

SHREWSBURY COLLEGES GROUP

MINUTES

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| Group : | SHREWSBURY COLLEGES GROUP – BOARD MEETING | Date: | 25/03/2019 |
| Location: | HIGHER EDUCATION CENTRE, LONDON ROAD CAMPUS, SHREWSBURY | Time: | 5.30 p.m. |
| Membership: | Andy Allen, Meg Chandler, Gordon Channon, Christine Davies, Iain Gilmour, Christina Gore, Joshua Harry, Richard Heath, Nigel Merchant, David Pulford, Robert Rosson, Rex Sartain, James Staniforth (Principal/Chief Executive), Michael Thompson, Paula Tucker and Michael Willmot. | | |
| IN ATTENDANCE: | <u>Members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT):</u> Catherine Armstrong, Group Vice Principal, Curriculum Support and Business Development (GVP – CS&BD) Mark Brown, Group Vice Principal, I.T. and Strategic Development (GVP – IT&SD) Donna Lucas, Group Vice Principal - Human Resource Development (GVP – HRD) Paul Morgan – Director of A Level Studies (DoALS) Paul Partridge – Finance Director (FD) Chris Pemberton, Group Vice-Principal, Quality and Curriculum Development (GVP – Q&CS). Clerk to the Board – Tracy Cottee R. Wilson – Co_Opted F&BO Committee Member. | | |
| APOLOGIES: | Meg Chandler and Mitch Neale. | | |

Prior to the meeting, the Board received a Development Briefing from the College Health & Safety Officer on the Board's responsibility with respect to Health & Safety. The Board was advised of the College's health & safety framework and how the College managed health and safety risks. The Finance & Business Operations Committee received regular reports on health & safety and reports from the H&S Lead Governor. The Board received assurance on health & safety compliance through an annual health & Safety Report and approved the Health & Safety Policy Statement annually.

PART I – OPEN ITEMS

01/19. **Declarations of Interest**

1. Andy Allen declared a Standing Interest as an employee of Harper Adams University.
2. Richard Heath declared a Standing Interest as an employee of Harper Adams University.
3. Gordon Channon declared an interest in Minute Number 07/19 (known to the candidate). He did not speak or vote.
4. Iain Gilmour declared an interest in Minute Number 07/19 (known to the candidate). He did not speak or vote.
5. Roger Wilson declared an interest in Minute Number 08/19. He left the meeting for the duration of the item and did not speak or vote.

02/19. **Minutes of Board Meeting Held 10 December 2018** (Appendix – Agenda Item 3)

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2018, be signed and approved as a true record.

03/19. **Matters Arising**

None.

04/19. **Chair's Announcements**

- The Chair made a presentation to David Pulford at the end of his Final Term of Office as an Independent Governor. Mr Pulford thanked the Board for his gift and paid tribute to the board members for coming together on the merger and to the Principal/CEO and Senior Leadership Team;
- The next Learning Walk would take place at English Bridge (English & Photography) on 10 April 2019 from 09.00 a.m.

05/19. **Principal/CEO's Report**

The Principal/CEO gave a verbal report to the meeting on the following -

- Attendance – 90/1% compared to 89.1% for the same period 2017 – 2018;
- Retention – 95.9% compared to 94.5% for the same period 2017 – 2018;
- Applications (including Higher Education) update;
- 16 – 19 Funding Allocation for 2019 -2020;
- Report from attendance at the AoC Quality & Accountability Group Meeting held on 20 March 2019;
- OFSTED Consultation on the proposed new Education Inspection Framework;
- CDF – additional funding to support industry placements;
- AEB Devolution – update on contracts secured and applications outstanding;
- Apprenticeships Update;
- Successful applicants to Oxbridge;
- Running classes for SAT – the Board sought assurance that measures were in place to safeguard visiting students and was advised that robust arrangements were included in the relevant Service Level Agreements;
- The F&BO Committee had discussed short-term temporary solutions to support capacity issues for Brick & Construction Trades. Further analysis now indicated that there was a business case to support the anticipated additional demand in these areas, which would be considered by F&BO at its next meeting;
- A written report would be circulated to all governors in the final week of Term updating on the outcomes of Progress Week 3.

Resolved: That the report of the Principal/Chief Executive be noted.

06/19. **Summary of Minutes and Recommendations from Committees** (Appendices – Agenda Item 7a - & 7d)

Quality, Standards & Curriculum Committee – 28 January 2019 (Appendix – Agenda item 7a) (draft Minutes previously circulated)

The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had considered reports on –

- The SLT officers present updated the Committee on Progress Grade Period 2 for A levels and vocational provision (previously circulated), being the second set of progress grades for the academic year. The College was now able to track changes between collection points as well as equivalent points in different years, achieving more accurate predictions. All course review meetings had taken place with new, realistic targets in place for 2018 – 2019. Interventions were in place with the most significantly at risk or lower-performing areas being the first as part

of this cycle. After hearing details of the College's processes in place to encourage students to achieve and progress, the Committee expressed support for the approaches taken, as it was of the view that this was a timely intervention to support the high grade strategy of the College and to offer support to students to effectively manage their stress and workload;

