

**Meeting of Kendal College Corporation
Wednesday 7th November 2018 at 5.00 pm
Conference Room 1
MINUTES**

Present:

Abigail Adnett (Student Governor)
Cath Dutton (Chair)
Pat McIver
Eve Martin
Zaeed Mohammed (Staff Governor)
Kelvin Nash (Principal)
Amanda O'Brien
John Rawsthorne
Rebecca Sandham
Mike Southworth
Jon Thedham
Gordon Watson
(attendance 86%)

In attendance:

Carole Drury (Director of Governance)
Craig Owen (Assistant Principal, Data, Funding & Information)
Louise Shrapnel (Assistant Principal, Corporate Services)

Apologies

1858 Michelle Clement (Staff Governor), Stephanie Stocks (Student Governor)

1859 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest

1860 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th September were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

1861 Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Plan

Updates to actions from the action plan were noted.

1819 – Amanda O'Brien was reported to be joining an observation on Thursday 15th November. Pat McIver and Mike Southworth indicated they would be keen to join the programme

1839 – the Principal reported that there was no update as yet to the capital strategy but that the Senior Leadership team had been considering an IT capital strategy that would be part of the overall capital strategy

1855 – the Chair welcomed two new student governors to the Board although unfortunately Stephanie Stocks was unable to attend today due to a college visit to London. An induction date of 26th November at 4 pm was proposed. A total of 7 students had applied for the role with 5 being put forward for a student vote. A total of 575 students took part in the vote which was a significant increase in student participation.

1862 **Principal's Report**

1. General update

The Principal's summary report provided an overview of contract performance and funding, much of which was covered in greater detail by later agenda items. He reported on curriculum performance reviews being conducted from the end of October where vocational results and achievement data from each curriculum team were scrutinised.

A summary of student outcomes was provided with concerns raised over the decline in both the number of apprentices completing their full framework and in full time 16-18. Mike Southworth expressed disappointment in the decline and why the Board had not been advised earlier. It was noted that both concerns had been impacted by functional skills delivery, in particular the non-completion of speaking, reading and writing elements of English functional skills resulting in failure to achieve full frameworks. The Principal advised that he was working with the teams on new block delivery models for this academic year and beyond with improved reporting being incorporated into the strategy. Zaeed Mohammed asked about delivery being reduced from two to one teaching session and the impact that would have on outcomes, however Craig Owen responded that improvements in attendance would be gained from delivery taking place in only one session. Eve Martin asked for close monitoring of this change to see the impact on outcomes. She highlighted that Ofsted would expect governors to be aware of the position.

In respect of the decline in outcomes for 16-18 year olds, Eve Martin expressed concern for individual students even though it was reported that the College results would still put them in the top 20 nationally.

An updated figure of 38 additional students recruited over the previous year was reported. An update on the CITB contract arrangements was provided along with activities as part of "Love Our College" week based on fairer funding for colleges.

Changes to senior management were reported including the move of Robert Marshall-Slater to Newton Rigg College and restructuring of the senior leadership team whereby Maggie Cawthorn had now left the College.

It was reported that the recent ballot of Universities & Colleges Union (UCU) members over a pay award had resulted in 36.9% (31) of those eligible to vote had done so of which 87.1% (27) had supported strike action.

The Principal reported on the positive meeting that had been held with the ESFA Intervention Team earlier in the week. It was agreed that the Principal would share the outcome letter with the Board once received.

2. Curriculum & quality key performance indicators

The monthly key performance indicator report covered the following areas:

- Improving position in respect of percentage retention by directorate and curriculum area
- Some concerns over attendance by curriculum area
- Significant concerns over maths and English attendance

Issues over retention of IT students were reported with staffing issues impacting on last year and the expectation that retention in this area would improve in 2018/19. Validity of data in respect of English and maths attendance would be checked because of students transferring between functional skills and GCSE groups. It was requested that numbers be included in future reports to show the impact of small group sizes.

