

**Meeting of the Kendal College Corporation  
Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at 5.00 pm  
Dem Kitchen  
MINUTES**

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**Present:**

Joseph Brown (Student Governor)  
Michelle Clement (Staff Governor)  
Fra Cooke  
Cath Dutton (Chair)  
Sam Phillipson (Student Governor)  
Zaeed Mohammed (Staff Governor)  
Rebecca Sandham  
Jon Thedham  
John Tiscornia  
Gordon Watson  
Graham Wilkinson (Principal)  
Claire Willett  
(attendance 92%)

**In attendance:**

Maggie Cawthorn, Carole Drury (Clerk), Craig Owen, Louise Shrapnel,  
Sinead Kay, Robert Marshall-Slater – staff attending to observe

The Chair welcomed the 2 staff observers to the meeting who had been issued with a set of papers for the meeting and had signed a confidentiality clause.

**Governor Training – Safeguarding and Prevent Update**

The Board received a presentation on the College Safeguarding procedures including responsibilities of the Board under the Prevent Duty from C Drury as Designated Senior Manager for Safeguarding. All members were issued with key documents including:

- Prevent Duty Guidance, England and Wales
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

It was requested that the annual safeguarding report included specific responses to key questions on board responsibility (Action: C Drury)

1613 **Apologies for Absence**

Ian Clinton (agreed absence)

1614 **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest

1615 **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

1616 **Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Plan**

There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda and updates on the actions were noted. L Shrapnel reported that Cumbria comparative data for personnel was not available and therefore had not been included in the annual personnel report.

## 1617 **Principal's Report and Data Dashboard**

The Principal presented his report, highlighting key issues currently facing the College as well as a number of international trips for both students and staff. Grant funding letters have been sent to the College outlining changes in funding for 2016/17.

F Cooke asked for further information on how the 16-19 accountability measures were monitored and the Principal provided an overview of how study programme requirements, including maths and English, work placement and progression were all tracked and that destinations of completing students were a key measure that would be tracked over Easter.

The Principal drew attention to the new opportunities being created in respect of BioPharma and Life Science provision that is now included in the LEP business plan. The College will be putting itself forward as specialising in these areas, supported by good recruitment already on science courses.

The data dashboard was presented demonstrating current performance against key indicators. Concern was raised over apprenticeship success rates (2% below College target of 85%) although still significantly above national benchmark (13/14 – 70.3%), noting that there has been high withdrawal dropout in a number of frameworks. Some withdrawals were explained through the recent flooding in Cumbria and hotels laying off staff and also by a less rigorous selection processes applying to apprentices when compared with full time students.

In respect of maths and English attendance, M Cawthorn explained the challenge of getting students to attend although the figures had been affected by registers when students change groups. It was reported that students who are not attending timetabled classes are being invoiced for full fees as the College will not be paid for students who do not meet full Study Programme requirements. It was however noted that 40% of students have 100% attendance at maths and English classes.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the Principal's report
- Accept the dashboard, noting actions that are in place to address areas where performance is below target

## 1618 **Area Review update** (key agenda item)

The Board was provided with a confidential paper on options to be considered under the Area Based Review (ABR) process with notes on preferred options. The paper had been circulated to the other Cumbria College boards so that they could add their comments. Other information provided included a range of case studies and models that should be considered under the ABR process. An updated paper was tabled showing 4 preferred options which would be expanded to 6 options, and would include justification as to why an option had been discounted at this stage.

The Principal gave an update on recent meetings between the four Cumbrian College Principals, Chairs and Vice Chairs as well as with Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership. He also provided an update on meetings held with other colleges outside of Cumbria to explore options of working together. The Chair and Vice Chair added their comments from the meetings attended.

L Shrapnel tabled a further confidential paper on some work carried out by the Cumbria Colleges Finance Directors in the consideration of how shared services between the colleges could work and which would be considered at the next meeting between the College Principals, Chairs and Vice Chairs on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February. Other shared services models were also being considered, recognising both the advantages and

disadvantages.

It was reported that the Internal Auditors, ICCA, would be able to provide a range of data reports to support the process once the options for further development had been agreed. The reports could include financial forecasts and a modelling of different scenarios where colleges want to look at merger or closer working relationships. F Cooke asked what criteria had been applied to reduce the original 14 options down to 6, expressing the importance of focussing on the needs of students and employers in the area as well as being able to justify why an option had been dismissed. The Principal outlined the process that had been gone through by the Senior Management team in proposing best solutions including rationalisation of curriculum.

The Chair requested that Board members give a steer on the approach the College should now take in its next round of meetings with all the colleges listed and whether options should include colleges outside of Cumbria.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Agree 6 options to be further explored
- Support the Chair in taking forward the options

#### 1619 **Teaching, Learning & Assessment report**

M Cawthorn, Director of Curriculum & Quality, presented her report for this month with specific reference to 2016/17 applications and the outcomes of the initial student questionnaire, completed by students within 6 weeks of starting their course.

