

**Board of Governors Meeting
22 February 2018**

Minutes

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| Time | 18.30 – 21.14 | |
| Venue | Southgate Campus Board Room | |
| Present (governors) | Ann Zinkin David Byrne Mervin Archer Sue Baldwin Fiona Bulmer Sheila Dawson Graham Duncan Bernard Manson Christalla Tsattala Pooja Patel Sebahtin Karaasanov | Chair Principal Vice Chair Staff Governor Student Governor Student Governor |
| In attendance | Toni Beck Peter Harrison Lizzie Jones Tracy McIntosh Ian Rule Melissa Drayson | Dir Quality and Learner Experience Dir of Curriculum Dir of Organisational Development Dir of Employer Partnerships Interim Dir Finance and Corp Ops Clerk to the Corporation |
| Apologies | None | |
| Vacancies | External Governor x 2 | |
| Quorum (6) | The meeting was quorate | |

| Item | Action lead |
|--|-------------|
| <p>Pre-Board Briefing – Changes to apprenticeship processes <i>Presentation by Tracey McIntosh – Director Employer Partnerships.</i> <i>Powerpoint slides provided to all governors, available from Clerk</i></p> <p>Governors received a policy update and noted the experience of the College which reflected the national picture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in implementing the new apprenticeships policy was slow • For levy payers, the 20% time off for study requirement was an obstacle • Some levy payers were using the levy to train their own staff rather than contract with apprenticeship providers • Non-levy paying SMEs were generally prepared to pay the 10% charge but preferred to pay it in instalments rather than one lump sum | |

- Some SMEs were paying the commercial rate rather than comply with the 20% off the job requirement
- The standard contract was complicated and this was a further deterrent for some SMEs
- The college would be seeking to cover the non-levied apprenticeship funding gap until April 2019 through subcontracting and was developing relationships with potential partners

Governors' discussion and questions included the following:

- *Is there a pattern to employers' reluctance to release employees for 20% of their time?* It was thought that this most commonly affected lower paid employees
- *What is the impact of increased bureaucracy on colleges and other providers?* It was reported that some Private Training Providers and smaller institutions were struggling due to capacity issues;
- *What the college was doing to prepare for April 2019, when funding for all employers would be through DAS (the Digital Apprenticeships Service).* The main focus was on building and maintaining relationships and supporting employers with other provision, such as employee training and Maths and English.
- *How optimistic the College was about apprenticeship growth in 2019/20.* It was confirmed that the college was in a strong position, but caution was being exercised as there were so many unknowns.
- There was support for the development of Higher Level Apprenticeships alongside T-Levels.
- *How were progression routes from level 2 being developed?* Trailbrazer groups were in place which were creating progression ladders for students. Links also needed to be strengthened with careers provision in schools to ensure that 14 year olds were aware of apprenticeships as an option.

1. Preliminary Items

1.i/ii Chair's welcome and apologies for absence

No apologies had been received.

1.iii Confirmation of eligibility, quorum and declarations of interests

It was confirmed that all present were eligible to take part in the meeting, there were no new declarations of interests and the meeting was quorate

1.iv Notification of urgent items of other business

None had been received.

2. Minutes

2.i Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018

The Minutes were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

2.ii **Matters arising and any outstanding actions**

Supporting paper by the Clerk

Item 11: The final version of the Capital Monitoring Executive Limitations Policy would be circulated to governors by email DFCO

Item 4i: Governors who had not yet completed the online safeguarding and prevent training would be sent individual reminders. Clerk

3. **Governor reminder of strategic direction**

Supporting paper by the Principal

Governors ratified the report as a useful aide memoire and noted the timescale for completion of the ongoing strategic planning work. A useful suggestion had been made in advance questions that all documentation during the process should be catalogued.

4. **Principal's Report**

Supporting paper presented by the Principal

The Principal highlighted key strategic developments and opportunities and sought Board endorsement for the approach being taken in relation to these

- Adult skills budget devolution

This was an important issue for governors to monitor. The process for bidding for ASB funding was not yet known. Local Boroughs were pressing the Mayor's Office about their role and influence in the management of the budget. It was considered that the College's balance of provision and track record in the delivery of adult provision would stand us in good stead but, until more was known, a cautious approach would be needed.

- Institutes of Technology joint bid

The College had expressed an interest in a partnership bid with two other London FE Colleges but would not be the lead College. There had been 27 expressions of interest in a limited pot of money. The launch of IoTs would not preclude the College from developing its own higher level STEM provision.

- Heathrow airport expansion

The college was working collegiately through the West London alliance to develop a joint offer that avoids duplication between individual providers.

