

**Greater Brighton Metropolitan College  
Board of Governors**

**Minutes of a meeting held at the Broadwater Campus  
Monday 18 December 2017 commencing at 4.30pm**

**Present:** Natalie Brett, Eileen Houghton, Jim Hynes (Staff Governor), Nick Juba (CEO), Scott Marshall, Joy Mercer, Anwar Musa (Student Governor), Julie Nerney (Chair), Martyn Wilks

**In attendance:** Jenny Brooker (Governance Adviser), Sharon Collett (Principal), Jon Rollings (COO)

**Apologies:** Ian Lowrie, Debbie Waring (Staff Governor)

**WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

149. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

**MINUTES**

150. The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2017 were taken as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Schedule of decisions**

151. The Board received and noted a schedule outlining the progress of actions from the minutes of the last meeting. All actions were complete or in progress, with the exception of one item on peer review of Governance Self-Assessment which was not yet due.

152. It was confirmed that the College will issue a press release and write to stakeholders to confirm the success of the bid for Local Enterprise Funding upon completion of the funding agreement for the redevelopment of its Pelham Campus.

**Student Governor**

153. Following a selection process, Anwar Musa, a full time HE Business Student, was recommended for appointment and welcomed by the Board.

**Resolved:**

**That Anwar Musa be appointed as student governor and arrangements be made for his induction.**

## 2016-17 COLLEGE SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT

154. Presenting the Self -Assessment Report (SAR), the Principal advised that the production of the report had commenced in July with course reviews followed by curriculum reviews. The document had undergone a thorough review process including input by the Senior Leadership Team, peers from other colleges and two Members of the Board. A September to December update had been produced and incorporated into the document to reflect the work undertaken and its impact in the period following the merger.
155. The College had self-assessed itself overall as Good. The use of the SAR by Ofsted as part of its quality judgement process was discussed. Although there was no longer a regulatory requirement to submit the report to Ofsted, it was best practice to do so and the report would be submitted this week.
156. Reflecting on the content of the report, the Board:
- Welcomed the integration of the data from the two predecessor colleges.
  - Congratulated the Principal on the streamlined format of the report compared to prior years, reflecting that whilst easy to read and understand, it continued to provide all pertinent information
  - Sought assurance that the report included sufficient data and narrative on apprenticeships
  - Suggested that the strength of value added should be further emphasised within the narrative of the report.
  - Noted the performance of Access to HE and basic skills and queried whether there was sufficient commentary on the reasons for this
157. There followed a discussion on the considerable complexity that lay behind the overall judgement. It was identified that there were some challenging areas which were being addressed including a three-year decline in Northbrook MET data and the performance of Creative Industries dipping below national averages and requiring improvement. The impact of the large number of short adult qualifications achieved in Worthing on the overall achievement rate was also noted.
158. The Board concluded that whilst the overall judgement was good, there remained areas that needed to be improved, that the internal management systems and controls had clearly identified areas for improvement and these had been reflected in the narrative of the report.

### **Resolved:**

**The 2016-17 College Self Assessment Report be approved and submitted to Ofsted, subject to any minor amendments made in response to the issues raised by the Board.**

## 2017/18 COLLEGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

159. Presenting the report, the Principal emphasised five themes arising from the SAR and included in the improvement plan:
- i) Consistency of provision: ensuring students on all sites have a good college experience and an equal opportunity for success
  - ii) Leadership: a development programme for middle managers.

- iii) Pass rates: a focus on teaching, learning and assessment to optimise pass rates, management of student performance including exam performance
  - iv) Staff recruitment: retaining and recruiting staff to shortage areas
  - v) Curriculum design and delivery: design and delivery of the curriculum including increasing inclusion programmes, providing high quality work placements and continual improvement to Maths and English.
160. Actions to promote effective leadership at all levels of the organisation, including first line management, were discussed and new approaches identified to further improve performance.
161. Assurance was provided that staff had ownership of the improvement plan through it being cascaded through the organisation and the priorities being aligned from whole college level through departments and course level.
162. A discussion followed on the introduction of T levels which aim to provide the primary vocational or applied route sitting alongside A levels and apprenticeships. Cabinet office officials had spent a day at the College discussing the proposals with staff. Although there was some appeal to the proposed simplification of vocational courses, there were concerns that they could result in students at the age of 16 who need broad educational pathways having career path options closed down. The latest progression data for the College - with 93% of students progressing to employment or further study - provided strong evidence of the strength of existing provision in meeting the needs of employers and students.
163. The challenges of vocational reform for students, staff and employers were recognised and the similarities between the T level proposals and the 14-19 diplomas introduced five years ago were discussed. It was concluded that the college offer needed to be what was right for local students and employers, and the curriculum organised accordingly.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the implementation of the Improvement Plan be reported to the Board on an exception basis through the CEO report.**
- (ii) The Board Spring Away Day to include a discussion on the proposed introduction of T Levels alongside other curriculum and policy reforms affecting the College.**

**COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD AND ENGAGEMENTS WITH STUDENTS AND STAFF**

164. The Board received feedback from a consultation held on Board composition and Governor engagement with students and staff. While the consultation feedback was not in favour of a change to Board composition it had revealed a fundamental misunderstanding on the role of student and staff governors in respondents. It was agreed that the feedback would need to be discussed by the Chair, CEO and Governance Adviser and a communication plan developed to address the consultation responses. Concern was raised that the election element of staff and student governor appointments promulgated the misunderstanding that they were representative roles.
165. The proposed student and staff engagement plan was considered. The Board welcomed the breadth of options available for engagement and the opportunities for

two way dialogue. It was identified that governors had differing levels of availability and that given the importance of student shadowing, Governors should be provided with options for the dates of these in order to maximise attendance.

166. There were some concerns raised that the number of governors meant that they could not meet with all students and staff. However, it was identified that attendance at large events, such as the College conference, would be important in terms of visibility and getting a feel for staff and student opinion. In addition, a communications plan would amplify the involvement of governors in College events.
167. With regard to the number of engagements governors should attend, it was agreed that attendance should be monitored and recorded by the Governance Adviser this year and that as part of the governor recruitment process, it should be clearly communicated to applicants that they would be expected to be involved some way in the life of the College.
168. It was concluded that successful delivery of the plan would result in an active and engaged board with students and staff. Subject to the plan being updated to include the option of governors observing student council meetings, the all staff conference, the regional skills event in March and open day dates, it was:

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the student and staff engagement plan be approved and implemented.**
- (ii) That the rolling calendar of student and staff events be updated and circulated to the Board alongside the monthly sector updates**
- (iii) That the Chair, CEO and Governance Adviser discuss the consultation feedback on the composition of the Board and report back at the next meeting**

## **CEO REPORT: DECEMBER 2017**

### **Executive Summary**

169. Phase three of the restructure was complete and the new structure would be implemented as planned on 1 January 2017. There had been 22 applications for voluntary redundancy approved and no compulsory redundancies. It was acknowledged that the process had been well managed but challenging with significant impact on all those staff involved. The restructure had brought together back office functions and these would be fully operational from January 2018, although there was some further work to do to complete the changes to accommodation for staff teams. Costs and savings were in line with the allocated budget.
170. The College would be going out to tender for the delivery of a bespoke leadership programme for approximately 21 middle managers. The CEO confirmed that no external funding opportunities had been identified to meet the cost of the training but the College continued to seek funding for other CPD opportunities such as the Aspiring Principal's course.

171. The College had scored well on the procurement process for its non-levy/SME apprenticeship contract but the contract allocation was under the amount requested and that included in the budget. Work was underway to identify how the shortfall could be made up through a request for a contract extension at the first performance management point and via increased income from levy-payers. The Board sought further information on the scale of the risk of the funding gap and how the costs of delivery aligned with the income.
172. The closing date for bids for the establishment of an Institute of Technology was confirmed as the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2018. An initial meeting of the College Institute of Technology partnership had taken place and a workshop was scheduled to further develop the bid.
173. The CEO was continuing to explore opportunities for partnership working, in line with the Strategic Plan, and had recently presented to the Board of Worthing College. Discussions are ongoing with University partners.

