

NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE

CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018

Present: Carole Thorogood (Chair))
Anja Beriro)
Mary Carswell)
Trevor Clay (from minute 276))
Gill Lane) External governors
Stephen Russell)
Andrew Unitt)
Sam Webster)
John van de Laarschot Chief Executive Officer
Becki Pate Staff governor

In attendance: Ian James Clerk to the Corporation
Yultan Mellor VP Curriculum
Jo Clifford VP Finance
James Whybrow VP
Emma Woods Director of Quality
Zoe Butler Director of Customer Experience
Matthew Varley Director of Estates/Capital Projects
Simon Kirby Director of Marketing and Communications
Ffyona Baker Director of OD and HR
Tom Dick Director of Curriculum

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

255 Apologies were received from Andrew Dickinson, Richard Donovan, Debra French, Charlotte Jackson, Jermaine Williams, Michael Wisher and Jane Peacock (ESFA).

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

256 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES

257 **Resolved** that the minutes (Part 1) of the meeting held on 16 April 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

POLICY REVIEW

Residential Accommodation Policy

258 The Board received the proposed Residential Accommodation Policy for approval. The governors asked for the position regarding insurance to be referred to in the Policy together with a requirement for students' contacts details to be made available to the relevant members of staff.

259 **Resolved** that, subject to the amendments requested by the Board, the Residential Accommodation Policy be approved

Bursary Policy

260 The Director of Customer Experience presented a revised Bursary Policy for 2018/19 drawing attention to the main changes to the previous version which were designed to maximise the benefit to learners. Drawing attention to the complexity of the Policy, governors asked if there was an easy guide available for students. This was confirmed, and the governors asked to be provided with copies.

261 **Resolved** that the Bursary Policy be approved

Sustainability & Environmental Policy

262 The Director of Estates/Capital Projects presented the Sustainability & Environmental Policy commenting that a 'best practice' approach had been taken in its development. The Director was asked if there was a policy in relation to single use plastics and he advised that this would be a priority area for the working group tasked with implementation.

263 In terms data to be used for tracking progress, the intention was that 2018/19 would be the baseline year but the governors asked that, wherever possible, data from 2017/18 be used.

264 **Resolved** that the Sustainability & Environmental Policy be approved

Security Policy

265 The governors received the Security Policy for approval. Attention was drawn to the absence of any reference to the responsibilities of the Board in overseeing the implementation of the Policy and they asked for this to be added. Asked whether there was clarity as to when the involvement of the Police was appropriate, the Director of Estates/Capital Projects advised that there was a close working relationship with the Police being developed through operational practice.

266 Governors felt that there was room for improvement in the security arrangements at some campuses and drew attention to the need for governors' lanyards to be updated.

267 **Resolved** that the Security Policy be approved

Freedom of Information Policy

268 The Freedom of Information Policy was submitted and the governors were content with this document subject to clarification that some information was exempt from Fol requests together with a link to the list of such information.

269 **Resolved** that, subject to the amendment requested, the Freedom of Information Policy be approved

APPOINTMENT OF VICE PRINCIPAL CURRICULUM

270 The Director of OD and HR submitted a report setting out the process for the recruitment of a Vice Principal Curriculum following the resignation of the current postholder. The VP Curriculum was a designated senior post and therefore fell to be handled in accordance with the Articles of Government of the College.

271 **Resolved** that a Selection Panel comprising the Chair, the two Vice Chairs, Trevor Clay and the CEO be established to fulfil the requirements of the Articles and that authority be delegated to the Panel to make an appointment

CURRICULUM & QUALITY REPORT

272 The Board received the curriculum & quality update advising the Board of current performance.

273 Apprenticeship performance currently indicated that overall achievement would be above target at around 75% while retention of apprentices starting in 2017/18 was 97%. However, 33% of apprentices (132) who were three months past their end date were no longer able to achieve in a timely way and this would impact on the College's timely achievement rate. The Board asked about this impact of this and were advised that, apart from the impact the College's timely success, it also held implications for staff whose workloads were based on funded learners and who had to continue to support the apprentices that were out of funding. The governors emphasised the need to tackle the issue of timely completion of apprenticeships and were assured that this was receiving attention from management.

