

BOSTON COLLEGE**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION ON 5 DECEMBER 2018**

1. PRESENT

Peter Cropley (Chair), Andy Atkins, Stephen Brown, Steve Crozier, David Earnshaw, Jo Maher, Helen Mather, Chris Pett, Ann Savage, Gerry Tawton, Ben Webb, Nick Worth, 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), Debbie Holland (Director of Finance), Vicki Locke (Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality) and Dawn Telford (Head of Learner Services).

Meeting attendance: 89%

Apologies for absence were received from David Hanson.

2. MEMBERSHIP

Members considered recommendations for two new appointments from the Search and Governance Committee and a nomination from the students. Members agreed that Michelle Sacks should be appointed as a member for a 4-year term, Terry Moore should be appointed for a 2-year term and Kaspars Zvejnieks should be appointed as a student member until the end of the 2019-20 academic year.

Michelle Sacks, Terry Moore and Kaspars Zvejnieks joined the meeting at this point.

3. ACTION LOG

Members reviewed progress against items identified on the action log.

4. MINUTESa) Corporation – 24 October 2018

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2018 were reviewed and approved as a correct record.

Jo Maher gave members an update on the position regarding the proposed Spalding lease which had been withdrawn. David Earnshaw asked about the use of the space which would now be available and Jo explained that the College was currently developing plans. Nick Worth explained that the change had come about because Higher Education was now more prominent than it had been when the lease had first been proposed.

b) Search and Governance Committee – 19 November 2018

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2018 were reviewed.

c) Finance and Resources Committee – 19 November 2018

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2018 were reviewed.

Jo Maher provided an update on pensions issues and anticipated a 7% increase in Teachers Pension Scheme employer contributions. It has now been confirmed that the Department for Education will be funding the increased costs.

The College is still forecasting modest surpluses in future years and modelling market share data to support its estimates.

Gerry Tawton asked about legal advice on the JVA for the Institute of Technology. Jo reported that the other participating colleges will share the advice and costs of obtaining it. Gerry Tawton also asked about a further bid to the LEP for funding. Jo gave an update on the latest position on the bid which was due later in the week and was now completed in draft form. The bid is receiving support from a number of parties. The anticipation is that this may not be successful in this round but would place a marker for future funding if it was not successful this time.

Chris Pett asked about the impact on the College of the EMAT anticipated completion date of October 2019. Jo Maher advised that the College was not anticipating any adverse impact. The students will move as soon as it is ready.

5. REPORTS

a) Principal's

Members received a report from the Principal on a number of strategic matters affecting the FE sector and news on College specific matters.

Jo Maher advised members that there was no anticipated significant rise in funding and that a negative view of the sector had been created by a number of colleges getting into difficulties. She reported that a T-Level consultation is now out but that there is a suggestion that there may not be a full national roll out of T-levels. It is estimated that 20% of provision will transfer to T-levels. The College anticipates getting another uplift in funding for capacity building. Full implementation of T-levels is likely to be in 2020-21.

Jo advised members about the likely impact on funding of devolution which would be largely mitigated by a reduction being in work carried out through partnerships. The College is looking at the possibility of working with a neighbouring LEP to offset this reduction. Jo advised that a new data analytic tool will give the College a better view of future funding.

Peter Cropley asked about student numbers. Jo advised that the latest ILR submission showed a small margin over the target of 1613 learners and also an increase in the banding values which means that at this stage the College is slightly above contract. Stephen Brown asked about open event numbers and how they compared. It was noted that it was difficult to give a definitive answer because the application processes had changed but that a recent open event had been the busiest for a number of years. Dawn Telford explained that the application statistics are monitored on a monthly basis and told members about the application process and tracking arrangements. Although it is quite early in the application process, there had been busy open evenings and the demographics for 16-18 potential students was slightly up. Ann Savage commented that the social media coverage was good for the open evenings. Jo Maher reported that she had been to a Lincolnshire County Council meeting with the schools and that Heads were now much clearer about the College's approach to applications. The College is keen to develop its relationship with the schools.

b) Finance

Members received a report from the Director of Finance on the College's annual accounts for 2017-18 and other financial matters.

Debbie Holland shared with members a minor update to the accounts which had been reviewed by the Finance and Resources Committee and Audit Committee. Both of the committees had gone through the accounts in detail and the Corporation was asked to

note the assurances given by the committee and the auditors as preparation for the signing off of the accounts. This included the annual report of the Risk Management group. Members approved acceptance of the recommended re-appointment of internal and financial accounts auditors, the presented annual internal audit report and plan for 2018-19 and the external auditors findings. The 2017-18 annual accounts and representations were approved for sign off.

Jo Maher pointed out to members the contents of the financial auditors findings report on sector issues which was a useful summary for members to note.

Debbie Holland also presented the management accounts for 30 September 2018 and the feedback received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency on the financial plan which were noted by Corporation members.

c) Governance

Members received a report from the Clerk to the Corporation on governance issues.

Members noted that in addition to the new appointments which had been approved the Search and Governance Committee was recommending the re-appointment of 3 members.

Andy Atkins, Chris Pett and Gerry Tawton left the room whilst the Corporation considered recommendations for their re-appointment.

