

- PRESENT:** Helen Walley (Chair)
Caroline Allen
Deane Braid-Lewis
Ben Geeson
Kene Ibezi
Roz Liard
Anita McGowan
Clare Mackie
Anthony Parker
Gordon Smith
Tim Thirlwall
Frances Wadsworth (Principal)
Kate Ward
Piers White
- ATTENDING:** Neil Blackmore (Clerk)
Jo Bland (Director of HR)
Chay Champness (Chief Operating Officer - COO)
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive – DCE)
- APOLOGIES:** Stephan John
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1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and noted as above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No new declarations were made. The Clerk confirmed that the Register of Interests had been completed for the new academic year.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meetings of 4th July 2012 were signed and agreed as a true record.

3.1 Matters Arising From These Minutes

There were none.

3.2 Report by the Clerk on Minutes

The report was **RECEIVED**. It was noted that in the minutes of the meeting of 16 May 2012, in the item on Equality & Diversity which read “It was **RESOLVED** that the Governing Body will receive an update to the Strategy as part of its annual equality reporting,” it should also state that the Strategy was itself approved. It was **RESOLVED** that a note be added to those minutes. It was also **RESOLVED** that the Chair sign a note for the Minute Book about missing signed minutes from June 2011 and the Clerk would add it to the Minute Book.

4 MEMBERSHIP

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Chair welcomed new members, K Ibezi, A Parker and K Ward. The membership of committees was **APPROVED**.

5 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Principal outlined the report, including the lifting of the Notice To Improve by the SFA. She noted significant improvements in enrolments and some improvement in success rates across college, though too much variation and not yet to national average. Governors stated that although the journey towards improvement was still very much ongoing, they were very encouraged on the strengthened foundation and robustness of the College, evidenced by the lifting of the Notice To Improve and the increased achievement of realistic but challenging targets. The Principal stated that leadership capability at all levels in the organisation remained an issue to monitor and that inconsistency was still being addressed. Management Development planned was tailored to support.

The Chair stated that the royal visit was highly learner-focused and a positive experience for all.

The COO reported that that exchange on the "Tower Block" property was currently expected for 10 October. Completion will follow when planning has been approved. The offer on the Heath Clark property had been withdrawn because of planning issues but that an additional offer is under consideration.

In considering the ICLT Strategy, Governors requested that reporting to Governors is not too reliant on acronyms. Governors requested that this Strategy be cross-referenced to prevailing IT security protocols. Governors questioned how the emphases of the Strategy can be mapped against actual staff performance. Managers explained how Moodle is used as a managed learning environment which can audit staff as well as learner usage. The DCE stated that there are variances in staff usage. Some areas now make significant use of Moodle but had risen from a low base, sometimes favouring quality over quantity; this could be addressed by a strengthened gatekeeper structure. Governors queried objectives that were worded to focus on upskilling staff, requesting that the focus on learner development should not be forgotten. The Strategy was **APPROVED** subject to these amendments.

Governors asked about some of the actions to effect improvements to teaching and learning, and in particular the 3-2-2 quality-improvement initiative. Managers noted that the target is 80% good or better teaching and that this would be an important but challenging target to achieve. The 3-2-2 scheme, which meant every curriculum manager owned responsibility for every member of staff not yet delivering good teaching in their area and their action plan to address, was discussed. Governors queried the timescales for this improvement process, welcoming the need to press ahead with improvements but noting potential performance-management issues. The DCE stated that each member of staff would have an individualised action plan following observation where strengths and weaknesses would be identified and that grade 3 was seen as 'requires improvement'. Those scoring 1 and 2 would be involved in dissemination of good practice across college, those awarded grade 4 would be subject to careful review of capability, with HR advice and support.

6 KPIS & OVERVIEW

The report was **RECEIVED**. Governors asked whether management could achieve a proposed 88% attendance. Managers stated that a RAG rating for student attendance is in place to highlight learners that were not attending well, in addition to the culture shift on expectations of attendance in effect from the start of the year. The DCE further noted that a number of new initiatives were in place and it would become clear which were more and less successful. Governors asked about how long-term sickness affected the "work time lost"

figure. Managers noted measures in place to monitor sickness, even though the prevailing figure was good.

7 REVIEW OF PROGRESS AGAINST TARGETS

The report was **RECEIVED**. Governors asked about the potential for increasing the part-time provision of fast-track degrees which seemed to be meeting learner demand well. The DCE explained that there is currently no cap on part-time provision but that there is much greater limitation on increasing full-time provision. The member representing the University of Sussex noted that the University Centre's achievement of its HE targets was significant against a background of large falls in applications and enrolments across HE. She further stated the College's new programmes had been well designed to meet changing learner needs and outlined possible additional student places in HE as might positively impact UCC.

Governors questioned managers about reported equality gaps in student achievement. The DCE replied that there was still work underway on an analysis of the gaps, which would be reported at November LQC. Governors strongly encouraged progress on this matter.

8 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

The report was **RECEIVED** and updated data was tabled for accuracy. The Principal outlined the Plan in its current form and overviewed the journey that the College had been on and described the processes for improvement, with published targets and performance monitoring through KPI dashboard. Further to item 7, Governors encouraged the development of Equality & Diversity targets.

Governors asked about analysis and monitoring of learner destinations. They stated that although progression may be improving, the purpose of further education is substantially employability. Governors requested further exploration of progression and destination statistics for learners in future reporting, both at LQC and board.

