

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

CORPORATION BOARD

**Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 12th December 2014 in the Boardroom,
Hele Road, Exeter College**

Present

Philip Bostock
Ian McGregor
Richard Atkins
David Allen

Chair
Vice Chair
Principal

Bindu Arjoon
David Batho
John Bunting
Chris Hoar
Elaine Hobson
James Jefferson
Mark Overton
Martin Owen
Matt Roach

From Item 4 Cameron Seymour
Tim Tamblyn
Dave Underwood
Emma Webber

Observing

To Item 9 Steph Barnard

Apologies

John Coombs
Jo Matthews
Michael Caines
Craig Marshall

(Co-optee invited to observe)
(Co-optee invited to observe)

In Attendance

John Laramy
Steve Campion

Vice Principal
Executive Director, Finance and
Enterprise

Items 7 & 8 Rob Bosworth
Item 7 only Jenny Leach

Assistant Principal
Head of Business and IT & Cranbrook
Project Manager

Item 8 only Katie Wild
Barbara Sweeney

Head of Media and Performing Arts
Clerk to the Corporation

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest** **Action**

The Chair welcomed members to the last meeting of 2014. He confirmed that Vicki Carah had tendered her resignation on 7th November 2014 and recorded his thanks for her contribution to the College during her time as Governor representing the Exeter Secondary Schools. The Board had sent flowers as a token of thanks. He also confirmed that Search and Governance Committee would be considering the vacancy at its meeting on 19th January 2015.

Apologies were received.

Bindu Arjoon declared an interest in item 6, Opportunities and Developments Register and item 12.2, Approvals, as Assistant Director, Exeter City Council.

Chris Hoar declared an interest in item 6, Opportunities and Developments Register, as Partner, Foot Anstey.

Chair's Update on Association of Colleges (AoC) Conference

The update was received and the Chair highlighted the main themes of the conference, which took place in Birmingham between the 18th and 20th November 2014 with over 1500 delegates. As President of the AoC, the Principal had played a key role, and had launched the AoC Manifesto. His national role reflected well on the College.

Several ministers had presented, and the Chair had participated in a number of governance workshops including an update on the values based Code of Governance, now out for consultation, and the role of the Chair. It was clear that it was a pivotal and uncertain time for the FE sector, with a lack of clarity until the outcome of the election was known. However, there was no doubt that austerity would continue and funding remain challenging.

The Board noted the report.

2. **Minutes of Meetings**

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 2.1 | The minutes of the meeting held on 10 th October 2014, as circulated, were agreed, subject to a correction to the attendees list, and signed by the Chair. | BHS |
| 2.2 | The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 10 th October 2014, as circulated, were agreed, subject to a correction to the attendees list, and signed by the Chair. | BHS |

3. **Matters Arising**

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

4. **Appointments**

19+ Student Governor

The report, including the pen portrait of the 19+ Student Governor was received. Cameron Seymour had been elected by the student body, and the Board was required to ratify the appointment.

The Board agreed:

- a) **To appoint Cameron Seymour as Student Governor representing 19+ students to join the Board with immediate effect for the academic year ending 31 July 2015.** BHS
- b) **To appoint Cameron Seymour to the Quality and Standards Committee with immediate effect for the academic year ending 31 July 2015.** BHS

The Chair invited Cameron in to the meeting and welcomed him to the Board.

Cameron Seymour, 19+ Student Governor joined for the rest of the meeting.

5. **Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2013/14 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2014/15**

Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2013/14.

The update was received and John Laramy, Vice Principal, highlighted the key issues from the 2013/14 SAR and updated the Board on the results for vocational, apprenticeship and Higher Education (HE) provision. Vocational provision outcomes were better at all levels against the all provider average. Whilst apprenticeship results, both overall and timely, were also above the all provider average, there had been a decline nationally from the previous year. In HE there was no national data from which an average could be calculated. However, 21 out of 25 programmes had 100% achievement.

John highlighted outstanding performance, including a number of areas where performance was significantly better than the national average. Progression was now a key metric, and there was 100% progression to employment in two areas, PGCE and Flybe Diploma in Engineering. Other aspects to celebrate included sustained improvement in adult long course performance since 2007/8, vocational success at level 3, consistency across the College and sustaining "Outstanding" between the

2012 Ofsted pilot and the full inspection in 2014. There had been improvements in accommodation and a return to financial surplus. The Board was reminded of other individual awards and successes.

Turning to teaching learning and assessment, the outcome from the students' survey was strong, such that further improvement in data would be challenging. However the College was working hard to ensure that there was consistency across all provision. There was also strength in leadership and management, with the Department of People and Performance having particular impact on quality improvement and performance management. Alignment between resources and quality outcomes was also strong, with a key (and rare) link between the Business Services and Quality and Standards Committees. The mission was well understood and served as a driver to improve teaching learning and assessment, continuous growth and strength of partnerships.

