



OAKLANDS COLLEGE

Minutes of the Board meeting held at the St Albans Campus at 1700hrs on 10 December 2018.

Present	Christine Chisholm	Mete Ekmekcioglu	Jean Fawcett
	Sue Grant (Chair)	Zoe Hancock (Principal)	Teresa Heritage
	Kerry Hood	Ginny Kerridge	Geoff Lambert
	Peter Marshall	Neil Myerson	Rob Payne
	Vithu Ravichandran	Peter Thompson	Jay Wheeler
In Attendance	Nicola Caiger (Dir Curr)	Ronnie Davison (Head of HR) (34-36/18 only)	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)
	Paul McCormack (Dir Fin)	John McMahon (MD. TT)(34&35/18 only)	Harpreet Nagra (DPQ)
	Sean Scully (Dir StExp)	Sian Williams (Dir Curr)	
Apologies	June Cory		

The Chair thanked all for attending and welcomed Vithu Ravichandran, the newly elected Student Member to his first meeting, all present introduced themselves. For convenience of the presenters, Item 5 and 7 would be considered out of agenda order.

PART ONE

34/18 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM, DECLARATION INTERESTS AND MEMBERS

The apology was accepted. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there had been no interests declared. (Standing Sue Grant UH/UCSA)

35/18 TOGETHER TRAINING (TT) (OUT OF AGENDA ORDER)

The MD of TT delivered a comprehensive presentation regarding the progress of the venture; the update took the form of a comprehensive briefing supported by presentational slides. (Attached to the filed copy of these minutes) Members were reminded of the background and current development of the venture. There were currently 103 apprentices on roll against a target of 98 and trading currently stood at £762k with the likelihood of a further £40k main business, and £100k sub-contracting before the year-end. As a Quality Assurance (QA) measure a successful two-day mock Ofsted inspection had recently been completed and welcomed as a challenging and informative exercise. During questions and discussions after the presentation, members were reassured that:

- “set-up” funding, equally contributed by the partners (Oaklands and WHC) would be returned and, as evidenced by current performance, a sound return on the investment was confidently expected;
- accreditation of students and final assessments were all properly completed; and
- there were now 19 employees delivering the service and TT was listed on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP).

The Chair thanked John for his presentation.

The information was noted and received.

John McMahon left the meeting.

36/18 PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT

- a. Performance Management (PM) The recently revised and structured performance management (PM) process included several key features, which were explained and welcomed. Development of aspirational targets, in parallel with early intervention where necessary, supported by well-trained managers was the objective for the process;
- b. Investors in People (IiP). The recent four-day visit by an assessment team from the IiP had been wide-ranging and detailed; the official feedback would be in early 2019. However, early indications were that some organisational changes, listed in the document, would be necessary and the management approach to these was explained. Members discussed the information and during the exchanges, it was explained that the process had included a staff survey, which had not been included in previous visits. Participation had been low at 48% (expected 80%), and to some extent, may have reflected staff disappointment at the Ofsted outcome. It was expected that the current silver level award would remain valid during the 12-month recovery period that was confidently expected to be confirmed.
- c. Human Resource (HR) Metrics. The recent addition of an HR Analyst would provide enhanced information to management, which would inform improvements. Key measures were explained and discussed, for example it was suggested that establishment of an “employee bank” would be useful.
- d. Pay Rise. The unions had sought a national pay increase of 5% and this, together with some individual College decisions to award that level, had prompted increased pressure in many areas where there was strong feeling that a 1% increase was insufficient. Teachers in schools were to receive a funded 3.5% increase in the coming year but there was no similar arrangement for the FE sector. Several colleges were facing ballots for strike action over the issue and these were likely to be successful. Meetings and negotiations with local unions had led to an informal agreement that an enhanced offer to replace the present deal would probably prevent that possibility; accordingly, an offer of a 2% increase plus a £50 bonus for all staff earning up to £40k and 1% for those above had been agreed, arrangements for implementation remained unchanged. Assurance was received that the award was affordable this year and that cost reduction measures would be taken for next year, and it was thus endorsed. **(Action 1)**

The information was received and noted.

Ronnie Davison left the meeting.

37/18 STANDING ITEMS

- a. re 23/18d. The word “Systematic” was replaced with “Systemic” and the Minutes from the Corporation meeting (Part 1 & 2) held on 12 November 2018 were confirmed for electronic signature. (Delegated to Clerk) **(Action 2)**
- b. Matters arising. There were no matters arising.
- c. Actions. There were no actions outstanding from the previous meeting.
- d. Audit Committee (AC) Meeting (03.12.18) (unconfirmed). The AC Chair explained the outcomes of the Audit Committee meeting. The meeting had discussed a wide range of issues and Corporation members were asked in particular to note the committee recommendations in regard of:
 - (i) the External Auditors’ Annual Report including the Management Letters, and the Annual Financial Statements (AFS) (To inform Item 3);

- (ii) the AC Annual Report to the Corporation (to inform Item 3); and
- (iii) the RM Annual Report to the Corporation (to inform Item 3).

