

**Meeting of the Kendal College Corporation
Wednesday 17th May 2017 at 5.00 pm
Conference Room 1
MINUTES**

Present:

Michelle Clement (Staff Governor)
Fra Cooke
Cath Dutton (Chair)
Emily Harris
Pat McIver
Eve Martin
Amanda O'Brien
Isaac Roach (Student Governor)
Rebecca Sandham
Michael Southworth
Jon Thedham
Gordon Watson
Graham Wilkinson (Principal)
(attendance 87%)

In attendance:

Maggie Cawthorn, Carole Drury (Clerk), Craig Owen, Louise Shrapnel
Sarah Tatham – Link Governor presentation
Matt Burke, Richard Evans & Robert Marshall-Slater item 1737 only

Link Governor Presentation – English & Maths: Rebecca Sandham and Sarah Tatham

The presentation was jointly delivered by Rebecca and Sarah (Assistant Head of School responsible for English and Maths provision). Changes for 2017/18 were outlined with targets for achievement of national expectations based around a range of interventions and quality of teaching and learning. The College is part of a national project funded via the Education & Training Foundation on inspiring students to achieve, with activities such as maintaining small class sizes to ensure more focussed sessions. It was reported that controlled assessments are already showing an improvement with 66% expected to achieve grades A-C for this element of the assessment. Focussed sessions are being put on directly before students go into the exam to ensure the students are as best prepared as they can be.

Other ideas on taking the project forward included reflection time in lessons with students taking on more responsibility for their own learning through marking work and developing a better understanding of why things are wrong. The process has already been trialled with adult groups. Changes to awarding bodies are also being put in place (EdExcel for Maths, AQA for English) to both align with schools (GCSE) and to better meet the needs of students with lower level skills (Functional Skills). There will also be a change of awarding body for apprenticeships to NCFE as the schemes are more work-related.

A new policy for English and maths is under development and based on the experience of the ETF project findings. Rebecca commented on the evidence of change management and focus on the learner that she had noticed. Pat McIver commented on the direction of travel but asked about sustainability. Costs associated with smaller class sizes would need to be

included and the new approach to delivery would be introduced at the induction stage of the course.

Sarah and Rebecca were thanked for their enthusiastic and informative presentation and the link would continue to be maintained.

1733 **Apologies for Absence**

Zaeed Mohammed, Alastair Speed

1734 **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest

1735 **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2017**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 29th March were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

1736 **Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Plan**

There were no matters arising from the minutes not included on the agenda or noted in the action plan.

1653 – Rebecca Sandham confirmed that approval for the visit had been given by Gilkes Chairman and arrangements would be made via the Clerk

1695 – the Principal confirmed that two important software systems had been approved for purchase to support development

1710 – the Succession Planning T&F group had had its first meeting

1737 **Strategic Planning update** (this item was taken at the start of the meeting and included the curriculum Heads of Schools)

The Principal provided an update from the recent strategic planning event, providing a paper that outlined some of the key issues identified with a particular emphasis on financial sustainability and curriculum viability.

A funding analysis was also presented, showing overall income against different curriculum areas and a breakdown of different funding streams. Emily Harris stressed the importance of including costs in this analysis to identify where savings could be made. It was also reported that an internal audit had been scheduled to review staffing levels against sector benchmarks for colleges of a similar size. Eve Martin expressed concern that other issues needed to be considered before dropping provision that was not cost effective and that a more rounded position should be provided. The Principal confirmed that essential but low cost provision, such as Care, would continue to ensure that local employment priorities were met.

In response to a question from Fra Cooke on the timetable for strategic planning, the Principal reported that the draft strategic plan would be presented to the Board at the July meeting along with an operating plan of how the priorities would be achieved.

At this stage, the paper drawn up by the Director of Curriculum & Quality under item 1740 was brought forward as it impacted on this discussion. The paper outlined different elements of College provision. In respect of Higher Education, the kudos of this provision was felt to be important with ambitious growth potential, including links to degree apprenticeships. A level provision was also discussed. Mike Southworth commented on the expectations of the demographic of 6th formers in having an informal study base but recognising the need for parity of

esteem with other learners. He stressed that there would be no success with a half-way approach and that the College needed to either embrace significant growth in A level or stick to the small level of provision already offered. Maggie Cawthorn outlined a proposal under development to grow A level provision to 100 students, recognising that having substantial A level provision alongside vocational/technical would best meet the future requirements outlined in the Skills Plan (Sainsbury Review 2016).

Cath Dutton asked about collaboration with other colleges over delivery to avoid travelling to carry out assessments of apprenticeships. Maggie Cawthorn outlined existing collaborative working but stated that there are sometimes issues with quality where delivery partners do not work to the same standards.

Cuts in curriculum hours had been considered with savings shown in the paper but the impact on quality and both staff and student experience were a negative aspect. Similarly cost savings had been considered in respect of tutorial delivery. Student Governor Isaac Roach confirmed the need for a personal connection with tutors and that he would not be happy with fewer hours on his course. Pat Mclver referenced the recent visit by governors to the Arts & Media Campus commenting on the value added hours delivered by staff and the risk of reducing course hours on staff well-being. He said that contact time had an impact on how the College performed.

