

THE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE, SOLIHULL

Corporate Board

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 20 October 2015 at 5.00pm.

Present: Alan Price [Chair], Paul Ashdown, Russell Beale-Burchell, Duncan Bryson, Abid Butt, Neal Clements, Fiona Dennis-Stephens, Adill Hadi, Abbie Lenihan, Rona Miller, Tracie Padro, Christine Quinn, Asa Walker

Clerk: Janice Hamilton

Secretary: Janet Parkes

In attendance: Clare Sutton [Director of Finance], Martin Sullivan [Vice-Principal], Elizabeth Baker [Assistant Principal] for items 5 and 6

1 Apologies for the meeting were received and accepted from Katie Chester, Peter Farrow, Luke Millard, David Munton and Karen Sherwood. Apologies for late arrival to the meeting due to attendance at the FE Review Steering Group meeting in Birmingham had been received from Paul Ashdown and Alan Price. Apologies for late arrival due to work commitments had been received from Fiona Dennis-Stephens and Tracie Padro.

In the absence of Alan Price at the start of the meeting, it was agreed that Neal Clements would act as Chair until his arrival.

Asa Walker, new parent governor, was welcomed to the Board. Christine Quinn was welcomed to her first Board meeting.

2 Declaration of Interests

The Clerk must be informed of any changes to members' declaration of interest form as and when a change takes place. Governors must declare the nature and extent of any financial and personal interest in any agenda item and must take no part in the consideration of that item or vote on any question with respect to that item, or form part of the quorum. Governors must withdraw where requested to do so by a majority of the members of the Board present at the meeting.

The Chair informed the meeting that the Clerk attends all Board and Committee meetings. If she is requested or required to answer questions or to present a paper in her role as Vice-Principal, a Temporary Clerk will be appointed for that part of the meeting.

Resolved: Duncan Bryson declared an interest as he is the NUT representative on the Joint Staff Group; Abid Butt and Christine Quinn declared an interest in item 13, Principal's Strategic Report; Fiona Dennis-Stephens later declared an interest in item 13.

Governors noted the College Mission and guidance on presentation of papers. The Chair reminded governors that it was important that they had read their papers prior to the meeting as this helps to move through the agenda quickly and efficiently.

3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 7 July 2015 were agreed and signed.

4 Matters arising

Item 9, Financial Plan: it had been agreed at the previous meeting that David Munton would have a discussion with Clare Sutton with a view to attending F&GP Committee in

relation to investments. However, it was agreed this would be deferred until the outcome of the FE Area Review is known.

Item 16, Review of the Meeting: comments were noted. The outcome of the Health & Social Care investigation will go to the HR Committee meeting on 3 November 2015.

5.10pm Adill Hadi arrived at the meeting.

5 Student Enrolment 2015/16

Elizabeth Baker updated the figures as of today.

5.13pm Tracie Padro arrived at the meeting.

6 Strategic Priorities

Clare Sutton drew attention to the three areas of success for priority 1a, and Elizabeth Baker highlighted the two success areas for priority 1b, both having been agreed by F&GP Committee. In response to a question from Neal Clements, it was agreed that a strategic priorities dashboard will be drawn up for monitoring by governors.

Resolved: the Board approved the strategic milestones for 2015/16 and the consolidated strategic objective for SP5, use the aspire approach to further enhance our learning culture.

5.17pm Elizabeth Baker left the meeting.

7 Report from Search Committee: 15 September 2015

The Clerk drew attention to the skills audit which had been revised to include LEP priorities. Governors who have not yet provided their responses to the revised skills audit categories were reminded to do so. A panel of the Search Committee had met with Luke Banks, a former student of the College and potential cooptee to the Audit Committee. No changes are proposed to the terms of reference.

Resolved: draft minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2015 and the skills audit were noted.

Resolved: on the advice of the Search Committee, the Board approved the appointment of Luke Banks as cooptee to the Audit Committee for a period of four years from 20 October 2015; and approved the terms of reference.

8 Report from Finance & General Purposes Committee: 6 October 2015

Neal Clements reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the College's Health & Safety Committee and wished to inform governors that the health and safety culture and attitude of staff in the College are excellent. He and Russell Beale-Burchell will be attending the next meeting of the IT Working Group on 23 October 2015. The College has received a letter from the EFA which confirms that the financial health is Outstanding. The Board passed its thanks on to Clare Sutton for her hard work and commitment.

No changes are proposed to the terms of reference.

Resolved: the Board noted the executive summary and draft minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2015, and the Health & Safety Annual Report 2014/15.

Resolved: on the advice of the F&GP Committee, the Board approved the appointment of Russell Beale-Burchell as Vice-Chair of the Committee to 20 May 2015; and approved the terms of reference.

9 Report from Curriculum & Quality Committee: 29 September 2015

Abid Butt reported that in-depth discussion had taken place on the exams report, which is a separate agenda item. No changes are proposed to the terms of reference.

Resolved: the Board noted the executive summary and draft minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2015, and the annual reports pack.

Resolved: on the advice of the Committee, the Board approved the terms of reference.

