

**PROSPECTS COLLEGE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY**  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**31 JANUARY 2018**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

David Sherlock (Chair)	External Governor
Judith Abbott	Chief Executive
Prof Rao Bhamidimarri	External Governor
Bala Mahendran	External Governor
Peter McKee	External Governor
Rachel Richards	External Governor
Theo Steel	External Governor
Ruth Umerah	External Governor
Cath Weissand	Staff Member

**In attendance:**

Robin Jones	Clerk to the Board of Governors
Ros Parker	Principal

**542 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Board noted that apologies for absence had been submitted by Stephen Metcalfe given other commitments.

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

**543 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**544 PURPOSE OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD**

The Chair thanked Members for committing the time to attend this Special Meeting of the Board which had been called in the context of the discussions with the ESFA and the need to look to the future in the best interests of the College, students, employers and the wider community.

**545 FINANCIAL PLAN – ESFA FEEDBACK**

The Board received the letter dated 25 January 2018 from the ESFA which had been prepared following the submission of the 2016/17 out-turn position and the revised Income & Expenditure Budget for 2017/18.

Based on the national methodology the revised financial health assessments for PROCAT were noted to be:

- Satisfactory for 2016/17 (the out-turn position)
- Inadequate for 2017/18 (the current budget year)

The Board agreed to note:

- 1 the revised financial health assessments for 2016/17 and 2017/18 provided by the ESFA
- 2 the Finance Dashboard as at November 2017 prepared by the ESFA based on the data supplied by colleges
- 3 that the implications of the inadequate assessment for 2017/18 would be addressed as part of the other appropriate items on the agenda for this meeting

#### **546 FINANCIAL HEALTH NOTICE TO IMPROVE**

The Board received and noted the letter dated 30 January 2018 from the ESFA addressed to the Chair of the Board which confirmed that the College was the subject of a Financial Health Notice to Improve.

This was prompted by the inadequate financial health assessment set out in the ESFA letter dated 25 January 2018 – see previous item.

The implications of the Notice to Improve would now be addressed by the Board and the Executive alongside the shared commitment to secure the long-term future of the College.

#### **547 FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Board received and discussed the basis of the draft Financial Plan which was supported by a comprehensive commentary prepared by the Chief Executive & Accounting Officer.

The Board agreed, following a wide-ranging discussion:

- 1 to adopt the Financial Plan as the basis of preparing for the future
- 2 to look forward to receiving an update at the meeting of the Board scheduled for 22 February 2018 when Members would have the benefit of having available the Management Accounts for January 2018 (Period 6 of 2017/18).

#### **548 INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY – UPDATE**

The Board received the report of the Director of Business Development which provided an update on the Institutes of Technology (IoT) scheme and the opportunities for PROCAT.

It was appreciated that the IoT must be a separate legal entity and, amongst the other factors to be taken into account when finalising an application, the learners must be additional and not already proposed and forecast in other plans.

Given all of the factors now known to the Board it was not appropriate for PROCAT to progress a submission as a lead as it was most unlikely that this would be approved.

The Board agreed, following discussion, to task the Executive with exploring the opportunities for PROCAT to join in a collaborative application with another college to progress the Institutes of Technology initiative.

#### **549 INSOLVENCY – NATIONAL CONSULTATION**

The Board received the summary document from the AoC prepared following the publication of the DfE technical consultation on the college insolvency regime which ran until 12 February 2018.

In addition to providing an overview of the insolvency arrangements, the AoC provided draft answers to the 10 questions asked in the consultation document.

The Board agreed that Members were broadly supportive of the approach on the part of the AoC and there was no wish to make any other specific comments to the DfE.

#### **550 GRANT APPLICATION TO SUPPORT A VIRTUAL REALITY/AUGMENTED REALITY FACILITY**

The Chief Executive explained the basis of an application to the GLA for a grant of £45k towards setting up a Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality facility at TUCA.

The total cost of the project was noted to be £90k with a 50:50 split between grant and match funding.

The College amount of £45k would be largely covered by the software provider committing development time with a value of £40k in return the College introducing them to rail employers as they wish to expand their customer base.

The Chief Executive had discussed the application with the Chair of the Board who had agreed that to gain an investment of £90k for £5k was of real benefit to the College and should proceed.

The Board agreed to support the action of the Chief Executive taken after discussion with the Chair to progress the grant application for the Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality facility at TUCA.

#### **551 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2017/18**

The Board noted the approved Calendar of Meetings for the remainder of 2017/18 as follows:

- Thursday 22 February 2018 – proposed location Basildon
- Thursday 17 May 2018 – proposed location Basildon
- Thursday 19 July 2018 – proposed location Basildon

Unless otherwise agreed, meetings would commence at 1.30pm and the locations would be the subject of review.

Members recognised that there was a need to add additional meetings given the nature of the issues to be addressed by the Board over the coming months – the Clerk would seek to identify the availability of Members for meetings to take place in March, April and June.

#### **552 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 553 to 563.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_