

CHELMSFORD COLLEGE
BOARD OF THE CORPORATION
28TH MARCH 2014

Members Present:

Janice Maclean (Chair), David Law (Principal), Elaine Oddie, Michael Lager, Angelika Baxter, Graham Evans, Heather Clarke, Liz Wood, Phil Bridge, Dick Madden, Jonathan Swan, Bill Pigram, Sarah Noble, Barbara Vohmann, Susan Hughes

In Attendance:

Debs Hurst (Director of Finance), Mike Tadman (Director of Human Resources), Caroline Williams (Director of Quality and Learning), Marco Iciek (Director of Curriculum and Students), John Fowl (Clerk to the Corporation), Joanne Seward (Minuting Secretary)

(Prior to the meeting the Board received a presentation and feedback from Elaine Oddie on the workshop she had attended for Governors to understand how better to monitor teaching and learning. Janice Maclean also provided feedback on the AOC Governance Summit that she had attended on 27th March 2014.)

955. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cheryl Elgram and Scott O'Brien.

956. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TO NOTIFY ANY CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Barbara Vohmann declared her connection with Anglia Ruskin University.

957. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH DECEMBER 2013

The minutes were **Approved**

958. MATTERS ARISING

- i) The effect of budget cuts referred to in item 939 would be dealt with under the Principal's report.
- ii) Members were informed that the final College self-assessment report will be sent to all Governors.

959. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE HELD ON 11TH MARCH 2014

The Search Committee had noted that Michael Lager and Phil Bridge had come to the end of their current term of office. In view of their particular skills and connections with the local community and public services in the area, it was recommended that the Board should reappoint them for a further four year period of office.

It was **Resolved** that Michael Lager and Phil Bridge be reappointed as Governors for the period to March 2018

The Committee had met with and interviewed three applicants for membership of the Board of the Corporation, these being Susan Hughes, Sarah Noble and Barbara Vohmann. Having considered the background and experience of each of these applicants, it was **recommended**:

- i) that Susan Hughes be appointed as a Governor for a four year term of office ending in March 2018 and that she be appointed to serve on the Audit Committee
- ii) that Sarah Nobel be appointed as a Governor for a four year term of office ending in March 2018 and that she serve on the Quality & Learners Committee.
- iii) that Barbara Vohmann should be offered membership of the Board as a co-optee for an initial four year term of office until March 2018 and that she serve on the Quality & Learners Committee also as co-opted member Committee

960. TO RECEIVE THE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal informed the Board that the Skills Funding Agency had at long last published its funding statement. The statement revealed that the Adult Skills budget would reduce from the current year until 2015/16 with an overall budget reduction in all areas funded by the SFA from £4.08bn to £3.78bn in that period.

Capital Funding for further education will be placed in the hands of Local Enterprise Partnerships and there will be a greater emphasis on apprenticeships with a new funding model for them.

The funding for 18 year old students will be cut by approximately £700 per student, an average reduction of 3% in FE colleges compared to the 1.2% reduction for sixth form Colleges and 0.4% for school sixth forms.

The Board was informed that the department of BIS and central government were planning to set up a HS2 College and new manufacturing centre in Coventry, a specialist College for the nuclear industry and a new software engineering College. Other initiatives included the setting up of Studio schools, Free schools, UTCs, Academies and Career Colleges. The view was expressed that the Career Colleges posed the greatest risk to FE Colleges.

Details of the Edge Foundation were outlined for the Board members and the view was expressed that this still seems to promote academic skills above those of vocational education.

It was **Resolved** that the report be received

961. TO RECEIVE THE MID YEAR STATUS REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS REGARDING THE COLLEGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Members received an updated copy of the CiP and noted the progress being made. The College retention and attendance data was compared with

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previous years and current targets as well as the national averages. Governors were pleased to be informed that retention within the College is above the national average at all ages and levels bar two areas and these are 1% down against the national rate at entry level and 2% at the 19+ level. It was noted that whilst still below the national average the retention for 19+ students was improved by 12% against the data for 2012/13. There are no national averages available for student attendance but Governors were told that Chelmsford College students are monitored hourly during the day and this is the basis by which the College student attendance rate is calculated.

The Board was advised that level 3 students taking subsidiary diplomas have achieved a 92% success rate with construction and art & design students achieving 100% success.

The teaching and learning observation data was received by the Board members. Particular concern was expressed about the poor performance in one of the construction craft areas. Governors asked for details to be notified to them of the intervention plan being used to improve the area concerned. Overall the College teaching and learning observations indicated that 79% of all teaching was graded 'Good or Better'.

College Improvement Plan

The College Improvement Plan used a red, amber, green dashboard to indicate the achievement against the plan. Governors were pleased to see the majority of areas were shown as 'green' but requested that a clear indication of version control should be included in future.

Good progress overall appeared to have been made with fewer actions now shown in 'red'. Governors noted the things doing well and those not so well. The latter areas of the CiP were those that the Governors will monitor closely.

Members questioned how progress was being made in respect of English and Maths and Caroline Williams stressed that English and Maths was now included as an integral part of each course. It was confirmed that the observations undertaken each year tended to target the weaker teachers first which had the effect of skewing the in-year data reports presented to the Board. The Governors were informed that approximately 700 students were now doing English GCSE with almost 800 taking Maths.

It was **Resolved** that the report be received

962. TO RECEIVE THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS JANUARY 2014

The management accounts for January 2014 had previously been considered in detail by the PF&GP Committee. The accounts were currently showing a deficit of £135k due mainly to a shortfall in apprenticeship income, despite the College having increased the number of students doing apprenticeships. The members noted the main variances for income and expenditure and that the end year forecast now showed a £160k deficit.

