

PUBLIC MINUTES



Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation of Yeovil College Held on Thursday 06 December 2018 at 17:00 In Boardroom, SMT Suite, Yeovil College

Members: Sam Best*; Mike Brinson*; Ken Comber*; Jacquie Dean [Chair]*; John Evans [Principal]*; Lee Harwood*; Clare Johnston [Student]*; Mark Lawrence; Rebecca Marshall*; Debbie Matthewson*; Netta Meadows; David Mills*; Paul Morey [Staff]*; Jagtar Ner; Gayle Pogson [Staff]*; Scott Roy*; Peter Thomas [Vice Chair]*

In attendance:

All items: Mark Bolton [Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality]*; Emma Cox [Vice Principal Finance & Resources]*;

Clerk: Kaz Corbett [Clerk]*

A Safeguarding Update Session for Board Members facilitated by Michelle Dennett, Head of Student Experience, was held prior to today's meeting.

1. MEETING PRELIMINARIES

Apologies for absence were received from Netta Meadows, Mark Lawrence and Jagtar Ner. The meeting remained quorate throughout.

Declarations of Interest: None declared on this occasion.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Board **APPROVED** the following minutes as true and accurate records of the meeting held on:

- 11 October 2018 Public
- 11 October 2018 Confidential

Both sets of minutes were signed by the Chair.

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Action and Query sheet was reviewed, updated and noted. The Vice Principal Finance and Resources informed the Board that the 2018-19 Leonardo Subcontracting Agreement was ready for signing by the Chair. All other actions were either complete, included elsewhere on today's agenda or being appropriately tracked and carried forward.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Board **noted** the Chair's Report which included headline updates on:

HE Registration

The Chair congratulated the HE manager and the HE team for achieving registration with the Office for Students, and also thanked the HE Lead Governor for her involvement. The Chair acknowledged the diligence required to complete the rigorous process.

CMT Awaydays 8 and 9 November 2018

Governors had been invited to participate on both days, with 8 November highlighted as the most important day. 6 Governors and the Clerk had been able to attend on the key date of 8 November and took part in the process of agreeing the judgements for the 2017/18 Self-Assessment Report. The Principal had been unwell, and the VP Curriculum & Quality covered the days well. CMT and Governors self-assessed the College as 'Good'. The Chair thanked the Governors who had attended, and asked for their feedback on the days. Members felt that they would have liked to have spent more time on the SAR, and would ask that more time was allocated to this in future.

Compliance against the AoC Code of Good Governance for English Colleges

Governors noted the outcomes of a self-assessment of the Board's performance against "the Code" which had recently been conducted by its Search and Governance Committee. The Board supported the conclusion that the Corporation is found to be performing strongly against the values and principal responsibilities as set out in the Code. Just two areas were found requiring improvement; actions have been planned to ensure compliance. The Search and Governance Committee would continue to monitor progress, and the Board would like to be kept updated on this.

IESG

IESG meetings have been postponed temporarily until 2019.

IoT BID

Ahead of today's meeting, members had received copies of an outline report, SWOT analysis and financial reports regarding the IoT project. The Chair informed the Board that IoT discussions will be an important element of the January Strategy day, and members were asked to fully explore these papers in readiness. Members were encouraged to approach the Vice Principals should they have any questions, or require any further information ahead of January's meeting.

AoC SW Principals and Chairs Event

David Mills gave a brief update on his experience at the recent AoC SW Principals and Chairs Event. The Principal had also attended and shared that Finance had been a focus for discussions, with all Colleges facing a challenging year.

Search and Governance

The Chair shared headlines from today's earlier Search & Governance Committee meeting. Independent members had received a copy of an informal Succession Plan which had been discussed at this meeting.

The Board **APPROVED** the following recommendations:

- Ken Comber to be reappointed for a further 4 year term of office commencing December 2019
- Peter Thomas's term of office to be extended by one year from 31/12/19 to 31/12/20. Peter to take on the role of Chair in Easter 2019
- Jacque Dean's term of office as Chair to be extended to Easter 2019, and as a Corporation member to be extended until December 2019
- The Committee to begin a targeted recruitment campaign for 2 new governors (ideally retired) one with significant FE experience to be promoted by Marketing Team, one with Senior business experience to be promoted initially through the Chamber of Trade

The Board then **APPROVED** the following as provisional recommendations:

- David Mills to take a shared Vice Chair role (dates to be decided)
- Lee Harwood to take a shared Vice Chair (dates to be decided)
- Jacque Dean to take a shared Vice-chair role in Easter 2019, before ultimate retirement in December 2019

5. COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Corporation noted the College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) which had been completed by the Principal and VP Curriculum and Quality with contributions from all areas of the College including Governors and the Clerk who had attended the CMT Awaydays in November.

The VP Curriculum & Quality briefly discussed the positive experience in completing the SAR, and the mostly accurate outcomes. He then highlighted the inconsistency between awarding an 'Outstanding' rating for Outcomes when Study Programmes and Teaching, Learning & Assessment have been awarded a 'Good' rating. The Board challenged the

Principal and the VP Curriculum & Quality on the reasoning for this. A Staff Governor shared that the discussions held during completion of the SAR suggested Staff were reluctant to judge themselves highly, as they could still see room for improvement. The Chair and Principal agreed that this high level of self-criticism is often the case throughout the College.

The Chair of Quality & Assurance declined an invitation from the Principal to review the Area himself; stating that he felt the Senior Management Team best placed to make a judgment. The Chair felt that if the Principal and VP Curriculum & Quality strongly believed the grade should be higher that this should be recognised. The Vice Chair Quality & Assurance made the recommendation to the Board to adjust the grade for Study programmes to 'Outstanding', and maintain Teach, Learning & Assessment as 'Good'. All members supported this.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the College's Self-Assessment Report and key judgements for 2017-18.

6. **TEACHING AND LEARNING REPORT**

The Corporation noted the Teaching and Learning Report for the first observation window in October. Within this first window there had been a Curriculum Area Review (CAR) looking at the Sport, UPS, Travel & Tourism and Performing Arts Curriculum Area. Previous CAR's had focussed on areas which were seen as underperforming, and in the interests of balance, this area had been selected because it had previously self-assessed as 'Outstanding'. The VP Curriculum & Quality gave a brief overview of the CAR process for the benefit of new Governors.

The Board viewed the full CAR report on screen and The VP Curriculum and Quality highlighted the positive findings from the observations, resulting in an 'Outstanding' grade for the area which supported their self-assessed grade. In particular it was noted that there was a strong family atmosphere within the department, which was felt to be of real benefit to students. One member asked why so many areas within the College are rated as 'Good' and this area as 'Outstanding', and questioned how this standard can be shared into other areas. The Principal felt the strong united team within the department was one of its greatest assets; however their unity is hard to replicate in Curriculum Areas which don't have such a team focus. The Board agreed that Sports is an area inclined to having a strong camaraderie. The VP Curriculum & Quality assured the Board that he was keen to share the Department's best practice around the College.

The VP Curriculum & Quality moved on to discuss the 61 learning walks completed around College in this first window. He commented that students' ability to show and discuss their target grades has improved, with their push and ambition for high grades coming across louder than expected. This could be an early reflection on the Value Added emphasis across College currently. It had been identified that some of the newer teaching staff need additional support in defining realistic targets for their learners.

7. **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

The Board **noted** the October 2018 Management Accounts and related financial commentary in addition to noting a verbal update from the Vice Principal Finance and Resources. Full details of these discussions are recorded separately in a confidential set of minutes.

The Board **approved** the Financial Action Plan based on the recommendation of the Audit and Finance & Remuneration Committees.

The financial impact of the IoT project will be discussed at the Corporation's Strategy Day in January.

8. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017/18**

The Corporation **noted** the Audit Completion Report (Management Letter) which covered both the Financial Statements and Regularity Assurance. Subject to the satisfactory conclusion of remaining audit work, Mazars LLP anticipate issuing an unqualified opinion without modification.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the 2017/18:

- Financial Statements

- Operating and Financial Review
- Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control
- Statement of Responsibilities
- Statement on the College's Regularity, Propriety and Compliance with Funding body terms and conditions of funding
- Letters of Representation

The Corporation **noted** the reconciliation of July Management Accounts to the Financial Statement, alongside a verbal update from the VP Finance & Resources.

9. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Corporation **noted** the Principal's Report. On this occasion there was particular emphasis upon:

- CMT Away Days
- New Ofsted Role
- A Level CAM Vacancy
- Social Media Update
- Level 4/5 in Business in Partnership with SSDC
- New Social Work Degree
- Apprenticeship Structure Change
- College Performance

The Principal gave an additional verbal update regarding water leaks due to the recent poor weather. Although the Board has agreed to freeze capital spend, this issue will need to be investigated. A roofing specialist is due to advise on approximate costs and the VP Finance & Resources will consider the options.

The Board then noted the updated Operating Statement for 2018/19 and challenged some of the areas with an amber RAG rating. The delay in the full roll out of Smart Assessor was discussed, and a Governor commented that in their role as a College Sub-contractor they had been frustrated with the programme so far.