The key areas for improvement were to increase value added scores and the percentage of high grades. There would also be a focus on consistency at AS level and timely apprenticeship outcomes. Staff training and enrolling students on the most appropriate courses would improve functional maths skills, particularly at level 2. There was also a need to address some specialist subject areas where not all those wishing to study at the College could be accommodated.

John confirmed that at College level the Self-Assessment grade was Outstanding, with the grade for overall effectiveness comprising three sub headings; outcomes for learners, quality of teaching learning and assessment, and leadership and management. All were graded as Outstanding. The key summary table provided the grades by faculty/department. There were nine Outstanding faculties and four Good, and seven Outstanding departments and three Good. HE had been graded for the first time. John updated the Board on the key changes from last year, providing rationale for each. It was vital to demonstrate that the SAR was robust, and within faculties and departments, where there were recognised areas for improvement, these were acknowledged and addressed through the QIP.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Chair of Quality and Standards confirmed that the Committee had reviewed the SAR at its meeting on 8th December 2014. It had requested a change of format following the Ofsted inspection in January 2014 and the new style retained detailed data, but aspired to include a feel for the culture of the College. Reviewed in detail by the Committee Chair and the Governor appointed to both functional Committees, whilst there in parts, the Committee recommended that future reports strive to express more of the soul of College.

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2014/15

John confirmed that whilst shorter than in the past, focus on improvement was still meaningful and it was important to avoid complacency following the grade one inspection. On the recommendation of the Quality and Standards Committee there had been an action added to the QIP to introduce strategies to promote British values and limit the chance of radicalisation.

The Board agreed that even after its fifth successive outstanding SAR, it was important to aspire to improvement and the key focus on value added scores and high grades were potent drivers. Continuous improvement, notwithstanding success, was the sign of strength.

QIP 2013/14 outturn

The report was received and John confirmed that some actions were ongoing, such as equality and diversity training.

The Board resolved to:

- a) Approve the SAR for 2013/14**
- b) Approve the QIP for 2014/15**
- c) Approve the QIP outturn for 2013/14**

Vote: Unanimous

6. **Opportunities and Developments Risk Register**

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

Rob Bosworth, Assistant Principal, joined for items 7 and 8. Jenny Leach, Head of Business and IT and Cranbrook Project Manager, joined for item 7 only.

7. **The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust**

The presentation, in response to a request from the Board, was received and Rob provided clarification on how the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust had been set up and confirmed that the rationale for pursuing the opportunity was long term influence.

The Ted Wragg Trust had been set up in 2010 to support one school under Local Authority control and with no financial influence. Subsequently the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust was set up to influence, challenge and nurture educational excellence for the benefit of all and currently sponsored a number of schools in Exeter and the Heart of Devon. There were two members of the Trust, the University and the College working in strong partnership and, sitting under that structure, a board of eight trustees. A key aim was to introduce structures to reduce the reliance on volunteer goodwill and to that end a paid administrator had been appointed and there was a proposal to recruit to other paid roles. Rob was interim CEO, a role which was not sustainable long term.

Jenny confirmed that as part of the East Devon growth, latest plans indicated potentially 8000 houses at Cranbrook by 2031 and three phases of education infrastructure were planned. There was currently a 420 place primary school and a proposal for another 420 place primary and 1000 place secondary school to open in September 2015. The Trust had been selected as sponsor for this, the Cranbrook Education Campus. Drawing from her experience in setting up the Exeter Mathematics School, Jenny had been appointed Project Manager. More primary schools would be required by 2031.

Jenny confirmed the time line and progress to date. An interim executive head teacher had been appointed and there was good progress on admissions, staffing and funding agreements. The building schedule was on track for completion in June 2015. Indications were that the demographics were moving fast and all planned numbers would be exceeded. There would be phased enrolment and curriculum as students joined within academic years as more moved into the area.

Turning to the rationale, Rob confirmed that as part of the Trust there was significant power to influence strategic decisions. The College was willing to work in partnership with schools which already had a 6th form. However, why should a school introduce a new sixth form when there was an outstanding provider in the College, offering a wide range of curriculum? The College also had a moral responsibility to drive up standards. The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust therefore had the potential to support schools in special measures as well as open new academies, and as a Multi Academy Trust, it benefitted from economies of scale not enjoyed by single academies.