The College had now reached agreement with the Co-op regarding the schedule of dilapidations for Copleston Court. The agreement had been settled at £120k.

Debs Hurst reported that having used substantial reserves to fund the refurbishment of the College estate the Board would need to ensure the 2014/15 budget is tightly controlled especially as it was expected that the College would receive approximately £600k less from the EFA/ SFA. It was noted that the key performance indicators set by the PF&GP Committee were tougher than those required by the bank in respect of the loans in place.

The College had moved from a 'good' financial health to 'satisfactory' and this was unlikely to change in the next few years. The SFA seem satisfied with the College financial health, however bearing in mind that it had spent much of its reserves to improve the College estate. It was acknowledged that there was a need to get back to at least a break even position with regard to future budgets.

The Board was informed that the College nursery is making a profit but not as much as had been initially expected. Debs Hurst outlined the steps being taken to address this. The Governors asked for a briefing note to be sent to them to explain how the reduced EFA funding has arisen and the Principal and Caroline Williams undertook to provide this.

It was **Resolved** that the Management Accounts for January 2014 be received

963. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE THREE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-17

The three year Strategic Plan had been discussed in detail at the Governors' development day at the beginning of February 2014. The Principal had taken the Governors comments and input from that event and amended the plan accordingly.

The Governors were now asked to confirm that the content of the report was what they had asked for and to notify the Principal of any additions/ deletions they felt were needed. Initial feedback indicated that the Governors wanted to be able to distinguish between the actions included in the Plan as opposed to key performance indicators with some indication of evidence monitors. It was agreed to present a second revision of the Strategic Plan to the PF&GP Committee so the Board of the Corporation can receive and approve it at its meeting in July 2014.

It was **Resolved** that the three year Strategic Plan 2014-17 be received

964. TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSAL FOR SHARED SERVICES

The Board was informed that the PF&GP Committee had given this matter a robust review and consideration. Debs Hurst reminded the Board that the establishment of shared services was one of key purposes for her being appointed. The proposal for shared financial services with South Essex

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College will generate an initial £15k per annum saving and provide the College with a much improved financial system which will more readily produce reports and analysis that are needed for the future. Full details of setting up a joint venture company had been outlined at the PF&GP Committee and it was noted that the South Essex College Board of Corporation had approved the proposal. It was confirmed that should the joint venture cease trading any liability will revert to the Colleges. The cost annually will be shared on a 37% for Chelmsford and 63 % to South Essex College. Debs Hurst undertook to confirm whether the OJEU process needs to apply in this instance.

It was **Resolved** that subject to the points raised by the Board being satisfactorily confirmed that the Board:

- i) approves the progression of a shared service operation to establish a joint venture company between South Essex College and Chelmsford College
- ii) enter a cost sharing agreement including service level agreements with a provision for procurement, finance and payroll
- iii) relocate the finance option to new premises and to be operational from 1st July 2014
- iv) that the Board approve the £37k capital investment to establish the new finance system.
- v) Approves the business case (subject to the OJEU and members agreement queries).

965. TO RECEIVE THE UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4TH MARCH 2014

The minutes and resolutions of the Committee were noted.

The Board was told that the Committee had some concerns about the quality of the internal audit service currently being provided and this was being closely monitored. Debs Hurst suggested that it may be appropriate for Chelmsford College and South Essex College to consider using the same internal audit service given that a shared finance service is to be established. She confirmed that she was currently doing some exploratory work on this.

The risk appetite responses from the Governors' development day had been collated and Debs Hurst is in the process of analysing this further. The initial results suggest a fairly even spread between being risk averse and having a positive risk appetite within the Chelmsford College Board.

It was **Resolved** that the minutes be received

966. TO RECEIVE THE UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE QUALITY & LEARNERS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11TH FEBRUARY 2014

The minutes were received and the resolutions made noted.

Members were informed that the Committee was finding it very useful to have members of staff in attendance at this Committee who were able to provide the detail behind many of the reports that were received.

The Board was informed that the student destinations were now being collected more effectively.

It was **Resolved** that the minutes be received

967. TO RECEIVE THE UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE PF&GP COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11TH MARCH 2014

The minutes were received and the resolution noted.

The Board was informed that there remains just one employment tribunal outstanding.

Members noted the areas reported to and considered by the Committee, and that the Committee's view was that the Lee Stafford Academy deficit could not be allowed to continue.

All Governors had been asked to complete online safeguarding and equality & diversity training. Just two Governors remained to complete the safeguarding training and four Governors had yet to complete the equality & diversity training.

It was **Resolved** that the minutes be received

968. TO RECEIVE THE annual equality & diversity report 2013/14

The detailed report was received and the data noted. The equality and diversity report is now published on the College website. All the data has at various times been shared previously with the Board of the Corporation. Equality Objectives are shown on the College website and the Governors were told that an increasing number of students are found to have mental health problems but were not declaring this until they were on their course. Another concern that had been raised is the number of 16-18 bursary category 1 students with financial/ post-care issues.

It was **Resolved** that the annual equality and diversity report 2013/14 be received

969. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- i) The Chair drew to the attention of members to the fact that Liz Wood would be stepping down from the Board having moved away from the College area. The Chair and the Board members thanked Liz Wood for her contribution to the work of the College over the past eight years.

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ii) Principal Recruitment

The Board was informed that details for the recruitment of a new Principal had been viewed on the College website by 786 people. 24 had downloaded an application form and 13 had returned their applications.

iii) Members were reminded that there will be a special meeting of the Board of the Corporation to confirm the Principal's appointment on 26th April 2014. This will take place at 3pm

970. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Friday 11th July 2014 at 2pm

Signed
(Chair)

Date
