

**Meeting of the Kendal College Corporation
Wednesday 4th October 2017 at 5.00 pm
Conference Room 1
MINUTES**

Present: Present:

Michelle Clement (Staff Governor)
Cath Dutton (Chair)
Emily Harris
Eve Martin
Zaeed Mohammed (Staff Governor)
Amanda O'Brien
Isaac Roach (Student Governor)
Rebecca Sandham
Jon Thedham
Gordon Watson
Graham Wilkinson (Principal)
(attendance 85%)

In attendance:

Maggie Cawthorn, Carole Drury (Clerk), Craig Owen, Louise Shrapnel
Richard Evans

Presentation on Senior Leadership Training

The Chair welcomed a presentation from Louise Shrapnel, Director of Finance & Resources, and Richard Evans, Head of School, who had completed three modules of a senior leadership programme funded through the Education & Training Foundation and who had been selected by a Board panel to attend.

The presentation included examples of what had been covered under the three modules:

1. Personal impact as leaders
2. Leading strategic thinking
3. Leading transformational change

Both confirmed the training had been very worthwhile, enabling them to develop long-term networking opportunities and reciprocal exchanges with attendees from other colleges and how the training was impacting on their management roles and behaviours.

1761 **Apologies for Absence**

Pat McIver, Michael Southworth

1762 **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest

1763 **To approve the minutes of the meeting held 5th July 2017**

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

1764 **Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Plan**

There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda or updated on the action plan.
1739: It was reported that Amanda O'Brien had agreed to join the Audit & Risk Committee
(Action: Clerk)

1752: The Principal reported that the fire safety review was ongoing with an expected April 2018 deadline. A survey of assurance had been provided to the ESFA based on the College main site only being 3 storeys high.

1765 **Teaching, Learning & Assessment report**

The Director of Curriculum & Quality presented her report, supported by Richard Evans, Curriculum Head of School with responsibility for A levels and English & maths provision.

1. GCSE Maths and English

The report provided a summary of the recently published GCSE grades for maths & English, noting improvements in overall pass rates particularly in maths. Concerns remained over English A*-C grades that were below benchmark expectations.

Data showing comparative rates with the previous year and against national benchmark were considered. Actions to address performance were included with further explanation given on practical aspects such as team approach and different strategies, including the ETF funded project on making learners self-aware of their own progress, adopted more successfully by the maths team. Changes to the GCSE specification for this year include the removal of controlled assessment with the new grading system.

Zaeed Mohammed asked about the impact of the English and maths intervention posts and it was confirmed that the contribution had not been evidenced in results except for apprenticeships. The issue of delivery hours was raised with more successful colleges offering up to 4 hours per subject per week rather than 2.5 hours for this college. However, Richard Evans commented that reductions in class size and a focus on developing students' self-belief would have more impact than putting in extra hours.

Eve Martin expressed concern over reference to compliance of staff, particularly in English, to planned changes and whether the issue related to the ability of teaching staff. It was recognised that there had been a significant journey for staff who had originally taught key/functional skills to get to grips with new GCSE specifications.

Isaac Roach asked about the impact of changing to the new specification, stating that he had found controlled assessment essential to getting a good grade. Maggie Cawthorn responded that overall response had been positive. Craig Owen advised that adult evening class English students on the new specification (9:1) had achieved well.

2. A Levels

In respect of A level achievement, results showed that 76% had been graded A*-C, based on 28 exam sittings, which was expected to be close to benchmark. AS provision had performed less well and likely to be well below benchmark. Students who had not performed well enough at AS had been supported in moving into BTec provision, usually by dropping their A level.

Comparative data with local schools was also provided along with a breakdown of actual grades awarded by subject area. This data showed that the average grade score for the College needed to increase to 36 to ensure a positive reputation for the provision. Some provision would not continue due to poor performance and low recruitment.

Jon Thedham asked about the impact of larger class sizes on the grade profile but staffing issues had impacted on sociology results and the guidance for students applying for A levels needed improving to include more rigorous assessment of the most appropriate level of study.

Targeted A level marketing was being planned but Eve Martin commented that only good provision would increase recruitment and asked what plans were in place to improve. Richard Evans advised on the introduction of adapted pastoral and academic tracking with

more regular tutorials and assessment points built into the programme along with more intervention at individual level. Generally, “add-an-A level” grades were lower than grades for students taking a cluster package.

