

The City of Liverpool College

Minutes of the Board meeting held on
12th November 2014

Present:

Ms Louise Barry
Ms Elaine Bowker (Principal)
Ms Charlotte Burns (Student Governor)
Ms Sue Carmichael
Ms Gemma Charters (Staff Governor)
Ms Clare Crowther
Ms Lydia Field
Mr Peter Grieve (Chair)
Ms Viv Lacey (Vice Chair)
Mr John Nolan (Staff Governor)
Mr Ian Pollitt
Dr Peter Tavernor
Mr David Wilson

In Attendance:

Ms Angela Cox (Deputy Principal)
Mr David Brennan (Vice Principal
Partnerships and Business Development)
Mr David McIntyre (Vice Principal Finance
and Corporate Resources)

Ms Christine Lenderyou (Clerk to the
Board)

Ms Jackie Manning (Head of School for
ICT, Computer Sciences and Digital)

The Chair had been unavoidably delayed so the Vice Chair was asked to Chair the meeting until his arrival. The Board decided that the item regarding recommendations from the Remuneration Group should be taken first so the Executive team (excluding the Principal) and the staff and student governors were asked to wait outside the room until the item was concluded.

14.100 Confidential Minutes of Previous Meeting

The confidential minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true record.

14.101 Confidential Item

[Minute removed due to containing commercially sensitive information or information relating to third parties/individuals]

The Chair had arrived during the discussion. The Executive team, staff governors, student governor and Ms Manning joined the meeting at this point.

14.102 Presentation from Head of School for ICT, Computer Sciences and Digital

Ms Manning was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made.

Ms Manning said the area had performed well for many years and had been grade 2 but was expected to be grade 1 in the Self Assessment Report (SAR). The school had just over 600 students and 43 staff. The majority of staff were dedicated, hard working and highly skilled with a commitment to CPD and Ms Manning used Ms Charters as an example, explaining how she had produced some really advanced material for the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Changes from awarding bodies had been adapted to immediately. High level skills for students were promoted in addition to increasing knowledge. Success rates were high and anticipated to remain high. The area had a number of vulnerable students who benefitted from pastoral support from staff. Staff had a good understanding of success rates and funding and how this would take the College forward. Some staff were really trying to improve income generation. Ms Manning was very proud of most staff.

Dedicated curriculum team leaders were committed to improving the section; two members of staff had previously presented to the Board. Applications to the staffing panel for conversion of part time posts had been successful and this had meant the College was able to retain talented staff while also boosting morale in the school.

Ms Manning reiterated how good the school was with vulnerable students. Academic practice panels had been introduced to call students in if they were falling behind or were at risk of not achieving their UCAS points with plans fed into ProMonitor. This has been valued by students and had led to good results. The team were particularly effective regarding "day 42" ensuring students were on the right courses. Ms Manning referenced the success rates which were over 90% including English and maths. GCSE English had been above national rates but there would be more push on high grades. Attendance was monitored almost daily and circulated to staff twice a week. Last year the target was 85% but was 90% this year. Maths and English was separated out and while it was not as good, quite a lot was above 80% and as the term progresses with students stabilising on levels it should improve. It was regularly tracked with trends highlighted for individual students. 100% attendance was congratulated.

Assessments had been front loaded. ProMonitor was used effectively. There was no complacency within the school. Improvements to maths and English was a key priority.

The Chair thanked Ms Manning for a comprehensive presentation. In response to a query about progressions Ms Manning said the majority went to HE, but others went to employment. Former students would come back to talk to current students. There was scope to improve tracking further. Governors commended the acknowledgement of the team's work but asked how elements of that could be translated to other areas of the College and also whether the use of IT in English and maths had contributed to the impressive success rates. Ms Manning advised that the Deputy Principal had asked her and another Head of School to present to the wider leadership team a month ago regarding tracking student progress. Tutorials always featured English and maths. Dr Tavernor commented that the school would compare well nationally, not just within the College.