Nick Worth reported that the committee had looked in detail at these proposed re-appointments and the committee was in favour of all 3 members being re-appointed. Four year re-appointments from the end of the existing terms were agreed.

Andy, Chris and Gerry re-joined the meeting.

Members reviewed the performance of the Standards Committee and Audit Committee against their 2017-18 targets and noted that both committees had met their targets.

Targets for 2018-19 were approved as:

Standards Committee

- Maintain an attendance of 75% or higher
- Maintain oversight of the impact of leadership actions to achieve a consistent and improved HE student experience
- Monitor apprenticeship performance through monitoring of related KPI's
- Oversight of T-Level Strategy

Audit Committee

- Make an annual report to the Corporation
- 80% attendance at meetings
- Carry out in-depth reviews of the College's top 10 risks.

6. PARTNERSHIP CONTRACTS 2018-19

Members received a report from the Partnership Manager on contracts which was presented by Rachael Baker.

David Earnshaw asked about the spread of spending for funds which had been released by contract changes and whether the College was comfortable with its exposure on the larger contracts. Rachael advised that the College was looking at a further potential partner which

was going through the due diligence process and would have a low level contract to increase local provision. The larger contracts were with proven partners. Rachael pointed out that there was some risk in the large contracts but all of the partnership delivery carries some risk and full risk assessments are carried out with quality management being key to the successful relationships.

Jo Maher advised that the changes in funding through devolution was affecting the market significantly. Discussions were taking place to set the strategy for next year and the Management team were specifically reviewing this. The anticipation is that with devolution coming in sub-contracting will reduce.

7. SAR UPDATE

The Vice-Principal: Curriculum & Quality presented information on the College's self-assessment report and the summary SAR document was circulated to members.

Vicki Locke explained the validation process which the SAR had gone through which included external support in the review process. The process is thorough and the final SAR leads into the Quality Improvement Plan. Vicki highlighted significant shifts in outcomes with some areas improving performance and Apprenticeships declining. Key strengths were highlighted as were weaknesses and it was noted that HE progression was a key issue. Vicki advised members that the Quality Improvement Plan will include identification of areas which need developments to become outstanding.

Ann Savage asked about feedback from learners and Vicki explained the different sources of information on learner views.

Gerry Tawton asked about performance and Vicki Locke highlighted that the College needs more learners getting high grades and progressing. Peter Cropley queried why apprenticeship performance had declined. Vicki explained that some historical data had affected the outcomes but that these learners had now been completed. There were some ongoing issues with retention in trade areas and a new structure to manage apprenticeships that had had some impact. David Earnshaw asked about key actions on apprenticeships. Vicki explained that these would include a review of the apprenticeship strategy, refining the offer, meeting with managers to promote apprenticeships, more regular review of data and other steps. The Standards Committee will have oversight of this process.

8. SEND REPORT

Members received a report from Inclusive Learning Managers which was presented by Dawn Telford.

Dawn explained that EHCP numbers were going up and that the SEND reform had produced an increased administrative burden with responsibility devolved to local authorities which in most cases for Boston College was Lincolnshire County Council. Dawn drew attention to the case studies reported within the document. Members agreed that the team managing this area of work was clearly doing a good job and agreed to congratulate them. ●

Chris Pett asked about the numbers of SEND enrolments and how this compared with national data. Dawn advised that the College's numbers were a little above the national figures but significantly above Lincolnshire figures for non-specialist colleges. The authorities had a structured approach to make sure the colleges could accommodate these learners rather than small independent providers doing so.

Helen Mather asked why there was a significant turnover of Learning Support Assistants. Dawn advised members that funding comes with the individual students and it is difficult to forecast this which increases the variability on jobs available. As a result many Learning Support Assistants are on casual contracts and the College is reviewing the mix of regular

and casual contracts. Nick Worth asked why the local authority cannot give better information for longer term planning. Dawn advised that the reforms have been very challenging for local authorities and have made this particularly difficult for them. She reported that the College has had a better relationship with the local authority in recent years which was a benefit to learners.

9. FE COMMISSIONERS LETTER

Jo Maher drew members attention to the Commissioners report. She advised that the FE Commissioner is critical to the relationship with the ESFA and the major focus of the commissioner is colleges' financial health. Governance is high on the Commissioners agenda and enhanced CPD for governors is being reviewed. Reviewing what information governors receive is part of this including such things as a focus on group sizes. Jo reported that the College is not anticipating a visit from the FE Commissioner but it needs to take time to review the report.

10. DFE GOVERNANCE GUIDE

The Clerk to the Corporation drew members attention to the newly published governance guide which was available to members on the College's intranet and also from the departments website.

11. PAY AWARD

Jo Maher advised members that staff would be informed of the proposed pay award before Christmas and she would then be offering meetings to staff in which to discuss this.

12. CONSTRUCTION EXTENSION

Jo Maher advised that the Construction extension was now complete and an opening was being planned with Employer Support. She asked members for suggestions for invitations.

13. DATES OF MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meetings of the Corporation would take place on:

1 March 2019
8 May 2019
3 July 2019