

SANDWELL COLLEGE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Governors
held on Monday 23rd February 2015,
in Room 5F/43, at Central Campus,
commencing at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-	Mr. J. Tew	(Independent)	(in the Chair)
	Mr. M. Bailey	(Independent)	
	Mr. M. Beardsmore	(Independent)	
	Mr. J. Britton	(Independent)	
	Mrs. A. Brook	(Independent)	
	Mr. J. Elsmore	(Independent)	
	Mrs. T. Hurst	(Independent)	
	Mr. N. Johal	(Independent)	
	Mr. R. Nugent	(Independent)	
	Mrs. C. Parker	(Independent)	
	Mr. G. Pennington	(Principal)	
	Ms. L. Pitsillides	(Staff)	
	Mr. A. Scott	(Independent)	
	Mr. M. J. Uddin	(Independent)	

Also in Attendance:-

Miss J. Berry	Corporation Secretary	
Mr. D. Hawkins	Executive Director for Finance and Resources	(part of meeting)
Mr. D. Holden	Vice-Principal	(part of meeting)
Ms. A. Llewellyn	Director for Adult, Community and Foundation Learning	(part of meeting)
Ms. R. Pal	Director for Exams and Funding Data	(part of meeting)
Ms. A. Sheridan	Director for Quality, Learner Studies and Innovation	(part of meeting)
Ms. K. Whiting	Executive Director for People and Corporate Services	(part of meeting)
Mr. J. Stott	Head of Department – Public Services	(part of meeting)
Ms. K. Facey	Team Leader – Public Services	(part of meeting)
Mr. L. McGrath	Team Leader – Sport and Travel	(part of meeting)

B15.01 Welcome B15.01

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. Parker to her first meeting of the Board of Governors.

B15.02 Declarations of Interest B15.02

There were no declarations of interest.

B15.03 Apologies B15.03

Apologies were received from Ms. Bushell, Ms. Randall and Messrs. Javid and Sadler.

B15.04 Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors held on Monday 8th December 2014 B15.04

The minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on Monday 8th December 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED: that the minutes be approved.

B15.05 Matters Arising

B15.05

i) Financial Year-End 2013/14 (Vide Minute B14.118)

Members were informed that the Members' Report and Financial Statements 2013/14 had been signed by the Chairman, Principal and financial statements auditors and submitted to the Skills Funding Agency by its deadline of 31st December 2014.

ii) Students' Union Accounts 2013/14 (Vide Minute B14.125)

Members were asked to note that the information requested by the Students' Union President had been forwarded to her and discussed with the Students' Union team.

B15.06 'My World'

B15.06

The Principal explained that 'My World' was an initiative whereby Heads of Department and members of their teams would be invited to attend meetings of the Board of Governors in order to give members an in-sight into the work of their departments. The Head of Department of Public Services, together with the Team Leaders for Public Services and Sport and Travel had been invited to attend this meeting. The Head of Department introduced himself and his Team Leaders.

The Head of Department made a presentation informing members of student numbers and the significant growth achieved between 2011/12 and 2014/15; group sizes; staffing numbers and expertise; performance data for 2013/14 for retention, achievement and success compared to the national averages, and, the specialist facilities available to learners, compared to those at the former West Bromwich Campus, which had helped staff raise the quality of teaching and learning.

The Team Leader for Public Services explained that the majority of the department's students were interested in joining the army, police, marines, fire service or security services. The skills development programmes available to learners were explained, together with the range of trips, residential programmes, volunteering and work experience opportunities all of which were linked to assessments.

The Team Leader for Sport and Travel outlined the number of learners undertaking sport and travel programmes, the majority of whom were 16-18 year olds. The study programmes and levels that the College offered were outlined, including the work of the careers academies, employer links and learner progression routes. Residential opportunities, which were linked to assessment, were explained, together with work experience, volunteering and employment opportunities. Members were informed of the students' fund raising activities and were shown a video of a recent trip to Goa that had been undertaken in conjunction with The Mango Tree Trust. In response to a query, members were informed how trips and activities were funded.

The Head of Department then outlined plans for 2015/16, including the development of new apprenticeships, development programmes and higher education opportunities.

In response to a number of queries, members were informed of the main geographical areas where students resided, the known destinations of learners and the percentage that progressed into higher education

Members thanked the Head of Department and Team Leaders for their very interesting and informative presentation.

RESOLVED: that the presentation be received.

The Head of Department – Public Services and the Team Leaders left the meeting.

The Principal presented a report updating members on a number of issues, activities and developments.

The College had exceeded its 16-18 learner numbers funding allocation and 19+ delivery was in line with expectations. The College's 16-18 target for 2015/16, which would be challenging, had been confirmed. An additional 19+ funding allocation had been received in-year and members were informed of the ways in which the College would deliver this additional income including work with collaborative partner organisations.

A number of very successful open events had taken place and acceptances to-date for 2015/16 were significantly higher when compared to the same time in the previous year. Members were informed of revised student interview processes that had been established.