- Collab group

Collab was having significant success in winning national training contracts which individual colleges would not be able to access. At

present these were predominantly related to apprenticeships and focussed on the construction industry.

- CETEC and the partnership with PA consulting was proving very fruitful

Governors noted the student successes and commended the Foundation Level 3 Art and Design students on the quality of their murals at Barnet Hospital. It was also reported that the partnership development of the sector- based Work Academy for Dry Lining had resulted in employment for three of the students involved.

It was agreed that the College was in a strong position to drive for acceptance by the Chartered Institute for Further Education.

5. **KPI Report**

Supporting papers by the Director of Employer Partnerships

The Board discussed KPIs currently shown as Red and Amber

- English & Maths attendance continued to improve slightly, primarily due to the text initiative, but remained stubbornly under target. Governors asked for comparisons with similar colleges. It was reported that there was no national data but the College was taking part in an AOC initiative to share information. Members of ELG were also meeting counterparts in other colleges to share good practice and anecdotal evidence suggested that E&M attendance figures compared well.
- 16-18 Learner numbers had increased by 32 compared to the January report and had therefore moved from Red to Amber. Measures were being taken to identify savings now in preparation for the reduction in lagged funding in 2018-19.
- 16-18 and adult apprenticeship funding had moved from green to amber due to the reduction in the non-levy funding allocations.
- Full cost/ commercial income had gone down as it was believed that students were deferring enrolment until the launch of the 18th Edition electrical courses in June.

Governors noted the Green rated KPIs. It was asked how a 0.5% difference in retention translated into actual numbers of students. This information would be included in the following month's report.

There was further discussion of the student texting initiative which was run by an external agency. The student governors provided feedback on factors affecting attendance and commented that early starts and gaps in timetabling were both factors for some students, and that individualised support from teachers might help. Some

teams offered group incentives to encourage collective responsibility for high attendance.

It was suggested that governors might explore issues around attendance on the forthcoming Meet the Students days.

6. Finance Reports

Supporting papers by the Iterim DFCO

6.i Management Accounts – Period 5, December 2017

Key issues reported and discussed included

- The lower than budgeted operating deficit. The management team were actively engaged in implementing the required savings to achieve the revised forecast.
- Following investigation, the position regarding tuition fee income appeared healthier than anticipated but more work was needed before a clear picture could be formed.
- MBC's catering performance had begun to improve, but there remained concerns about income from Baird Road. The position would continue to be monitored closely. Governors asked about current Directors and the need for a college representative on the MBC Board was discussed.
- The Treasury Policy did not currently cover the funds held in college bank accounts and would need to be updated. Alternative counterparties had also been identified to maximise rates of return. Governors commented that it was important that risk and liquidity of accounts were taken into account.
- Governors welcomed the additional scrutiny of agency costs and sought assurance that there were adequate controls in place to ensure both Value for Money and quality.

AGREED: that the number of MBC Directors, and need for a College representative on the Board would be investigated further.

DCFO/
Clerk

6ii Capital Project Monitoring

The Board updated that the M Block decant work was proceeding well to allow the refenestration work. The ELG office would be moving to the public library the following week.

E,W and R Blocks

The Board considered the proposals to authorise extra expenditure on the external works. The current budget only covered internal

work but some external areas, particularly flat roofs and roof-lights were in poor condition.

Governors supported the need for the work and considered the difference in costs between the options. The additional cost of replacing the roof and roof-lights was considered small over the life of the improvements. The aesthetic considerations were important in terms of providing an attractive environment for students. It had been noted, in the student survey, that student feedback seemed better from more modern buildings.

It was suggested that a better price might be negotiated if internal and external work was undertaken at the same time. It was not known whether the price quoted included professional fees

AGREED: that a more detailed proposal be brought back to the Board, including the curriculum case. DCFO

M Block STEM Hub funding

The GLA funding application had been rejected on a technicality and there had been heavy competition for funding. The GLA had indicated that they would be inviting expressions of interest for a new funding round between April and June. The Board considered four options, including 'do-nothing' and a 100% college-funded project. There was general support for continuing to pursue GLA funding.

Should a funding bid be resubmitted, the key question was whether the college should self-fund further design work at an early stage to develop the proposals (Option 3). There was some Board support for this option.

AGREED: that the Board would be provided with more detailed proposals on Options 2 and 3. DFCO

6iii Debt Recovery

Supporting paper by the DFCO

Governors were reassured by the work that had been undertaken so far to identify and recover student debt but acknowledged that not all debt would be recoverable. Particular progress had been made with the 2017-18 and much tighter controls were now in place.

