

Minutes of the 129th Meeting of the Board of Corporation of Sunderland College held on Tuesday 4th July 2017 at 6.00pm in the Conference Room, City Campus

PRESENT: Mr H Kemp, Mr J Phillips, Ms E Bass, Mr K Ramanathas, Mr T Crompton, Mr J Barnett, Mr G Blyth, Mr R Lawson, Ms S Atkinson, Ms S Forster, Mr R Saelzer, Mr P McEldon, Ms A Fellows, Cllr C Gofton, Ms E Thinnesen.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Harrett, Mr D Howells, Ms V Morton, Mr I Nixon and Ms E Moody (Bond Dickinson), Ms J Quinn, Mr J Parkinson, Ms C Ayre

CLERK: Ms E Moody (acting on a temporary basis)

Bd/17/65 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were accepted from Ms A Hodgson.

Declarations of interest were received from Ms Bass in relation to item 70.

It was noted that this was the current student governor's last meeting.

Bd/17/66 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 MAY 2017

The minutes of both meetings were accepted as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

Bd/17/67 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Bd/17/68 EXECUTIVE REPORT

The Principal presented this report to governors.

The Principal highlighted that the College was currently going through a robust risk assessment in relation to its fire safety.

It was noted that the College had been successfully chosen to be part of the pilot scheme for the North East and National Reform programme for technical education. This would attract significant national publicity.

Mr Crompton commented that whilst the outcome of the regional area reviews was in a state of flux, it may be wise for the College to revisit its thinking in relation to mergers and the support it may be able to provide to failing colleges.

The Board:

- i) Reviewed and received the report.

Bd/17/69 SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The report was presented by Vikkie Morton.

Mr Saelzer questioned the status of the 3 staff currently under investigation. Ms Morton confirmed they were suspended pending the outcome.

Mr Saelzer asked if the Chaplaincy was Christian or Inter-faith. Ms Morton confirmed it was Inter-faith.

Ms Atkinson asked whether the College was satisfied it was doing enough in terms of preventing the risk of extremism amongst its students. Ms Morton confirmed she was keeping in close contact with the Police, taking advice as appropriate. She also confirmed that the College was sharing information with the Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

Ms Atkinson confirmed that she thought there needed to be a further discussion around what key partners in Sunderland could do together, ensuring they were proactive, rather than reactive, in tackling this issue.

Ms Gofton asked about the College's Prevent Strategy. Ms Morton confirmed this was already being utilised by the College and referrals have been made under this strategy.

Mr Ramanathas said the BME community in Sunderland were worried about activity in Sunderland and there were many destructive messages out there. He suggested the College needed to do more to promote positive messages to the community.

Mr Crompton asked the senior team to ensure the security position at the Bede site was kept under review.

The Board:

- i) Received and reviewed the report;
- ii) Approved the areas for development outlined in the 2017-18 Safeguarding QIP and Prevent Duty Action Plan;
- iii) Approved the changes to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Bd/17/70 MOU WITH SCHOOLS

The report was presented by Ms Morton

It was noted that there had been a reduction in funding into the partnership. The schools had received a difficult message, but nevertheless acknowledged the challenges. The schools had been asked to revert back to their governing bodies to reach an agreement on the proposal.

Mr Kemp declared an indirect interest in the discussion at this point. He confirmed that his view was that the schools remain committed and recognise the valuable work that the college is doing, noting that the "taster" sessions were very well received.

The Board:

- i) Approved the MOU Strategic Partnership.

Bd/17/71 ENGLISH AND MATHS PROGRESS REPORT

The report was presented by Judith Quinn

It was noted that the report had been subject to previous scrutiny at the teaching committee

The Board:

- i) Reviewed and received the report;

Bd/17/72 APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE

The report was presented by Iain Nixon.

It was noted that the report had been through previous scrutiny by the curriculum committee.

Mr Nixon confirmed that the stated achievement rates put the College in the top quartile nationally. This area had been self assessed as grade 2 overall.

The apprenticeship reforms have not yet been completed. There are still some technical challenges and a slow down of activity whilst employers get to grips with the new regime. The College has engaged with 37 levy payers, over half of which have entered into an agreement with the College.

Mr Barnett said he had stood back from the process from an employer perspective, but he confirmed he had been very impressed by the College's offer. His company now used only 1 provider – the College.

Ms Atkinson queried the level of competition between colleges for apprenticeship provision in this area. Mr Nixon confirmed there was a degree of competition, more employers were now following a formal procurement process. Price is a key consideration, but not determinative.

Ms Gofton declared an interest at this point as apprenticeships formed part of her portfolio.

The Board:

- i) noted apprenticeship enrolments (+87 starts) and increasing number of starts from subcontractors.
- ii) Noted the strong focus on in year retention for 16/17.
- iii) Noted the progress on apprenticeship reforms.
- iv) Noted the internal inspection grade.

Bd/17/73 TEACHING AND LEARNING (SELF ASSESSMENT UPDATE)

The report was presented by Nigel Harrett.

It was noted that the report had been subject to scrutiny at curriculum committee.

The Board:

- i) Received and noted the report.

The student observers (Joseph Parkinson and Courtney Ayre) left the meeting at 6.50pm

Bd/17/74 BUDGETARY CONTROL STATEMENTS

The report was presented by David Howells.

Mr Howells confirmed that the College was still pushing hard on Adult Education/Skills budget. The paper had been subject to scrutiny by the resources committee.

The Board: i) Discussed and received the report
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Bd/17/75 ESTATES UPDATE – CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION

(Redacted)

Bd/17/76 MERGER UPDATE AND PROCESS – CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION

(Redacted)

Bd/17/77 RECOMMENDATIONS OF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Ms Atkinson asked for an update on the governor appointment process. The Chair confirmed that 2 interviews had been carried out, but the third candidate could not meet until 24 July so a decision would be made thereafter.

The Principal confirmed that a new clerk had been appointed to start next term.

The Board: i) Noted the position.
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Bd/17/78 INTERNAL AUDIT OPERATIONAL PLAN

Mr Howells provided a verbal update. He said KPMG had refused to carry out internal audit function (as well as external) as, from a risk perspective, they could not provide the dual service. Mr Howells had been impressed with BDO through the merger process and had asked for an overview of their service offering.

The Board: i) Noted the update.
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Bd/17/79 DRAFT CALENDAR OF BOARD MEETINGS

The Board: i) Approved the proposed calendar of Board meetings; ii) Agreed to hold some meetings on the Hartlepool campus.
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Bd/17/80 APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Board Received the minutes for information.
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Bd/17/81 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Principal updated governors on the efficiency programme, savings of which should be in the region of £600k.

The Principal informed governors that the College's Director of Marketing was moving on and the College would be looking to recruit.

The Chair said thank you from the Board to the student governor for his contribution to the Board.

DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting will take place at 6pm on 17th October 2017 in the Conference Room at City Campus.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm