

BOSTON COLLEGE**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION ON 15 MAY 2019**

1. PRESENT

Peter Cropley (Chair), Andy Atkins, Stephen Brown, Steve Crozier, David Earnshaw, David Hanson, Jo Maher, Terry Moore, Chris Pett, Michelle Sacks (joined the meeting from Point 5a), Ann Savage, Gerry Tawton (joined the meeting from Point 4c), Ben Webb and Helen Wright.

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Rachael Baker (Director of Planning and Performance), Paul Collins (Director of Business Development), Jen Durrant (Head of HR and Organisation Development), Craig Gosling (Head of Quality), Vicki Locke (Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality), Dawn Telford (Head of Learner Services) and Tim White (Interim Head of Curriculum: Growth and Planning).

Apologies for absence were received from Helen Mather and Nick Worth.

Meeting attendance: 82%

The Chair welcomed Jen Durrant and Tim White to their first meeting of the Corporation.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The Clerk to the Corporation advised members that there was a student governor vacancy which would not be filled until the next academic year when elections could take place.

3. ACTION LOG

Members reviewed the progress made against items identified on the action log.

4. MINUTES**a) Corporation – 1 March 2019**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2019 were reviewed and approved as a correct record.

Members noted that the options for addressing the Skegness lease issue were to be looked at by the Finance and Resources Committee at its June meeting. ●

b) Finance and Resources Committee – 15 April 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2019 were reviewed.

c) Remuneration Committee – 15 April 2019

Gerry Tawton joined the meeting at this point

Staff governors and observers withdrew from the meeting at this point.

Members reviewed the minutes of the Remuneration Committee on 15 April 2019 and discussed and approved a recommendation made by the committee.

Staff governors and observers re-joined the meeting

d) Standards Committee – 24 April 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2019 were reviewed.

e) Audit Committee – 14 March 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2019 were reviewed.

Helen Wright asked about the discrepancy identified on apprenticeship income and whether this was picked up by Audit. Jo Maher confirmed that it had been picked up by Managers within the College and addressed.

5. REPORTS

a) Principal's

Members received a report from the Principal on a number of strategic and College related matters.

Jo Maher highlighted a few key sections of her report including the national push for audit standards to be improved, which was expected to work its way through to the sector.

Jo gave members an update on the Institute of Technology and advised that the College had been asked to notify any changes from the original proposal. Jo and Debbie Holland have a lot of work to progress to the contract stage. Jo advised that it was not realistic to expect building works to commence in July because of the expected timing of contract signatures but this could work better if it coincided with the completion of the EMAT building.

Members were advised that the bid which had recently been submitted to the Greater Lincolnshire LEP was to be considered at a meeting on 24 May and an outcome should be known soon thereafter.

In reviewing applications members noted that HE applications had increased significantly. David Earnshaw asked about the source of growth and a summary of key developments was given. Vicki Locke advised that the College's plans in this area were progressing well. Jo advised members that the College is working with local schools and particularly commented on work being done with Haven High School.

Michelle Sacks joined the meeting at this point.

Jo circulated a letter from the FE Commissioner which members noted and it was agreed that it would be useful to discuss the implications of the letter when David Hughes attends the Corporation meeting in July. Jo ran through the College position with regard to the specific recommendations and it was noted that the College was developing electronic reports to address space utilisation.

Jo advised members that the new Ofsted framework had been published and information on this would be going to the Standards Committee. In response to a query from David Earnshaw about Boston Borough Council support for EMAT equipment, Michelle Sacks advised that he council was likely to be asking for further information.

A discussion took place about staff engagement as there is a lot of work on and Jo advised that feedback was being obtained through a focussed approach. Michelle Sacks asked if staff engagement affected the teaching environment and Jo advised that some staff actively engage while others choose not to but the level of response to the staff survey is very high. The College is looking to extend its focussed approach to engagement. Staff governors were asked to comment on this. Steve Crozier suggested that Managers being seen around the College is helpful. Ben Webb suggested that there

needs to be a variety of approaches to get engagement. In response to a query from Peter Cropley, Jo commented that staff engagement is progressing, but cannot all be achieved at once.

Members were reminded that there would be an informal meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee on Monday which all members are invited to attend and which would be looking at the detailed budget planning for 2019/20 particularly in light of the commissioners report.

b) Finance and Risk Management

Members received a report from the Director of Finance which was presented by Jo Maher since it was noted that Debbie Holland was attending the Finance Directors' Conference.

Members reviewed the management accounts, five-year financial forecast and risk management information presented. Jo Maher advised that the forecast surplus for the year was slightly ahead and cashflow remained healthy. There have been a few positive developments on income generation including Anglophiles looking to extend the number of student spaces over the summer. £20,000 is being obtained for digital investment and a consultant will be working with the College to develop some new course offers. The Executive team is working prudently and Gerry Tawton highlighted that there were some areas where there would potentially be an underspend by the year end.

Chris Pett asked in relation to apprenticeship income whether any other potential discrepancies had been identified. Jo Maher confirmed that no new issues had been identified and the ESFA had acknowledged issues with their reports. Action had been taken to prevent a recurrence of the issue. Rachael Baker advised that other colleges are only just finding this particular problem.

