

Wakefield College Corporation

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 October 2019

1 Present: Nichola Bell, Paul Campbell (**Chair**), Paul Collier, Julie Craig, Emma Elvin, Dmitry Fedotov, Karen Hands, Eunice Ma, Andrew McConnell, Ian Parsons and Sam Wright

Clerk to the Corporation (**Clerk**)

In attendance: Executive Director Finance and Resources, Executive Director Human Resources and Organisational Development, Executive Director Quality and Planning and Executive Director Employer Engagement and Apprenticeships

Apologies: Arnold Tabor and Andy Wallhead

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9 July 2019

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019 be approved.

4 Matters Arising

4.1 The Chair reminded the members of the Board of the importance of completing and returning their Registers of Interest. The Clerk agreed to resend the document.

4.2 The Chair noted the following matters arising from the Board meeting of 9 July 2019:

- (i) on minute 3.1(i), the Clerk agreed to arrange safeguarding training for Ian Parsons. The training was completed on 15 July 2019;
- (ii) on 3.1(ii), the Clerk agreed to provide Governors with an updated calendar of meetings. The Clerk noted that an updated version of the calendar would be sent to Governors shortly;
- (iii) on minute 7.2, the Executive Director Quality and Planning agreed to present updated KPIs to Governors. These were provided at the Governor Workshop held on 8 October 2019;
- (iv) on minute 7.4, the Clerk agreed to contact each Governor to determine the preferred date for the next Governor Workshop. This was actioned on 10 July 2019;
- (v) on minute 7.6(i), Governors asked that the risk register be amended to show the effectiveness of mitigating actions. This was to be considered by the Audit Committee on 19 November 2019;

- (vi) on minute 7.8, Governors asked for further details around the College's staffing costs. This was to be addressed during the meeting;
- (vii) on minute 14.1(ii), Governors queried whether invitations had been sent for the Children's University Graduation. The Clerk confirmed that invitations had been sent and Governors were asked to check email junk folders; and
- (viii) on minute 14.3, Governors asked that the Board Assurance Framework be reviewed to make it more interactive. The Clerk and Executive Director Finance and Resources agreed to address this.

4.3 The Chair noted the following matters arising from the Governors' Workshop held on 8 October 2019:

- (i) Governors asked for performance indicators to be circulated. The Principal agreed to send these to Governors;
- (ii) Governors noted that they could not access the dashboard. The Clerk agreed to liaise with IT for a solution; and
- (iii) Governors asked for the date of the next Governor development session. The Clerk agreed to arrange this.

4.4 Nichola Bell asked when a second student Governor would be elected. The Clerk agreed to chase the Head of Student Experience for an update.

4.5 Nichola Bell referred to 8.2(ii) of the minutes of 9 July 2019 and asked whether Governors' thanks had been passed on to staff for their hard work during 2018/19, as requested. The Principal confirmed she had picked this up in staff meetings.

4.6 Nichola Bell noted that she had struggled to find the room for the meeting. The Clerk agreed to include the room number in relevant emails to Governors, going forward.

5 Principal's Annual Report 2018/2019

5.1 The Principal referred to her annual report and noted the following:

- (i) that the year had begun with a successful staff conference, held at Elland Road, which was an opportunity to celebrate the College's successes and focuses for the year ahead. Staff and students played pivotal roles in the planning and delivery of the event;
- (ii) that developments and student successes during the year included the following:
 - a. the College had partnered with Wakefield Trinity Community Trust to become the first women's rugby league development academy in the country;
 - b. students had worked in a resort in the Italian Alps for a fortnight with very positive feedback and visited the Hadron Collider at Cern;
 - c. a student had been selected for Wakefield Trinity Rugby's first team;
 - d. a student had won the 'Miss Dance' prize at the Blackpool Winter Gardens;
- (iii) that the College had taken steps to invest in future generations including:
 - a. hosting the Children's University graduation;
 - b. hosting the 'Give Construction a Try' event;