### **Resolved**

- (i) **Chief Executive of Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership, to be invited to attend the 18 June Board away day to discuss the LEP strategy.**
- (ii) **More information on the plans to mitigate the reduced value of the new Apprenticeship SME contract to be provided to the next meeting of the Board**

### **Quality**

174. A different approach to reporting on teaching, learning and assessment practice had been implemented through learning walks. Through the qualitative evidence collated, Teaching, Learning and Assessment had been judged to remain 'Good'.
175. Concern was raised at the latest set of student attendance data, particularly relating to Higher Education. This was attributed largely to changes in reporting procedures where if a mark was missing on a register, that students was reported as absent. It was acknowledged that there were areas of teaching that were not sufficiently engaging but these were known of and clear actions were in place for improvement. It was confirmed that various interventions took place to retain every student.
176. With regard to the quality data provided within the report, the Principal confirmed that data on minimum grades would be included within the January report and student progress would be included within the February report.
177. The First impressions survey findings suggested that the level of focus on improvements to recruitment had not been mirrored in enrolment processes. It was acknowledged that there had been challenges around queues and waiting times at certain sites but areas for improvement had been identified and the standardisation of enrolment processes across all sites was anticipated to result in a vastly improved student experience.

## **Funding/Contract Performance/Finance**

178. There were challenges in some income streams, particularly apprenticeships as discussed in depth earlier in the meeting, and in fees and loans associated with the planned January recruitment (both funding and commercial provision). At this stage, no projects had been secured against the planned £300k for the full year. Despite the income variances, the year to date was broadly in line with the projected position, with reduced pay costs offsetting the income variances noted above and increased non-pay. Whilst non-pay remained over budget there was a significant reduction in overheads in the current month and it was considered that this was a timing issue.
179. Variances due to the impact of the apprenticeship changes were reported as the largest area of risk to meeting the budget. There was a request for more detail in future CEO reports on year to date finances. The CEO noted that this point had already been picked up and considered by the Executive Team and would be addressed by inclusion of the full Management Accounts at each quarter point.
180. Reflecting on the sector trend of a reduction in Higher Education learner numbers, the Board sought further information on how many existing HE learners were re-taking in the current year, and also asked that monitoring information on HE student recruitment for 2018/19 be reported to the Board from January. The curriculum development strategy and HE strategy were scheduled for consideration by the Board at its February meeting.
181. Reflecting on the upsides/downsides, concern was raised at the potential under achievement of commercial income. It was acknowledged that this was a risk but work was taking place to mitigate it with additional recruitment planned in January and April, and also replication of courses historically delivered on the Brighton sites in Worthing.

### **Resolved:**

- (i) Quarterly Management Accounts to be included in full as an appendix to the CEO report.**
- (ii) Monthly Management Accounts to continue to be made available to the Board on Google Drive**
- (iii) Further detail on HE learner numbers be reported to the next meeting of the Board.**

## **Human Resources**

182. The improved completion rate of staff appraisals was welcomed but it was acknowledged that in future years they needed to be completed sooner. The improved completion rates had come about through the hard work of the HR team working with Heads of Department. Focus was now on completion of mid-year appraisals.
183. With regard to mandatory development courses, governors noted some issues with regard to notifications and system access which required addressing.

### **Resolved:**

**Technical issues of access to and completion of mandatory training courses by Governors to be investigated.**

**Property**

184. The local enterprise partnership had responded positively to a request regarding the timing of capital spend in relation to the grant for the Pelham redevelopment Scheme. This would provide a cash flow advantage rather than additional funding.

**Risk Management**

185. It was agreed that the top level risks had been considered through discussion on other areas of the CEO report.

**GREATER BRIGHTON SKILLS (GB SKILLS) COMPANY PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

186. The Board received a report on the establishment of GB Skills, its formal structure and performance and achievements to date. Board oversight of the subsidiary company was discussed and agreed.
187. The benefits of the company with regard to pensions, staffing and marketing were considered against the administrative workload of having a subsidiary company. It was not clear at this stage whether the structure was the right vehicle for the delivery of apprenticeships, but it had the potential to provide savings, flexibility and a separate brand and identity for sales.