- Regarding BTEC Subsidiary Diploma, the Committee had reviewed High Grades assessments and directed that actions for Programme Leaders were to set targets for the remaining work to produce the outcomes to, at least, maintain the ALPS award of 3 from 2018;
- The Committee had noted that the DfE Performance Tables Summary 2017/2018, had been published and that the College had performed exceptionally well both nationally and locally. The Board recorded its congratulations to the College and staff.
- The Committee had debated the recent Office for Student (OFS) research report on the impact of unconditional grades offered by some universities on outcomes for A levels. The Academic Staff Governor (EB & WB) had described how he addressed the risk to outcomes in his subject area, by acknowledging the achievement in gaining a university place but highlighting the risks of complacency to students. He considered that an unconditional offer could reduce stress on the student, notwithstanding the risk to motivation and outcomes;
- The Apprenticeship Lead Governor continued to meet termly with the GVP CS & BD to be assured that actions were being taken to improve both the rate of timely completions and improve outcomes. The Committee had again challenged the rate of timely completions and the GVP CS & BD had explained the challenges in securing assessors that could deliver student support to the College's high and expected standards. The Committee would receive a presentation on apprenticeship provision, specifically, the impact of recent development both national and local on the College's provision and quality systems at its next meeting, to which all governors were invited;
- The Committee had reviewed the latest update of the HE Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP). The HE Lead Governor confirmed satisfaction with the College's progress made against improvements identified. The HE Student Governor had commented on the effectiveness of the College's plagiarism protocols and the impact on protecting students' original work. The Committee had sought assurance that vulnerable students were protected from exploitation for plagiarism;
- The Committee had reviewed an overview of results from the Induction Satisfaction Survey of academic and vocational learners conducted in November 2018. Whilst overall, the results were positive and it was now easier to identify trends and target specific issues, the Committee had requested an update on actions identified at the next meeting;
- The Committee had acknowledged the impact of the Safeguarding and E&D Lead Governor in leading on Board challenge to secure a high percentage of staff completions on the mandatory staff module.

Search & Governance Committee – 13 February 2019 (Appendix – Agenda item 7b) (draft Minutes previously circulated)

The Committee Chair gave a verbal update and presented recommendations -.

07/19. **Board Vacancies - Interviews with Prospective Candidate**

The Committee had interviewed candidate for the Co-Opted Audit Committee Member vacancy, considering the current Board skills set, the Board's Succession Plan and the performance, contribution and skills base of the individual interviewed.

Resolved: That Colin Sharp be appointed to the Co-Opted Audit Committee Member vacancy with effect from 26 March 2019, for a Term of two years and be appointed to the current vacancy on the Audit Committee.

08/19. Board Vacancies and Succession Planning

Having given careful consideration and having due consideration to the Board's skills audit and succession strategy, the Committee made a number of recommendations -

Resolved: That –

- 1. Helen Hawksworth be appointed as Academic Staff Governor (London Road Campus) for a Four Year Term, with effect from 26 March 2019; and**
- 2. Roger Wilson be appointed as an Independent Governor for a Term of Four Years with effect from 26 March 2019.**

The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had considered reports on –

- New insolvency legislation, which made clear how colleges would be managed if they became insolvent, had come into force on 31 January 2019. Whilst, currently, the College had a Good ESFA Financial Health Score and had in place robust controls to maintain a sustainable financial position, the Committee noted that the Guidance placed emphasis on the Board ensuring it had appropriate financial skills bases covered. The Committee noted that the latest Skills Audit showed that all of the key skills identified as required were present;
- As the College was anticipating an OFSTED Inspection, the Committee had identified a group of governors to prepare to meet inspectors. They had met with the Principal/CEO and GVP – Q&CM that day, as part of preparations;
- The Committee had reviewed the Board's Improvement plan and noted that all actions had been achieved by deadline. It had also noted progress against the 2018 – 2019 Governance KPIs. The Board particularly noted the high level of attendance at meetings and events. The Principal/CEO expressed the SLT's gratitude to the commitment shown by governors.

Finance & Business Operations Committee – 12 March 2019 (Appendices – Agenda item 7c)
(Minutes previously circulated)

The Committee Chair gave a verbal update and presented recommendations -.

09/19. College's Financial Position and Mid-Year Financial Budget – Update (Appendix 7ci previously circulated)

Resolved: that having considered the report, the Board received the Management Accounts for the financial reporting period 01 August to 31 January 2019, highlighting key results, measures and risks.

10/19. Capital Expenditure Update (Confidential Appendix 7cii previously circulated)

Resolved: That budgeted capital expenditure be increased by up to £150k to account for the delay in capital expenditure incurred in 2017/18.