Zaeed Mohammed questioned small class sizes and whether they were economical when compared with vocational groups sizes and it was agreed that the position should be reviewed in a year’s time to see if the provision was viable and recruitment sustainable.

3. Higher Education

The Board was requested to confirm assurance that it had confidence in the College’s HE provision as part of the HEFCE quality assurance process. The report provided outcome data from both internal student questionnaires and the National Student Survey both of which showed high levels of satisfaction with the provision along with 97.6% student employment outcomes and 86.6% student retention.

The Board unanimously agreed that they had full confidence in the College’s higher education provision based on the evidence presented in the report.

4. Student Recruitment 2017/18

The report also provided an overview of recruitment for this academic year against each of the key areas of curriculum showing an overall increase of 49 students over last year, against a growth plan target of 30. Disappointment was expressed over the reduction of Art & Design students despite the new facilities. It was felt that the delay in completion of the Wildman Street studios and promotion of the new facilities had impacted on recruitment

The importance of retention of students in line with the first ILR return at six weeks was raised with the emphasis on supporting students to remain on programme which in turn would have a positive impact on income.

Emily Harris asked for comparative data with the previous year to be added to future reports (Action: M Cawthorn)

5. Internal Questionnaire Results

An appendix showing the results of the student questionnaire for 2016/17 was presented, based on 81% return of full time students. The summary showed high levels of satisfaction, in line with previous years with particularly high levels of satisfaction with teaching, learning and assessment as well as student support.

The Board RESOLVED to:

1. Review A level provision in a year’s time to ensure sustainability
2. Give an assurance of confidence in Kendal College’s Higher Education provision in line with HEFCE requirements under their quality assurance processes
3. Receive updated recruitment data, noting that growth plan targets for full time recruitment had been superseded
4. Note the high level of student satisfaction
5. Thank managers and staff for their hard work in recruitment and student satisfaction

1766 **Principal’s Report and Data Dashboard**

1. Overseas visits

In line with the requirements of the college’s financial regulations, the Principal’s report provided an overview of overseas visits completed by students during 2016/17.

2. Sector Update

The report also provided governors with an overview of some of the key issues facing the sector including the introduction of the new Technical Level qualifications and minimum standards threshold changes. The Chair asked for a reminder that the standards are calculated on qualification aims and requested that they should continue to be monitored

via the data dashboard with an emphasis on exceptions and risks. The Principal confirmed that there are no areas of concern at present.

The Principal mentioned that a letter was being sent to the Prime Minister from each college to draw attention to the inequality of FE versus schools funding for post 16 provision with the sector requesting an additional £200 per learner and to support a cost structure for the development of the new T-Level qualifications ie more funded hours and funding for all FE programmes, not just T-Level qualifications.

3. Staff Pay Award

In respect of the staff pay award, it was confirmed that no provision had been made in the 2017/18 budget. Governors discussed the possibility of issuing a £100 net bonus to all staff but, whilst recognising that the staff contribute enormously to the College, the decision to reject the proposal was not taken lightly and was based on the current financial position with the cost exceeding £40k.

However, it was agreed to include a 1% pay rise in the budget for next year, subject to year-end financial outcomes bearing in mind concerns that had been raised over the impact of the local government pension scheme on the end of year financial position.

4. Overdraft Facility

The Board was asked to consider the continuation of the overdraft facility from Nat West Bank noting that the facility had been used on several short term occasions during the previous year with unanimous agreement.

5. Data Dashboard

The data dashboard based on the position at 17th September identified performance against key performance indicators with areas of concern highlighted and commentary provided. Data for apprenticeship funding was highlighted with anticipated growth of over £300k, contrary to sector trends. The Chair asked about resources to deliver quality apprenticeships where employers were expected to pay higher rates for training. Board members with experience of apprenticeship and levy payments confirmed that they were taking a closer look at value for money but noting that 20% of the fee was paid for end point assessment. Market competition was also a factor with discounts being offered that in turn could compromise quality under new standard delivery.

It was also reported on the non-levy apprenticeship tender that had been submitted with a potential value of up to £900k that had used significant management resource to pull together. Outcomes from the tendering process were due to be released by December.

The Board RESOLVED to:

1. Note sector updates
2. Request that a pay award is included in next year's budget and refuse the proposal to pay a £100 bonus at this stage
3. Request further information on apprenticeship income at the next meeting

1767

Strategic plan operational update & Risk Register

The updated position against the 2017-2021 strategic and operating targets was provided. As this was the first report of the year, progress against the targets were not indicated but the Principal advised that the targets were allocated to staff and then monitored through performance review. The updated strategic plan would be emailed to Board members (now actioned).

