

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 5th October 201 in the Boardroom, Hele Road, Exeter College

Present

David Allen	Chair
Emma Webber	Vice Chair
John Laramy	Principal

To item 14

Bindu Arjoon
 Philip Bostock
 Sarah Brampton
 Sue Clarke
 Ben Gardner
 Mark Goodwin
 Jacob Harris
 Chris Hoar
 Aimee Mitchell
 Stewart Noakes
 Michelle Pugh
 Matt Roach
 Dave Underwood
 Em Wilkinson-Brice
 Cassandra Wood

All bar item 20 (part)

From ratification of appt.

Apologies

Heather Ancient
Glenn Woodcock

In Attendance

Rob Bosworth	VP Schools, Partnerships & Curriculum
Steve Campion	VP Finance & Business Operations
Malcolm Walsh	Deputy VP Standards and Student Engagement, People and Performance
<i>Item 8 only</i> Richard Brine	Strategic Projects Lead/ Head of ILS
<i>Item 7 only</i> Jade Otty	Assistant Principal
<i>Item 7 only</i> Sam Hillman	Assistant Principal
<i>Item 8 only</i> Jenny Leach	Assistant Principal
Barbara Sweeney	Interim Clerk to the Corporation

Action

Preliminaries

1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to this the first meeting of the academic year. He welcomed Malcolm Walsh in his new role as Deputy Vice Principal

and Ben Gardner and Jacob Harris, HE and FE Student Governors respectively. He also welcomed Barbara Sweeney as interim Clerk.

At this his last meeting as a Governor, Philip Bostock was thanked for his commitment and significant contribution to the College and to the Board in the role of Member, Committee Chair and Chair of the Board. His continued association with the College was assured through his roles as an Associate of the College and his membership of the Ted Wragg Trust. A dinner in his honour the previous evening had been a fitting celebration and during which tributes had been made to him and the retiring Clerk.

Apologies were received

Bindu Arjoon declared an interest in items relating to planning, as Director, Exeter City Council.

Mark Goodwin declared an interest in matters relating to the University of Exeter, as Deputy Vice Chancellor.

The agenda was reordered taking item 20 next, relating to External member appointments

The CV of Em Wilkinson-Brice was considered at the Search and Governance Committee at its meeting on 1 October 2018. On the unanimous recommendation of the Committee the Board agreed

a) To appoint Em Wilkinson-Brice to the Board with immediate effect for a four year term to 4th October 2022. Clerk

b) To appoint Em Wilkinson-Brice to the Quality and Standards Committee for the 2018-19 academic year. Clerk

Vote: Unanimous

Em Wilkinson-Brice joined the meeting and was welcomed to the Board by the Chair.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution, the Board resolved

c) To appoint Philip Bostock as Associate of Exeter College for a four year term from 14th October 2018 to 13th October 2022. Clerk

Vote: Unanimous

Matt Roach withdrew for the next part of the item

The Chair reminded the Board that Standing Orders permitted a limited third term of office in exceptional circumstances. Given the significant

agenda relating to East Devon as part of the Greater Exeter Area, on the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee the Board agreed

d) To appoint Matt Roach for an additional third term of office on completion of his second term on 6th December 2018 for up to a maximum of four years to not exceed 6th December 2022.

Clerk

The Chair updated the Board on the Clerk to the Corporation. This was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the Confidential Minutes.

2. Minutes of Meetings

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2018, as circulated, were agreed, subject to a correction in the attendee list, and signed by the Chair.
- 2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2018, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

- 5.3 – The Board and Committee Self-Assessment Report were in hand.
- 7.2 - The proposal to rename the Learner Voice Report as the Community Voice Report would not be actioned as the importance of the Learner Voice should not be diluted.
- 8.2 – The substantive item on the Risk Register would be deferred to await the outcome of the East Devon Skills settlement.
- 10.1 Cash days in hand had been considered by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 19th September 2018 and the Business Services Committee on 24th September 2018.

Clerk

There were no other matters arising which were not elsewhere on the agenda.

Strategic matters

- 4. Principal's Strategic Report
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the Confidential Minutes.
- 5. Recognition Payment for Staff
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the Confidential Minutes.
- 6. Cost of Living Pay award
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the Confidential Minutes.

Jade Otty, Assistant Principal and Sam Hillman, Assistant Principal, joined for item 7 only.

7. Outcomes: The Story So Far – including maths and English
The presentation was received and Jade and Sam updated the Board on the outcome for the 2017-18 year and the position with maths and English exams respectively.

Outcomes

Jade reminded Governors of the A levels structure. The programme for year 1 comprised three core subjects (A level or BTEC) plus an extend subject. In year 2 the extend subject was replaced by progression and employability curriculum. All learners would sit examinations at the end of the first and second years. However, in the case of linear A levels, first year exams would be internal. The College had completed two of the three year move to all linear, with 71% of subjects linear in 2018.

The three year trend for retention, attainment and success for A and AS levels showed that the College had maintained strong outcomes. Compared with national average data the College was above on all lines, and the 61% achieving A*-B, and 86% achieving A*-C was particularly commendable. The College was also ahead of local competitor providers.

