

Riverside College

Widnes & Runcorn

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON 12TH DECEMBER 2016

Present:	Valerie Allen	External	
	Ethan Bartlett	Student	
	Alan Bennett	External	(Chair)
	Jeannette Brady	Staff	
	Jayne Caslin	Staff	
	Sue Hopper	External	
	Tony McDermott	External	
	Tom McInerney	External	
	Mary Murphy	Principal	
	Lynn Pegler	External	
	Wesley Rourke	External	
	Susan Smith	External	
In Attendance:	Thalia Bell	Deputy Principal	
	Leeann Bellfield	Assistant Principal	
	Alan Brown	Assistant Principal	
	Julie Holland	Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources)	
	Lesley Venables	Clerk to the Governors	

PART ONE

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

70 Apologies for absence were received from Neil McGrath (External) and Melanie Simmonds (External).

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

71 No declarations of interest were received.

APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNORS

72 The Clerk advised that, following a selection process, Jeannette Brady had been nominated by staff for the governor vacancy.

73 **Resolved -** That Jeannette Brady be appointed as a staff governor for a two year term of office, commencing on 12th December 2016

UPDATE ON STRATEGIC ISSUES

74 The Principal provided governors with information on a recent serious incident of student behaviour.

75 The Area Based Review process had now concluded, with the final report due for publication in January 2017. The recommendation for Riverside College Halton was that it would remain as a stand-alone institution. A total of 16 recommendations had been made in the Greater Merseyside report, 7 of which related to structural changes amongst colleges and 9 that involved actions for the Combined Authority working with partners in the Liverpool City Region.

76 Governors received information on significant curriculum reforms that were due to take place shortly, including external assessment and linear A Levels, for which all curriculum managers were currently preparing.

77 The College had recently submitted its application to join the national Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers, which, if successful, would enable it to continue to deliver apprenticeships. The results of this exercise were due in March 2017.

78 Several local developments in post-16 provision were highlighted.

79 The Principal reported that the Chancellor's Autumn Statement had not included any significant announcements for further education. However, the associated funding details had not yet been published and, therefore, the College continued to be prudent in its 5 year financial planning.

80 Governors were provided with an update on progress against each of the strategic priorities. The Self-Assessment Report for 2015/2016 had graded provision overall as 'good', with 10 strengths and 3 areas for improvement.

81 The Skills Funding Agency had recently graded the College's financial health as 'outstanding', against a number of criteria.

82 A number of learner successes were highlighted. Governors expressed their thanks to all staff and learners for their achievements during the first term of 2016/2017.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015/2016

Audit Committee's Annual Report

83 The Chair of the Audit Committee presented its Annual Report to the Board, which had been prepared in line with the Joint Audit Code of Practice and the English College's Code of Good Governance.

84 The Committee's opinion was that the College's systems of internal control and arrangements for risk management, control and governance framework and processes for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness were adequate and effective in 2015/2016.

85 **Resolved -** That the Audit Committee's Annual Report for 2015/2016 be noted.

Financial Statements 2015/2016

86 The Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources) presented for approval the Financial Statements for 2015/2016, together with the Financial Statements' Auditor's Management Letter, the Audit Committee's Annual Report and the Internal Auditor's Annual Report. The Financial Statements had been reviewed by both the Audit Committee and the Finance & General Purposes Committee and were recommended for approval.

87 Governors noted that the actual outturn for the year was in line with the management accounts for July 2016. The Financial Statements/Regularity Auditor's opinion was unqualified.

88 **Resolved-** That the Financial Statements for 2015/2016 and the Letter of Representation be approved and signed by the Chair and the Principal

AUDIT COMMITTEE – 5TH DECEMBER 2016

89 The Chair of the Audit Committee gave a verbal report on the meeting held on 5th December 2016.

90 The Committee had received for information the outcomes of a recent audit by the SFA's Provider Financial Management & Assurance Team which had examined the College's level of compliance with funding regulations on the Adult Skills Budget and 16-18 apprenticeships and traineeships.

91 It was noted that the areas for improvement identified in the College's Quality Improvement Plan had now been incorporated into the Risk Management Plan (together with all recommendations arising from recent audit work) and progress against each of these would be monitored by the Quality & Standards Committee.

92 The Committee had discussed its performance against a number of key criteria and governors had graded the overall performance as a 1 or 'outstanding'. It had been agreed that the remaining meetings in 2016/2017 would be paperless and that the success of this initiative would be reviewed at the September Committee meeting.