**Resolved:**

- (i) **That the schedule of Board business include consideration of GB Skills annual business plan in July and company accounts in December.**
- (ii) **Minutes of Board of Director meetings to be circulated to Members by e-mail.**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR GREATER BRIGHTON METROPOLITAN COLLEGE**

188. The Board considered the 2016-17 consolidated financial statements for GBMet, the external audit findings and an overview of the financial statements by the COO. The accounts had been considered by the Audit Committee. Key aspects were:
- The basis of the accounts were the prescriptive format issued by the ESFA
  - College income was just under £40m which was down on £41m on the prior year
  - Removing pension and merger costs there was an underlying deficit of £100k
  - Revolving credit facility (RCF) of £3m was undrawn
  - Underlying financial health was satisfactory.
189. The cash position of the College and the structure of the merger re-financing which utilised the (RCF) meant that the College did not score any points for its Liquidity position within the ratios used by the ESFA for their Financial Modelling. This meant

the College would have been 'flagged' on their early intervention list – however, it was noted that regular meetings with the ESFA were already taking place following the merger and the removal of City College from intervention at that point.

190. In response to queries, it was confirmed that materiality could be considered to equate to covenant headroom which was £90k. It was confirmed that the Audit Committee had no concerns regarding the level of adjustments and the net impact was relatively limited.
191. A discussion followed on the level of understanding which the Board should have on the financial statements. Assurance was provided that the financial statements had been thoroughly reviewed by the External Auditors and the Audit Committee whom had no concerns on which to report. The COO advised that he was happy to meet with any Board members should they wish to develop their understanding of financial reporting.

**Resolved:**

- i) That the Greater Brighton Metropolitan College Financial Statements for the period ended 31 July 2017 be signed and submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by 31 December 2017.**
- ii) The letters of representation be signed by the Chair**
- iii) That GB Skills financial statements be submitted to Companies House**

**HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT**

192. The Board received the 2016/17 Annual Health & Safety Report. It was identified that there was a robust and effective health and safety system in place at Northbrook MET but work in progress to ensure that this was replicated across Brighton MET.
193. The report had been included as an assurance item, rather than consent, due to the issues of implementation of a single, consistent and effective Health & Safety system and procedures across the institution.
194. A discussion followed on the reporting arrangements to the Board on Health & Safety which mirrored those for safeguarding – the Board received an annual report, a mid year report, reviewed the policy annually and received data in the CEO report on an exception basis.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the 2016/17 Health & Safety Annual Report be noted.**
- (ii) That any reportable accident (RIDDOR) be noted in the CEO report**
- (iii) That any item that does not require a decision should be included in the consent agenda, unless reasons otherwise are included within the report cover sheet.**



## **AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

195. The Board received the draft minutes of the last meeting of the Audit Committee and the 2016/17 Annual Report of the Audit Committee. It was confirmed that the College external auditors had been in place for a number of years and the Audit Committee was scheduled to consider whether a tendering process should take place.

### **Resolved:**

**That the annual report of the Audit Committee be noted and submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency with the 2016/17 financial statements.**

## **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

196. The Health & Safety policy had been reviewed and updated to comply with best practice.

### **Resolved:**

**The Health & Safety be approved and uploaded to the College website**

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR CITY COLLEGE BRIGHTON & HOVE FOR PERIOD ENDED 30 MARCH 2017**

197. The Board noted the financial statements and external audit findings.

### **Resolved:**

- (i) That the City College Brighton & Hove Financial Statements for the period ended 30 March 2017 be signed and submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by 31 December 2017.**
- (ii) The letters of representation be signed by the Chair**

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Governor Recruitment**

198. Forthcoming governor vacancies had been advertised through social media and to all known equality and diversity groups in the Greater Brighton region. Three potential applicants had been identified and interviews would take place on 22 January from 2pm. It was agreed the selection panel would comprise the CEO, Chair, Natalie Brett and Joy Mercer.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

199. It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Board was scheduled to take place on Monday 29 January at 4.30pm at the Brighton Central Campus.

## MEETING EVALUATION

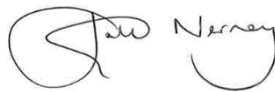
200. In order to capture immediate feedback about the quality of the session, an informative evaluation of the meeting was led by the Chair.

**Resolved:**

**A social event be organised for Members at the conclusion of the Board Away Day on 19 March 2018.**

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

Signature of Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Narnay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Date 29 January 2018