The level of unrecoverable debt write-off required was not yet clear but would be brought back to the Board for approval. There was a discussion of the need to provide the Principal with delegated authority to write off lower levels of debt.

The Finance and Customer Services teams were thanked for their work so far in addressing the issue.

AGREED: that an update and report on student fees controls be brought to the Audit Committee on 22 March

6iv Fees Policy

RESOLVED: that the Fees Policy 2018-19 be approved.

7. Quality and the Learner Experience

7i Student governor monthly feedback

Oral update by the Student Governors

The students reported on improvements to the issues raised at the January meeting relating to the fire alarm and the lack of quiet study areas. Other positives included:

- The Promonitor system was working well.
- Recent student careers talks had been very useful

Students had identified issues in the following areas:

- The canteen closing time of 3pm when lessons finished at 5pm, leaving a gap of two hours
- It was also thought that canteen pricing was not competitive compared with local supermarkets. Students were therefore opting to go offsite for food, which sometimes resulted in them returning late to lessons
- The lack of sports and leisure facilities at Wood Street compared with Southgate had also been raised.

Management agreed to look into the closing time and pricing at the canteen. Options for providing facilities for extra-curricular activities at Wood Streets would also be explored.

7ii Learner Survey update – First Impressions Survey

Supporting paper presented by the DQ&LE

The return rate of 82% was considerably higher than target and an improvement on previous years.

Overall, positive responses were higher than the previous year. Two questions scored 'amber'. Once, regarding the system of checking Maths and English levels, had declined by one percentage point. Reasons for this were in the process of being explored.

Governors suggested that it would be interesting to know whether there was a correlation between satisfaction rates and student drop-out. This analysis would be reported back to the Board.

It was confirmed that HE student satisfaction was measured through the National Student Survey.

7iii Proposed T-Levels

Supporting paper presented by the DofCurr

Questions from governors included:

- *Will new teaching skills be needed?*
The people strategy covers the need for all staff to refresh their skills to meet curriculum changes and new challenges
- *How feasible is the 42 day work experience requirement?*
The onus will be on colleges to use pump-priming funds to liaise with business to set up the best partnerships. Work was being done by organisations such as CBI to sell T-Levels to the business sector. Governors considered the risk of non-completion of the qualification due to failure to achieve the 42-day placement target. As T-Levels were due to replace other vocational quals, Colleges would have no choice than to provide them. The staff governor pointed out that there was already good practice in securing work experience within the college which could be shared with other areas.

8. Employer partnerships – Employer Engagement update
Supporting paper by the DEP

It was noted that key issues had been covered in the Apprenticeship presentation and discussion.

9. Equality and Diversity Annual Report
Supporting papers by the DQLE

Governors were reminded of the duty to publish statistics about the college and its strategic equality objectives. The Annual Report also covered the new statutory duty to publish a gender pay report.

Governors noted that the good progress had been made in collecting data on ethnic background. The percentage of learners choosing not to disclose religion or sexual orientation had improved but remained high.

The achievement gap by gender was 6%, with female students performing better than males. This was largely explained by poor achievement on two courses where the majority of students were male. There were few significant achievement gaps by ethnic group.

Governors noted the gender pay gap data and asked whether there was anything that could be done to address the overall pay gap. Positive actions might include attracting more women into senior roles, and encouraging more flexible working arrangements.

The proposed E&D objectives for 2018-21 were presented. Several were a continuation of the 2015-18 objectives with new measures. Governors indicated support for the objectives but asked whether setting a target of 2% for 'unknown' equality indicators was over-ambitious. It was confirmed that the target was aspirational but

underlined the intention to be proactive in collecting data. It was also queried whether the target of 95% positive learner survey response was ambitious enough. This reflected realism about the likelihood of achieving higher than 95%.

Governors commended the management team on a comprehensive document. It was agreed that the report reflected the positive culture at the college around diversity and inclusivity well, along with staff commitment to promoting positive E&D values.

RESOLVED: that the Equality and Diversity Annual Report be approved for publication on the website.

Ian Rule left the meeting at 9.00pm

10. **Remuneration Committee – revised Terms of Reference**
Supporting paper by the Clerk

RESOLVED: that the revised Remuneration and Appraisal Committee terms of reference and cycle of business be approved and a meeting be convened in April 2018

Clerk

11. **Urgent Other Business**

There was no other business.

Staff and students then left the meeting for Part B

PART B ITEMS

- 2i **Minutes of the meeting on 18 January 2018**

The Confidential Part B Minutes were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

Signed:(Chair)