Gerry Tawton asked about the possibility of looking at approaches to pension provision in other colleges. Jo advised that Debbie is trying to progress this. Peter Cropley asked whether any consideration had been given to the effect on pension schemes of potential political changes and this was noted as something to watch for the future. Gerry Tawton advised that he has applied to be an employer representative on the pension scheme panel.

c) Property

Members received a report from the Director of Business Development on property developments.

Paul Collins advised that the EMAT development was proceeding well and that the planned IoT development will transform neglected areas of the College although this will involve some upheaval and careful planning will be required. The College is also looking to open up some unused areas in the Halls of Residence to give more flexibility in the future.

In relation to the GLLEP bid Jo Maher advised that she has been speaking to the local authority about the possibility of acquiring additional car parking spaces. There is an identified need to add capacity or to look at options such as encouraging car sharing.

Gerry Tawton asked about planned increased numbers from Anglophiles and Paul commented on the background to this. Jo also highlighted that agents from China were in College and that this market offered further opportunities. The latter work will be enhanced if it is possible to run it alongside an agreement with the Universities on progression. Michelle Sacks asked about the social offer linked to the Council to attract learners to the College. It was noted that many of the students would actually prefer to be City based so 1 year is realistic. A discussion also took place about homestay options

as opposed to residency in the Halls. Jo advised members that the Halls were the preferred choice because homestay for students carries more risk. Dawn Telford suggested that homestay may actually be a parent preference rather than what the students would like.

d) Leadership Business Plan

Jo Maher presented the updated Leadership Business Plan highlighting progress which had been made against the targets. She addressed the areas which were still under development and were therefore shown within the plan as partially achieved. Members noted in particular the procurement exercise to support the AEB offer.

David Earnshaw asked how apprenticeship PMRs were going. Craig Gosling advised that in the first window the outcomes were good but not outstanding but window 2 was seeing some best practice emerging. Vicki Locke advised that oversight of apprentices had been broadened. David Earnshaw asked if this had resolved the issues which had been highlighted. Vicki confirmed that the College was looking at the apprenticeship data thoroughly and regularly and knows exactly where it is on performance.

A discussion took place about promotion of the College and the need to increase sales capacity. Michelle Sacks asked about the Business Breakfasts which the sales team supported. She advised that the Boston Business Breakfasts were perceived to be doing better than those in some other areas of the county.

A discussion took place about College apprenticeships. It was confirmed that the College did have some apprenticeships in targetted areas but this was unlikely to expand because it was not necessarily the right thing for the College to do financially.

In respect of the item on mandatory training, Peter Cropley noted that there were one or two governors who still had some paperwork to complete and asked them to do so as soon as possible. ●

e) Governance

Members received a report from the Clerk to the Corporation on the proposed introduction of a Senior Postholder remuneration code and the calendar of meetings for 2019/20.

Members noted that the suggestion that a Remuneration Code be adopted had been reviewed by both the Search and Governance and Remuneration Committees and it was recommended for adoption. Members agreed to adopt the code and to make an associated amendment to the Code of Good Governance as suggested.

Meeting dates for 2019/20 were approved and it was confirmed that diary invitations will be circulated. ●

f) Gender Pay Gap

Members received a report from the Head of HR and Organisational Development.

Jen Durrant took members through the calculation of the data being reported in respect of the College's Gender Pay Gap from the March 2018 payroll. She confirmed that the College was not concerned with the level of gap being reported and advised members how this was influenced by factors such as in-house cleaning and catering. Members noted that the figures were favourable as compared with other colleges and the broader education sector. Peter Cropley asked if the College was happy with the figures and Jo Maher confirmed that it was.

g) Office for Students

Members discussed a letter which had been sent to the Chair about financial viability and sustainability by the Office for Students.

Jo Maher advised members about the contents of the letter and it was noted that the Office for Students tended to be stronger on direction and intervention than the previous regime. The letter particularly suggested that the Office for Students wanted assurance on growth forecasts. It was noted that the Office for Students relies on ESFA financial assurance and it had been suggested that further education colleges would not generally meet the same benchmark as universities. Gerry Tawton suggested that it would be useful to look at the College performance in percentages compared to the financial measures identified in the letter.

Helen Wright asked about potential increase in fees and Jo advised that this was being looked at by the College Executive. Dawn Telford advised members that the Office for Students had tightened up its requirements on access and participation and this has affected the universities' behaviour in respect of widening participation.

Vicki Locke advised members that the Office for Students had recently suggested that the HERA 2017 was required reading for members. She advised that she had a summary of the requirements of the act which would be circulated with the minutes.

6. GOVERNOR LINKS

It was noted that several members were in the midst of completing their governor link activities and it was agreed that copies of the guidance should be recirculated to all members.

7. NATWEST

Since there are a number of references in minutes to NatWest and banking, David Hanson reminded members that he was employed by NatWest Bank.

8. VERBAL REPORTS

The Principal asked members to note a number of points:

- a) Ashok Kumar has left the College to pursue personal interests
- b) It is being reported that further colleges are interested in the potential merger with Peterborough Regional College
- c) Information was provided on the development of the relationship with Boston United.

9. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meetings of the Corporation would take place on 3 July 2019 and David Hughes, Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges, would be a guest speaker.