3. Key financial performance indicators

Cashflow and operating surplus data were presented showing an improving picture at this early stage of the year. The financial health score position was also presented showing an overall grade of good forecast for the year.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the Principal's report noting progress against key areas
- Request further data on student numbers in retention/attendance reports
- Receive the Intervention team letter once received

1863 **Strategic Focus:** Kendal Museum – update on lease negotiations and link to the College
The Board was provided with a paper outlining the progress to date in respect of the 10-year management agreement with South Lakeland District Council and the progress of the lease agreement between the College and Kendal Town Council.

Information on the management agreement and the lease was outlined and how the museum would be repurposed for use by curriculum. Transfer of collections to alternative locations locally was discussed and it was reported that a full condition survey had been completed, with SLDC providing funds to address the capital requirements of the museum.

Eve Martin asked about the provenance of the £80k included within the agreement and whether council overspend would impact on the sum being released but was advised that the figure had been ring-fenced to be released when the agreement was signed. John Rawsthorne questioned the outcome of the condition survey and whether the money would need to be spent on structural repairs but was advised that the building was in good repair with maintenance work still being carried out by SLDC. Further details on the plan to support the ongoing development and repurposing of the museum would be presented at the December Board meeting. Provision for the re-siting of the dioramas was now well advanced. Eve Martin requested termly updates on progress to ensure governors exercised their duty in respect of the agreement.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Approve the signing of lease and management agreements once ready
- Receive termly reports on progress

1864 **Teaching, Learning & Assessment report**

1. Student satisfaction survey outcomes: the Principal reported on both the internal and external view of student satisfaction with very high levels of satisfaction in most areas although some reduction when compared to previous data including in A level teaching, learning centre and learning services provision. Of particular note was that 98% of the 812 students surveyed felt safe in College. A full breakdown of the questions and scoring was provided. A number of internal initiatives had been launched to address concerns raised.

An external survey had been carried out with 482 students with excellent outcomes. 93% of respondents were likely to recommend Kendal College to friends or family, placing the College 4th nationally and highest college when compared with neighbouring colleges. Abbie Adnett commented on her very positive experience at Kendal College when compared with previous attendance at another college.

Eve Martin expressed concern about A level provision and asked how the College responded to early warnings that student satisfaction was low. The Principal advised that the induction survey was a good early indicator where issues were followed up at the first

opportunity. Staffing issues in politics and sociology A level classes had now been resolved.

2. Staff satisfaction survey outcomes: the outcomes of the staff satisfaction survey conducted between May and June this year were presented. 55% of staff had responded to the survey. It was reported that the results had been analysed and a number of initiatives put in place including a staff wellness programme and staff briefings. The survey had been part of a joint benchmarking initiative with 40 other colleges, led by York College.

The Chair expressed particular concern that staff were feeling undervalued with areas of management and communication being highlighted as key issues. There was a strong intention to see staff satisfaction improve, monitored through future satisfaction surveys. Craig Owen commented that the timing of the survey coincided with a period of significant change at the College with staff unsure of the impact. The Principal advised that a number of new well-being initiatives were being introduced and that he had offered “surgeries” for staff to meet with him that were being attended by a number of staff.

Mike Southworth suggested that the survey was a starting point for the Principal to benchmark future surveys and that outcomes should be shared with staff. The Principal advised that an HR letter to staff was being sent out and that further staff briefings would take place. Jon Thedham commented that the questions did not really identify what issues there could be with management but it was recognised that staff did have some concerns although noting that, in general, staff across the sector had concerns over funding and job security.

3. Careers strategy: the Principal presented a new draft careers strategy that had been built around the expectations of the 8 Gatsby benchmarks for good careers guidance. There would be particular implications for the careers strategy in line with the introduction of T-qualifications and an extended work experience requirement. The Principal reported that funding had been received to put 37 students through a pilot work experience project.

