

SANDWELL COLLEGE

**Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting
held on Monday 26 February 2018
in Room 5F/43, Central Campus
at 5.30pm**

Present:	Mr K Ellis	(Independent)	(in the Chair)
	Mr J Britton	(Independent)	
	Mr D Chuhan	(Staff)	
	Mr N Johal	(Independent)	(part of meeting)
	Mr G Pennington	(Principal)	
	Mr M J Uddin	(Independent)	
	Supt R Youds	(Independent)	
Apologies:	Ms R Jenkins	(Independent)	
	Mr M Smith	(Staff)	
	Mr M Seaman	(Student)	
Absent:	Ms R Hanif	(Student)	
	Mr T Mahmood	(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 5.30pm

The agenda items were taken in a different order to the published schedule but are reported in agenda order in the minutes.

		Action
B18.18	<u>Welcome</u>	
	<p>The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. The Chair reminded Governors of their responsibilities with regards to the confidential nature of some agenda items. The Chair advised that the latest edition of the Code of Conduct would be brought to a forthcoming meeting.</p> <p>The Chair reminded Governors that the terms of office of Governors Alistair Scott (Chair – Audit Committee) and Teresa Hurst (Chair – LQCC) had now expired. The Chair would write to Mr Scott and Mrs Hurst on behalf of the Board to express the Board’s thanks and appreciation for all their hard work and commitment during their tenure.</p> <p>The Search Committee was actively seeking potential Governor candidates and Governors were encouraged to approach their own contact networks to identify suitable candidates.</p> <p>Following the expiry of Mrs Hurst’s term of office, there was now a requirement for a Safeguarding Lead Governor. Mr Ellis confirmed he would cover the role for the timebeing.</p>	Chair

B18.19	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
	Mr Chuhan declared an interest as a union representative.	
B18.20	<u>Apologies</u>	
	Apologies had been received from Ms Jenkins, Mr Smith and Mr Seaman and were accepted by Governors. Ms Hanif and Mr Mahmood did not attend.	
B18.21	<u>Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors – 16 October 2017</u>	
	The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.	
	RESOLVED THAT: the minutes be approved.	
	<u>Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors – 24 January 2018</u>	
	The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.	
	RESOLVED THAT: the minutes be approved.	
B18.22	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
	There were no matters arising.	
B18.23	<u>Apprentice and Employer Engagement update – presentation by Simon Griffiths, Executive Director – Apprenticeships and Skills Division</u>	
	Key points arising from the presentation were:	
18.23.1	Apprenticeships and skills were the current focus of attention.	
18.23.2	The context of the current position, following the introduction of the employers' levy and a move away from frameworks towards standards, was explained. There has been a large scale national decline in apprenticeships over the last few months. The College's current apprentice numbers stand at just under 600.	
18.23.3	The work of the Apprenticeship Development team was outlined.	
18.23.4	The government acknowledges that the apprenticeship sector has changed significantly which has resulted in lower employer take-up.	
18.23.5	There has been a shift in focus to up-skilling and and re-skilling the existing workforce. Since November, the College has sought to engage employers more directly as a result.	
18.23.6	SG outlined the refocus of the College's marketing strategy. At present, it concentrates on Engineering, Advanced Manufacturing, Automotive but realises it needs to develop a niche area with Business Admin and Customer Service potential areas, along with Health and Social Care, and Dental and Dental Nursing.	
18.23.7	The College intends to simplify the process for the benefit of both apprentices and employers.	
18.23.8	Governors asked if employers requested support in areas outside the College's offer at present. SG advised that a focus group had been set up to explore this but explained the challenges faced by levy paying employers	

