

**Meeting of the Kendal College Corporation
Wednesday 14th October 2015 at 5.00 pm
Conference Room 1
MINUTES**

Present:

Joseph Brown (Student Governor)
Michelle Clement (Staff Governor)
Fra Cooke
Cath Dutton (Chair)
Zaeed Mohammed (Staff Governor)
Rebecca Sandham
John Tiscornia
Gordon Watson
Graham Wilkinson (Principal)

(attendance 82%)

In attendance: Maggie Cawthorn, Carole Drury (Clerk), Louise Shrapnel
Paul Holme (1582 only)

1578 **Apologies for Absence**

Ian Clinton, Claire Willett

It was confirmed that Denise Dent has resigned from the Board

1579 **Declaration of Interests**

J Tiscornia declared an interest in item 1588.

1580 **To approve the minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8th July 2015 were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

1581 **Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Plan**

There were no matters arising not included in the action plan which was reviewed and the update positions noted.

1582 **Area Reviews**

The meeting was joined by Paul Holme.

Paul provided the Board with an overview of the Area Review process, tabling a paper summarising the key areas covered. He explained his background and experience of both the sector and Cumbria and how he had been working with the Cumbrian Principals in their approach for capital funding with the LEP. His overview gave an explanation of the purpose for the reviews, a national context, proposals for institutes of technology and the differences between LEP area reviews and those within combined authorities linked to the devolution agenda. The outcome of the November Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) would also impact on the process and potential outcomes.

In respect of Cumbria and the College, he emphasised the importance of meeting local and county-wide curriculum needs based on LEP priorities, travel to learn considerations and understanding potential and current relationships both within Cumbria and with organisations outside the county.

Governors followed up with questions to Paul on the process and implications for the College and thanked him for his input. (P Holme left the meeting at this point.) Further discussion took place based around a number of options that were being put forward following a recent meeting of the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Principals of the four Cumbrian Colleges. The following was reported from that meeting:

- Newton Rigg had declined the offer to be involved at this stage
- A steering group would be set up to continue discussions on area review
- Consideration of which private training providers would be included
- Recognition of the impact of CSR on continued college financial viability
- University of Cumbria had indicated they would not be interested in merger
- Whether an early review should be requested

A number of questions were raised by Governors about the direction the College should take, recognising that lessons would be learned from the reports of the areas reviews currently taking place in other parts of the country. The importance of the Board agreeing what Kendal College wants to get out of the process including what it wants to preserve and how it wants to grow was raised by F Cooke along with a further option of specialist colleges with local delivery, moving away from institution-based provision. G Watson reminded the Board that options needed to remain strategic, based around LEP priorities and looking at what could be achieved through collaboration such as reduction in management and teaching costs. He also suggested that the College needed to be aware of who its allies were in respect of specialisms. C Dutton suggested that our area of specialism should be revisited.

C Dutton provided the Board with reassurance that there is proactivity towards making the process work for Cumbria and the College. She requested that Governors contact the Clerk over their thoughts on the different options put forward.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Gain assurance that the Area Review process is being closely monitored
- Agree to a shadow area review that includes the LEP and other stakeholders to augment the work of the Cumbria Colleges steering group
- Advise the Clerk of their comments on the options presented
- Review the College's priority of specialisation from Visitor Economy eg to Health and Life Sciences

1583 **Strategic Plan**

- a. 2014/15 final update: The Board assurance report showing updated figures in respect of 2014/15 targets was presented by the Principal, with the right hand column providing a commentary on the current position. The Principal confirmed that the final position against academic targets would be reported through the 2014/15 Self-Assessment Report
- b. 2015/18 Draft Strategic Plan: following consultation with senior staff, the key strategic priorities with targets for each year through to 2017/18 was presented. The Principal outlined the process of developing the plan which in turn would generate an operating plan to be reported on termly to the Board.

J Tiscornia asked how a return on the investment in the Wildman Street campus (1.4.2) would be measured but was advised that this measure covered whole college e-learning materials rather than focussed on arts programmes. Reference was also made to the increase in higher education in this area.

