

SANDWELL COLLEGE

**Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting
held on Monday 16 October 2017
in Room 5F/43, Central Campus
at 5.30pm**

Present:	Mr K Ellis	(Independent)	(in the Chair)
	Mr J Britton	(Independent)	
	Mr D Chuhan	(Independent)	
	Ms R Hanif	(Student)	
	Mrs T Hurst	(Independent)	
	Ms R Jenkins	(Independent)	
	Mr T Mahmood	(Independent)	(part of meeting)
	Mr G Pennington	(Principal)	
	Mr A Scott	(Independent)	
	Mr M J Uddin	(Independent)	

Apologies:	Mr M Johal	(Independent)
	Mr M Smith	(Independent)
	Supt R Youds	(Independent)

Also in attendance:

Mr D Hawkins Executive Director for Finance and Resources
 Mr D Holden Vice Principal
 Ms A Sheridan Assistant Principal, Quality, Learner Studies and Innovation
 Mrs E Scotford Clerk to the Corporation

The meeting started at 5.40pm

		Action
B17.69	<u>Welcome</u>	
	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. The Chair took the opportunity to encourage Governors to attend college events where possible. The Chair advised that he would write on behalf of the Board to the former Chair, Mr John Tew, to thank him for his hard work and contribution to the success of the college during his tenure.	Chair
B17.70	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
	There were no declarations.	
B17.71	<u>Apologies</u>	
	Apologies had been received from Mr Johal, Mr Smith and Supt Youds and were accepted by Governors.	
B17.72	<u>Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors – 10 July 2017</u>	
	The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.	

	RESOLVED THAT: the minutes be approved.	
B17.73	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
	There were no matters arising.	
B17.74	<u>Principal's Report</u>	
	The Principal presented a report informing members of: Ofsted preparation, recruitment, quality, HR, events and achievements, developments, finance and ongoing developments relating to apprenticeships and T levels, HE offer, and the AoC campaign to increase base funding rate of 16-18 year olds.	
	Key points highlighted included:	
1	Recruitment has gone very well with student numbers currently standing at 4,119 which is 300 over target.	
2	Work continues with Coventry University with a launch of the re-branded Central Sixth Centre now planned for January.	
3	New apprenticeship starters are down by 60% across the country. This is consistent across all providers. Extra marketing is being put in place but the changes introduced nationally, outlined in the report, lead the college to advise a cautious approach to this market at present.	
4	Overall quality and success rates were 86% for 2016/17, significantly above the national figure.	
5	Adult provision figures are strong with overall achievement rates of 93%, an improvement on the previous year.	
6	Maths was up to 27%, an increase of more than 10% on the previous year and English up to 32%..	
7	Functional Skills at 78% is strongly ahead of the National Average of 57% and an improvement on the college's previous year's result of 75%.	
8	HR developments were summarised: a new Head of Quality has been appointed and recruitment is underway for a Head of HR and Organisational Development. Two Heads of Section posts are to be filled (Head of Engineering and Head of Creative Industries) following the curriculum reorganisation.	
9	A meeting of the Black Country Colleges' group on Friday 13 October to which all local MPs had been invited, saw 3 MPs attend, with no Sandwell MPs in attendance. Focus to be given to encouraging greater attendance for future meetings.	
10	The STA project is currently being evaluated, particularly the funding requirements of Walsall Council. Project held in abeyance at present.	
11	Launch of new FE Skills & Productivity Group – the launch date is Friday 3 November. All colleges in the Combined Authority are involved with the aim of presenting a united voice on the skills agenda, particularly on the adult skills budget.	
12 NFP		