274 The report also contained an analysis of partner performance which provided an overall RAG rating for each partner based on various aspects of performance including contract value, achievement rates, quality of teaching & learning and attendance. The governors found this useful but asked for the financial element to be separated out in future reports. There was also concern that 44% of students on apprenticeships and 47% on adult education courses were past their end date which could have implications for the College's achievement rates. Monthly meetings were now taking place with each partner to review the progress of individual students.

275 The governors had previously highlighted their concern over the extent to which the College was using agency staffing and the associated high cost. They now received further information on the impact of agency staffing on both cost and on curriculum and quality performance. The Director of OD & HR commented that comparisons with other colleges showed that this was a sector-wide issue especially in areas where recruitment of suitably qualified staff was a challenge. Consideration would therefore need to be given to devising ways of making employment at the College more attractive.

276 The Board noted the outcome of the term 2 student survey and that work was in hand to review how safe students felt at College with a particular focus on the Maid Marian Way and Adams sites. Good links with the Police had been developed through liaison on specific issues. The governors asked for trend data so that they could observe any movements in student opinion over time.

277 The report also advised of the College's bid for registration with the Office for Students, the new regulatory body for HE. The submission included the fees the College intended to charge for HE courses from 2019/20 and this was proposed to be £8,250, an increase from the current fee of £7,500. The Board noted that the application had already been submitted and that, therefore, their approval of the fee level was retrospective. Some governors expressed concern over this situation and wanted more justification for the increase. They were advised that the fee level was an intrinsic part of the bid as it reflected higher levels of expenditure on student retention and support.

278 **Resolved** that the HE fee level of £8,250 be approved but that a report justifying the increased level of fees be submitted to the Board at the next meeting

SCORECARD & KPI'S REPORT

279 The Board received the monthly report setting out the College's KPI's which were RAG-rated and updated through a commentary explaining current progress. Attendance rates for the last 30 days were 82% which, according to the outcome of a recent AoC survey, were broadly in line with the rates experienced by other FE colleges.

280 At this stage, retention rates were ahead of the College's targets although the position with regard to 16-18 was being monitored closely.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS P9

281 The VP Finance presented the management accounts to 30 April 2018 which showed that the College remained ahead of budget at this stage with a year to date surplus of £1.3m against a budgeted deficit of £1.2m. This was accounted for by one-off items and phasing while below target income was mitigated by savings on costs. The current year end forecast was an overall operating deficit of £2.286m against a budgeted figure of £1.93m, a shortfall of £356k which was an improvement on the P8 figure. The VP commented that the Adult Education position was strengthening and that cashflow was satisfactory in relation to the Bank covenants.

282 The management accounts contained a full explanation of variances to budget. Asked whether any problems were arising from the fact that the budget for teaching (non-pay) was only two-thirds spent, the VP responded that this had not emerged as a problem as heads of faculty were well aware of the College's financial position and any requests for expenditure were being examined carefully.

283 The VP was asked what action the College was taking to ensure that the financial position would be better in a year's time given the high level of fixed costs. The VP responded that much detailed work was being undertaken on this during the curriculum planning exercise which was targeting higher group sizes and greater efficiency of delivery. The group size target for 2018/19 was 18 compared to 15-16 this year.

284 The governors repeated an earlier request for variances to be categorised as (a) one-off, (b) due to timing or (c) evidence of a trend; with the last category being of most significance.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION REPORT

285 The Board received the EDI Annual Report noting that this was a transitional report reflecting the merger to the two colleges. Asked whether staffing for student support had been reduced during the year, the Director of Customer Experience confirmed that this was the case in line with the shortfall in student numbers.

286 Governors were interested in the question of increasing the participation of women in those curriculum areas which were traditionally male-dominated and the College's initiatives in this area.

287 **Resolved** to establish a task & finish group comprising Mary Carswell and Anja Beriro together with the Directors of OD& HR and Quality to take this issue forward

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE UPDATE

288 The Board received and noted an update report on activity related to customer and student experience in the College

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Appointment of internal auditor

289 The Chair of the Audit Committee reported on the outcome of a tendering exercise to select internal auditors. Whereas the recommendation to appoint would normally come through the Committee's minutes, the Board were content to make the appointment based on the fact that a quorum of Committee members was present during the evaluation of the tenders. Making the appointment now would enable the appointed firm to prepare the internal audit annual plan in advance of the commencement of the 2018/19 financial year.

290 **Resolved** that KPMG be appointed as internal auditors with effect from 1 August 2018

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

291 18 July 2018 at 4.30pm.

Chair

Date