G Watson suggested that an additional objective be included under priority 5 to link in with Area Review and strategic partnerships.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the updated board assurance report
- Accept the draft strategic plan subject to the proposed additional objective and a review of the plan following the Comprehensive Spending Review 25th November 2015

1584 **Principal's Report and Data Dashboard**

The Principal's report provided an overview of points of interest in respect of the College including World Skills Finals 2015 and international links including a new project linked to harnessing modern communication technologies.

Further information on the Area Review process was included in the report and discussed under item 1582.

Under capital grants, the Principal reported that a new and limited funding round had been issued and for which the College would bid for essential maintenance work and the cost of the revised foundations at Wildman Street of £573k. It was reported that the College had taken the decision not to apply for an SFA loan at this stage due to the risks attached to it. Any loan would require paying back within five years and could preclude the opportunity to bid for other grants as well as risk the College's financial health grading.

The data dashboard, providing a range of key data, was considered with no further comments. Areas of concern were backed up with commentary within the report or within other supporting papers.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the Principal's report
- Note the reasons for not applying for an SFA loan
- Accept the data dashboard

1585 **Teaching, Learning & Assessment report**

The Director of Curriculum & Quality presented her report that included specific reference to learner growth, showing that recruitment of full time learners has increased by 78 over the previous year. This however leads to over-delivery against target by £400,000 that would not be funded until the following year under lagged funding arrangements.

Higher Education recruitment has increased to 165 students overall, compared to 135 in 2014/15 and includes the new top-up BA (Hons) programme in Children, Schools & Families.

The report provided a summary of Student Feedback from 2014/15 and included the following questionnaires:

Full time FE Internal End of Year Questionnaire (83% response rate): overall high levels of satisfaction in respect of teaching, learning and assessment, 1.2% improvement in IT level of service (88%), 96% of students agreeing that their course had improved their employability

Part time FE Internal End of Year Questionnaire (63% response rate): high level of satisfaction

Full time Higher Education Internal End of Year Questionnaire (59% response rate): high levels of satisfaction with teaching, learning & assessment and course organisation. 44% stated they had experienced difficulties with IT.

SFA Employer Satisfaction: 149 employers responded with average scores being 9.4 out of 10 and 5% higher than last year

SFA Learner Satisfaction Survey: 697 responses with positive results showing an improvement on last year and an overall satisfaction rate of 8.6

Higher Education National Student Survey: overall satisfaction rate is 100% compared with 86% last year

Ofsted Learner View: 232 students completed the survey with an average score of 94% agreement

J Tiscornia challenged over highlighted positives and how negative comments were being addressed. He was advised that scrutiny of the data showed no specific patterns, with comments being very much on an individual basis.

C Dutton commented that additional enrolments had put additional pressure on teaching teams and thanked them for managing this effectively, noting that the College would not receive payment until the following year under lagged-funding guidelines.

F Cooke asked about a recent report of the success of the College employability programmes and requested that all press releases be posted on the College website.

M Cawthorn added some information in the College's success in last year's Higher Education Review, reporting that the College was in the top 14% for areas of good practice with only 25% of all colleges meeting the requirements of all areas reviewed.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the teaching, learning and assessment report, noting a high levels of satisfaction from a range of student feedback
- Request that press releases are published on the College website

1586 **Draft end of year Accounts 2014/15 and Updated Cash-flow position**

The Director of Finance & Resources presented to the board the following reports:

- (1) Financial Outturn position – preliminary report – draft position is an historic surplus of £60k. This figure will be confirmed once external audit has been completed and received at the Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 25th November. J Tiscornia stated that this was a pleasing outturn position with the key performance indicators giving a good position on how the College was operating with the exception of cash flow.
- (2) Outstanding Debtors report: the reports were considered with no business outstanding debt being beyond 30 days. Long standing student debt was collected through legal processes. It was requested that individual names of students in this position should not be identified in future and the report was collected in for data protection purposes.
- (3) Update on cash flow position: the current position in respect of cash-flow was explained following meetings with the Bank with the outcome of an extended flexible overdraft arrangement still awaited.