Audit Committee – 21 November 2018 (Appendices – Agenda item 9d) (draft Minutes previously circulated)

The Committee Chair gave a verbal update and presented a recommendation -

11/19. Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework

The Committee had reviewed (previously circulated) the Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework (BAF) – February 2019 Update. The Committee had concluded that it considered the risks to have been appropriately identified and the management actions reported were effectively mitigating these risks.

The Committee had agreed that it use the October 2019 pre-meeting time slot to discuss and review the Risk Register Assurance Level grading system, quantifying impact criteria and probability assessment criteria.

The Board noted that SLT had reviewed and removed redundant risks to secure a more focussed and strategic Register and that RAG-rated assurance levels after existing controls were in place and expected assurance levels after proposed Action Plans had been completed were also recorded.

Resolved: That the Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework (BAF) February 2019 Update, as amended by the removal of Risks 2.13 and 3.2, be approved.

The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had considered reports on –

- the progress of Internal Audit Service (IAS) work in the College. The Committee had noted that two audits had been rescheduled (Student Support and GDPR) and that an audit for Network Controls had been put on hold. The Committee had agreed that instead it consider at the next meeting, a report setting out these issues so it could consider whether or not to continue with the Network Controls Internal audit and also provide relevant information for the internal auditors to enable a more focussed and value added audit, should this be required.
- Internal Audit Service Reviews – two had secured Substantial Assurance (Assurance Review of Admissions & Enrolments and Marketing) and one had secured Reasonable Assurance (Key Financial Controls – Income & Debtors). The Committee had asked that, going forward, reviews would place more focus on recommendations that added value.
- The Audit Recommendation Tracking Report and **had** supported the removal from the Tracking Report of those actions either completed since the last report or no longer considered relevant or where no further action was considered appropriate by management.
- The Annual Value for Money (VFM) Report. The Committee had acknowledged that current Financial Regulations required the submission of an Annual VFM Report and had agreed that, as there were other, more useful sources of assurance presented to Board members, this requirement be removed at the next review of Financial Regulations.

12/19. Sub-Contractor Management and Retained Funding Policy 2018/19

The Board reviewed the updated Sub-Contractor Management and Retained Funding Policy for 2018/19 (previously circulated). The College was required to have this Policy in place and approved by Board when sub-contracting Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funded activity. The College had not processed any new sub-contracted starts as at 21 March 2019, although starts were expected imminently.

Having reviewed the Policy, the Board

Resolved: That the Sub-Contractor Management and Retained Funding Policy 2018/19, be approved.

13/19. Risk

As part of the discussions on the College's Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework agreed (Board Min No. 67/17 refers), all committee agendas now featured a final item to consider whether risks connected with that committee had been effectively addressed in the meeting.

The Board also undertook a review of the risks within the remit of the Board. It was assured that the College was taking reasonable actions to mitigate these risks.

14/19. Date of Next Meeting – .20 May 2019. Venue – H.E. Centre, London Road Campus.

It was agreed that Minute Number 15/19 be considered as confidential under Article 16(2) (d) and Standing Order 11.

The Staff Governors, and all members of SLT with the exception of the Principal/CEO, Clerk and GVP – HRD left the meeting at this point.

15/19. Summary and Recommendations from Committees – Confidential

Confidential Minutes of Special Human Resources Committee – 20 December 2019 (Confidential Appendix – Agenda item 10c) (tabled)

The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had considered reports on –

- ITrent was deployed and working. People Manager was in use, with high engagement and positive feedback from users;
- the majority of performance management reviews had been completed to target and the College was preparing for 2018/19.
- The latest completion figures for staff mandatory training staff. Progress towards targets had improved and was ongoing; further sessions would be added to the training day schedule for 12 July 2019.
- The College's gender pay gap analysis to March 2018, which examined the difference between the average (mean or median) earnings of men and women. Although there had been an increase in the College's mean (average) gender pay gap of 10.9% and median (mid-point) of 18.2%, this was below the national average for all employees, full-time and part-time of 17.9% and largely due to the appointment of males into senior management positions previously held by females. The College's workforce was made up of 62.5% female and 37.5% male and had a higher proportion of females in Management and Support categories. The Report included an Action Plan to address identified issues, mostly to encourage females to work at the College, particularly women over 40, into middle management and senior teaching posts. The Committee had acknowledged that, since the period covered by the report (to March 2018), four of the five middle managers appointed to the College had been females over 40, which would reflect positively in the Report to March 2019.

The GVP - HRD also provided a confidential verbal update, details set out in a Confidential Minute.

The Principal/CEO and Clerk with the exception of the GVP – HRD left the meeting at this point.

Confidential Minutes of Board – 10 December 2018 (Confidential Appendix – Agenda item 10a) (previously circulated)

Resolved: That the Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2018, be signed and approved as a true record.

Special Remuneration Committee – 25 January 2019 (Confidential Appendix – Agenda item 10b) (previously circulated)

The Chair of the Committee provided a confidential verbal update, details set out in a Confidential Minute.

Resolved: That the recommendations of the Remuneration Committee set out in a Confidential Minute be approved.

The meeting concluded at 7.00 p.m.