13	<p>Finance – the college had a budgeted surplus of £750k. Due to the increase the College has requested additional funding of approximately £400k.</p> <p>The new pension liability has had an impact but is beyond the college's control.</p>	
14	<p>Apprenticeships are the main challenge at present. The college is not as reliant on apprenticeships as it was which is helpful as figures are nearly two thirds down. This could indicate that employers are not willing to make the contribution required and some are viewing it as a tax so it is not generating more apprenticeships. Some employers use it to fund existing trainees. The college has a high number of business apprenticeships at the moment.</p>	
15	<p>Development of T levels is a concern. They include a requirement for students to undertake 45-60 days worth of work but many students have part-time jobs. This would require them to work for nothing and give up other funded support. The number of work placements which would need to be generated is also a concern.</p>	
16	<p>Funding issue – the AoC has written to the government to request a £200 increase to the base funding rate for 16-18 year olds.</p>	
17	<p>A 2-day conference was held recently with managers to prepare for Ofsted which produced a number of useful working documents and actions.</p>	
18	<p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the report be received - that the Principal give further updates on the building cladding and fire safety 	
B17.75	<p><u>Teaching, Learning and Assessment Report</u></p>	
	<p>The Vice Principal presented the report informing members of 16-18 success rates, 19+ success rates, apprenticeship success rates, English and maths, and improvements since the last inspection. Key points highlighted included:</p>	

1	The college's success rates have increased year on year as expected, this has been in combination with the rapid growth of the college over the last couple of years.	
2	<p>English and maths – the college's number of students who had left school without maths increased from 60 last year to 150 this year. The college's provisional success rates reflect that 27% achieved A-C GCSE maths in 2016/17, significantly higher than the previous year and 8% above national average. This achievement would stand the students in good stead for the future.</p> <p>There is a similar picture in English with 118 students last year achieving A-C GCSE English, rising to 225 students this year. This will make a real difference to them with employers.</p> <p>The English and maths results reflect the huge amount of work undertaken by the college. Initiatives have included: putting classroom assistants in every class; a restructure of the area with the appointment of a new Assistant Director and Curriculum leads for English and Maths; a November resit programme; a further revision programme; streaming students based on their ability and enthusiasm to do maths; students given the opportunity to take 2 GCSE papers with different exam boards which increased their confidence for the second exam (an additional 25 students passed on the second exam).</p>	
3	Overall success rates – good pastoral and programme management system with Sports students, with a whole range of initiatives in place to ensure students are successful.	
4	The college's actual success rates compared to national averages were outlined with the college being better than the sector by – L1 25%, L2 19%, L3 6%. The college's performance outstrips every sector at all levels.	
5	Governors asked if the college was planning to make any amendments based on student and staff feedback. The college confirmed this would be fed into the Quality Improvement Plan.	
6	<p>The main areas of focus moving forwards would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apprenticeships – national averages are low. The college had front loaded on apprentices and functional skills and had a number of opportunities to make improvements over the year. - AS levels – need to improve. VOC results are better than AS results. The college is focusing on performance management. A levels have been restructured. Smaller units with more accountability were being mirrored in A levels. 	
7	Governors asked for more detail on the apprenticeships issue and clarification of the data. The college confirmed the timely trend 62% was improving and is above national average. The overall trend was down on the previous year but was above national average (74%, national average 69%). There were a number of reasons for this including if the apprentices had dropped out after the planned end date in the previous year, it would impact on success rates in the current year. The college had also had a high rate of hang over on apprenticeships in the previous year so the maximum overall success rate which could be achieved in 2016 was 80% if every single student on programme had got to the end of the programme and had passed. This year 92% were on the starting point therefore, even with a similar pattern, the figure should improve.	

8	The college confirmed that it had improved its apprenticeships provision since the last inspection, although it was very different now and more diverse. The college had promoted apprenticeships through a range of methods.	
9	Governors congratulated the GCSE staff, leading to a massive improvement in GCSE results and noted that the strategies which had been introduced were clearly having an impact.	
10	RESOLVED THAT: the report be received	
B17.76	<u>Equality and Diversity Summary Annual Report</u>	
	The Vice Principal presented the report informing members of: population trends, achievements, equality and diversity ethos and values, narrowing the achievement gap, groups and events, training and other activities.	
	Key points highlighted included:	
1	Governors queried the age of the data in the report which referred to 2011 and asked that the report be based on more up to date data in future. The college explained that the report had been based on census data but would use alternative data sources for subsequent reports. Governors suggested the Sandwell Trend website be used which contains updates on census information.	
2	The college pointed out that Ofsted would focus on how the achievement gap had been narrowed. Over the last 2-3 years the focus group had been 16-18 males of Pakistani origin, the gap had been narrowed to within 1.8% of the college average. The new group of focus was white males 16-18 who perform less well than other groups. Governors asked if the white males might not be of British origin. The college confirmed it had checked and the group was white working class British males. Other gaps relate to curriculum areas.	
3	Governors asked how the college addressed the groups once they had been identified. The college explained that the first step was to identify whether it was a curriculum or ethnicity issue, e.g. Construction, which had a predominant group of 16-18 white British males and success rates needed to increase across the department. Focus groups would also be used in each curriculum area to identify any common themes or areas requiring more support. This was not easy to identify, particularly when groups are small.	
4	Governors asked if the college used role models with the groups. The college confirmed it did and gave examples.	
5	Governors requested examples of the processes which had been put in place. The college highlighted that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some of the issues were social and income deprivation related and pastoral support was put in place to support them. - It visited students at home and, from this year, would take work out to students over the holiday period. - Student mentors were in place and a buddy-up system was used - Grade buster classes were in place 	
6	Governors asked if streaming students caused any problems. The college explained that students were not streamed purely on ability but on grouping	