All were noted (**Action 3**)

e. It was agreed to an item of urgent business relating to use of the seal.

a. The information was received.

b. Actions had been identified (Register 47/18)

38/18 FINANCE

- a. The management accounts accurate to 31 October 2018 were then considered and discussed. The situation was favourable, an overall variance of c£423k against budget; income was also favourable by c£116k with all variances clearly tabulated as was payroll expenditure at positive c£168k; in response to that comment a question was raised whether student experience was adversely affected by the staff vacancies and strong assurance was given that was not so. Non-payroll costs were positive by c£136, again all variances were clearly tabulated. The balance sheet remained positive with a strong cash balance. St Albans campus development fund stood at c£8.6m. Capital expenditure was £351k/£1m. Identified Risks and Opportunities were listed and individually discussed, the charge re the “staff £100 bonus” was adjusted to (£47.5k) (per 36/18d). In response to a query, assurance was given that the policy of a “break even” outcome for the accounts still held and the accounts were noted.
- b. Policies. The Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy (Annex 3), necessary to satisfy ESFA sub-contracting requirements, largely unchanged from the previous year but updated as necessary, was scrutinised and approved. (**Action 4**)
- c. Purchases over £100k. There were seven purchases over £100k (Annex 2). All were associated with early charges related to the St Albans Campus development and were all noted.
- d. AC Annual Report. The Annual Report was to assure the Corporation that their statutory responsibilities were being met and to inform consideration of the AFS for approval. The Committee opinion had been formed after due deliberation of the IAS annual report and the External Audit information; the report was noted and received.
- e. AFS. The accounts had been closely scrutinised page by page by the AC and the document was explained and closely scrutinised, the following issues were noted:
 - (i) the arrangements regarding the treatment of “start-up” of investment for TT had been agreed by the auditors (35/18a refers);
 - (ii) one control recommendation relating to manual journals had been discussed and satisfactorily answered;
 - (iii) a potential adjustment relating to Enhanced Pension Provision and below materiality had been discussed and resolved, after a question on the validity of that comment, it was confirmed that the adjustment was not mandatory; and
 - (iv) questions included whether it was sensible to continue with commercial activity since the outcome was “break-even” and whether routine reporting of the accounting position should consider the pension liability; the first had already been identified for consideration, possibly at the next “Awayday” and the second was an accounting process for the annual accounts and did not affect the management numbers. A short explanation and a training session would be provided for members. (**Action 5**) The External Auditors had commented favourably on the frank and open way in which the audit had been completed

After these considerations, it was unanimously agreed to accept the AC recommendation and the AFS was approved for signature. **(Action 6)**

- f. Letter of Representation. The Ext Audit Management Letters had been closely scrutinised by the AC; an unqualified opinion had been given to both the AFS and the Regularity Report; the AC had recommended the report, including the Letter of Representation, to the Corporation and it was received; specifically, the Letter of Representation was recommended for signature. **(Action 7)**

- a. **The information was received.**
- b. **Actions had been identified (Register 47/18)**

39/18 PRINCIPALS REPORT

- a. Funding. That the present focus on financial austerity looked set to continue was a strong message from the AoC Conference. Colleges were facing financial difficulties, 48% published annual losses in 2016/17 and that looked set to be at least repeated in 2017/18; North Hertfordshire College had been issued with a financial notice to improve. The Oaklands discipline of £4m reserves and “break-even” budgets has served well as one of the 24% cohort of outstanding financial health evidenced, whilst 16% were placed in the inadequate cohort. The insolvency regime would become effective on 31 January 2019 and members were reminded again of the reasons for the introduction; relevant information from the DfE would be circulated in the near future.
- b. Curriculum. As part of the work-placement pilot scheme for TLevels, there was a requirement for 45-50 day placements for 133 students. In response to a question, it was agreed as a challenge but there were some excellent employer engagements and with hard work and imaginative arrangements, management was optimistic that it could be achieved.
- c. Other updates regarding the FE Commissioner’s termly letter, a new Ofsted Inspection Framework and the successful and well-attended open days at both campuses were received.
- d. Congratulations were recorded to the media students who took first place in a Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service road safety “Think before you drink” raising awareness campaign, the film would be used in the Christmas campaign.

The information was noted and received.