The Chair summarised that strong leadership and hard work was evident. The Board thanked Ms Manning and asked her to pass this acknowledgement along to her staff. In turn Ms Manning thanked the Deputy Principal and Principal for their support for her support while saying that she hoped her staff realised how proud she was of them.

As Ms Manning mentioned the College's longest serving member of staff was based in the area the Chair asked a general question about how the College celebrated long serving staff. The Principal explained that staff were celebrated after 25 years, plus the Principal would write to staff.

Ms Manning left the meeting.

14.103 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes were approved as a true record.

14.104 Actions from previous meeting.

The report was noted.

14.105 Declarations of Interest

College employed staff (with the exception of senior post holders) declared an interest in the Pay Award item.

14.106 Feedback from FE Commissioner's Stock Take Assessment

The FE Commissioner's Stock Take Assessment was tabled. The Principal felt this was a extremely positive outcome. There was more undoubtedly more work to do but it was a significant landmark. The assessment would not be published on the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) website. The College had received requests to take part in various forums but the Executive team would continue to focus on improving the

College. The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) had asked for the full audited accounts and some other information to be provided before they would lift the notice of concern.

The chair congratulated everybody for a positive outcome and thanked the rest of the Board for their dedication.

14.107 Performance and Quality Task and Finish Group

Reflecting on previous meetings, the Group agreed that cultural change had been evident and should be celebrated. The redefined objectives remained valid. At the most recent meeting an in depth analysis of two areas had taken place.

Ian Green had attended to report on Work Based Learning (WBL). [*Part of minute removed due to containing commercially sensitive information or information relating to third parties/individuals*]

Gill Williams had also attended as the Head of School for Catering, Hospitality and Leisure. Sport and Travel had been brought into her area and it had improved substantially. The Group had confidence in Ms Williams' performance and it was evident that tangible improvements had been made to the school.

The Chair urged governors to attend meetings of the PQTFG as this enabled a deeper understanding of the issues facing the College. Governors agreed that the more effective Heads of Schools referenced students a lot. Ms Charters added that English and maths had been integrated into the tutor groups.

Governors asked whether other staff needed to be upskilled in IT to be able to use system data to maximum effect. Ms Charters believed there had been an improvement. The Deputy Principal highlighted that Ms Williams and Ms Manning were giving guidance along with other staff.

14.108 Performance Update

14.107.01 Enrolment Numbers

[*Minute removed due to containing commercially sensitive information or information relating to third parties/individuals*]

14.107.02 Apprenticeships

[*Minute removed due to containing commercially sensitive information or information relating to third parties/individuals*]

The Board agreed to take the pay award item next.

14.109 Pay Award

The Association of Colleges (AoC) had recommended a 1% increase. The College did not make a pay award the previous year. The budget for 2014/15 included provision for a 1% pay award to all staff. The Board accepted that based on current student numbers there would be difficulties in 2015/16 but they agreed with the Executive that there was a need to recognise work within the College which had resulted in the outturn required.

Governors agreed that it was important to invest in staff but acknowledged the limitations of what was affordable and sustainable. The Principal said that there had been a Joint Trade Union Meeting the previous day and highlighted that by paying 1% the College would be in dispute with UCU who may strike. It had been asked whether a pay award for the previous year could be made retrospectively but the Board agreed it was not possible.

The pay award was approved and backdated to 1st August 2014.

Dr Tavernor left the meeting at this point.

14.110 Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP)

The Deputy Principal clarified that the plan was RAG rated and that any areas left white meant the action had not been due to happen yet. The timescales relating to talent management and culture change required dates adding.

There was some slippage which was disappointing. Governors queried whether the aim of increasing the proportion of good or better lessons was on target to be met and it was felt to be achievable. Governors asked for the planned completion dates to be made clearer.

The Board noted the progress against the plan and the actions taken.

14.111 Financial Position

The presentation was concise as much of the detail had had been covered under earlier agenda items. The Financial Statements Audit had been undertaken with the auditors indicating the opinion would be unqualified. The group had historical cost surplus of £256k for 2013/14. This was a different measure to the cash based operating surplus.