Progression data was a key metric of quality, demonstrating value added on the grade at students' entry. For A levels the College had maintained last year's ALPS score of 2 – up from a 7 in 2014, when the drive for better value scores was initiated. This put the College in the top 10% relating to distance travelled. For AS levels the ALPS score had increased from a 5 in 2016-17 to a 4 in 2017-18.

37% of learners were going to high tariff universities and Jade confirmed the three top destinations as Bristol UWE, Exeter and Cardiff. 17 had been successful out of the 24 who had applied to Oxbridge or medical, dental or veterinary schools.

The Board was invited to consider how the College should grow its reputation for Academic Excellence. The Chair recommended that, as a significant question requiring more time than available, this should be deferred and taken at the next Quality and Standards Committee meeting on 3rd December 2018 and and report back to the next Board on 7th December 2018.

Clerk

Chair
QS

English and maths

Sam reminded the Board that all learners who had failed to achieve a level 2 in the subjects were required, as a funding condition, to continue to study the subjects at College. Despite lobbying from within the sector, the Minister had announced no change to the policy. There was a fall in GCSE resits pass rates among learners age 17 or older. Nationally 161k

sat the exam with a pass rate of 22% and there was evidence that success declined with age.

Operationally the numbers to be accommodated for exams was significant, with circa 1000 for each subject and increasing, and with numbers requiring special access arrangements also increasing. External accommodation was necessary and, together with other expenditure including the salary of a large number of invigilators, the cost of examinations was £20k per day. The number who failed to show to sit the exam had fallen but was still an issue.

The College had adopted a strategy considered by Ofsted as “bold”, whereby those entering with the lowest grades (E/2-U) were put onto an Echo programme, with the aim of achieving level 4 over two years and a first year target of progress. Those entering with a grade D/3 were put onto a Delta programme, to achieve level 4 in one year. The outcomes were above the national average but still required improvement.

The Board considered the challenges at length, which included logistics, cost and the negative impact on those learners with the biggest programmes who had failed to achieve level 2 over 5 years in school. The College strategy was to appoint a vocation lead, given that this was the area of most affected learners. There was investment in staff to provide stability with over 80% delivered by a full time programme leader. However the national policy flew in the face of the “right student right course” culture. Future plans included establishing a working group to explore and challenge and to be creative and innovative.

The Quality and Standards Committee had considered this issue at length, and recommended continued representations to Government. Was it appropriate to enter everyone every year or would it help learners if a more strategic approach was taken? As the Echo programme deferred exam entry by a year and success declined with age, was this strategy in learners’ best interests? Furthermore, success was norm referenced, with the associated implications for individual learner’s chances of passing. There was a moral question of whether the policy was setting learners up to fail, when a more appropriate functional skills would be more achievable, albeit it would not attract funding. The Board recommended that the working group assess whether a more strategic approach to entering learners into exams might be beneficial, for it to monitor progress following the planned interventions and whether the programmes themselves were appropriate.

Exeter was seen nationally as an exemplar of success in mathematics, with the Exeter Maths School, Sparks and a potential Institute of Technology. The challenge was to replicate this for those with lower ability.

Notwithstanding the challenges to English and maths, the Board commended overall outcomes, progress and the above national average success rates.

The Board

- a) **Noted the update.**
- b) **Recommended that the Quality and Standards Committee consider the question of how the College should grow its reputation for Academic Excellence and report back to Board.**

Richard Brine, Strategic Projects Lead and Jenny Leach, Assistant Principal, item 8 only

- 8. East Devon Skills
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the Confidential Minutes.

The agenda was reordered, taking items 11 – 13 taken next.

Audit and Risk Assurance

- 11. Summary Report
The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee updated the Board on the meeting held on 19th September 2018.

The Committee had received a Deep Dive into the operational management of the English and maths examinations. This was the second since the process was introduced and was valuable in providing insight into the challenging logistics of running the exams for so many students. It was recommended that Governors observe the process during the next examinations in summer 2019. The risk would remain red as the number sitting exams increased.

Clerk

An oral update provided assurance on IT security mitigation and a report would come to the next meeting in November. Other risks were considered and the Committee Chair confirmed changes in risk ratings and their justification. There would be a report at the next meeting on HE recruitment, a newly identified risk, given significant competition. Good progress had been achieved towards GDPR compliance and the IAS action tracker confirmed progress on all outstanding actions. The information Security Policy was ratified. On line training on GDPR would be rolled out.

Clerk

Clerk.

Clerk

Four internal audit reviews had been received: Key Financial Controls, Risk Management and Board Assurance, Anti-Fraud and Follow up. There were no significant concerns and from the Anti Fraud review the

Committee had rejected the recommendation to reduce the ceiling for reported gifts from £100 to £50 because of the low risk and administrative burden.

The Committee agreed on a self-assessment grade 2 because although effective, there was room for improvement in the Internal Audit reporting.

The Board noted the update.