10 Report from Audit Committee: 9 September 2015

In the absence of members of the Audit Committee, the Clerk presented this item. It was explained that the meeting had been rescheduled from 30 June 2015. Chantrey Vellacott, external auditors, had merged and is now known as Moore Stephens LLP, therefore a new planning letter required signature. Baker Tilly, internal auditors, has been rebranded to RSM. Peter Farrow was in College last week to carry out an evidence check of the Regularity Audit, and had subsequently signed off the document. No changes are proposed to the terms of reference.

Resolved: the Board noted the executive summary and draft notes of the meeting held on 9 September 2015, and the risk management review.

Resolved: on the advice of the Audit Committee, the Board approved the terms of reference.

Resolved: that the agenda be re-ordered prior to the arrival of Alan Price and Paul Ashdown.

16 Review of Corporate Board Meetings 2014/15

The Clerk explained that the document is prepared from the review of meeting proformas. and confirmed that requests and issues are addressed immediately.

14 Freedom of Speech Policy

Martin Sullivan explained that the document had been drawn up from information provided by Eversheds. Adill Hadi asked a question regarding visiting speakers. Martin Sullivan responded that the process had not changed, but the arrangements are now formalised in order that the College can refuse an application. Neal Clements asked if Abbie Lenihan wished to make any comment. She responded that she felt students would not wish to listen to the views of speakers who may wish to incite a breach of the peace by talking about extremism for example. Rona Miller said that healthy debate is good for students, but it is a challenging area. Russell Beale-Burchell said there is a clear difference between debate and promotion of an extreme view. Christine Quinn said that paragraph B.3 which mentions Prevent is crucial. Duncan Bryson referred to paragraph C.5.4 and said that a breach of the peace could be incited by a speaker or listener. Tracie Padro said she felt reassured that such a policy exists in the College. Adill Hadi said that challenge is positive for students, but agreed that speakers should be vetted.

Resolved: the Board approved the Freedom of Speech & Expression Code of Practice.

6.05pm Alan Price and Paul Ashdown arrived.

Alan Price thanked Neal Clements for standing in as Chair, and took over as Chair.

11 Exams & Value Added Report

Martin Sullivan summarised the report. The Clerk reported that Luke Millard as Chair of C&Q Committee had already sent congratulatory letters to Curriculum Leaders for meeting or exceeding excellence targets.

Resolved: the Board agreed the targets set for 2015/16, and the outline excellence targets for 2020.

6.23pm Fiona Dennis-Stephens arrived.

12 Proposed New Mission Statement

Paul Ashdown said that all of the work with aspire in recent years has led to some confusion with the current mission statement. He welcomed governor discussion prior to taking the proposed new mission statement to staff for consultation.

13 Principal's Strategic Report

The Board noted the report, attachments and prospectus for 2016 entry.

15 Chair's Report

15.1 Whistleblowing Policy: in response to a question from Abid Butt, it was explained that the change in the policy related to the addition of K.2 and K.3 regarding appeal.

15.2 Anne Jones: the thank you letter for her leaving gift was noted.

15.3 DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education: changes to the previous version had been highlighted. It is important for governors to read the documentation. The Safeguarding Policy has been updated to include information from this document.

15.4 Attendance at Meetings/Events: the Chair wished to thank governors for their commitment. If there are any errors or omissions in the documents, governors were asked to contact Janet Parkes.

15.5 Performance Indicators: the annual report for 2014/15, and the revised performance indicators for 2015/16 were noted. Alan Price highlighted that governors should shadow a student or member of staff on an annual basis. He said this is a fantastic opportunity to get to know the College and urged governors to pass on their availability to Janet Parkes.

17 Review of the Meeting

The Chair asked all governors to complete the proforma provided and hand to Janet Parkes at the end of the meeting. 9 out of a possible 12 completed proformas were returned, all with positive responses.

Obstacles to contributing to the meeting: I wanted to be fairly receptive and to learn how the Board worked so remained fairly quiet for this first meeting; only that I am getting familiar with the issues and information as a new governor; sometimes it is difficult to get to the meeting on time due to work commitments.

Requests for further information: I have been provided with a great deal of very useful information; it really just is a case of becoming familiar with Board meetings.

Comments: a very good introduction to the Board and a great induction from Janice; informative and interesting; particularly impressed with responses from CLT in response to the mission/values, I would endorse the proposal of the word 'aspire' in AIR, so much of what the College does prepares young people for life beyond College and this is more appropriate; less paper please, I do appreciate this is the first meeting of the new academic year – we should be 'greener'.

19 Determination of Confidential Items

Resolved: that the following be confidential items and minuted separately: item 5 Student enrolments; item 8 F&GP Committee executive summary, confidential minutes and H&S annual report; item 9 C&Q Committee executive summary, confidential minutes and annual reports; item 10 Audit Committee executive summary, confidential minutes and risk management review; item 11 Exams and value added report; item 12 proposed new mission statement as in draft; item 13 Principal's strategic report and attachments relating to the FE review; item 18 Report of Remuneration Committee.

Resolved: that the following documents be confidential: item 6 Strategic priorities.

20 Date of next meeting: 15 December 2015

7.00pm Janice Hamilton, Martin Sullivan and Clare Sutton left the meeting.

18 Report from Remuneration Committee: 15 September 2015

Confidential item, minuted separately.

7.05pm Paul Ashdown left the meeting.

Resolved: on the advice of the Remuneration Committee, the Board approved the terms of reference.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.