

**Meeting of the Kendal College Corporation
Wednesday 12th October 2016 at 5.00 pm
Wildman Street Studios
MINUTES**

Present:

Michelle Clement (Staff Governor)
Fra Cooke
Cath Dutton (Chair)
Emily Harris
Zaeed Mohammed (Staff Governor)
Isaac Roach (Student Governor)
Rebecca Sandham
Alastair Speed (Student Governor)
Jon Thedham
John Tiscornia
Gordon Watson
Graham Wilkinson (Principal)
(attendance 92%)

In attendance:

Maggie Cawthorn, Carole Drury (Clerk), Louise Shrapnel
Matt Burke, Richard Evans, Robert Marshall-Slater (presentation and item 1677 only)

The Chair welcomed the two new student governors who had been elected by the Student Body: Alastair Speed, Level 3 Engineering year 2, Isaac Roach Level 3 Music Year 1

Presentation on Maths & English results 2016

Maggie Cawthorn, Director of Curriculum & Quality, gave a presentation on the recent maths and English GCSE outcomes and action plan to improve the success rates.

Data presented showed that, whilst overall pass rates for both subjects were good, the A* to C grades were extremely disappointing at 17.5% for English and 28.6% for maths, both lower than last year. The entry criteria was explained, noting that Kendal College were including students who had previously gained a grade E whilst many other colleges had restricted entry to those with a D grade. It was also reported that male students' success in English was only 12.3%. Targets for A* to C grade outcomes had been set at 30% for English and 33% for maths.

Board members challenged the curriculum Heads of School over different aspects of the outcomes including attendance rates (82%), learner motivation and what was being put in place to improve success rates. Consideration was being given to changing awarding body and an increase in timetabled hours, with additional teaching sessions being put on for those likely to achieve a grade C or better. An action plan had now been put in place to monitor attendance with personal tutors being advised on non-attendance with disciplinary actions invoked where poor attendance continued. External moderation of controlled assessment would be introduced to ensure standards were being met along with a policy that only those with a previous Grade D would be entered for exams.

The team were thanked for their presentation by the Chair who confirmed that progress against the actions would be closely monitored by the Board.

1673 **Apologies for Absence**

Ian Clinton.

It was reported that two recent resignations from Claire Willett and Jeff Edginton had been received by the Chair.

1674 **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest

1675 **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2016**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th July were approved by the Board and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

1676 **Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Plan**

1659 – The Principal outlined further proposals that had been put forward on the setting up of a Joint Venture between the colleges and the University of Cumbria with a bid for transition funding being submitted by Furness College. It was confirmed that this recommendation from the Area Review team had been approved at the previous Board meeting and recorded in the minutes.

The action plan was reviewed noting that the Director of Finance & Resources would be available to meet governors during half term week to provide them with information on College finances and funding.

1677 **Area Review update**

- Steering Group Meeting 5
- Collaborative activity

The Chair led on the reporting of recent activity in respect of the Area Based Review, including the implementation of outcomes and recommendations from Steering Group 5 , these being:

- Merger of Lakes and Carlisle College
- Merger of Furness College and Barrow 6th Form College standalone
- Kendal College standalone with robust growth plan
- Joint venture between the colleges and University of Cumbria
- LEP/Local Authority-led post 16 skills forum

The overall Area Review final report for Cumbria provided a full explanation of the recommendations made with an annex giving data and specialisms for each college. The report had been sent to the FE Commissioner for approval with an expected release date in late October.

The Chair reinforced the importance of delivery of the growth plan which would be closely monitored by the Board, recognising that there would be a considerable amount of external scrutiny to see if it could be achieved. She stated that the Board would support managers in achieving the plan, backed up by the continued support that had been expressed by external stakeholders including the LEP. The Principal confirmed that all managers had been set targets linked to the Growth Plan. Fra Cooke suggested that the College should focus exclusively on the growth plan with a clear strategy to ensure future financial sustainability.

The Chair reported on the recent meeting held between a panel of Kendal governors and Lancaster & Morecambe College governors where a range of collaborative proposals were put forward for consideration. The meeting had not focussed on merger but had a joint intention of supporting each college's intention to remain independent. A follow up meeting was scheduled to take place in late November following Lancaster & Morecambe's appointment of a new principal.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Receive the reports, noting the development of actions in respect of the Joint Venture
- Request that Senior Managers meet to consider collaborative opportunities

(Curriculum Heads of Schools left at this point)

1678 **Principal's Report and Data Dashboard**

The Principal's report provided an overview of the Area Based Review outcomes as well as a report of a recent AoC meeting attended with the Chair to meet the new AoC Chief Executive, David Hughes who provided an overview of the sector. Key issues raised were included in the report for governor information.