J Tiscornia asked for reassurance that any further loans or overdraft facility would not affect the covenant position and was advised that it would not.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Receive the draft financial outturn position that would be presented following external audit and recommendation from the Audit & Risk Committee at the December meeting
- Take assurance that outstanding debt is being pursued
- Take assurance that the covenant position is not affected by extended overdraft arrangements to support short term cash-flow.

1587 **Capital Projects Update**

The Board was provided with reports on the capital build project at Wildman Street but was also advised that the project was now five weeks behind schedule due to issues with the main building contractor. It was reported that, following a pre-meeting with the building surveyor, it had been recommended that a warning be issued to the contractor about the

potential withdrawal of the contract if assurances could not be given by the contractor. Any decision would be taken based on risk to the bond payments and step down dates agreed within the contract.

Governors were provided with assurance that everything was being done to get the work back on track and a worst case scenario presented that could include employing the site manager with local sub-contractors to complete the project now that the substantial structural parts of the building had been completed. It was reported that the quality of the build to date had been exceptionally good.

C Dutton assured governors that they would be kept informed of developments and would seek a written resolution if a recommendation is made to terminate the contract.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the update on the project
- Agree to support a written resolution if required to terminate the contract in order to protect the bond.

1588 **Search & Governance Meeting report**

John Tiscornia, Chair of Search & Governance, provided an update of recommendations coming out of the meeting of the Committee held on 6th October 2015. The report included:

- Governor attendance meeting targets
- Early outcomes of performance review and a review of the quality improvement plan
- Committee membership changes:
 - Michelle Clement and Claire Willett to join Search & Governance
 - Ian Clinton and Zaeed Mohammed to join Audit & Risk
 - Fra Cooke to leave Audit & Risk – he was thanked for service to that committee
- Compliance and action plan for the Code of Good Governance
- Governor Development programme – members were advised of planned curriculum visit dates and the training event on 20th January 2016
- Proposal to merge Remuneration Committee with Search & Governance
- Proposal to set up a working group to review the monthly management accounts. Governors were asked to contact the Clerk if interested in supporting this group. Ian Clark, Co-opted member of Audit & Risk, has agreed to join the first meeting.

The skills audit had been considered along with new member applications. J Tiscornia left the room at this point and the Chair asked Board Members to confirm the recommendation from the committee that John serve for a further year. This was agreed unanimously.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the report, taking assurance that it is meeting its terms of reference
- Approve the appointment of committee members
- Approve the Governor Development programme for 2015/16
- Approve the appointment of J Tiscornia for a further year

1589 **Health & Safety Annual Report**

The Director of Finance & Resources presented the annual health and safety report that provided comparative data on accident statistics, showing a consistent percentage of learners reporting accidents (0.03%).

Plans for Health and Safety going forward were considered with no further actions. Graphs showing the accident analysis by department and by type for 2014/15 and for 2013/14 were included in the report with no trends or concerns identified. Board members had been requested to post questions on this agenda item ahead of the meeting for clarity.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the report, taking assurance that Health and Safety is well managed and monitored within the College

1590 **Prevent Duty**

The Board was provided with the Prevent Guidance for England and Wales now that it has become a statutory duty for the College. The guidance would be further explored during the training event on 20th January, to supplement the training that had already taken place earlier in the year. Board members had been requested to post questions on this agenda item ahead of the meeting.

The Prevent Risk Register and Action plan was also presented, to show progress by the College in addressing the expectations of the duty. The action plan would be closely monitored to ensure the College is compliant with the requirements of the duty.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Take assurance that risks are being monitored in respect of the Prevent Duty
- Attend training on 20th January on the Prevent Duty
- Monitor the completion of the action plan

1591 **Board Self-Assessment Report (draft)**

The first draft of the governance self-assessment report was presented, showing key strengths of the board in supporting the performance of the College. Areas of development were noted and would be revisited in the final development of the SAR which is used to support the leadership and management grade of the College overall SAR. Whilst the grading does not impact on the College grade, overall opinion was that the Board was operating as outstanding based on decisions taken in respect of the campus, curriculum scrutiny and overview of the financial position of the College.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Approve the draft governance self-assessment report
- Agree to grade Board performance as outstanding

1597 **Date of Next Meeting** – Wednesday 9th December 2015