

PROSPECTS COLLEGE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

25 FEBRUARY 2015

MINUTES

Present:	David Sherlock (Chair)	External Governor
	Neil Bates	Chief Executive/Principal
	Bala Mahendran	External Governor
	Peter McKee	External Governor
	Kini Pathmanathan	External Governor
	Theo Steel	External Governor
	Ruth Umerah	External Governor
In attendance:	Robin Jones	Clerk to the Board of Governors
	Helen Russell	Director of Business Development
	Neil Warren	Chief Operating Officer

72 CLERK TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board adopted the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee and appointed Robin Jones as the Clerk to the Board of Governors.

73 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Board received and noted the apologies for absence from the following Members:

- Felix Bateman
- Carole Leach
- Jackie Northedge
- Rachel Richards
- Tom Wilson

74 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Members present confirmed that there were no declarations of interest relating to the issues set out in the published agenda.

75 KINI PATHMANATHAN

Kini Pathmanathan was congratulated on her recent appointment as the Vice President Human Resources for Thales.

76 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2014

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 10 December 2014 were agreed to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

77 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2014

The Board agreed that there were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting requiring attention over and above those set in the published agenda.

78 AUDIT COMMITTEE – 20 JANUARY 2015

The Board received and noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 20 January 2015.

It was noted that the main items of business concerned the arrangements for the appointment of External Auditors and assurance mapping. These issues will be progressed at the next meeting scheduled for 20 April 2015.

79 GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE – 25 FEBRUARY 2015

The Board noted that a meeting of the Governance & Search Committee had taken place immediately before the meeting of the Board and the main items requiring attention at this time concerned:

- The appointment of the Clerk to the Board of Governors – item 72 above
- Membership of the Board – item 80 below
- Group Training Association Model – item 81 below

The Minutes of the meeting will be presented to the Corporation on 6 May 2015.

80 MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

The Board agreed to adopt the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee that David Wells be appointed to serve as a Member of the Board of Governors with immediate effect for a period of four years.

It was noted that Mr Wells is the Managing Director of JW Froehlich UK Ltd and is well positioned to make a significant contribution to both the Board and the Engineering Group Training Association (GTA).

81 GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION

The Board agreed to adopt the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee with regard to the approval of the documentation associated with the establishment of the Group Training Association (GTA).

The work of the Director of Business Development in preparing the documentation in consultation with the External Members of the Board who will lead the GTAs in the first instance was acknowledged.

The intention was to launch the GTA arrangements by the end of March 2015.

The Board recognised that the model was one that may prove to be of interest to other colleges and organisations.

82 STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 - 2018

The Board approved the Strategic Plan for the three period commencing in 2015 for early publication and in doing so it was noted:

- The associated Annual Development Plan will follow
- The ways and means of delivering the Strategic Plan will be assessed in terms of, in particular, the resources, finance and capacity of the College

During the discussion Members suggested that consideration be given to defining what success looked like in terms of the Strategic Plan so that on a year by year basis all concerned had a clear understanding of the progress being made.

It was noted that the version provided to Members was in the process of being designed for circulation to the many stakeholders and others with an interest in the College. A copy of the published version will be provided for Members as soon as practicable.

The Board thanked the Principal and the other members of the Executive for progressing the vision to set out the ambitions of the College with such a clarity of focus.

83 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Board received and discussed the detailed report of the Principal which provided updates on a number of issues affecting the College.

The Principal provided the Board with his assessment of the progress the College was making:

- Strategy and Planning – very good progress
- Capacity and Resource for Transformational Change – very good progress
- Quality Improvement – satisfactory progress
- Budget Performance and Long Term Financial Security – Good progress

The present and immediate risks were acknowledged and the fact that the Executive Team were managing these and taking the appropriate action to either mitigate or eliminate these over time.

The Principal also addressed a number of issues in his comprehensive report including:

- Marketing Strategy
- Efficiency Review
- Estates and Accommodation Strategic Review
- Sale of Fairfax Drive site
- ETF Fellowships, Digital Learning and Edge
- SFA Capital Bid
- The Gatsby Foundation
- Quality and Inspection
- Visits and meetings in January and February 2015

The Board noted the basis of the Efficiency Review including the involvement of Peter McKee as an External Member of the Board.

The Principal highlighted the final inspection report from the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering. It was explained that, whilst the College agreed with the overall findings, this did not apply to the judgement associated with teaching and learning which, in the view of the College, was outstanding.

The Board noted the intention to publish the first College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) in the Spring 2015 and this will be the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Board.

The associated actions included a comprehensive review of recruitment practices and learner attainment linked to GCSE levels on entry. This approach would, it was thought, impact positively on future student success rates.

The Board thanked the Principal for the comprehensive report and agreed to look forward to receiving further updates at future meetings.

84 ACCOMMODATION AND ESTATES REVIEW

The Board received a report setting out the current position with regard to the accommodation available to the College and agreed, following discussion, to approve the recommendation to allocate £20,000 to engage consultants to carry out a comprehensive review.