John Tiscornia asked whether the apprenticeship levy would apply to the College and whether it had been included in the budget and it was confirmed that the College would be liable to the levy, amounting to around £30k per year.

Zaeed Mohammed raised concern about the Studio School being set up at Queen Elizabeth School in Kirkby Lonsdale, where provision in hospitality, engineering and arts would be on offer. Whilst the Principal had been given reassurance that the school's catchment area was more Yorkshire and north Lancashire, the provision was seen as duplication and competition for the College.

Data within the dashboard was considered against key performance indicators. It was noted that monitoring of attendance of maths and English was currently affected by students moving groups.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Receive the Principal's report including key sector updates
- Note progress against key performance indicators

1679 **Kendal Museum – key agenda item**

A summary paper was provided by the Principal to give a short history of the College's involvement with Kendal Museum and its progress since taking it over in 2009 under a 10 year management agreement.

A range of high level options was put forward to be discussed with an agreement as to preferences going forward which could be worked up into a proposal to put to SLDC. Each of the options was explored through discussion, recognising the value of the museum as a teaching space and its place in the community.

Emily Harris requested more financial information that would better support decision making, including running costs and projected income. Louise Shrapnel outlined the average running costs, noting that the building was in a good state of repair. Two Board members suggested that option 1, handing back the museum to SLDC in 2019, should be kept live as it would be unreasonable for the College to be expected to run the collections at no cost and SLDC having a public duty to manage the collections. Option 4, where the College would receive a lump sum to manage the college for a longer period, should also be further considered. It was generally agreed that the museum could not compete with other similar sized museums without significant investment.

Jon Thedham asked about the time being given to manage the museum recognising that it could detract from the focus of the growth plan. Emily Harris questioned whether other accommodation for teaching would be easier and cheaper to secure although it was felt that the museum was an important part of the College's Northern Arts Campus and noting that room utilisation in the college was currently at capacity.

The Principal proposed that it would be more effective for a small team of governors to meet with SLDC representatives to negotiate the museum's future and ensuring that the College's educational remit was not lost in the discussions, recognising that curatorial and museum studies had not recruited well.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Agree to options 1 and 4 being further investigated and formal proposals drawn up
- Provide governors with more financial information on museum profit and loss (Action: L Shrapnel)

1680 **Capital Projects Update**

The Principal provided an update on the Wildman Street Studios project that had faced a 13 week delay in completion but which were now being used for teaching. Reasons for the delay were linked to retrospective changes in utility requirements and the earlier issues with the builder. It was recognised that project management had not been as effective as it could have been, leading to an overrun of costs of £122,514 over and above what had been reported at the last Board meeting.

Emily Harris questioned whether the budgeting for the project had been sufficiently accurate and that more contingency should have been included. Zaeed Mohammed asked about the likely impact of the additional costs on curriculum and other capital budgets but was assured that there had been no cuts in curriculum with additional funding expected from other projects such as ESF and from the leasing back of assets to release an additional funds. Louise Shrapnel confirmed that there would be no risk of covenant breach. Jon Thedham asked about the impact of the overspend on the Area Based Review recommendations and the Principal outlined the meeting that had been held recently with the Skills Funding Agency Intervention team who are fully aware of the cashflow position, noting that the management accounts were reviewed by the Finance Working Group and the Board. Louise Shrapnel confirmed the continuing support of the banks.

In respect of The Castle Dairy, the Principal confirmed that additional flood defence mechanisms were now required by the insurers. He reported on the continuing issues and delays with SLDC over the repairs, resulting in no date for re-opening of the Apprenticeship Academy

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the update position including the overspend
- Note responses to concerns over funding of the overspend
- Agree that the Chair and Principal continue to push SLDC in speeding up the reinstatement of The Castle Dairy

1681 **Management Accounts**

The Management Accounts to end of July 2016 were considered, following previous consideration by the Finance Working Group (see 1683 below). Commentary to the accounts from the Director of Finance & Resources provided additional information on the position against key financial performance indicators.

Emily Harris questioned the use of the term forecast when it should read draft final position but Louise Shrapnel advised that the year end position would be left open as long as possible with a forecast having been distorted because of project funding and the position with the Castle Dairy.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the management accounts, based on the recommendation from the Finance Working Group

1682 **Finance Self-Assessment & Regulatory Report**

The Director of Finance & Resources presented the regularity audit report for the year ended 31st July 2016 that required to be signed off by the Corporation prior to the external audit that was scheduled to take place week beginning 24th October 2016.