Eve Martin welcomed the strategic approach to careers but requested that the final version needed to better articulate what needed to be done with impact and evaluation targets. The Principal reported on the recently-formed Careers Hub for Cumbria, one of nationally supported hubs. Governors talked about the pressure on employers to respond to the numerous requests they receive for work placement with the hope that the hub will be the conduit for a joined-up approach going forward.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Receive the information on staff and student satisfaction surveys
- Seek improvement in staff levels of satisfaction in future surveys
- Note progress on the careers strategy and introduction of the Cumbria Careers Hub

1865

Finance & Funding

1. Management accounts – September 2018
2. Management accounts – draft July 2018

The Assistant Principal, Corporate Resources briefed the board on the success of the financial statements audit with no material adjustments expected. The draft year end accounts showed that the College was forecasting a small operating surplus with key performance indicators giving a financial health grade of good. In respect of the “going-concern” notice, it was reported that the bank overdraft position was not an issue for the audit letter. The cash position was better than forecast.

The first set of accounts for the academic year showed good performance against target. It was reported that a contribution analysis was currently being worked on which would support decision-making and cash forecasting. John Rawsthorne questioned the staff to turnover ratio that was still higher than sector norm and was advised that pay costs continued to be monitored but that further reduction of staff would not be possible unless key areas of provision were removed. Other ways of becoming more efficient eg class sizes were being considered with a consequence that less part time and agency staff would be needed. Mike Southworth commented on this being difficult in a college that continues to grow year on year and that incorporating lagged funding calculations into the percentage would make more sense recognising the cost of the unfunded growth element.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Note the draft end of year position
- Receive the September management accounts

1866 **Policy Review & Annual Reporting**

Health & Safety annual report: the Assistant Principal, Corporate Resources presented the annual health and safety report that provided a summary of key health and safety statistics and graphs on accidents by type and by curriculum area, compared with the previous year.

The report also outlined the College's approach to occupational health and wellbeing and expenditure on health and safety that had increased since the previous year with spending on first aid supplies and small equipment.

Plans for 2018/19 were outlined and included the introduction of the staff health and well-being policy, centralised recording and reviewing of all maintenance contracts and a review of the College's health and safety policy.

Pat McIver asked where the key risks were identified and was advised of the processes already in place to assess workshops, equipment, student trips etc but that there was currently no central documentation of health and safety risks. Rebecca Sandham expressed concern over lack of identification of hazards in workshops that would be expected to be displayed in industry settings and how important it was that students also learned about environmental conditions, mental health etc. Pat McIver agreed to meet with the College's health and safety senior lead to see if improvements could be made that would benefit students.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Receive the annual report
- See how student understanding of health and safety could be improved to meet industry expectations

1867 **Governance**

1. Search & Governance Committee: Jon Thedham as Chair of the Committee summarised what had been covered at the meeting of 30th October.

The Committee recommended that Cath Dutton be appointed for a further year as Corporation Chair to support continuity for the new principal and to enable the current Vice Chair to assume some of the responsibilities. The recommendation was unanimously accepted.

A proposal was also made and agreed for committee meetings to be rescheduled to commence at 8 am.

New governor applications had been considered but it had been felt that additional skills in finance and digital were required to support the Board development but that applicants would meet with the Principal and Clerk as part of the application process.

2. Governance SAR: a draft self-assessment report had been considered and had been based on outcomes from governor performance review. The Committee recommended its acceptance by the board as a true reflection of board performance during the previous year. Governors were invited to attend the validation of the overall College SAR on 4th December 2018.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Approve the appointment of Cath Dutton as Chair through to July 2020
- Support the recruitment of governors with finance and digital skills
- Approve the governance self-assessment report
- Agree that committee meetings are scheduled to commence at 8 am from January

1868 **Any other business**

1. Bank signatories: the Board approved the addition of Assistant Principal, Craig Owen as a bank signatory
2. OfS quality assurance: the Board agreed the annual assurance statement that they were satisfied with the quality of higher education provision as part of the OfS regulatory notice 2

1869 **Date of Next Meeting:** 12th December 2018