The Chair thanked the board for this useful discussion.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Note proposals for reviewing curriculum and costs
- Receive the draft strategic plan at the July Board meeting, advising the Clerk in advance of any proposals to be further considered

1738 **Principal's Report and Data Dashboard**

The Principal's report provided information to the Board on a range of national issues, with particular reference to inspection grades in the sector. Non-levy apprenticeship starts were explained along with the reduced allocation expected by the College. Other key issues such as maths and English GCSE and degree validations were included in the report and received by the Board.

Ofsted Inspection

The expectation that the College could be subject to Ofsted inspection was raised as grade 1 colleges were now in scope although only likely to be triggered by a drop in data. Craig Owen reported on strong 16-18 classroom based achievement along with the high position of the college in recent satisfaction survey but there had been concerns with apprenticeship outcomes although the position was improving.

It was raised that the most recent Common Inspection Framework was very different to the one used at the last College inspection. Mike Southworth asked how prepared the College was for an inspection and Maggie Cawthorn advised of a range of actions that would be put in place for the next academic year based on recent training she had attended. Key priorities for development would be target setting with good evidence of monitoring for both full time students and apprentices, value added scoring and evidence of homework. Student placements also needed to have an improved value added impact assessment on their return to College, and students needed to know their chances of employment will be improved. She also identified a new expectation for DBS checks every

three years for staff. She had picked up no specific requirements for perimeter fencing but governors were given an assurance over additional safeguarding actions including that lanyards would be issued to staff and governors in the next few weeks.

Eve Martin asked about self-assessment and how it demonstrated the plans in place would meet expectations. Maggie Cawthorn confirmed that the full SAR is presented to the Board in December but that interim position statements could now be provided on request through the new performance monitoring system.

The Principal outlined preparatory steps taken by the College through its “48 hours & Counting” planning document that included a range of briefings and updates for staff and governors.

Data Dashboard

The data dashboard was presented identifying areas of concern in respect of attendance at maths and English GCSE sessions which were slightly below target. Accompanying notes identified how attendance was being monitored and other actions being taken to improve the data. Under financial targets, liquidity and solvency lines at risk were identified. Income lines including Adult Education Budget were highlighted as being of concern and commentary was included to provide an explanation and strategies in place to support achievement of the target.

The Principal advised the Board that an early intervention visit was taking place on Monday 22nd May with this position influenced by the notified cashflow forecasts. He pointed out that 299 colleges were in the same category of intervention.

In respect of the dashboard presentation, Audit & Risk Committee had requested additional benchmarking data be included, following recommendations from internal audit.

Emily Harris questioned line F6 in respect of there being no year-to-date target but was advised that this was a hard target to include and that the data was compared with the previous year’s position. It was agreed that D6 should not be assessed as green based on the current staff to turnover ratio.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Note the Principal’s report
- Note current position against key performance indicators in the data dashboard and agreeing to change the status of D6

1739 **Reports/Actions from the Committees:**

a) Search & Governance 4th April 2017: draft minutes from the meeting were included for consideration and summarised by the Committee Chair. The Committee had reviewed the Governor Development Programme and Link Governor scheme, making proposals for continuous improvement next year. Jon Thedham asked governors to consider ways of improving attendance at curriculum visits, recognising the value of the visits. Pat McIver reiterated the benefits of being able to view teaching and learning in an information and flexible way which in turn gave greater context to what was discussed at Board meetings.

Board attendance overall was above target at 83.5%. Board and Committee membership was considered and Michelle Clement was confirmed into her

second term as staff governor. The vacancy on Audit & Risk Committee was raised and governors asked to advise the clerk if interested in joining the committee. The importance of the role of student governors had also been discussed and it was agreed that Jon Thedham would meet with them.

In respect of succession planning, it was reported that a Task & Finish Group had been set up and had met for the first time to support this process whenever it was required.

The Committee had considered the recent letter from the FE commissioner that had outlined expectations of the Board of a successful college. The measures would be incorporated into governance self-assessment later in the year.

The Committee had reviewed proposed updates to the Instrument & Articles of Government which would be presented to the Board for approval once completed.

- b) Finance Working Group 25th April 2017: Notes from the meeting were presented and demonstrated the work the group had done in reviewing the management accounts and cashflow position. Additional expense for English and maths support, increased national insurance and pension costs were considered and their impact on a high pay to turnover ratio had been discussed, noting that staffing at Castle Dairy and the museum were also affecting this ratio. It had been proposed that cashflow projections beyond the end of the academic year should be included to identify months of highest risk going forward.

Emily Harris had suggested that an executive report be provided for the Board to accompany the management accounts, to identify what the Board needed to focus on. However, the full management accounts and comprehensive narrative would still be provided within Board papers. It was agreed that Louise Shrapnel would draft up ideas for how this should be presented.

The growth plan had been considered, noting that targets for 2016/17 had already been met although recognising that the growth would not be relevant if current general income targets were not met.

- c) Audit & Risk Committee 9th May 2017: two internal audits had been considered – Follow-up and Management Information, KPIs & Reporting, both of which had provided substantial assurance. The internal audit action plan for 2016/17 provided the Committee with assurance that recommendations were being met.

