing, but attainment of the level of consistency in delivery of the core service was entirely feasible. Dr Smith advised on some of the features of Teaching, Learning and Assessment which required attention, but she reaffirmed her expectation that the necessary consistency across the College would follow.

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The Board then discussed the reported outcomes and particularly the identified Areas for Improvement. The challenges presented by the prior learning experiences of many of the College's maths and English skills students had been acknowledged by OFSTED.

Mr S Browne felt that the Board needed to reflect upon this experience and, specifically, to ensure that appropriate focus was directed towards improvement/consistency in delivery of the core service. He noted that College Management had sought external assurance in the production of its plans for improvement and that this should provide the Board and the Quality & Standards Committee with the confidence needed to endorse measures calculated to produce rapid and sustainable improvement across all areas.

The Board noted how OFSTED's new inspection framework had proved to be challenging for colleges in general. However, the College's response would be monitored by OFSTED so that, by the time of the next OFSTED visit, the Board should be in a position to confirm that necessary improvement measures had been implemented.

The Chair advised the Board that the final Report would be circulated as soon as it became available. Immediately thereafter, reports to both the Board and the Quality & Standards Committee will provide the desired opportunities for Board Members to oversee the production of an appropriate Improvement Plan.

It was agreed that Board Members would receive (in advance) the College's official press release on the outcome once the final Report was received.

Finally, the Chair echoed the Principal's disappointment with the inspection grade. She confirmed that there was no doubting that the inspection framework was significantly more onerous than in the past, but that the result should not detract from the efforts of staff and the focus must now move to improving areas of teaching and learning where consistency in delivery remained unproven.

Dr Smith then presented the other items in her report, including the update on Apprenticeships.

Resolved: that the Report be noted.

210. Student Members' Report

Ms D Hemsley and Cllr J Morgan presented their report which included news on forthcoming events to which Board Members were invited. These included a 'Question Time' event and meetings of the new-format Students' Council meetings. Other activities linked to 'Respect Week', domestic violence, hate crime and the SAHARA Project were noted.

It was agreed that, once times/dates had been confirmed, the Clerk would circulate full details.

211. Audit Committee Annual Report

The Board received a copy of the Audit Committee Annual Report. The Report set out the assurances of the College's Audit Committee function in respect of the adequacy of and effectiveness of the College's systems of internal control, its arrangements for control and governance processes, and for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Resolved: That the report be approved and the assurances therein noted.

212. Internal Audit Annual Report

The Board received a copy of the Internal Auditor's Annual Report on 2015/16, summarising the internal audit activities and the year-end opinion, the latter confirming the adequacy of the College's framework for risk management, governance and internal control.

Resolved: That the Internal Audit Annual Report be approved and the assurances therein noted.

213. Annual Report and Financial Statements, Management Letter and Letter of Representation

Mr S Nixon presented the Annual Report and Financial Statements, Management Letter and Letter of Representation and in doing so confirmed that each document had been approved by the College's Audit Committee. The Business Planning Committee had also examined and approved the Financial Statements. He reported that the external audit was now complete and that no significant issues had been raised.

The Board then noted each section of the Annual Report and Financial Statements. The contents of the Management Letter and the Letter of Representation were also noted.

Mr Nixon explained that, along with all other colleges in the sector, the College awaited receipt of the Skills Funding Agency's (SFA) annual Funding Reconciliation Statement. Although it was not expected that the Funding Reconciliation Statement would reveal anything unexpected or otherwise challenging, signing of the Financial Statements, Management Letter and Letter of Representation would have to be deferred pending its receipt. This did not mean, however, that the documents could not be agreed at this meeting.

Resolved: That, subject to receipt of a clean Funding Reconciliation Statement from the SFA:

- i) the Financial Statements for 2015/16 be approved and the Chair and Principal and Chief Executive authorised to sign the same;**
- ii) that the Management Letter and Letter of Representation be approved with the Chair authorised to sign the latter.**

214. Performance Against KPIs

Mr Nixon presented the latest report setting out performance against the College's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), split into four sections covering Responsiveness, Quality, Financial Sustainability and Human Resources. He drew attention to those indicators which had been the subject of discussion at the Business Planning Committee on 1st December 2016.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

215. Estates Review

The Board received an updated report from Fusion Ltd reflecting developments since the summer. Mr Nixon advised the Board that this

constituted an 'aspirational statement of intent, albeit with an identified 'preferred option' as previously confirmed by the Board.

The Board agreed that the report basically represented a 'staging point' in a long-term process which would be shaped by, amongst other considerations, the availability of funding.

Resolved: That the Estates Report be received and progress noted.

216. Strategic Planning Forum

The Principal and Chief Executive identified a number of topics which might provide the basis for the next strategic planning event. These included:

- Apprenticeships;
- Meeting College staff;
- Maths and English challenges; and
- Mental Health.

Consideration of these topics would be in the context of enabling 'effective challenge', and also with reinforcement of the College 'brand' in mind.

It was agreed that the event would be held at the Westleigh Centre of UCLan on Thursday, 2nd February 2017, commencing at 12.00 noon and concluding with dinner at around 6.30pm.

217. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Board was scheduled to take place on 23rd March 2017.