10. **LEGAL, POLICY and REGULATORY MATTERS**

Student Union Financial Arrangements

The VP Finance & Resources informed the Board that the Student Union Financial Accounts had not been audited this year due to their small size. The Chair questioned whether these accounts should be audited regardless of size, but was reassured by other members of the Board that this was standard procedure for small charitable accounts. Spot checks are carried out by the Finance Department to ensure legitimacy. The VP Finance & Resources noted the accounts currently run outside of the standard financial year; this will be adjusted for the next set of accounts.

The Board **APPROVED** the Student Union Financial Arrangements (including accounts).

Health and Safety Policy

The Board **APPROVED** the updated Health and Safety Policy.

Children's Centre Policy: Child Protection and Safeguarding Children

The Board **APPROVED** the updated Policy with recommendation from the Safeguarding Lead Governor.

Probationary Policy and Procedure

The Board **APPROVED** the Policy and **delegated future approvals to SMT.**

Complaints Annual Report 2017/18

The Board **noted** the Complaints Annual Report for 2017/18 which included the previous two years data for comparative purposes. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality highlighted that only 19 complaints were made this year, forming a consistent downwards trend over the last 3 years. In addition, only 13 of these complaints were upheld. Clearer expectations for students could help to reduce the amount of initial complaints. The Board agreed that given the number of students on campus the complaints represent a minority.

Office for Students Annual Accountability Return

The Board **noted** this return, which was **APPROVED** by the Board retrospectively to enable submission by the 3 December deadline imposed by the OfS.

Safeguarding and Equality & Diversity (SED)

The Board **noted** a verbal update on Safeguarding and E&D presented by the VP Curriculum & Quality and Lead Governor Safeguarding. Particular points noted included:

- Separate Safeguarding and Equality & Diversity meetings are more effective
- There have been 2 major safeguarding incidents for the team to handle
- There have been a large number of minor safeguarding referrals / incidents
- Lead Governor Safeguarding highlighted her confidence in the College safeguarding processes and team

HE Updates

Lead Governor HE commended the HE team for the recent OfS submission. She informed the Board that the College is sadly unable to participate in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) awards this year due to not meeting the student numbers criteria required for entry.

The Board would like to invite Head of HE into March 2019 meeting to give an update on HE progress and aims.

Whistleblowing, H&S and Fraud

The Board **noted** a Paper containing full details of an incident of suspected fraud which had been reported by the Vice Principal at the last meeting. The Board **delegated authority** for any suspected Fraud to be monitored by the Audit Committee and only brought to the Board should it become a confirmed instance. There were no further incidents of Fraud or Whistleblowing to report on this occasion.

Student Voice

The Chair announced to the Board that today's meeting would mark the end of Clare Johnston's term of office as HE Student Governor. The Board thanked Clare for her contribution to the Board since January 2016, and wished her well with the conclusion of her studies and new lecturing position at the College. Clare thanked the Board for the experience and would like to note that any issues she has brought to their attention have been recognised. She added that the College has significantly improved since she joined. A brief presentation took place.

Staff Voice

The following points were raised by the Staff Governors in attendance at today's meeting:

- Staff survey response is up to c.80%
- Workload and stress had been raised at the Teaching Staff Voice. One Board member asked if there were measures in place to alleviate Staff stress levels. Both the Principal and Lead Safeguarding Governor assured the Board that they were confident there were strong measures in place to protect Staff wellbeing. The Board will explore this further once staff survey results are available in January.
- IT is a recurring problem. The IT Department are aware and looking at solutions
- Staff wellbeing week will be held January 14th -18th
- Business Support Governor had asked Staff members for feedback on Staff Voice. Responses were positive and recognised the importance of an open forum for Staff and Management.

The Chair congratulated the team at Davinci for their continued hard work in running such a successful, busy restaurant which is enjoyed by so many and is a real asset to the College. The Chair also congratulated the College for the success of the recent Christmas Fayre, in particular thanking the Marketing Team and Staff who had given their time on a weekend to support the event.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL

The Board **noted** the following 2017/18 Annual Reports:

- **Risk Management**
- **Health and Safety**
- **Audit Committee**, which included the following assurance statement (unchanged from last year) from the Committee to the Corporation, to the Principal (as Accounting Officer) and to the Skills Funding Agency:

“Having regard to the reports of the Internal Audit Service and the Financial Statements/Regularity auditors and on the basis of the work of the Committee during the year, it is our conclusion that the College has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control to ensure that the Corporation has fulfilled its statutory responsibility for the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the safeguarding of its assets, and to manage the achievement of its objectives”.

The Board also **noted** key business from the draft minutes of the last Committee meeting held on 21 November 2018 which had not been covered elsewhere on today’s agenda (including risk).

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other items of business on this occasion.

NEXT ORDINARY MEETING

Thursday 24 January 2018 at the end of the Corporation’s Strategy Day.

Meeting closed at 19:10

Head of HE

Board