Regarding the current year the number of loan student numbers was lower than targeted but comfortable. Income generation was a risk as it was such an ambitious target. Expenditure would be monitored. Costs which are not fixed will be cut in areas with low numbers. Staff costs were higher than ideal but this related to the transformation programme and pay protection being at a different level along with high agency costs where bank staff could not cover the need.

Cash flow was anticipated at being at £164K at its lowest point without any management. Ratios and covenants had changed very little from the last update to the Board.

There were some risks to the 2015/16 position as outlined earlier in the meeting. The mitigation from the Adult Skills Budget had been included. Other mitigations in terms of replacing income and reducing costs were outlined. It was clear that 2015/16 would be difficult but it would be planned for. The picture across the sector would also be clearer.

Ms Carmichael left the meeting.

14.112 Board Policy Manual Update

The Clerk advised that the changes largely related to externally produced guidance such as the Joint Audit Code of Practice and the Charities' Commission Essential Trustee but in reality would not substantially change how the Board operated. There were also some formatting changes to be made.

The Board reviewed the suggested changes and approved the updates to the Board Policy Manual.

14.113 Strategy Update

The VPPBD referred back to the discussions at the September strategic planning event and asked whether governors felt the criteria in the paper covered the points made and whether there was anything else which should be added.

The Chair queried whether the super port should feature. The Principal felt that it may be beneficial, although it would need to be considered more.

The Vice Chair thanked the VPPBD and said quality standards would be applied with a line of sight between the strength and the mission. Consistency would be vital. The Vice Chair felt the required elements had been listed.

Governors asked for the connection between the strategic plan and the work with Kenyon Fraser earlier in the day. The VPPBD confirmed the work would feed into the strategy.

The Board were in agreement that the top level strategy and how it was driven through would be important. The teaching staff governor queried how ownership from staff and students would be achieved. The Principal advised that staff and students were influencing the strategy and it would be taken out to staff in pillars. The Chair was aware that there had been some engagement with students. The Students' Union and student reps were feeding in.

It was suggested that it may be useful to ask the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to Board meeting attend a future Board meeting.

14.114 Risk Management

Key movements were listed. One risk had changed score and that related to the financial position which was now back at 25. No risks had been removed. Apprenticeships had been added and would be included in the next report.

The Vice Chair asked if the strategy would link to the risk register. The VPFCR said there was an opportunity for mapping and he would expect most to be covered. The Vice Chair asked if both could be reviewed together.

14.115 Health and Safety Update – Summer Term 2014

There were no Riddor reportable incidents in the update. There had been a peak in July in terms of staff incident with eight of the nine incidents being related to construction at Vauxhall Road (dust etc).

The report was noted by the Board.

14.116 Safeguarding Update – Summer Term 2014

The report had been carried over from the last Board meeting. Prior to the meeting a governor had requested clarification regarding "huge" which had been provided. The Deputy Principal agreed that this needed to be clearly quantified in future reports. The report reflected discussions at the strategic planning event where the number of students with mental health issues had increased. Ms Barry would link in with the safeguarding governor and the Deputy Principal to discuss further.

The Principal said the number of increases and the type of incident was a concern. The teaching staff governor agreed that there had been an increase.

The Chair asked if the Board was happy that the College was doing enough. The Deputy Principal advised that guidance on suicidal behaviour was being rolled out to staff across the year. The safeguarding team would access supervision of which there was anecdotal evidence of having been done but the process needed to be more robust. There was agreement that external agencies needed to take accountability rather than the College committing more resources. The Deputy Principal had spoken to managers within pastoral support and they didn't feel extra resources was the answer; it was more about being able to access help.

The Vice Chair asked if the staff were also safeguarded against emotional pressures. The Chair agreed that people who found or witnessed self-harm would be distressed and the matter should be considered further. The Deputy Principal would seek advice. **Act: AC**

14.117 Any Other Business

The Principal advised that it may be necessary for the Board to meet before its next meeting to review and approve the Financial Statements.