93 A list of criteria was used to assess the performance of the Auditors for 2015/2016. Governors and management discussed this issue and concluded that the service provided was of an extremely high quality and met the College's needs effectively in terms of assurance levels.

94 The contracts for the services for both the Extended Assurance and the Financial Statements Auditors were due for renewal at the end of the 2016/2017 academic year.

- 95 **Resolved -**
- 1 That the contracts for KPMG to supply services for External Assurance and Financial Statements Audits be extended to 31st July 2018.
 - 2 That discussion on the terms of the contract take place between KPMG and College Management prior to the March

Audit Committee meeting.

QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 29TH NOVEMBER 2016

96 The Chair of the Quality & Standards Committee provided a verbal report on the meeting held on 29th November 2016.

97 Governors had received a report on courses in the “special measures” process, which included progress made since the October 2016 meeting. A presentation from the Head of Higher Education had provided useful information on this area of the College’s provision.

98 The majority of students had progressed to positive destinations, including employment and higher education. A significant proportion progressed to higher levels of study within the College in 2015/2016 and progression to higher education and higher level apprenticeships was high.

99 The improvement in achievement levels on Pre-Advanced Maths had been noted compared to 2014/2015. This area would remain under close monitoring. Retention and attendance on 19+ programmes were a cause for concern and subject to rigorous monitoring by staff.

100 The Annual Report for 2015/2016 had highlighted a number of areas for improvement, which would continue to be monitored in 2016/2017.

101 The Committee had approved a policy on Teaching, Learning & Assessment and had recommended a policy on Learner Involvement for approval by the full Board.

102 **Resolved -** That a revised policy on Learner Involvement be approved

SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2015/2016

103 The Assistant Principal presented the draft Self-Assessment Report for 2015/2016. The Report would be forwarded to Ofsted, who would use it as part of its risk assessment process and planning of inspection visits.

104 **Resolved -** That the Self-Assessment Report for 2015/2016 and the Quality Improvement Plan for 2016/2017 be approved

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 6TH DECEMBER 2016

105 The Chair of the Committee (Alan Bennett) provided a verbal report on the meeting held on 6th December 2016.

106 The Committee had received the annual report on human resources for 2015/2016.

107 It was noted that the total number of minor injuries had decreased compared to the same period in 2014/2015. There were no discernible trends in the accident figures, either by department, campus or type. All accidents were investigated to determine whether any

changes were necessary to the College's processes and procedures. There had been no reports of any 'near misses' or 'incidents' and no RIDDOR reportable incidents.

108 The Committee had been reminded that the College was in the final year of a 5 year insurance contract. This service would be re-tendered in 2016/2017, with a recommendation brought to the Board for approval.

109 The Committee had received a report on performance against partnership provision contracts in 2015/2016, together with proposals for 2016/2017.

110 The Deputy Principal presented an update on current property issues, including the completion of the STEM Centre project at Kingsway and the construction of the IDEA Centre at the Cronton Campus.

- 111 **Resolved -**
- 1 That the Health & Safety Statement of Intent for 2016/2017 be approved
 - 2 That the list of partnership contracts for 2016/2017 be approved
 - 3 That a review of compliance against safeguarding processes be undertaken at the earliest opportunity
 - 4 That the following policies be approved:

Supply Chain Fees & Charges
Staff Capability
Staff Discipline
 - 5 That the Committee's title be amended to the "Finance & Resources Committee"
 - 6 That the management accounts to 30th September 2016 be accepted
 - 7 That the Section 106 Notice relating to the Runcorn Campus be approved and signed by the Chair and the Principal

GOVERNANCE ISSUES

112 The Clerk presented a revised schedule of committee memberships, which had been updated following recent governor appointments and resignations.

113 **Resolved -** That the revised list of committee memberships be approved.

114 Governors received for information an update on each of the outstanding actions resulting from the implementation of the English College's Code of Good Governance. The Clerk anticipated that all actions would be completed by the end of the current academic year.

Whistleblowing Report 2015/2016

115 The Clerk explained that it was considered to be good governance practice for the Board to receive an annual report on Whistleblowing. It was noted that there had been no instances of whistleblowing in 2015/2016.

MINUTES

116 **Resolved -** That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2016 be approved
as a correct record and signed by the Chair

MATTERS ARISING

117 Governors received a progress report on the actions identified at the previous meeting. It was noted that all of these issues were either in progress, had been completed or were featured on the agenda.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

6 th March 2017	Audit
7 th March 2017	Quality & Standards
8 th March 2017	Finance & Resources
20 th March 2017	Board