40/18 QUALITY UPDATE

- a. The comprehensive Quality Update was considered and discussed; Student Progress and Predicted Achievement. Development of the predicted achievement tracker was on schedule, with most of the curriculum areas loaded; all students will know their expected grades and teachers will be informed on how to achieve high grades. Raising awareness sessions were planned during “out of class” times and would consider issues across a wide range of influencing and related issues. Practically, tracking and monitoring of students’ progress to their best capability was through the tracker and priority was completion of loading of all data, including attendance, by the end of term allowing a full and current position by January. The information was discussed and some elements were queried, for example was attendance by the EAM students corrected early enough in year to maximise chances of achieving in their GCSE resits? Since they had not succeeded in their last attempt, it was suggested that early corrective action would enhance continuity and their possible outcome. The point was taken
- b. First Impressions Survey. Consolidated data (16-18 & 19+) from the first impressions survey had been tabulated at Annex 1 and was discussed; the presentation had been designed to provide scrutiny of individual courses by dissatisfaction levels. Survey questions in order of dissatisfaction levels by the courses concerned were listed. The highest satisfaction indicators and related questions were also detailed.
- c. Curriculum Audits. A curriculum audit, observing individual Learning Support Assistants (LSA), was in progress; to date 19/38 had been completed, with 2/19 judged as ineffective.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that corrective action was underway to rectify identified weaknesses and both of the “ineffective” ILAs would be re-observed. Emerging strengths listed in the document, were discussed, the full report would be available later this month.

- d. The Quality Improvement Plan. (QIP) The QIP at Annex 3, had been informed by the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR), which had been approved at the last meeting together with the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP); it had been updated to include identified key weaknesses, areas for improvement, including apprenticeship provision, were clearly listed in the document. Results against the plan would be monitored directly by the DPQ through integrated use of KPI tracker, lesson observations, learning walks, the Predicting Achievement Tracker and curriculum audits; the information would be reviewed at monthly SMT meetings and reported to the Corporation.
- e. Teaching Learning and Assessment. (TLA) The TLA grade profile indicated that 78% were meeting expectations and 22% not, outcomes had been tabulated and RAG rated to show, where applicable, Strengths and Areas for Improvement. Students appeared to be making good progress and resources were well used. Weaknesses identified by the Quality Team, including the Quality Improvement Facilitators (QIF) would inform the content of the staff development day in January 2019. A question was raised regarding numbers to deliver the amount of work involved in delivery of the Plan; there were 10 QIF available and they were receive remission from primary teaching duties. Heads of Department would be required to improve reporting of equality and diversity, independent learning support (rated red) and some other “non-applicable” from the table, appropriate training would be provided. The 48 teachers who did not “meet expectations” were receiving direct QIF support, including provision of “teachers’ toolkits”, a high proportion were newly or unqualified, a special training day had been arranged for these and extra time would be allowed for acquaintance with the quality regime before re-observation.

- a. **The information was received and noted.**
- b. **Actions had been identified. (Register 47/18)**

41/18 COMMERCIAL UPDATE

The self-explanatory Commercial Update was considered; the Marketing Department now had assumed responsibility for sales and was successfully working to a revenue target, which was likely to be met. Information re the commercial activities was clearly detailed in the paper and was noted.

The information was received and noted.

42/18 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

- a. KPI. Performance against the challenging 2018/19 KPI (approved in July 2018) was tabulated at Annex 1 and was supplemented by textual updates, the strategic themes were:
 - (i) talented and valued workforce;
 - (ii) financial sustainability;
 - (iii) corporation attendance; and
 - (iv) high quality responsive curriculum.

and all were noted, the red rated English and Maths attendance indicator was still noticeable and assurances were given that focus on this issue would be maintained.

- b. Risk Management (RM). The Risk Register presented as a RAG rated table at Annex 2 had been reviewed by SMT on 13 November and was considered, the following changes were noted:
 - (i) TVW2 and 3 had been reduced;
 - (ii) FS1 and FS 8 had been reduced;

- (iii) QC1, 2 and 3 had been reduced; and
- (iv) FS10 had been added as a new medium risk.

An additional mitigation factor had been added to FS5 and QC4.

There were currently 18 Risks associated with the Strategic Themes, 17 Medium and one Low, the information was noted. The improvement in the overall risk residual grades was challenged, since it reflected a major improvement in a short timescale. The changes indicated that the mitigating factors had influenced outcomes and improvements were underway. Preparations for the Ofsted monitoring visit were well advanced and the register reflected that.

The information was noted.

43/18 POLICIES

The Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy had been approved at 31/18.

44/18 GOVERNANCE

The recent skills audit had been analysed and the consolidated result would inform the Search Committee for areas where strengthening may be necessary.

- a. **The information was received.**
- b. **Actions had been identified.** (Table 47/18)

45/18 URGENT BUSINESS

The Corporation Seal had been affixed to Form DS1 (re HD552406) (North side of Elstree Way, Borehamwood) on 3 December 2018. Authenticated by Zoe Hancock (Principal) and Geoff Lambert (Chair of the Audit Committee).

The information was noted.

46/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held at 1800 on 11 February 2019.

47/18 ACTION REGISTER

See referenced minute for full detail		Resp	Date
Action 1	36/18d. Pay rise detail noted and endorsed.	ZH	asap
Action 2	37/18a. Minutes (12.11.18) confirmed for signature.	Clerk	
Action 3	37/18d. AC recommendations noted.	All	wie
Action 4	38/18b. Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy approved.	DoF	
Action 5	38/18e. Accounts process to be explained to members.		
Action 6	38/18. AFS approved for signature.	SG/ZH	
Action 7	38/18f. Letter of Representation approved for signature.		