Responding to questions, Rob confirmed that with an aspiration to raise standards, schools rated "good" as well as "requires improvement" had shown an interest in joining the Trust. However it was critical that there was a collaborative ethos. There was no financial risk and the College was not underwriting the Trust, but there had been the initial draw on management time. Going forward, as more schools joined, top slicing would fund the Trust. The only risk to the College was reputational. The

Board recommended a presentation to the Exeter4Learning Governors' Partnership to explain the ethos and aims of the Trust, given that board engagement was essential.

RB

Finally it was agreed that the future of education was complex, with many strands and numerous interested parties. It was important to position the College as a key influencer.

The Board noted the update

Katie Wild, Head of Media and Performing Art, joined for item 8 only

8. **The Impact of the Property Strategy in learner outcomes. The CCI: a case example**

The presentation was received to update the Board on impact following investment in the Centre for Creative Industries (CCI), which accommodated Art and Design and Media and Performing Arts. Over the past four years there had been an increase in the number of performance practice areas, investment in the art gallery, photo studios, fashion and textiles workshop, and TV and radio studios, which were now at least up to industry standard. The MAC suite had also been expanded, in response to the learner voice.

Katie confirmed the benefits. The impact of the investment was felt by both students and staff and provided a "wow" factor to potential students at open events. Additional gallery space meant that work could be celebrated and external collections housed, such as those from Killerton House and the V and A.

Over the period, enrolments had increased from 1900 to 3100, with increases in success rates at levels 2 and 3. Improvements were commended by former students who returned to the College to give industry talks. A short film featuring students also illustrated the positive attitude to the enhanced facilities.

There were still areas for improvement in faculties which were spatially and technology resource intensive. Requests would be considered alongside others in a difficult financial climate.

The Board noted the update.

9. **Principal's Report**

The report was received and the Principal highlighted the key issues. He thanked the Chair of Business Services for proof reading a number of College publications including the Annual Review, Self-Assessment Report and Financial Statements.

As President of the AoC he updated Governors on the national landscape. The AoC manifesto had been launched. However, there were not likely to be any significant policy developments ahead of the election, although some reforms may be reviewed subsequently. Civil servants were planning for seven scenarios, but it was clear that funding would remain challenging. Local demographics and austerity illustrated the importance of the Cranbrook project.

In his Presidential role he had visited a number of colleges. The FE Commissioner's annual report indicated the extent of the impact of austerity. He confirmed that the College was as well placed as any, with a financial surplus and outstanding inspection grade. With continued focus on teaching learning and assessment and strong financial management it should remain the master of its own destiny. The predicted increase in Structures and Prospects Appraisals meant that it was possible that the College would continue to be invited to consider mergers and he confirmed, in financial terms, the optimal size of an institution. The wide mix of provision at Exeter was also an advantage. It would be prudent to continue to scan the horizon and it was appropriate to focus on local rather than remote partners.

BHS

The Principal highlighted the success of the annual Festival of Carols and reminded the Board of the Awards evening on 8th January 2015, to which they were invited.

The Board noted the report.

10. **Student Representatives' Update**

Student Governors' Report

The report was received and James Jefferson, 16-18 Student Governor highlighted the key issues. The College was pursuing Fair Trade certification. The Exeter College Volunteers hub would be launched in January 2015, with the logo designed by students from the Art and Design Faculty. World Aids day had been a success, the College selling 2000 wrist bands and the Festival of Carols had raised £969.51 for the College's chosen charity.

John Laramy confirmed that the request for additional social space from the learner voice had been noted and was being considered alongside other requests. The development of the Maths and Science Centre and new sports hall may provide options.

The Board commended the report and agreed to

Note the Update.

11. **Governance Report**

The report was received and the Clerk confirmed that since there was currently a focus at national level on good governance, the report had been moved into part one of the agenda. To that end a governance library had been created on the Ipad as part of the electronic board papers and there would be alerts when documents were uploaded or refreshed. There had been an increase in Governor training and events and the College had been well represented.

The Board noted the report.

Part 2 REPORTS FOR APPROVAL

12. **Recommendations from Business Services Committee**

At the invitation of the Chair, the Chair of the Business Services Committee updated Governors on decisions recommended for Board approval at its meeting on 1st December 2014. Those relating to the Financial Statements were subject to approval of the recommendations of the Audit Committee. He confirmed that there were no surprises and that the Committee and Board had been kept apprised of the position throughout the year in the Management Accounts. He thanked the Finance team and Financial Statements Auditors for what had been a smooth and clean audit.

12.1 Statutory Accounts for Financial Year Ended 31st July 2014:

12.1(i) Exeter College

The draft accounts for Exeter College for the year ended 31st July 2014, which had been reviewed by the Business Services Committee and were recommended for approval, were received. The Board resolved to:

Approve the Exeter College Financial Statements for the year ended 31st July 2014.

