

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION
Held on Tuesday 21 March 2017
At 5.00 pm in Room K222, Wiltshire College, Trowbridge

Present	Helen Birchenough, Mark Lello, Amanda Burnside, Harry Adam, Martin Clark, Jon Downing, Dan Lomax, Ben Permutt (from item 7/5), James Hayes (from item 7/4) Carolyn Godfrey (from item 7/5), Liz McKee (by Skype), Karl Simpson (by Skype).
In Attendance	<i>Adrian Ford, Vice Principal Resources, Iain Hatt, Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality, Heather Cross, Clerk to the Corporation, Denise Lloyd, Assistant Principal (for item 7/5)</i>

	Minute	Action
7/1	Apologies for absence	
	Apologies were received from Faith Butt, Hannah Granger, James Bilzon, Venetia Summers and Jack Wills	
7/2	Declarations of interest	
	None.	
7/3	Chair's Opening remarks	
	<p>The Chair especially welcomed Dan Lomax to the meeting.</p> <p>She was very pleased to report that the College had recently been informed that the QAA now considered it fully met expectations concerning HE work.</p> <p>She informed governors that an urgent item had been added to the evening's agenda as the college had been notified very recently by the SFA that it could not yet be included on the Register of Apprenticeship Providers (RoATP) which was due to come into operation on 1 May 2017.</p>	
7/4	Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP)	
	<p>This item was agreed to be added to the agenda as an urgent item.</p> <p>The Principal summarised what was a fast-moving scenario. The new Register had been introduced as a process to assess providers for the delivery of apprenticeships from the beginning of May 2017 with the introduction at that time of the Apprenticeship levy. The college had made an application to be included in the register by the deadline, in accordance with the proforma of required information and although it had given appropriate consideration to its application, had considered the approval of this Ofsted 'Good' college to be routine. However, it had been informed at the end of last week that it was not to be included on the register at this stage, along with 30 other colleges, some major companies and a number of universities. The Principal explained the reason given to the college for non-inclusion - which appeared to be without any justification, especially given that the issue revolved around the assessment of an answer to a question which only allowed for a 250 word answer and for which there had been no guidance provided about what was required. It was the college's view that it had not failed, but the process established by the SFA for assessment was inadequate to the task.</p>	

	<p>Governors were concerned to hear about this situation and were pleased to support the robust and immediate response which the Principal had taken in making a complaint and were very concerned to hear that the issue had then been made worse by the complaint not being handled adequately nor in accordance with the SFA's own process. The College had taken legal advice, which was very important, given the potential consequences for loss of income and advice had also been sought from the Association of Colleges who had advised colleges to approach MPs, as questions had been asked in the House. The letter sent to MPs was circulated for information to the meeting. It was a matter of regret that the AoC did not appear to be taking a more robust approach in providing a collective voice on behalf of affected colleges.</p> <p>An opportunity to resubmit bids had been provided and the college was planning to respond, even though it considered that it had already adequately answered the question. It was noted that a very recent announcement that day was that the register would not impact on non-levy apprentices – and this was to be welcomed. A concern was that the College was doing very well with apprenticeships with 200 current starts, which would be in jeopardy together with the associated income if inclusion in the scheme was not permitted. Judicial review might be resorted to if necessary.</p> <p>Governors asked a series of questions about the possible worst case financial scenario, the response which had been seen from MPs and the information which had been conveyed to staff. The Chair commended the Principal on the way she had communicated the situation to staff. It was agreed that a letter on behalf of governors could also be helpfully sent to MPs and the Chair agreed to prepare a letter.</p> <p>The Principal would continue to notify governors about significant progress.</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Principal</p>
7/5	Equality and Diversity Annual Statement	
	<p>Denise Lloyd attended the meeting for this item to present the annual statement, which had been circulated, as she held an additional responsibility to chair the E and D theme group. The four key objectives for 2015/16 were discussed and achievements noted in all, but with further improvements still appropriate. It was noted that the collection of data in order to identify achievement gaps was improved and staff ability in handling data was also much improved. Variation in apprenticeship achievement had been identified and whilst improvement had been made, there was still more to do in this area. The College had significantly increased the number of high needs learners and as a result less attention was thought to have been given to learners with additional learning needs, so this would be addressed.</p> <p>It was agreed that any curriculum specific issues would be highlighted on the Quality Improvement plan.</p> <p>Denise highlighted that the legal requirement to report on gender pay gaps would come in from April 18, which in effect meant the collection of any contributory data from now.</p> <p>Some useful staff development days on the issue of protected characteristics had taken place. The Equality Street staff development which the college had devised was available for all staff. Some work was to be done on unconscious bias and how additional learning support was being delivered in the classroom.</p>	