	the most able and motivated students together but it also ensured that the remaining students had appropriate support in place. Those groups could be more challenging because of poor attendance records and were required to do catch-up sessions.	
	RESOLVED THAT: - the report be received - future reports be based on more up to date ethnicity data	
B17.77	<u>Fire Safety</u>	
	See Principal's report, point 6.12.	
B17.78	<u>Policies</u>	
	There were no policies to be reviewed or approved.	
B17.79	<u>Management Accounts for the period ended 31 July 2017</u>	
	The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, presented the accounts. Key points highlighted included:	
1	Period 12 showed an operating surplus of £479k. The budgeted surplus had been £1,391k but this had been affected by the £521k pension charge as well as higher than anticipated exam fees, professional fees and marketing. The increased marketing expenditure had impacted positively on learner numbers this September.	
2	The significant investment in maths and English had led to improved results.	
3	The increased pension charge of £90k not in the budget at the start of the year had also impacted.	
4	The application for £400k adult funding in-year had not yet been accepted. If successful it would be included in the final figures.	
5	The accounts demonstrated a positive picture with an improving cash position of £2.9million in July 2017 compared to £1.9million in July 2016.	
6	An investment is being made in key college priorities.	
7	Financial statements to be tabled in December will contain further pension adjustments.	
8	Governors noted that a surplus of almost £400k in year was an excellent position and compared favourably to the past but were disappointed if it was compared to the original budgeted surplus of £1,391k. Governors asked for an explanation of what had happened in the last couple of months to cause this difference. The college explained that there had been additional marketing expenditure as the number of applications was behind. This usually takes place at this time of year. There had also been increased exam expenditure with some students being put through extra qualifications. Some expenditure had also taken place on building and decoration. Governors asked if such a decrease of £800k was usual. The Audit Committee Chair explained that the reason for the variance since the last projection was contained in the management accounts.	

	RESOLVED THAT: the accounts be received	
B17.80	<u>Risk Management Monitoring Report</u>	
	The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, presented the report which was in the new layout which ranked risk by its likelihood of occurrence and impact on the college. Key points highlighted included:	
1	Building cladding to be incorporated into the next version.	ED, F&R
2	Risk 14 - Pension payment – the college explained it was still exploring taking up security on the building to reduce the payment it makes for deficit reductions. The college hopes for some progress on this proposal in the next 6-8 weeks.	
3	Risk 6 – decline in quality of teaching and learning – amendment to wording given impending nature of inspection - Executive Director, Finance & Resources, to consult with colleagues to reword.	ED, F&R
B17.81	<u>Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Committee held on Tuesday 20 June 2017</u>	
1	Mr Scott presented the minutes of the meeting and outlined the discussions that had taken place which had covered: internal audit reports 2016/17; internal audit progress report 2016/17; internal audit strategy/plans 2017/18; financial statements audit plan 2016/17; regularity audit self-assessment questionnaire 2016/17; register of outstanding internal audit recommendations; risk management report; half yearly health and safety report 2016/17; review of appointment of internal audit service; review of effectiveness and terms of reference of the Committee.	
2	There were a number of items which consequently required Board approval.	
3	RESOLVED THAT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the minutes be received - the Internal Audit Plan 2017/18 based on 31 audit days be approved - the Audit Committee's recommendation of a financial statements audit fee for 2016/17 of £23,680 exclusive of VAT be approved - the Board noted that the Audit Committee had considered the Regularity Assurance Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2016/17. - the amended Risk Register report be approved - the revised Risk Management Policy be approved - the Audit Committee's recommendation of an internal audit daily fee for 2017/18 of £430.00 including expenses but excluding VAT be approved - the revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee be approved 	
B17.82	<u>Minutes of the Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee held on:</u>	
1	<u>Wednesday 21 June 2017</u>	
	Mr Ellis presented the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017 and outlined the discussions that had taken place which had covered: the Quality Improvement Plan Impact Statement; a presentation on work experience and programme achievement management; the curriculum target setting process; external verifier visits 2016/17; quality strategy annual report and review;	