A new risk register, based on the key strategic risks, was presented for consideration. Scoring of the risk and residual risk rating had not yet been completed and the Board was asked to approve the approach through agreeing the risks. The register would form part of significant monitoring processes during 2017/18, linked to the growth plan.

Board members were asked to provide comments to the Principal on the strategic plan and any additional risks that should be considered by 10th October.

The Board RESOLVED to:

1. Provide responses to the Principal on the strategic plan and risk register by 10th October.

1768 **Reports/Actions from the Committees & Working Groups:**

Committee/Working Party Chairs presented the findings of the recent meetings.

1. Search & Governance Committee – presented by Jon Thedham
 - a) Notes from the meeting were considered:
 - b) Instrument & Articles of Government – work had been done over the last 18 months to update the I&A in line with the flexibilities offered through the Education Act. Changes had been completed in line with legal guidance and would provide the Board with improved operating methods.
 - c) Governor Development & Improvement Programme – the new programme was put forward, providing dates for curriculum visits, the training event in January 2018 and the governor link programme. Additional development resources would also be uploaded to the governance Hub. Following appraisal, apprenticeship development would be included in the governor training event.
 - d) Governor Liability – based on an AoC briefing paper, governors were provided with a summary to assure them over potential liability should insolvency take place
2. Finance Working Group – presented by Emily Harris
 - a) Notes of the meeting showing how the management accounts had been scrutinised
 - b) Growth Plan update

The Board RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the amended instrument and articles of government
2. Accept the governor development and improvement programme
3. Note the growth plan update position

1769 **Management Accounts & Financial Outturn position – preliminary report**

An updated paper was tabled following requests from Emily Harris prior to the meeting and showed the preliminary outturn position for 2016-17. Concerns had already been raised via the Finance Working Group over the presentation of the FRS102 valuation in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Further advice was being taken on what to do next. Overall a prediction of £100k surplus was seen as significant for a small college but the pension situation was likely to impact on the audited outturn position.

(postscript – advice from the External Auditors has indicated the provision itself should not impact on net current assets. It will affect the balance sheet total/net asset position. The provision is required for accounting purposes but doesn't in itself affect the going concern/solvency position. The key thing for going concern considerations is the actual cash contributions being paid into the LGPS to reduce the funding deficit (which is calculated on a different actuarial basis) over time. External audit will consider the cash flow forecasts for 2017/18 and beyond until Dec 2018 as part of our audit work on going concern but essentially the Governors and college management need to be satisfied that the college will have sufficient cash/bank overdraft and other facilities available to be able to pay its liabilities as and when they fall due within the next c. 15 months.)

Emily Harris pointed out that a greater surplus needed to be generated to reduce financial risk for the College and that budgeting needed to be more in line with the reports from the actuary. Other potential and additional costs in relation to the Teacher pension scheme

and increased national insurance payments could potentially impact on income projections going forward.

The Board RESOLVED to:

1. Note the financial position with respect to pension liabilities and seek further guidance
2. Receive further updates in line with external audit outcomes

1770 Cumbria Further & Higher Education Partnership Joint Venture Project

The Principal provided the Board with an update on the proposed joint venture project that had been a recommendation from the Cumbria Area Based Review to enable more formal collaboration to be set up amongst the four FE colleges and the University. A project, run by FE Associates and government funded, had put forward proposals with a recommendation to set up a new body called the Cumbria Skills Alliance that would be responsible for bringing more funding into Cumbria through tendering and provide a central location for business and employer enquiries, built on the legacy of existing collaborations such as Cumbria Colleges Ltd and the Edge ESF project. The full paper was available on the governance hub.

Governors were concerned that the criteria and parameters for operation of a new venture were not evident, such as how a project or contract lead would be determined. However, it was agreed to take the project to the next stage of development and to receive further information on how the venture would operate.

The Board RESOLVED to:

1. Agree to accept the initial proposal to set up a Cumbria Skills Alliance subject to receiving further information such as a memorandum of agreement before a final decision is made.

1771 Policy Updates

1. Financial Regulations – amendments approved
2. Complaints & Compliments – amendments approved

**1772 Succession planning meeting update – confidential item
(business governors only)**

1773 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 13th December 2017