- c. putting on STEM Workshops to encourage school students to take part in STEM activities;
- d. arranging the 'CHaOS' event, in partnership with Cambridge University, to encourage children aged 7-14 to get involved in Science;
- (iv) that all the College's Staff had contributed to the success of the College. Individual success stories included:
 - a. Ian Smith who had been selected to train Yamaha technicians in the UK strengthening the College's relationship with the company;
 - b. Ben Severn who had been selected to be part of the English Colleges' National Football Team coaching squad;
- (v) that the College's Programme of Excellence had had another successful year with a new cohort of graduates;
- (vi) that the College had enjoyed positive external recognition and achieved external accreditations including:
 - a. securing 'good' following a recent Ofsted inspection;
 - b. membership of the Association of College's Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter;
 - c. Matrix reaccreditation including very positive feedback;
 - d. approval to deliver T-Levels from September 2021;
- (vii) that the College had secured improvements in 16-18 apprenticeship and Higher Education data and maintained achievement rates for 19 plus;
- (viii) that the College had secured good finances and was expecting confirmation of 'good' financial health from the ESFA;
- (ix) that the College had disposed of Thornes Park and had vacated the property, that the sale of F Block was ongoing, and that the Registry of Deeds was ready to be occupied; and
- (x) that the College had the following priorities going forward:
 - a. expanding the College's adult curriculum;
 - b. achieving the College's funding allocation;
 - c. a commitment to staff wellbeing;
 - d. an inspection preparation plan to secure outstanding at the next Ofsted visit.

5.2 Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) how the Principal shared the contents of the report with staff. The Principal agreed to share the report with staff and stakeholders. The Executive Director Quality and Planning noted that the information did go out piecemeal during the year;
- (ii) whether the report would be sent to secondary schools. The Principal replied that it would not be but that the College sent regular updates regarding schools' ex-pupils and the school liaison teams managed relationships effectively; and
- (iii) whether good news was being shared at open days. The Principal confirmed that staff had been encouraged to do this.

6. Core Strategic Item: Staff Costs and Workforce Plans Context

6.1 The Executive Director Finance and Resources and the Executive Director Human Resources and Organisational Development gave a presentation, covering the following points:

- (i) the College's staffing costs had risen from approximately £18.5 million to over £20 million over the previous four years;
- (ii) pension costs, beyond the College's control, were a major contributor to increased staffing costs;
- (iii) security staff had been moved in-house leading to greater expense;
- (iv) College income had not risen by much despite the increase in staffing costs;
- (v) the staffing costs ratio had reached its peak in 2017/18 and was in decline;
- (vi) the College's staffing costs were difficult to compare to other colleges due to its unique offering;
- (vii) teaching contact hours were roughly in line with the relevant benchmarking data;
- (viii) the College had not reduced its staff numbers due to the decrease in 16-18 enrolments which might be an area of focus in the future;
- (ix) teaching hours per learner would be considered for efficiencies going forward;
- (x) that the College's decision to move away from agency staff had increased costs;
- (xi) that teaching staff costs were comparable with other local colleges and non-teaching staff costs were below average but that other staff, such as teaching support, were higher than the sector which was a decision taken by the College to provide the necessary support to its students; and
- (xii) the College could explore the introduction of subsidiaries and outsourcing although it was thought that the latter would be expensive and, potentially, of lower quality than in-house provision.

6.2 Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) how much of the College's increased staffing costs were inflationary? The Executive Director Finance and Resources confirmed that approximately £1 million was over and above inflation;
- (ii) what was the projection for 2019/20? The Executive Director Finance and Resource explained that the staffing costs ratio would continue to decline;
- (iii) whether the Government were expected to continue funding the teachers' pension contributions. The Executive Director noted that he had received information that suggested colleges would continue to receive additional funding;
- (iv) whether staff/student ratio benchmarking data was available. The Executive Director Finance and Resources explained that it was but that it was crude;
- (v) why the College had so many more support staff than the sector average. The Principal explained that it was difficult to make comparisons but that the College had made the decision to invest heavily in staff to provide greater support to its students than other colleges. The Executive Director Finance and Resources noted that the College had also bought many staff in-house including an estates team tasked with College maintenance which other colleges may not have done;
- (vi) whether class sizes were still lower than average. The Executive Director Human Resources and Organisational Development noted that there were still some small classes, but that work was being done around curriculum planning as well as attendance and retention; and
- (vii) whether redundancies should be made. The Executive Director Human Resources and Organisational Development explained that the College had made small numbers of redundancies but that large scale layoffs were

considered a mark of poorly run organisations and unnecessary given the College's good financial health.

- 6.3 Governors asked for a greater depth of information around the College's extra spending on support staff to allow them to assess whether they could endorse it.