It was noted that this cost was not included in the approved budget for 2014/15.

The Board agreed to look forward to receiving an update on the accommodation review including the opportunities to progress any rationalisation.

85 FAIRFAX DRIVE – PROPOSED SALE

The Board noted the present position with regard to the proposed sale of Fairfax Drive and that discussions with representatives of Southend Borough Council and a third party.

Members asked the Executive Team to provide updates on the proposed sale as and when there were developments and to report the present position to the Board at the next meeting.

86 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The Board received and discussed the Management Accounts for the period to 31 January 2015.

It was apparent that there were a number of positives to note as at mid-point of the year particularly in terms of the relative performance in the previous year. However, it was stressed that there were significant pressures on such factors as commercial income, the performance of Creative Sport and Leisure (CSL) Ltd and some elements of apprenticeships. These and other factors were likely to impact on income and expenditure in the remainder of the year.

The cash flow was in line with the forecast and it was good to know that the bank remained extremely supportive of the College.

The proposed sale of the Fairfax Drive site was reflected in the original budget plans and if there was a delay there would be implications for the College which would need to be addressed.

The Board recognised that, given the various uncertainties, it was not yet possible to provide a definite year end out-turn amount. The Management Accounts for the period to 31 March 2015 would be presented to the Board on 6 May 2015 by which time there would be a degree of greater certainty as to the position to be reported at 31 July 2015.

87 **BANK LOAN – LETTER OF VARIATION**

The Chief Operating Officer provided the Board with an update on the proposed letter of variation associated with the amount borrowed prior to incorporation to support College developments.

It was recalled that a detailed statement had been circulated to Members by the Chief Operating Officer in an email dated 13 February 2015 and that, based on the subsequent exchange of emails, it was the wish of Members to have the opportunity to discuss the implications for the College at this meeting of the Board.

The Board recognised that a priority was to seek to reduce the level of borrowing and to improve the overall financial health of the College.

The Board agreed, following discussion, to approve the letter of variation received from Barclays and to authorise Bala Mahendran to sign the documentation so that the Chief Operating Officer may complete the formalities on behalf of the College.

88 **RISK REGISTER**

The Board received the revised Risk Register which it was noted had been substantially updated to be aligned with the new Strategic Plan.

The Risk Register continues to be seen as a live document and will be the subject of regular review.

The Board agreed to receive and note the updated Risk Register and in looking forward to receiving further updates asked that an indication be provided of the direction of travel so that emerging changes and trends can be identified with ease.

89 **SAFEGUARDING**

The Board received and discussed a report on Safeguarding which addressed a number of related issues:

- The proposed Safeguarding Policy
- The appointment of Neil Warren as the Senior Manager with responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection
- The arrangements for updating Ruth Umerah as the Corporation's lead on Safeguarding
- The intention to have Safeguarding as a standing item on the agendas for all future meetings of the Board
- The arrangements for Members of the Board to undertake a DBS check
- The staff training programme including the intention that all staff will undertake the "Child Protection in Education" module and managers will undergo "Safer Recruitment" in 2014/15 with other modules being followed in 2015/16 and beyond.

One issue which continues to require attention relates to receiving information (records) from previous schools and colleges for students when they join the College. This will assist greatly when supporting students who may have additional support needs and/or safeguarding related issues.

A Member asked about the arrangements in place for students undertaking work experience placements away from the College. It was explained that the College had in place appropriate robust policies and procedures for carrying out risk assessments prior to the commencement of such placements .

Whilst reviewing the update Members acknowledged that responsibility for Safeguarding rested with each and every one associated with the College.

The Board agreed to approve the Safeguarding Policy for immediate implementation subject to an ongoing review of the contents taking place including the extent of the focus on (1) radicalisation and the Prevent Agenda and (2) cyberbullying.

90 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Board received an update on health and safety related issues including:

- the membership and standard agenda for the College Health & Safety Committee
- the accident statistics for the current year starting in September 2014
- there had been no reportable accidents (RIDDOR) or hospitalisations during the year
- the Fire Evacuation Procedures have been drafted and implemented
- all campuses have completed full evacuation tests
- the arrangements for preparing and making available the assessments for those students identified as at risk for any given reasons
- the staff training completed and planned to date
- outstanding insurance claims

The Board recognised that health and safety will always provide potential risks – including reputational risks - and a high priority needs to be given to managing and minimising the risks for the College.

The intention is to seek to achieve external certification for health and safety.

The Board agreed to note the update on health and safety related matters and to look forward to receiving regular updates at future meetings.

91 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BOARD**

The Board agreed to meet on the following dates in 2014/15:

- Wednesday 6 May 2015 commencing at 3.00pm
- Tuesday 21 July 2015 commencing at 3.00pm

The location of both meetings is likely to be the Basildon Campus although this will be confirmed nearer the dates of the meetings.

Signed: _____ Date: _____