	who preferred a 'one stop shop' approach, with one institution covering a range of areas, e.g. higher level skills at Level 5, 6 and 7. The higher levels of qualification together with specialist areas, e.g. Business and Professional Services (accountancy and paralegal) are being requested at present.	
18.23.9	Governors expressed shock and concern that there had been a 60% national reduction in apprenticeships. SG explained this was partly but not wholly caused by the front-loading by employers before March, e.g. January-March last year.	
	NJ arrived	
18.23.10	In response to a Governors' query, SG outlined the Sandwell companies and organisations supported by the College totalling 350 and including: Sandwell Council, the NHS Trust, the Albion Foundation. Many were SMEs and locally based employers: Diamond Bus and Bandhal Dental Practice.	
18.23.11	Governors questioned how important an area apprenticeships was to the College. SG advised that it provided a £2 million income stream and it was imperative to have a presence in the market to maintain that level of income. The College needed to continue to work with employers across a range of sectors. The focus group would explore these questions with employers.	
18.23.12	Governors asked if the College was focused on large or small employers as the College's local presence in the apprenticeships market could be higher. SG explained that the present marketplace was based on SMEs with 50 employees or less. The College perhaps had a lower profile as it served a specific client group. Due to the levy, the College was focusing on those employers who wanted to take on significantly more apprentices; and who were looking at up-skilling and re-skilling their existing workforce rather than recruiting new apprentices.	
18.23.13	Governors enquired if the 16-18 or apprenticeship market was the most important area for the focus of Governors' attention. SG confirmed that both were as 16-18 was important but the 2 areas went hand in hand as applications for apprenticeship programmes were still being received from 16-18 year olds.	
18.23.14	Governors thanked SG for an informative presentation.	
18.23.15	RESOLVED THAT: the presentation content be noted.	
	SG left the meeting	
B18.24	Principal's Report	
18.24.1	The Principal presented his report which updated on recruitment; quality; HR; events and achievements; developments; finance; and looking ahead. Specific points highlighted included:	
18.24.2	Work is underway to recruit more A level students.	
18.24.3	Apprenticeships has been a difficult area for a couple of years but that relates more to employer engagement than recruiting students into an employer. The College is taking a more commercial approach with the introduction of a Sales team.	
18.24.4	The adult education budget remains a concern and the introduction of the Combined Local Authority will impact still further.	

18.24.5	Governors recognised that the College had the lowest adult funding per head in the Black Country. GP detailed the historical background to the funding allocation.	
18.24.6	Governors queried if the College was able to prove its need has not been met as a case for extra funding. Discussion took place regarding the debate underway at present regarding devolution of the adult skills budget to the Combined Local Authority and the need for the College to be involved and influence the decision makers, as well as involvement from the 4 Black Country local authorities and the LEP to highlight the discrepancy in funding levels. It was suggested that the Principal meet with a representative from the Combined Local Authority to enable a full understanding of the adult education budget to ensure the discrepancy in funding in the Black Country was addressed.	
18.24.7 NFP	CONFIDENTIAL	
18.24.8 NFP	CONFIDENTIAL	
18.24.9	A financial update was given. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The apprenticeship situation has impacted on the financial position which is now near a breakeven position. Governors asked how much of a problem the apprenticeships income was. The Principal advised that it was important because engagement in the local skills agenda is part of the College's mission. The £1 million gap was able to be addressed by making economies elsewhere to minimise the impact. A positive resolution to the high needs funding issue has now been achieved. 	
18.24.10	The difficulties relating to 'T' levels were outlined: particularly the requirement for the inclusion of 3 months' unpaid work experience.	
18.24.11	RESOLVED THAT: the Principal's report be received and noted.	
B18.25	<u>Quality update</u>	
	Presentation deferred to a future meeting. Clerk to note.	Clerk
B18.26	<u>Teaching & Learning Report</u>	
18.26.1	The Vice Principal presented the Teaching & Learning report. It was noted that the LQCC Committee would review the report in more detail.	
18.26.2	In-year retention overall for 16-18 year olds stands at 97% which was extremely high for this point in the year and indeed at all levels is up at present which demonstrates a very positive picture.	

18.26.3	<p>The current picture for English and maths was outlined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-C grades are well in excess of national average. • November re-sits over a 3-year period from 2015/16 – 2017/18 have increased with 88 students taking them this year. • Revision classes have gone well • A more targeted approach has been taken in 2017/18 with less students put in for November re-sits so that support could be focussed on the students with the best chance of passing. • The College is approximately 7-8% above national average at present 	
18.26.4	<p>An explanation of current safeguarding issues was given. An increase in the number of reported safeguarding cases related to: the increased ease of reporting issues within the local authority area and nationally; the greater number of students in college.</p>	
18.26.5	<p>Governors referred to the recent fight in college which was posted on social media and asked what action the College had taken to counteract negative PR. The background to the incident was given, as well as the effective staff action taken at the time to resolve the matter and the disciplinary action taken since with those involved in the fight and the bystanders who had exacerbated the issue by filming and posting the incident. A high quantity of positive social media messages had been put out by the College to counteract any negative press.</p>	
18.26.6	<p>Governors asked if the increase in referrals came from self-referrals or from staff and others, were there any trends and what types of safeguarding were involved. DHo explained that the robust safeguarding training, along with the dedicated Safeguarding office now in place, had led to an increase in referrals now that the process was well understood. Most referrals were self-referrals.</p> <p>DHo advised that a full and detailed Safeguarding report was issued to the LQCC Committee.</p>	
18.26.7	<p>RESOLVED THAT: the Teaching and Learning report be received and noted.</p>	
B18.27	<p><u>Governor membership update</u></p>	
18.27.1	<p>The Chair gave a membership update. Recent end of terms of office combined with existing vacancies has created a situation where quoracy is now an issue both for some Board meetings as well as Committee meetings.</p> <p>There are currently 5 vacancies for Independent members. Invitations are being extended to existing Governors to stand for reappointment for a second term as well as seeking suitable new candidates for membership. The Chair and Principal are to meet several potential new recruits with a view to recommending a shortlist to the Search Committee for consideration. Governors were encouraged to research their networks for other suitable candidates. Skills needed are: finance/accountancy, HR, business planning, legal and education, charring committees.</p> <p>Committee Chairs are needed for: Audit and LQCC.</p> <p>A Governor lead for safeguarding is also needed, role currently being covered by the Chair.</p>	