Vote: Unanimous

12.1(ii) Aplus Training (SW) Ltd

The report was received. The Accounts had been approved by the Board of Aplus Training (SW) Ltd at its meeting on 24th November 2014 and were received by the Board for noting only. The Board resolved to:

Note the Aplus Training (SW) Ltd Accounts for the year ended 31st July 2014.

12.1(iii) Ecole Limited

The draft accounts for Ecole Limited for the year ended 31st July 2014, which had been reviewed by the Business Services Committee and were recommended for approval, were received. The Board resolved to:

Approve the Ecole Limited Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st July 2014.

Vote: Unanimous

- 12.2 Property Approvals
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.
- 12.3 Advice Recruitment and Marketing Campaign
The confidential report was received and on the recommendation of the Business Services Committee the Board agreed to

Approve the Advice Recruitment and Marketing Campaign

Vote: Unanimous

- 12.4 Local Government Pension Scheme Policy
John reminded the Board that it had approved an amendment to the Business Services Committee's Terms of Reference on 10th October 2014, to include scrutiny of awards of additional pension benefits. The underpinning Discretions Policy also required Board approval and a draft was considered and recommended by the Business Services Committee.

The Board agreed to

Approve the Discretions Policy.

Vote: unanimous

13. **Recommendations from Audit Committee**

At the invitation of the Chair, the Chair of the Audit Committee updated the Board on decisions recommended for Board approval at its meeting on 3rd December 2014.

- 13.1 Audit Committee Annual Report
The report was received and recommended for approval. The Chair of Audit confirmed that the Committee had scrutinised the Annual Report, which provided the Board with a review of the work of the Committee and provided assurance that there were controls in place. He acknowledged the contribution of his predecessor, whom he thanked.

The Board resolved to:

Approve the Audit Committee Annual Report.

Vote: unanimous

- 13.2(i) **Audit Findings Report**
The report was received and was confirmed as being a smooth clean audit. The Financial Statements represented a fair view of the College's position and there was nothing to threaten it as a going concern. The return to surplus was welcomed. The SFA letter confirming funding was still awaited which was typical for the sector and would not change the outcome of the audit.

The Board resolved to:

Approve the Audit Findings Report.

Vote: unanimous

- 13.2(ii) **Regularity Self-Assessment**
The report was received and the Chair of Audit confirmed that the self-assessment tool -which superseded the Financial Management and Controls Evaluation (FMCE)- had been completed and since it required the signature of the Chair of the Board, the Audit Committee had reviewed the document, and recommended it to the Board.

The Board resolved to:

Approve the Regularity Self-Assessment.

Vote: unanimous

- 13.2(iii) **Letter of Representation**
The report was received and Chair of Audit confirmed that the Auditors required the Board to confirm their understanding of their responsibilities by signing the Letter of Representation before the accounts could be finalised. Amendments had been requested by Governors and the Board resolved to:

Approve Letter of Representation for signature by the Chair.

Vote: unanimous

- 13.3(i) **Risk Management Annual Report**
The report was received and considered and the Board agreed to

Approve the annual Risk Management Report

Vote: unanimous

- 13.3(ii) Risk Register
The report, which had been scrutinised by the Audit Committee, was received. The heat map showed risks plotted against probability and impact. The limited number of changes to the previous version were confirmed. The Board questioned the risk rating relating to management capacity, which remained unchanged despite the removal of a significant risk. Following debate it was agreed that it remained a permanent risk, but that a fuller report on mitigating actions was recommended to provide assurance that the impact was being managed. SC

The Board agreed to

a) Approve the Risk Register

- b) Recommend detailed mitigations to manage risk R12** SC

Vote: unanimous

PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

14. **Reports**

- 14.1 Management Accounts
The September Management Accounts 2014 were received. The Board agreed to:

Note the Management Accounts for the period to the end of September 2014.

- 14.2 Sealings Report
The report confirming the application of the College seal was received.

The Board noted the report.

15. **Minutes**

The following minutes were received and noted.

- 15.1 Business Services Minutes 29 September 2014 *Approved*
15.2 Audit Committee Minutes 1 October 2014 *Approved*

16. **Confidential Reports**

The following confidential report was received and noted:

- 16.1 Property Update
The Board noted the report and commended the Estates Team.

17. **Confidential Minutes**

The following confidential minutes were received and noted:

- 17.1 Business Services Confidential Minutes 29 September 2014 *Approved*
- 17.2 Audit Committee Confidential Minutes 1 October 2014 *Approved*

18. Dates of scheduled meetings for 2014/2015

Friday	13	February	2015
Friday	1	May	2015
Wednesday	8	July	2015