The internal audit strategy for 2017/18 had been considered and accepted by the Committee, based on levels of risk from the strategic plan in the risk register and on other key issues in the sector including maths and English, pay to turnover ratios. The plan was shared with the Board and contained some important data on the current status of the College which in turn had developed the risk-based audit plan. The committee had also considered a letter from the Chief Executive of the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) outlining responsibilities of Boards in the financial leadership of the College.

Gordon Watson reiterated the need to have another business governor on the committee to ensure quoracy was met and invited members to attend the November meeting where the financial statements are considered.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Take assurance that the Committees and Finance Working Group were undertaking their responsibilities
- Welcome the continuation of Michelle Clement as Staff Governor
- Incorporate expectations of the FE Commissioner in the governance SAR
- Request additional Board member to join Audit & Risk Committee
- Receive the Audit Planning document and Letter from the ESFA Chief Executive

1740 **Teaching, Learning & Assessment report**

(including curriculum choices following the Strategy event)

The Director of Curriculum & Quality provided additional information to the Board following the strategy event including A level recruitment, higher education including the HE review achievement and apprenticeships. (see minute 1737 above)

The report also identified the need for improvements in systems to support learner target setting and progress monitoring. Curriculum hours were also identified as a potential for cost cutting but the impact on reputation, learner outcomes and progressions were included.

In respect of quality of teaching, learning & assessment, the report reminded the Board that 98% of staff met college standards with 93% being judged so in their first observation. 100% of assessors and learning assistants observed met College standards.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the Teaching, Learning & Assessment report

1741 **Management Accounts and Growth Plan**

The Director of Finance & Resources presented the March management accounts, identifying the key risks facing the College with a predicted deficit position at year end. At risk income streams were identified and included Cumbria County Council and Edge income lines. However, opportunities through increased apprenticeship recruitment and reviews of staffing will both impact on the end of year position.

Financial Key performance indicators were considered along with the balance sheet and cashflow position.

Much of the discussion over this item was covered under the Finance Working Group report (1739a above). However, the Principal announced that an improving picture was being identified in the April accounts. A target of £100k had been put in for Edge delivery and activity estimated at £85k was already scheduled to take place over the next few months. The April management accounts had been completed prior to the meeting, and the College is now showing the current position against a budgeted surplus of £85k, a forecast of £75k trading profit.

Emily Harris challenged why cash was still showing a negative position when income is improving but was advised that payment for delivery was often impacted by complex processes such as ESF paperwork and evidence requirements.

The growth plan was reviewed with an updated position on higher education applications. The plan shows that the targets for 2016/17 have been surpassed and the current position for 2017/18 also shows an increase against target

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Accept the management accounts and growth plan for March noting the early intervention process and estimations of improvement going forward

1742 **Capital Projects Update**

The updated position in respect of Castle Dairy was presented, with the re-opening on 10th May following extensive post-flooding refurbishment, mostly funded via insurance. There has been a lot of media interest in the re-opening and bookings were reported to be encouraging and includes a new link through to the Wildman Street Art Gallery. It was also reported that SLDC had put forward a suggestion for the College to take on a co-terminus lease with the Allen Building, Museum and Castle Dairy and more detail would be provided.

The Chair stressed the importance of the education element of the Castle Dairy not being lost and it was reported that College hospitality students were gaining valuable experience of this type of provision alongside advertising of apprenticeship vacancies.

It was agreed that income and expenditure reports for Castle Dairy activity would be provided to the Board going forward.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Note the good progress at Castle Dairy
- Receive income and expenditure reports at future meetings as well as updates on apprentice achievements

1743 **Museum**

With the current management arrangement with SLDC running out in March 2019, the future of the museum was considered with proposals put forward over re-purposing of the building for the benefit of the college and its students.

It was reported that the application for University Type 2 accreditation remained outstanding with additional information requested that would include approval of the collections disposal policy and the business plan through to 2022. It was reported that the SLDC cabinet consideration of the museum was likely to be delayed until later in the year due to the general election.

Governors did not feel in a position to accept the policy and plan as not enough detail was presented but agreed that further work should be done by the College to reconcile the policy and the plan and then seek Board agreement outside the meeting.

The Board RESOLVED to:

- Request further work to be done on this agenda item
- Seek approval from the Board once reconciliation exercise completed

1744 **Policy Updates**

Fees Policy 2017/18: the fees policy was presented by the Director of College Information Services and based on funding guidelines for next year. The guide to funding and fees provided an overview of anticipated fees and exemptions for different kinds of students. It was explained that some further amendments would need to be made to reach the final version however, the Board agreed in principle to the policy changes and requested that the final version be sent to them once completed.

Fra Cooke questioned whether the fees were competitive and whether or not the College was charging high enough fees and was advised that checks were in place noting that there were high levels of drop out from some courses offered free of charge.

The Board RESOLVED to

- accept the current amendments to the policy
- approve the policy subject to further amendments being made
- receive a copy of the finalised policy

1745 **Any other Business**

There was no other business

1746 **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 5th July 2017