The Principal explained the inclusion of an 'At a Glance' section within his report. During discussions it was suggested that this should be extended to include information on meeting local business needs and learner destinations. The Principal asked members to inform him of any other information they would like to be included.

The Principal outlined work that was being undertaken with local schools; quality improvement initiatives; the development of a new website and progress in establishing a FabLab.

In response to a query, a discussion took place regarding creative industries and discussions that had taken place with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). It was noted that the Principal had been asked to make a presentation to the LEP regarding digital, media and the creative economy, which might be areas for the College to focus on.

Members noted that adult funding for 2016/17 would be challenging, as would requirements in relation to English and maths, which would be discussed later in the meeting.

In response to a query, the Director for Quality, Learner Studies and Innovation explained the profile of teaching and learning observation grades compared to the previous year. The Director also outlined actions taken to address issues arising from the student survey.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

The Vice-Principal presented a report updating members on matters relating to the College's approach to becoming 'outstanding'; arrangements for external scrutiny of aspects of the College's approach to quality; implications of the Government's requirements in relation to English and maths; qualification success rates for 2013/14; changes to the assessment of vocational courses; curriculum inspection reviews and the outcome of the student survey.

In response to a query, members were informed that curriculum pathways had been developed at every level for students attending the College.

With regard to the external scrutiny of the College's approach to quality, members were informed that in future years the Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee would be asked to determine the areas of work that should be reviewed.

Members were aware that from September 2014 it was a condition of funding that all students that did not have a 'C' grade in GCSE English and maths would need to undertake a course to improve these skills. With effect from September 2015 the requirement had been strengthened in that all students with a 'D' grade would have to undertake a GCSE resit. The implications on colleges, particularly in areas of high deprivation, were substantial.

The Director of Funding and Exams Data made a presentation outlining the background to the Government's requirements in relation to English and maths; the timeline for their introduction, and the impact on the College in terms of funding, staffing, physical resources, timetabling complications and exams.

Learner numbers in relation to English and maths functional skills and GCSEs for 2013/14 compared to 2014/15 were explained, together with the potential negative impact on success rates and funding, which may be withdrawn.

Concerns were expressed regarding the overall impact on the College of the English and maths initiative. The Chairman informed members that the Association of Colleges' was taking steps to ensure that the Government fully understood the implications of this initiative on colleges.

In response to a query, members were informed of the way in which apprenticeships would also be affected.

The Principal assured members that the College was implementing a number of strategies to address the implications of what was a very complex issue.

RESOLVED:

- a) that members' concerns regarding the potential implications on funding and success rates of the Government's requirements in relation to English and maths be noted.
- b) that the report be received.

B15.09 Presentation – The Impact on Funding of English and Maths B15.09

This item had been discussed earlier in the meeting under agenda item 8 'Teaching and Learning Update'. Discussions regarding this matter are detailed above under minute number B15.08.

B15.10 Annual Strategy, Policy and Discussion Forum - Update B15.10

The Principal updated members on the development of the new Strategic Plan and work that had been undertaken since the Annual Strategy, Policy and Discussion Forum, particularly in relation to the mission, values and long term objectives.

The Principal informed members that he would circulate the revised objectives to them for their consideration and feedback.

RESOLVED: that the verbal report be received.

B15.11 People and Corporate Services Report B15.11

The Executive Director for People and Corporate Services presented a report updating members on the establishment of the Directorate of People and Corporate Services, together with matters relating to human resources, marketing, and admissions.

Members viewed a promotional video that was being developed for the first time as part of the new website. Suggestions were made for inclusion in the video. It was noted that a mini video would be developed for each curriculum department.

A discussion took place regarding ways in which the College could increase its use of social media and the ways in which website metrics could be measured and used to inform future developments.

Members were pleased to note the success of recent open events and the increased number of student acceptances compared to 2014/15.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

B15.12 Risk Management Monitoring Report

B15.12

The Executive Director for Finance and Resources presented the December 2014 risk management monitoring report. As had been discussed earlier in the meeting, the impact on the College of the Government's requirements in relation to English and Maths was a high level risk.

A number of comments were made regarding the format and content of the report and it was noted that this would be reviewed and revised in line with the new Strategic Plan.

A member asked that 'front sheets' be re-introduced for all reports presented to the Board of Governors and this was agreed.

RESOLVED:

- a) that 'front sheets' be re-introduced for all reports presented to the Board of Governors
- b) that the report be received.

B15.13 Policies and Procedures

B15.13

i) Health, Safety and Welfare Policy

The Executive Director for Finance and Resources presented a revised Health, Safety and Welfare Policy, which had been updated to reflect the College's new structure.

RESOLVED: that the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy be approved.

ii) Public Interest Disclosure Procedure

The Corporation Secretary presented a revised Public Interest Disclosure Procedure, which had been updated in line with the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

A member suggested that reference should be included within the Procedure to the duty of the Audit Committee to oversee the Public Interest Disclosure Procedure as required under the Joint Audit Code of Practice.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the Public Interest Disclosure Procedure be amended to include reference to the duty of the Audit Committee to oversee the Procedure as required in the Joint Audit Code of Practice.

