

Riverside College

Widnes & Runcorn

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17TH OCTOBER 2016

Present:	Valerie Allen	External	
	Alan Bennett	External	(Chair)
	Jayne Caslin	Staff	
	Sue Hopper	External	
	Tony McDermott	External	
	Neil McGrath	External	
	Tom McInerney	External	
	Mary Murphy	Principal	(minutes 4 to 12 and 36 to 63)
	Wesley Rourke	External	(minutes 4 to 12 and 36 to 63)
	Melanie Simmonds	External	
	Susan Smith	External	
	Denise Whitney	Staff	

In Attendance:	Thalia Bell	Deputy Principal (minutes 1 to 35)
	Leeann Bellfield	Assistant Principal
	Julie Holland	Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources)
	Lesley Venables	Clerk to the Governors

PART ONE

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1 Apologies for absence were received from Ethan Bartlett (Student Governor Elect) and Alan Brown (Assistant Principal).

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2 No declarations of interest were received.

APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNORS

- 3
31st **Resolved -**
- 1 That Ethan Bartlett be appointed as a student governor until July 2017.
 - 2 That Lynn Pegler be appointed as an external governor for a 4 year term of office commencing on 17th October 2016

AUDIT COMMITTEE – 19TH SEPTEMBER 2016

4 The Chair of the Audit Committee presented a summary of the main items of discussion at its meeting on 19th September 2016.

5 The Committee had received for information an extended assurance report on Key Financial Controls.

6 Governors had considered the annual Risk Management Review for 2015/2016 and recommended the Risk Management Policy for 2016/2017 for approval by the Board.

7 The annual Accountability Review document had been completed for 2015/2016 and would be used as the basis for any review of the College by the Skills Funding Agency's Provider Financial Assurance Team, even though this was no longer a regulatory requirement.

8 The Committee had received the self-assessment of controls on fraud and irregularity and individual governors were required to complete a fraud/irregularity questionnaire, prior to the Chair signing a letter of representation at the December Board meeting to accompany the Financial Statements for 2015/2016.

9 The Board noted a number of proposed amendments to the Committee's terms of reference. The most significant of these was the Vice-Chair of the Board being able to sit on the Audit Committee (as opposed to the Chair of the Board, for whom this was not possible under the Joint Audit Code of Practice).

10 Work was underway to align the College's Risk Register with the Ofsted inspection criteria, through the combination of the Ofsted Action Plan/Quality Improvement Plan and the Risk Management Action Plan.

11 The Committee had been advised of a recent audit of funding by the Skills Funding Agency.

- 12 **Resolved -**
- 1 That the Risk Management Policy for 2016/2017 be approved
 - 2 That the annual Accountability Review documentation be approved
 - 3 That the Regularity Self-Assessment (Annex C of the JACOP) for 2015/2016 be approved
 - 4 That governors complete the fraud and irregularity documentation as soon as possible
 - 5 That the Committee's revised terms of reference be approved

QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 3RD OCTOBER 2016

13 The Chair of the Quality & Standards Committee presented a verbal report on the meeting held on 3rd October 2016.

14 The agenda had focused on a detailed analysis of performance levels in 2015/2016, the current picture in 2016/2017 and progress with the College's special measures process.

15 The Committee had received information on imminent curriculum reforms, including A Levels becoming linear and external assessments or examinations were being introduced on vocational courses.

Thalia Bell left the meeting at this point.

SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 5TH OCTOBER 2016

16 The Chair of the Search & Governance Committee presented a verbal report on the meeting held on 5th October 2016.

17 The Board was encouraged to use its own networks to bring forward any other suitable individuals for forthcoming vacancies. The most recent skills audit had identified gaps in Human Resources and Education (from secondary sector upwards or from HE), in addition to attracting more local employers to the Board.

18 A further search for suitable candidates from the adult student cohort was being undertaken, with any appointments being submitted to the Board in December. A nomination and election process was underway for one of the staff governor roles, as the current postholder's term of office was due to expire shortly.

19 The schedule of committee memberships was discussed in light of recent resignations and new appointments. It was noted that a new chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee would need to be appointed at its first meeting in November.

20 The constitutions of the Audit and F&GP Committees were being amended to reflect the current categories and numbers of members.

21 The Committee had discussed proposals made by the Clerk on the reclassification of confidential minutes relating to the 2015/2016 academic year. The Committee had received a report on attendance levels in 2015/2016.

22 A summary of the main outcomes of the Governor Performance Review process was discussed by the Committee.

23 The Committee had received a progress report on how any identified gaps in the Board's processes and procedures were being filled. It was noted that the majority of items had either been completed or were underway.

24 **Resolved -** That the following items be approved by the Board:

- 1 Schedule of committee memberships
- 2 Reclassification of confidential minutes

MINUTES

- 25 **Resolved -** That the minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

MATTERS ARISING

26 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.

UPDATE ON STRATEGIC ISSUES

27 The Principal reported that she had just returned from Steering Group meeting 4a of the Area Based Review process. A report on the proposed outcomes of the process had been drafted by the FE Commissioner's office and had been presented to the Steering Group.

28 The report contained 13 recommendations, 7 of which concerned structural change amongst colleges within Greater Merseyside and a further 6 recommendations that related to work that would be carried out after the completion of the Review process. The proposal for Riverside College Halton was that it should remain as a stand-alone institution.

29 On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked the Principal and Senior Management Team for their work on the Area Based Review.

30 The Board was reminded of future curriculum reforms, including those emanating from the Sainsbury Review, which outlined 15 vocational and technical routes for learners.

31 Apprenticeships were also being reformed through the introduction of a levy applicable to all employers with staffing budgets in excess of £3m and a move away from 'frameworks' to 'standards'. The College was preparing for these complex changes and further information on the full implications would be provided to governors at a future meeting.

32 Governors noted progress against the College's strategic priorities contained in the Quality, Efficiency and Growth Plan for 2016/2017.

- 33 **Resolved -**
- 1 That the recommendation of the Area Based Review, that the College should remain as a stand-alone institution, be approved
 - 2 That the revised Quality-Efficiency-Growth Plan for 2016/2017 be approved, subject to any further amendments being submitted via the Clerk prior to 21st October 2016

RETIREMENT OF STAFF GOVERNOR

34 The Chair thanked Denise Whitney for her contribution as a staff governor over the past 2 years.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

28 th Nov 2016	6.00 p.m.	Audit Committee
29 th Nov 2016	5.00 p.m.	Quality & Standards Committee
30 th Nov 2016	5.30 p.m.	Finance & General Purposes Committee
12 th Dec 2016	5.00 p.m.	Board