

PROSPECTS COLLEGE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

27 SEPTEMBER 2018

MINUTES

Present:

David Sherlock (Chair)	External Governor	Judith Abbott	Chief Executive
Sue Dare	External Member		
Peter McKee	External Governor		
Stephen Metcalfe	External Governor		
Theo Steel	External Governor		
Cath Weissand	Staff Member		

In attendance:

Robin Jones	Clerk to the Board of Governors
Ros Parker	Principal
Malcolm Rodrigues	ESFA

770 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Board noted that apologies for absence had been submitted by Bala Mahendran given other commitments.

The Board noted that the meeting was quorate and could proceed.

771 PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETING VIA TELEPHONE

The Board noted that Rachel Richards was available to participate in the meeting via telephone. In the event it was not possible to make contact.

772 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Sue Dare took the opportunity to remind the Board that she was acting as the Interim Principal of the National College of Creative Industries based in Purfleet.

773 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON 23 AUGUST 2018

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 23 August 2018 were agreed to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

774 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON 23 AUGUST 2018

The Board agreed that all of the items arising from the minutes of the last meeting requiring attention were addressed in the published agenda. 2

775 RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE

The Board noted that the Recovery Plan continued to be a focus of attention for the Executive and others as appropriate and the key issues were covered in the item on Performance Monitoring (see item 779 below).

776 ESFA CASE CONFERENCE

The Board noted the latest ESFA Case Conference had taken place immediately before the meeting of the Board when the main issues of attention had included:

- The Management Accounts for August 2018 (Period 1 of 2018/19)
- The likely out-turn for 2017/18
- The audit review was underway leading to the presentation of the Financial Statements to the Board on 20 December 2018

777 BUDGET – 2018/19 - MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – AUGUST 2018

The Board the Management Accounts for August 2018 including:

- Income & Expenditure Account for the period to 31 August 2018
- Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2018
- Cash flow forecast to July 2019
- Profiled Income & Expenditure Budget for 2017/18

Members appreciated that Management Accounts are not normally prepared for August as there was relatively little activity but given the ESFA Case Conference and the application to be made to the Transaction Unit to support the merger it had been appropriate on this occasion.

A number of points were highlighted including:

- The cash flow was stronger than anticipated although this was due to timing issues on payments such as for the cost of utilities at TUCA although the provision would be required when invoices were received
- The clawback for the under performance of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) of £128k would be in December whereas in previous years such payments were not required until January
- A business case would be made to retain the 2018/19 AEB allocation to PROCAT despite the underperformance in 2017/18 given the opportunities that would be available post-merger with South Essex College
- The College had scope to increase Apprenticeship numbers given the 129 open and potential vacancies that were known - an increase of 30 on the same point last year
- The increase in Study Programme learner numbers with more Level 1 provision was not increasing the overall cost of delivery as group sizes had grown to improve efficiency
- The growth in Study Programme numbers would benefit South Essex College in 2019/20 given the nature of the national funding methodology

In response to questions from Members it was explained that:

- Quality of provision would not be put at risk by the increased group sizes
- There was pressure on young people to opt for Study Programme provision and not Apprenticeships as parents retained tax credit benefits – Apprentices were deemed to be “employed” and this was far from helpful and indeed a real disincentive

- The relationship with CSL was now all but at an end although to be fair to individual learners it was likely that a small number – possibly 10 – would be retained in 2018/19
- The position with the lease cars used CSL had still not be resolved although as there were no further payments due to be made for students to cover the £4k a month it was intended to repossess the vehicles in October 2018

The Board agreed following discussion:

- 1 to note that Management Accounts for August 2018
- 2 to look forward to receiving a further update on the financial health of the College at the meeting scheduled for 26 October 2018

778 FEES AND CHARGES POLICY – 2018/19

The Board recalled that at the meeting held on 19 July 2018 it had been agreed to approve in principle the Fees & Charges Policy of South Essex College for use by PROCAT in 2018/19 subject to the section on Apprenticeships being enlarged given the relevance for PROCAT.

The Chief Executive reported that the drafting of the section on Apprenticeships would be completed shortly and presented to Members for

779 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Board received and considered at length the report of the Principal setting out the Performance Monitoring Overview covering:

- Recruitment to Study Programmes and Apprenticeships
- Recruitment and retention of academic staff
- Retention and achievement rates for 2017/18
- Quality Improvement Plan for Rail

The current position with regard to the recruitment of Study Programme learners and Apprentices was noted including the expectation that, at this early stage of the new year, some learners would move to Apprenticeships.

As would be expected with a planned merger with another college being progressed, there was some uncertainty on the part of staff and in particular those working in support areas. This said for the first time since incorporation 100% of the teaching staff had returned after the summer break. Teams were described by the Executive as being motivated, engaged and well planned. Furthermore, agency workers were now in the minority of academic staff which had so many potential benefits in the delivery of courses and benefiting students and Apprentices alike.

Members were pleased to hear of the positive news associated with the achievement outcomes in a number of areas although the final position would be affected adversely by some examples of poor retention and such legacy issues as English and maths. The final position would be set out in detail in the College Self-Assessment Report to be presented to a future meeting of the Board.

The Board agreed to note following discussion:

- 1 the report of the Principal on performance
- 2 to look forward to receiving at future meeting further updates including the College Self-Assessment Report which would provide an analysis of the achievement outcome position on 2017/18
- 3 that the position with regard to rail was now integrated into the College approach to improving the quality of provision and, therefore, there was no longer a need for a separate Quality Improvement Plan for Rail.

780 SAFEGUARDING, PREVENT & PDBW – UPDATE 2018/19

The Board noted that the Safeguarding, Prevent & PDBW Policy was being updated for 2018/19 following a review involving the Board's Link Member for Safeguarding. This would be presented to Members shortly for consideration and approval.

The Board recognised that the version of the Policy adopted for 2017/18 was thought to be fit for purpose and, other than a small number of points of detail, could be used in the interim until the redrafting was completed. This was widely available for reference by students and staff.

781 MERGER – DISSOLUTION NOTICE

The Board agreed to support the draft Dissolution Notice setting out the planned merger of PROCAT and South Essex College for publication in the national and local press.

The Dissolution Notice was noted to be a major item for consideration by the Shadow Board at a meeting to take place later that afternoon (27 September 2018).

782 MERGER CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Board agreed to support the draft Merger Consultation Document subject to addressing a number of typographical errors and stylistic points of detail.

The Merger Consultation Document was noted to be a major item for consideration by the Shadow Board at a meeting to take place later that afternoon (27 September 2018).

783 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2018/19

The Board noted the calendar of meetings for 2018/19 up to the date of the planned merger with South Essex College:

- Friday 26 October 2018 at 1.30pm
- Thursday 29 November 2018 at 1.30pm
- Thursday 20 December 2018 at 1.30pm
- Tuesday 29 January 2019 at 1.30pm

Members recognised that, given the range and importance of issues to be addressed, it may be appropriate to arrange additional meetings and or change the planned meetings to seek to maximise attendance.

784 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Board considered other items which, on the grounds of confidentiality, are the subject of separate minutes only available for reference by, as appropriate, Members of the Board, the Executive and others designated to have access.

Note: the confidential items of business are covered in 785 to 791

Signed: _____ Date: _____