The Board RESOLVED:

- To approve the regulatory audit that was signed by the Chair on behalf of the Corporation

1683 **Reports from the Committees:**

Search & Governance 27th September 2016

Chair of Search & Governance Committee, John Tiscornia, provided an overview of the meeting held on 27th September, going through the accompanying notes. Of key note were the following recommendations or agreements:

- Board performance review – almost completed and included the use of an on-line survey to gauge the opinions of the Board over the performance of the Chair. Outcomes from performance review would be used to inform the governor development programme and the governance Self-Assessment report, which had also been reviewed
- Proposals for changes to the link governor programme were put forward and accepted by the board. Suggested links would be sent out to governors and the programme and reporting spread over a two year period
- Governor resignations, committee membership and new member search had all been considered. Jon Thedham had agreed to join Search & Governance Committee and take over as Chair following John Tiscornia's retirement from the Board
- It had been recommended that Cath Dutton be asked to continue as Chair for a further year but that a new Vice Chair be appointed for next academic year with the proposal that they take over as Chair the following year.
- The inspection report for Accrington & Rossendale College had been considered and would be used as an aide-memoire for the Board (Action: Clerk)
- An additional meeting of the business members of the Committee would be held to further discuss senior position succession planning

Finance Working Group 27th September 2016

The Finance Working Group had met and reviewed the management accounts to the end of July 2016, noting in particular the lowest position in respect of cashflow anticipated for March 2016. Continued support from the banks would ensure this position could be managed with additional income from emerging projects expected to bolster the financial position.

A revised budget forecast had been reviewed based on a request from the Skills Funding Agency to properly classify grants of income. It had been confirmed that the budget had included prudent growth predictions.

A key role for this group was the monitoring of the growth plan and its RAG ratings, noting that targets for 2016/17 had already been met in most cases. The Board were provided with assurances that the growth plan was currently on track.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Approve the recommendations made by the Search & Governance Committee
- Receive assurance on the monitoring of the monthly accounts
- Receive assurance on the monitoring of the growth plan

- 1684 **Strategic Plan**
The updated strategic plan was presented, showing minor adjustments including a change of colour. The Chair proposed increase reference to the Area Based Review throughout the plan. Once inserted, the final version will be sent out to Board members and uploaded to the College website (Action: Clerk).
- 1685 **Teaching, Learning & Assessment report**
The Director of Curriculum & Quality presented her report which included specific reference to student recruitment, showing an overall positive variance on full time numbers of 35 when compared with the previous year and an 87% conversion rate of new applicants to enrolments compared with 85% the previous year. Areas of concern were considered, these being Hair, Sport and Childhood Studies.
- First year AS results were presented showing an overall pass rate of 68.6% and 96% retention. Whilst acknowledging that the results were disappointing, they compared favourably with national benchmarks and feedback from local schools. A range of actions were noted to support improvement in the statistics for this provision.
- A summary of Student Feedback for 2015-16 was presented based on the full time end of year questionnaire showing some very positive trends and comments. The report distinguished between outcomes for both full time further and higher education students as well as a summary of average scores for employer and learner satisfaction surveys.
- Governors thanked the Director for the report and noted areas of concern and actions being put in place to support continuous improvement.
- The Board RESOLVED to:
- Accept the report noting statistics for recruitment, AS results and learner feedback
- 1686 **Apprenticeship levy (AoC briefing event)**
Staff Governor Michelle Clement provided an overview of the AoC briefing event attended by governors that had outlined the apprenticeship reform programme and in particular the introduction of the employer levy.
- Michelle was thanked for her presentation and progress towards implementation of the levy and reforms would be monitored by the Board.
- 1687 **Higher Education Quality Assessment**
The Board were asked to approve the delay of submitting the requirement from the Higher Education Funding Council England to submit assurances on continuous improvement of student academic experiences and student outcomes and the reliability of degree students until the Spring based on the timing of the request. It was agreed that a higher education self-assessment report would be prepared to provide a response to this new quality assessment request.
- 1688 **Any other Business**
- Governors were invited to attend the validation of the College Self-Assessment Report on 1st December at 0930 am. Governors who can attend are asked to advise the Clerk.
- 1689 **Date of Next Meeting –**
Wednesday 14th December 2016