Governors asked about changes to the appraisal system and their effectiveness. The Principal outlined how the system had been simplified and strengthened. Governors requested further reporting on the effectiveness of the process both in terms of processes and outcomes. Governors noted that there was a lack of mention of non-governmental commercial opportunities in the Plan. The Principal stated that the College is open to new opportunities but that the immediate priorities were to assure the robustness and consistency of teaching and learning for the core cohort of learners and build on and improve the existing funded FE/HE business and meeting learners' needs. Governors requested that any targets yet to be given a figure be received at LQC. The update to the Plan and the relevant targets were then **APPROVED**.

ACTION: Further targets for the Strategic Plan to be considered by LQC.

9 STUDENT MATTERS

9.1 Student Governor Report

The Student Governor gave an oral report on a number of items: learner volunteers at the Olympics and Paralympics; participation in the Get On Track project led by Dame Kelly Holmes; a collaborative project on equality and diversity with Danish students; learner involvement with the City Safe project (www.citysafe.org.uk). The Chair and Safeguarding Governor both noted that the last was particularly of interest to the Governing Body. The Student Governor also described how many learners had reported that they were proud to have taken part in the royal visit and learner involvement in the preparations.

9.2 Student Association Financial Arrangements

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Governing Body had previously requested this item. The proposal was **APPROVED**.

10 iTRENT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT TENDER

The report was **RECEIVED**. The COO outlined the urgent nature of this request to meet the current demands of the HR/payroll system following substantial under-performance on a previous contract. The COO outlined the rationale for a waiver on the basis of a limited number of companies offering the service, particularly at comparable cost. Governors queried the lack of a price cap on the proposal. The COO replied that the controls will reside principally in strong project management. Nonetheless, Governors requested that some limitation or parameters be built into the contract. The request was **APPROVED** subject to developing those contractual controls.

ACTION: A report should go to the Audit Committee on the issues with the existing HR and payroll integrated system.

11 REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE ITEMS

11.1 Instrument & Articles

The report was **RECEIVED**. This Clerk had previously reported extensively on the impact of the 2011 Education Act and a draft revision to the Instrument & Articles had been received at the July meeting and initial approval given. This final document did not include the proposal to end the class of employee of Senior Postholder. Governors agreed that there had been much discussion about this development and with the proposal to postpone the changes to the SPH class of employee. The new Instrument & Articles were then **APPROVED**.

ACTION: The Clerk to publish the revised Instrument & Articles.

11.2 Standing Orders

The report was **RECEIVED**. Governors discussed the proposed amendments, approving all except the removal of clause 2.8 on Collective Responsibility, which it agreed to retain. The revised Standing Orders were then **APPROVED**.

ACTION: The Clerk to publish the revised Standing Orders, but retaining clause 2.8.

11.3 Other Items for Annual Review

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Clerk made an additional proposal for the Search & Governance Committee Terms of Reference based on the advice of a consultant on PFA audit, to add a paragraph on the Committee's delegation to advise on Governor training. He also noted that the reference to LSC should be changed to "funding body". Subject to the above, the Terms of Reference were **APPROVED**. The Membership Policy, Scheme of Delegation and Code of Conduct, which were unchanged, were also **APPROVED**.

ACTION: The Clerk to revise and publish the Terms of Reference.

12 REVIEW OF GOVERNOR PERFORMANCE

The report was **RECEIVED**. It was noted that the same afternoon, the annual Governors' self-assessment event had taken place which had received this information along with the results of the recent online Governor Performance Survey and a workshop on the new Common Inspection Framework. She noted that the Clerk had been asked to unpick some of the outcomes of the Performance Survey with a view for further consideration by small groups of Governors. The peer assessments of the Performance Survey would be used to inform Chair: Governor 1:1s. There was also a proposal to develop a chair appraisal system. The Clerk also noted that as part of the CIF workshop, it was agreed that a shift in workshop emphasis towards teaching, learning and assessment had been agreed, after a period focused on finance, restructure and stabilisation.

ACTION: Clerk to circulate Performance Survey to those not attending Self-Assessment.

13 POLICIES FOR APPROVAL: Health & Safety

The Health & Safety Policy was **RECEIVED**. The COO noted that it had been streamlined and benchmarked against policies in outstanding colleges. Governors suggested that lawyers might be used to further test the policy. An amended sequencing of the document was agreed. The policy was **APPROVED** subject to legal review of its contents.

14 FINANCIAL MONITORING

A report, tabled to maximise currency, was **RECEIVED**. The COO outlined the disaggregation of the Local Government Pension Scheme and its effect on the balance sheet. He stated that though this seemed a very large figure, as yet, the actual effect on the College's finances was limited. The COO outlined the actual surplus, which was above forecast, and contributory variances. The COO was forecasting that the current net liabilities of £1,100K would revert to net assets by the end of the current financial year. All aspects of the Financial Objectives were above target. Governors asked that any audited adjustments be reported at F&R. The COO stated that he did not anticipate significant change.

15 ANNUAL REVIEW OF RISK PLAN

The Clerk reported that this item was on the Schedule for this meeting. However, a substantial review took place at the July meeting and the Chair and Executive agreed that another review was not necessary or appropriate at this time.

16 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

There had been no meetings yet during the term, so no minutes were received.

17 DATES FOR NEXT YEAR

The dates were **RECEIVED**.

18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair had received a letter from the UCU representative about the Modernising Pay policy approved in 2010/11. The Chair stated that she had asked the Executive team to draft a response to the concerns voiced in the letter. Whilst supportive of staff being paid appropriately, Governors reiterated their support for the performance-based payscale progression in the original policy. The Principal also noted the recent death of North Croydon MP Malcolm Wicks.

19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 5 December 2012, 6pm

The meeting then ended at 8.50pm.