	interim safeguarding report; Risk Management report; approval of the Equality & Diversity Policy, the Additional Learning Support Policy 2017/18 and the Disability Statement 2017/18; a review of the Committee's effectiveness and terms of reference.	
	RESOLVED THAT: the minutes be received	
2	<u>4 October 2017</u>	
	Mr Ellis gave a verbal outline of the Committee's discussions in advance of the minutes being circulated which had covered: a presentation on HE provision/partnership with Coventry University; a programme standards review on Art and Design and Engineering, and Health and Public Services; 2016/17 provisional results, outcomes and actions; quality improvement plan impact statement; annual reports 2016/17 on teaching and learning, complaints and student disciplinary actions; Safeguarding report.	
	RESOLVED THAT: the content of the discussions be noted.	
B17.83	<u>Appointment of Student Member</u>	
1	Governors approved the appointment of Student member, Radia Hanif, for a term of office of one academic year to 31 July 2018.	
2	RESOLVED THAT: Radia Hanif, Student member, be appointed for one academic year to 31 July 2018.	
B17.84	<u>College calendar of events</u>	
	The calendar would be circulated to Governors when it had been finalised by the Marketing Department.	
B17.85	<u>Any Other Business</u>	
1	<p>Tour of the building - an outline of the major areas of development was given in lieu of a tour of the building including:</p> <p>Central Campus: 2 extra classrooms had been created on each floor; an additional IT classroom has been created on the 5th floor; main catering outlet created on the 4th floor to alleviate queues with smaller catering outlets on each floor; Costa Coffee pod removed from the building entrance; open IT areas created on the bridges; dog grooming is situated on the ground floor; old archive room reutilised as a classroom.</p> <p>Central Sixth: lower ground floor – another classroom has been created in the unused space; 4th floor – 3 classrooms created to assist with HR provision; another Science lab created; new computers installed on each floor in response to student comments that they needed better access to IT. Central Sixth was useful space which had been made more practical with the changes.</p> <p>Governors referred to the growth of the college versus the capacity of the building. To be discussed at the next Board meeting. Clerk to note for agenda.</p>	Clerk
	RESOLVED THAT: building capacity be discussed at the next Board meeting.	

2	Development programme for staff	
	<p>The Principal suggested that new managers would find it useful to attend Board meetings on occasion to present on key areas relating to their remit. An internship programme has already been offered to inspire senior leaders. Managers have been invited to join the leadership team for a period of time to familiarise themselves with strategic issues. Some others would benefit from attending Governors committee meetings to understand the work of the college and governance.</p> <p>Governors supported the idea but stressed the need for managers to understand and respect the confidentiality of Governors meetings.</p>	
	RESOLVED THAT: managers be invited to Board meetings relevant to their role by the Principal	
	Staff Governors and Student Governors left the meeting at 7.06pm	
B17.86 NFP	<u>CONFIDENTIAL ITEM</u>	
	Staff members and the Principal left the meeting at 7.21pm	
B17.87 NFP	<u>CONFIDENTIAL ITEM</u>	
B17.88	<u>Determination of confidential items</u>	
	Agenda items B17.74.12, B17.86 and B17.88.	
B17.89	<u>Date and time of next meeting</u> Monday 11 December 2017 at 5.00pm	

The meeting ended at 7.30pm

Signed: (Chair)

Date: 26 February 2018