12. Internal Audit Performance and Appointment

The Board approved TIAA as the Internal Auditors for 2018-19

Vote: Unanimous

13. Internal Audit Strategy

The Board approved the Internal Audit Strategy for 2018-19

Vote: Unanimous

Future IAS Strategies would be received at the June meeting of the Committee

Clerk

9. College News

The report was received and taken as read. The Principal confirmed that the College had again been invited to send the sole under 18 English rugby team to Japan in summer 2019, which coincided with the Rugby World Cup.

The Board noted the report

10. Learner Voice

The report was received and taken as read. The FE Student Governor confirmed no significant issues. The HE Student Governor advised that Student Rep training was scheduled and in which all HE Reps would participate. This would provide an opportunity for the first feedback of the year.

The National Student Survey was considered and concern raised over some deteriorating feedback. Some responses related to the awarding institution and so did not reflect the HE experience in the College.

Furthermore, the sample was small and so data was volatile. However, the HE Governor recommended analysis of free text responses to scrutinise qualitative data.

SLT

The Board noted the report.

Quality and Standards

14. Summary Report

The Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee updated the Board on the meeting held on 17th September 2018. Much of the meeting had covered in the Board agenda.

The Committee had received the annual External and Internal verification report. Activity was as good as in previous years with the College continuing to be judged low risk overall. The Committee had reviewed the subjects included in the intensive care and outpatient process and noted that outcomes demonstrated that the process was effective.

The annual HR report had been received and there was a discussion on high staff turnover of those with less than two years' service.

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures were received for their annual review and recommended to the Board for approval. The Annual Safeguarding Audit would come to the next Committee meeting in November, and there had already been consultation with the Safeguarding Governor.

The Committee agreed to a self-assessment grade 1.

On the recommendation of the Quality and Standards Committee the **Board agreed to**

a) Note the update

b) Note the HR Annual Report

c) Approve the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

Vote: unanimous

Business Services

16. Summary Report

The Chair of the Business Services Committee updated the Board on the meeting held on 24th September 2018. The Committee had considered the circulated Opportunities and Developments Risk Register and Management Accounts for June 2018. An oral update on the July Accounts provided assurance that there would be a year-end surplus of over £200k after the agreed pay award and that because of the receipts from the sale of Wear Barton, the College was in Outstanding Financial Health.

Governors had received a presentation on Exeter Futures which the College been invited to join. The Committee recommended progressing membership.

SLT

The Committee also considered Brexit and its impact and recommended increasing the rating on the risk register.

The Committee agreed to a self-assessment grade 1 because of the Outstanding Financial Health.

The Board noted the update

17. Property Update

The Committee recommended that the risk register be revised to provide clarity on the nature of risks associated with the property masterplan.

There had been an exchange of contracts relating to the purchase of the Clock Tower Hotel, subject to successful planning permission following public consultation into its use for boarding and education.

The Committee agreed

- a) To formalise the property Masterplan to achieve outline planning permission with a budget of £200k
- b) To receive a presentation on the Institute of Technology (IoT) at the November meeting
- c) To recommend a Governors' working party to scrutinise legal agreements for the IoT.

The Chair thanked all concerned for the completion of the sale of Wear Barton.

The Board noted the update.

18. Financial Regulations

The Committee had endorsed the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee that the threshold for recording gifts should remain at £100. Members had challenged the length of the Financial Regulations and whether there would be enhanced compliance with a distilled version. The College Leadership Team (CLT) would progress this recommendation at its meeting on 10th October 2018.

RB

Search and Governance

19. The Chair of the Business Services Committee updated the Board on the meeting held on 1st October 2018. The election for the Staff Governor vacancy representing academic and non-academic staff would be renamed Teaching Staff Governor.

The 2019 Board Residential would take place at Highbullen Hotel on 15th and 16th March 2019. Governors were invited to submit suggestions for the programme, and current recommendations were partnerships and student welfare, particularly mental health. Key note speakers were under consideration.

There would be no Autumn Twilight Session in 2018, since the style of Board agendas had been revised to include more strategic issues.

The Committee had agreed to a self-assessment grade 1.

20. This item was taken during agenda item 1.

Special and Closing Items

21. Remuneration Committee Summary Report
The Vice Chair of the Remuneration Committee, who had chaired the meeting held on 1st October 2018, updated the Board.

Following recent issues within the education sector a revised Code of FE Remuneration was under review. A more open approach was now followed.

The Board was compliant with best practice in that the Chair of Remuneration was not the Chair or Vice Chair of the Board, who undertook the Senior Post Holders' appraisals, and the outcome of which they would report to the Remuneration Committee. The Committee would approve targets which were SMART and remuneration would continue to be based on sector benchmarks. No remuneration had been set at the meeting on 1st October 2018.

The Board noted the update.

22. Items for next meeting.
The Board agreed that the following be included in the agenda for the Board meeting on 7th December 2018: Clerk
- a) Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan
 - b) Institute of Technology update
 - c) Financial Statements Audit and Annual Report for approval.

Date of meetings for 2018-19

Draft for Comments

Friday 7th December 2018
Friday 8th February 2019
Friday 3rd May 2019
Friday 5th July 2019

DRAFT