- b) that, subject to (a) above, the Public Interest Disclosure Procedure be approved.

B15.14 Finance and Resources

B15.14

Management Accounts for the Period ended 31st December 2014

The Executive Director for Finance and Resources presented the management accounts for the period ended 31st December 2014 and outlined the main variances against budget. The Executive Director also gave a verbal report on the management accounts for the period ended 31st January 2015.

Members were informed that the College expected the year-end position to be in line with budget, however, this would depend on actual examination fees. Members noted that the overdraft facility had not been used.

RESOLVED: that the management accounts be received.

B15.15 Three Year Financial Plan Monitoring Report

B15.15

The Executive Director for Finance and Resources presented the three-year financial plan monitoring report. Members noted that the financial plan would be up-dated in line with the budget for 2015/16 and the new Strategic Plan.

Members were reminded of the additional in-year adult funding allocation that had been received and the implications for curriculum delivery.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

B15.16 Budget Setting Timetable 2015/16

B15.16

The Executive Director for Finance and Resources presented the proposed budget setting timetable 2015/16.

RESOLVED: that the budget setting timetable 2015/16 be approved.

B15.17 Minutes of the Meeting of the Search Committee held on Monday 9th February 2015

B15.17

The Chairman presented the minutes of the meeting of the Search Committee held on Monday 9th February 2015, which included a number of recommendations to the Board of Governors.

The Chairman reminded members that Mr. Beardsmore's term of office would cease on 30th April 2015. On behalf of the Board of Governors, the Chairman expressed a vote of thanks to Mr. Beardsmore for his dedication and commitment to the College during his time as a governor. Members unanimously supported the Chairman's comments.

RESOLVED:

- a) that Mrs. Ann Brook be appointed as an Independent Member on the Board of Governors for a two-year term of office commencing 1st June 2015 and ceasing on 31st May 2017.
- b) that Mrs. Brook be appointed to serve as a member of the Audit Committee and the Remuneration Committee with effect from 1st June 2015.
- c) that Mr. Jan Britton be appointed to serve as a member of the Audit Committee with effect from 24th February 2015 until 31st July 2015.

- d) that a vote of thanks be recorded to Mr. Mike Beardsmore for his dedication and commitment to the College during his time as a governor.
- e) that the minutes be received.

B15.18 Appointment of Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors B15.18

The Chairman reminded members that the Vice-Chairman's term of office would cease on 30th April 2015. Members were asked to appoint a Vice-Chairman with effect from 1st May 2015.

Mr. Beardsmore proposed that Mrs. Brook be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors with effect from 1st May 2015. Mr. Bailey seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED: that Mrs. Brook be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors for a term of office of 25 months commencing 1st May 2015 and ceasing on 31st May 2017.

B15.19 Board of Governors and Committees - Schedule of Meetings 2015/16 B15.19

The Corporation Secretary presented a proposed schedule of meetings for the Board of Governors and its committees for 2015/16.

RESOLVED: that the proposed schedule of meetings for the Board of Governors and its committees for 2015/16 be approved.

B15.20 College Development Project - Project Managers – Final Report B15.20

The Executive Director for Finance and Resources presented a summary of the final report from the project managers in relation to the new build project. A copy of the complete report was available to members on request.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

B15.21 Any Other Business B15.21

1. Strategic Planning/Curriculum Observation Day

The Chairman reminded members of the intention to arrange a strategic planning/curriculum observation day. The aim of which was to give further consideration to the draft strategic plan, to undertake an element of the licence to observe training and to undertake observations of curriculum areas.

The Principal proposed that the event should take place on Thursday 16th April 2015. The way in which members would be assigned to the various curriculum departments was explained. Further details would be circulated in due course.

RESOLVED: that a strategic planning/curriculum observation day be arranged to take place on Thursday 16th April 2015.

2. Board of Governors Reports

A member commented on the high quality of the reports presented to the Board of Governors, however, members agreed that all future reports should include a front sheet, which incorporated an executive summary.

RESOLVED: that future reports to the Board of Governors include a front sheet, incorporating an executive summary.

- B15.22 Determination of Confidential Items B15.22
- Members agreed that none of their discussions should be minuted confidentially.
- RESOLVED: that none of the discussions at this meeting of the Board of Governors be minuted confidentially.
- The Staff Member and members of the Senior Leadership and Management Team (excluding the Principal) left the meeting.
- B15.23 Extract from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors held on Monday 8th December 2014 B15.23
- The extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on Monday 8th December 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- RESOLVED: that the extract from the minutes be approved.
- B15.24 Date of Next Meeting B15.24
- The next meeting of the Board of Governors was planned to take place on Monday 11th May 2015, commencing at 5.30 p.m., at Central Campus.
- The meeting terminated at 8.21 p.m.