18.27.2	There is also an additional vacancy on the LQCC Committee. The Committee requires 2 Independent members as part of its quorum of 3.	
18.27.3	Consideration was also being given to the introduction of a Finance and Resources Committee to focus in depth on finance, HR and estates matters.	
18.27.4	RESOLVED THAT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors note the update on Corporation membership and current Governor vacancies • Governors explore their own contact networks for potential new recruits 	
B18.28	<u>Proposed schedule of meetings for the Board of Governors and its Committees 2018/19</u>	
18.28.1	The Clerk presented the meeting schedule.	
18.28.2	Governors suggested that the February 2019 meeting date be put back by a couple of weeks to avoid it falling on the first day back following the half term break. Clerk to action and recirculate.	Clerk
18.28.3	RESOLVED THAT: the meeting schedule be approved subject to the February 2019 Board of Governors meeting being put back by 2 weeks	
B18.29	<u>Minutes of Committee meetings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search Committee – 12 February 2018 	
18.29.1	The minutes of the Search Committee meeting on 12 February 2018 were received and noted and the key points highlighted by the Committee Chair.	
18.29.2	RESOLVED THAT: Governors received and noted the Search Committee minutes of 12 February 2018.	
B18.30	<u>Management Accounts for the period ended 31 December 2017</u>	
18.30.1	The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, presented the accounts. The accounts showed a small surplus because of the apprenticeships income; the reduction of high needs funding and full cost recovery.	
18.30.2	The increased cost of exam fees was because of the larger student cohort. There had been increased agency costs expenditure. Marketing expenditure was high as it was front-end loaded.	
18.30.3	There was a breakeven position as at December but the cash position will be £2.5 million at the end of the year.	
18.30.4	RESOLVED THAT: Governors receive the management accounts for the period ended 31 December 2017	
B18.31	<u>Budget setting timetable</u>	
18.31.1	The budget setting process was about to start and an update would be brought to the May Board meeting, with final approval of the budget taking place in July.	
18.31.2	RESOLVED THAT: the update on the budget setting timetable be noted.	

B18.32	<u>Risk Management Monitoring Report</u>	
18.32.1	The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, presented the report and highlighted the latest revisions including: a change to the risk relating to Ofsted as the inspection had now taken place; an addition of the negative pledge document.	
18.32.2	Inclusion of a risk related to ensuring all contracts were complete and in situ was suggested. The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, would take a proposition to the next Audit Committee meeting for consideration alongside its detailed review of the Risk Register.	Exec Dir, F&R
18.32.3	RESOLVED THAT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Risk Management Monitoring Report be noted. • The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, take a proposition to the next Audit Committee meeting for inclusion of a risk related to ensuring signed contracts were in place 	
B18.33	<u>Use of Corporation Seal</u>	
18.33.1	Jan Britton declared an interest as a member of the West Midlands Pension Fund.	
18.33.2	The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, advised that the Corporation Seal had been used for the West Midlands Pension Fund 'Negative Pledge and Restriction on Dealing Agreement' between Wolverhampton City Council and Sandwell College The document had been signed on Monday 12 February 2018 by Ken Ellis and Richard Youds.	
18.33.3	The Executive Director, Finance & Resources, explained the terms of the Negative Pledge. The College was also exploring the opportunity to offer more security to reduce its pension liabilities still further.	
18.33.4	RESOLVED THAT: Governors note the use of the Corporation Seal.	
B18.34 NFP	<u>RESERVED BUSINESS</u> <u>Confidential item – Cadbury College</u> See point B18.24.7	
B18.35	<u>Any Other Business</u> There was no other business	
B18.36	<u>Determination of Confidential Items</u> Point B18.24.7 – Cadbury College update Point B18.24.8 – QAA matter	
B18.37	<u>Date and time of next meeting</u> Friday 4 May 2018, 11.00am – Annual Strategy Day **DATE TO BE REARRANGED** Monday 21 May 2018, 5.30pm – Board of Governors meeting	

The meeting ended at 7.15pm