7. College Performance

(i) Student Performance 2018/19

- 7.1 The Executive Director Quality and Planning gave a brief presentation, covering the following points:

- (i) that improvements had been made in respect of 16-18 learner outcomes during 2018/19 with an overall achievement rate of 85% against 83% for 2017/18 and better than national rate averages for Levels 1, 2 and 3;
- (ii) that the overall 19 plus achievement rate was predicted to be 86% in line with 2017/18 results;
- (iii) that the Level 4 achievement rate was only 46% but this only included thirteen enrolments and was predicted to rise to the national average of 65% once all results were in;
- (iv) that, excluding English and Maths, the overall achievement rate for 16-18 learners was 91%;
- (v) that, excluding English and Maths, 19 plus provision was performing soundly with an overall achievement rate of 90%;
- (vi) that Functional Skills English and Maths had improved, significantly, at Levels 1 and 2 in 2018/19;
- (vii) that pass rates for GCSE English and Maths 9-4 grades stood at 27% and 19%, respectively, and that, although this represented a decline for English against 2017/18 this was because the reformed GCSEs were more challenging;
- (viii) that Access to HE was above the national average at 83% with a 4%-point improvement over four years;
- (ix) that, at intermediate level, the achievement rate for apprenticeships was 69% against a national average of 61% and at advanced level the achievement rate was 73% against a national average of 58%; and
- (x) that for Higher Education the retention rate had improved from 83% to 88% in 2018/19, that the achievement rate had improved to 97% from 95% and that there had been significant and sustained improvement in distinction grades.

- 7.2 The Executive Director Quality and Planning tabled a further document. She noted that 16-18 achievement rates had not hit targets and so could have been RAG rated amber but against national averages should be considered green. She reiterated that the targets for achievement rates were to be 3% points above the national rate for 2019/20, 4% points for 2020/21 and 5% for 2021/22.

- 7.3 The Executive Director Employer Engagement and Apprenticeships gave a brief presentation, in which she reiterated apprenticeship achievement rates and explained that the Higher-Level apprenticeship achievement rate had been 30% against a national average of 60%. She noted that this was due, in part, to the poor quality of information advice and guidance which resulted in withdrawals.

7.4 Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) whether 19 plus students were, generally, previously 16-18 College learners. The Executive Director Quality and Planning explained that many were adult students who had never studied at the College before;
- (ii) whether the GCSE team delivered Functional Skills. The Executive Director Quality and Planning confirmed that it had done but that the College was not offering Functional Skills in 2019/20; and
- (iii) what the College would do to improve Higher Level apprenticeship results. The Executive Director Employer Engagements and Apprenticeships noted that new teachers had been brought in and that the information, advice and guidance had been improved.

(ii) Finance Report

a) Provisional Outturn 2018/19

This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

b) Debts Written Off During 2018/19

This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

c) Report on Waivers from Financial Regulations 2018/19

This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

d) Student Recruitment 2019/20

This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

8 Property Update

This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

9. Policies

9.1 The Clerk noted that, going forward, Governors would receive amendments to policies in track changes, for ease of reading, and that Executive Summaries would contain key information only.

(i) Treasury Management Policy

9.2 The Clerk outlined the key changes to the policy and asked for approval.

Resolved

That the Treasury Management Policy be approved.

(ii) Health and Safety Policy

9.3 The Clerk outlined the key changes to the policy and asked for approval.

9.4 Issues raised by Governors included:

- (i) how the policy is communicated to students. The Clerk agreed to ask the Estates Manager for details; and
- (ii) whether the policy extends to students doing College work at home. The Executive Director Human Resources and Organisational Development explained that the policy was aimed at trips and visits but not homework.

Resolved

That the Health and Safety Policy be approved.

(iii) Additional Learning Support Policy

9.5 The Clerk outlined the key changes to the policy and asked for approval.

Resolved

That the Additional Learning Support Policy be approved.

(iv) Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

9.6 The Clerk outlined the key changes to the policy and procedures and asked for approval.

Resolved

That the Safeguarding Policy and procedures be approved.

10 Appraisal of Governors and the Chair of Governors in 2019

10.1 The Chair thanked those Governors who fed into the Chair's appraisal and those who attended their own appraisals.

11 Subcontracting

This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

12 Briefing Papers:

12.1 (i) Complaints Report

Resolved

That the Complaints Report be noted.

12.2 (ii) Health and Safety Annual Report

Resolved

That the Health and Safety Annual Report be noted.

12.3 (iii) Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Annual Report

Resolved

That the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Annual Report be noted.

(iv) HR and Organisational Development Annual Report

Resolved

That the HR and Organisational Development Annual Report be noted.