Overall applications were lower than this time last year but the open day held this week had the highest number of potential students attending. The report provided a breakdown of applications per curriculum area along with other information on expansion of provision eg A levels and Access programmes. G Watson asked about recruitment to A level provision and how the A level offer married up with the Museum business plan for Archaeology and History. It was reported that there had been 32 A level enquiries at the recent open day.

The initial questionnaire showed very high levels of student satisfaction although the sample only represented 72% of students. C Dutton felt that 72% return rate was a good response to a questionnaire but M Cawthorn reported that a higher response would be expected from students in college and that there was no national benchmark. J Tiscornia asked how the data from the questionnaires was used by the Senior Management team and M Cawthorn explained how it was included in the quality improvement plan and monitored through performance review. J Thedham asked how the data was triangulated and it was explained that this was through Student Council, Ofsted Learner Voice and other questionnaires that all gave the same overall opinions.

F Cooke noted that the same comment had been made two years in succession over satisfaction rates in respect of college enrolment days. M Cawthorn responded that efforts had been made to improve the learner experience on these days.

Z Mohammed asked about access to computer and whether the current facility was in proportion to the growth in student numbers and the greater emphasis on digital learning. Apart from peak times, it was felt that access was good with a student governor reporting that he was able to access a computer 95% of the time. It was reported that a new Digital Learning Manager was now in place who would develop the IT strategy although it was also recognised that classroom time should be for teaching and not for using computers.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the report, noting levels of student satisfaction from the induction questionnaire
- Note the current recruitment position

1620 **Report from Audit & Risk Committee Meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

G Watson, Chair of Audit & Risk Committee, provided an overview of the meeting held earlier in the week. The Committee had reviewed the covenant position which stood at 32.1%, the strategic risk register and policy updates with no areas of concern.

He particularly highlighted the latest internal audit advisory report on funding compliance, reporting that the error rate of 0.6% linked to maths and English was highly commendable and reinforced the opportunity to have the data reports on the 4 general FE colleges and Sixth form College revised once the publically available 2014/15 data is published to support the ABR process.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Receive the report from the Audit & Risk Committee, gaining assurance that internal audit and other key items were being reviewed

1621 **Report from Search & Governance Committee Meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016**

Minutes of the meeting had been emailed to Board members following approval by the Chair, J Tiscornia, who provided an update on key issues discussed.

The Board approved the appointment of Jon Thedham as a new governor, following an interview with the Search & Governance panel. Two further applications had been received and would be interviewed before the next meeting.

Following the success of the task and finish group set up to monitor the management accounts and financial situation, it had been proposed that a similar group be set up for the Area Based Review process. Governors interested in joining the group were asked to contact the Clerk.

The Committee had approved the following updates from the recommendations of the internal audit into corporation governance:

- Scheme of delegation
- Chair's appraisal
- Succession planning

The governor development programme had been reviewed with two vacancies for the link governor programme. Governors were also asked to advise the Clerk if they wanted to join the programme.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the report from Search & Governance Committee
- Request members to join a task and finish group on ABR
- Take assurance that recommendations from the internal audit had been implemented
- Complete the Chair's appraisal through development and completion of an electronic survey

1622 **Capital Projects Update**

The Director of Finance & Resources provided an update on two key items: Castle Dairy and the Wildman Street Studios. In respect of Castle Dairy and flood damage, it was reported that tender specifications had been issued for fitting of a replacement kitchen and bar. Through business continuity insurance, the staff and apprentices of Castle Dairy are undertaking experience in top level hotels during the closure of the restaurant as well as assisting in other parts of the College.

It was reported that there is likely to be an overspend of £60k on the Wildman Street project although value engineering on fittings may reduce that amount. A condition of the LEP grant funding was that the money had to be spent by Easter 2016 which would preclude providing an opportunity for Kendal College construction students to get involved in the

project as suggested by Z Mohammed. Completion of the build is expected to be mid-June 2016. The overspend estimate was further considered and the Board gained assurance that the figure would be manageable.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Receive the update on capital projects noting the issue of tenders
- Accept the expectation of estimated overspend for Wildman Street

1623 **Management Accounts**

The management accounts for December were presented. As they had been previously scrutinised by the Finance Working Group, it was agreed to accept them without further debate.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the management accounts based on the assurances provided from the Finance Working Group

1624 **Personnel Annual Report**

The Director of Finance & Resources presented the annual personnel report for 2014/15 showing a range of data in respect of staff recruitment and turnover, pay award, short and long term absence and procedures for dealing with staff problems. The report indicated that there had been 4 redundancies during the year and no formal grievances taken out or employment tribunals.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the report

1625 **Draft meeting dates for 2016/17**

Meeting dates for the next academic year had been considered at Search & Governance Committee and were accepted by the Board. A weekend strategy event may be proposed for next year.

1626 **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016