	<p>The public duty to publish the Equality statement once a year and comment on performance against the objectives as well as publishing revised ones was noted. Governors supported the draft document which had been circulated, noting that further finalisation work was still to be carried out.</p> <p>In response to a question it was commented that recent political events in both the UK and US had increased challenges in dealing with intolerant views expressed by some students. Right wing radicalisation was a known issue in the county. Staff had received on-line training to help them identify the issues and know what action to take should there be an issue.</p>	
7/6	Self-Assessment Report Final Grades	
	<p>A report commenting on and providing the updated 'Outcomes for Learners' section of the College SAR had been circulated with the agenda. It had been agreed that the Outcomes for Learners section and proposed grade would be brought back to the governing body following publication of the Provider and National averages for a review of how the college performed against the new benchmarks. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality commented that the college was still assessing as good but it was felt that the outcomes for learners assessment should now be recorded as 'requires improvement.' given the comparisons. The next version of the Quality Improvement Plan would be updated to reflect the issues.</p> <p>Governors examined the results and noted the inconsistent college performance – a so-called spikey profile.</p> <p>There was no change to college data but as a result of the benchmarks, the IT curriculum area was now added to the concern list and had already started to have intensive care work.</p> <p>The favourable position on level 3 performance which represented a significant part of the college's work remained an achievement, on which the Chair remarked positively.</p> <p>Adult work still had more of a spikey profile, with Access to HE in intensive care even though the results were good, as there were issues about early departure from courses. This was receiving attention.</p> <p>In response to a question about the performance disparities by age, information was provided about the range of measures introduced to improve maths and English results.</p> <p>On destinations the college would work with J2Profit again to obtain trend data. On course tracking of students was now starting to come together with the use of ProMonitor and MarkBook.</p> <p>The meeting reviewed the updated section of the report and agreed that for Outcomes for learners the assessment should be 'requires improvement'.</p>	
7/7	Draft Agenda for Awayday/Residential	
	<p>The draft agenda was circulated. The Chair commented that the event was an opportunity to reflect on governance performance, which had not taken place for a couple of years, and so would be timely. She requested any thoughts and comments from governors about the event content.</p>	

	external governor vacancy had been advertised through social media and it was hoped to attract responses from younger people in this way. This development was welcomed.	
7/13	<p>Governor attendance at events</p> <p>Governors who had attended the recent apprenticeship awards remarked on the excellent marketing and the feel of the event. Jon Downing had attended two learning walks as the final part of his induction. Martin Clark and Mark Lello were thanked for their attendance at the inaugural Project Board meeting; inevitably there were more requests for the use of the funding than could be accommodated, but useful ideas had been put forward which were now being evaluated. Martin Clark provided some names of contacts which might be of value to the college. Carolyn Godfrey had attended the most recent Safeguarding Board and it was noted that the college was to become a Thrive Hub with mental health professionals available to support students on site. This development was strongly welcomed by governors.</p> <p>The Chair reported that she had been involved in some AoC research on governance and in a separate event had spoken at City of Bristol College about women on boards.</p> <p>Governors were reminded about the recent email concerning the start of the motor racing calendar at Castle Combe.</p> <p>The latest calendar of college events would be placed on Board Intelligence and further dates for Learning Walks would be provided as soon as possible.</p>	Clerk
7/14	<p>Minutes of the last meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting held on 21 February 2017 which had been circulated previously were approved as a true record.</p>	
7/15	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>This was noted as the Awayday/residential on 27 and 28 April 2017 at Beechfield House.</p>	