(v) Data Protection Annual Report 2018/19

Resolved

That the Data Protection Annual Report 2018/19 be noted.

12.4 (vi) Governor Attendance 2018/19

Resolved

That the Governor Attendance 2018/19 paper be noted.

12.5 (vii) Annual Report on Governor Activity 2018/19

Resolved

That the Annual Report on Governor Activity 2018/19 be noted.

12.6 (viii) Use of the Seal of the Corporation

Resolved

That the use of the Seal of the Corporation between 3 July and 8 October 2019 be noted.

13 Feedback from Governors Attending External or Development Sessions

13.1 The Chair noted that Governors had attended the following events since the last Board meeting:

- (i) Ian Parson attended safeguarding training with the Student Wellbeing and Safeguarding Manager on 15 July 2019;
- (ii) Karen Hands had a catch up with the Executive Director Employer Engagement and Apprenticeships on 23 August 2019;
- (iii) Nichola Bell met with the Executive Director Human Resources and Organisational Development regarding her Staff Voice Lead Governor role on 9 September 2019;

- (iv) Nichola Bell attended a quality review process consultation with the Executive Director Quality and Planning on 11 September 2019;
- (v) he had had a tour of the Registry of Deeds with the Director of Estates on 11 September 2019;
- (vi) Karen Hands attended a Careers Team meeting with the Head of Student Experience on 18 September 2019;
- (vii) Karen Hands went on an apprenticeship visit with the Executive Director Employer Engagement and Apprenticeships on 18 September 2019;
- (viii) Governor appraisals took place on 20 and 23 September 2019;
- (ix) he and Andrew McConnell had attended the business awards with the Principal, the Executive Director Finance and Resources and the Executive Director Employer Engagement and Apprenticeships on 18 September 2019;
- (x) Ian Parsons had attended his appraisal on 15 October 2019;
- (xi) Karen Hands and Dmitry Fedotov had attended a Care and Early Years learning walk and had found the students to be highly engaged and motivated to further their education.

13.2 Karen Hands noted that she had become aware of a dispute around the career coach software. The Principal confirmed the College was looking at funding for it.

14 Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Identification of Emerging Risk

14.1 The Chair acknowledged the meeting had overrun which he felt was acceptable given that the discussion around staff pay needed proper consideration.

15 Date of Next Scheduled Meeting – Tuesday 10 December 2019

Signed Date.....

Actions

No.	Minute	Details	Deadline	Responsibility
1.	4.1	The Clerk agreed to resend Registers of Interest to those Governors who had yet to return theirs.	The Board meeting of 10 December 2019.	The Clerk.
2.	4.2(ii)	The Clerk agreed to provide Governors with an updated calendar of meetings.	The Board meeting of 10 December 2019.	The Clerk.
3.	4.2(v)	Governors asked that the risk register be amended to show the effectiveness	The Audit Committee meeting of 19 November	The Executive Director Finance and Resources.

		of mitigating actions.	2019.	
4.	4.2(viii)	Governors asked that the Board Assurance Framework be reviewed to make it more interactive.	The Audit Committee meeting of 19 November 2019.	The Executive Director Finance and Resources and the Clerk.
5.	4.3(i)	Governors asked for performance indicators to be circulated.	The Board meeting of 10 December 2019.	The Principal.
6.	4.3(ii)	Governors noted that they could not access the dashboard. The Clerk agreed to liaise with IT for a solution	ASAP.	The Clerk.
7.	4.4	The Clerk agreed to chase the Head of Student Experience for an update regarding the appointment of a second student Governor.	The Board meeting of 10 December 2019.	The Clerk.
8.	4.6	The Clerk agreed to include the meeting room number in relevant emails to Governors, going forward.	The Board meeting of 10 December 2019.	The Clerk.
9.	5.2(i)	The Principal agreed to share the Principal's Annual Report with staff and stakeholders.	The Board meeting of 10 December 2019.	The Principal.
10.	6.3	Governors asked for a greater depth of information around the College's extra spending on support staff to allow them to assess whether	ASAP	The Executive Director Finance and Resources and the Executive Director Human Resources and Organisational Development.

		they could endorse it.		
11.	<i>Please see the confidential minutes.</i>			
12.	9.4(i)	The Clerk agreed to ask the Estates Manager how the Health and Safety Policy is communicated to students.	The Board meeting of 10 December 2019.	The Clerk.