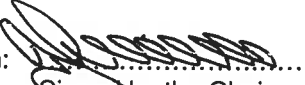


Draft minutes prepared on 12 October 2016 from contemporaneous notes
Draft minutes approved by the Chair via email on 12 October 2016

Approved by the Corporation:


Signed by the Chair

20/10/16
Date

Bradford College

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD: Thursday 8 September 2016

Present:

Mazn Amhamed	Governor (Student)
Paul Ashton	Governor
Eve Gregory (Chair)	Governor
Robert Holden	Governor (Staff)
Nasreen Karim	Governor
Dave Mann	Governor
Cath Orange	Governor (to 1720)
Karl Oxford	Governor (from 1615)
Debbie Rolls	Governor (Staff) (from 1610)
Ramindar Singh	Governor
Cllr Dale Smith	Governor
Andy Welsh	Governor (Group Chief Executive Officer ("GCEO"))

The quorum was six Governors

In Attendance:

Joanna Green	Clerk to the Corporation ("Clerk")
David Hambleton	Director of Finance and Corporate Services ("DFCS")
David Harwood	Principal
Liz Knowles	Assistant Clerk
Jacqueline Olson	Interim Head of FE Quality Enhancement ("HQE") (from 1715)
Gareth Osborne	Group Chief Operating Officer ("GCOO")
Richard Thomas	Provost

The meeting was held in the Bradford College Boardroom from 16.00 until 18.55. It was chaired by Eve Gregory.

L/R Denotes the time any Governor left/rejoined the meeting. A record identifying the individual concerned is held separately and is available on request.

0. Preliminaries

- 0.1 The Clerk advised that a quorum was present. The Chair opened the meeting.
- 0.2 It was **NOTED** that the Register of Governor Attendance had been circulated but was not for discussion.

1. Introductions and Apologies for Absence

1.1 Introductions

None.

1.2 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Richard Wightman due to holidays and Terry Davis due to work commitments.

2. **Disclosures of Interest**

2.1 There were no specific disclosures of interest. The Chair reminded Governors to declare interests as and when necessary.

3. **Minutes of the meeting of 28 July 2016**

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 28 July 2016 were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and the Chair was duly authorised to sign them.

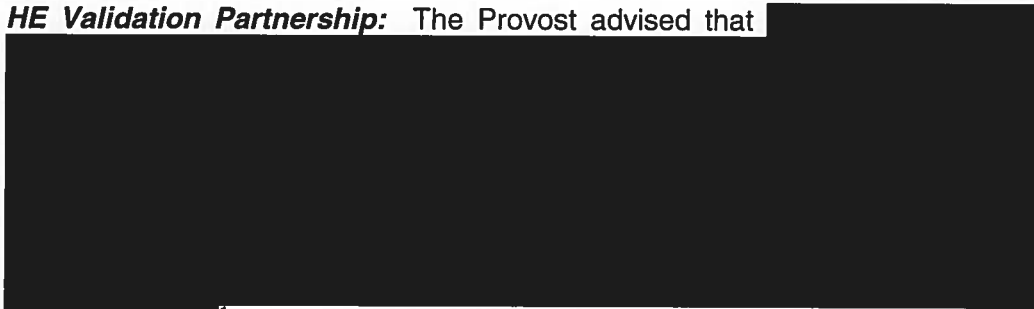
RESOLVED:

- i. *That the minutes of 28 July 2016 are a true and correct record and should be signed by the Chair.*

R 16.10 Debbie Rolls joined the meeting.

4. **Matters Arising**

4.1 **HE Validation Partnership:** The Provost advised that



¹ The Provost was **ASKED** to report again at the next meeting.

4.2 It was noted that the other 'matters arising' were scheduled for discussion at future meetings. Governors **AGREED** to receive the report.

RESOLVED:

- i. *The Provost to report to the 26th September 2016 Corporation*



Provost,
Agenda
26.09.16

- ii. *To receive the report.*

5. **Appointments to Bradford College Education Trust Governance Positions**

5.1 Governors **AGREED** to defer the item to the 26 September Special meeting, **NOTING** that this will still be in line with the timetable set out in the Articles of the Bradford College Education Trust.

RESOLVED:

Agenda
26.09.16

¹ Information exempt from disclosure by s43(2) Freedom of Information Act 2000 as disclosure at the present time would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person.

- i. To defer to the 26 September 2016 meeting consideration of Sponsor appointments to Bradford College Education Trust governance positions.*

R 16.15 Karl Oxford joined the meeting.

6. Governor Training Session

- 6.1 The meeting was stood down temporarily while Independent Governor Cath Orange (an Association of Colleges National Leader of Governance) led a training session, covering the following topics: 'What is Governance?', 'Characteristics of Good Governance', 'Outstanding', 'What do all Governors need to know?', 'Common Pitfalls' and 'Becoming a Good Governor'. It was noted that the session would count towards new Governors' induction training.
- 6.2 The Chair thanked Cath Orange for her very helpful session and the meeting then resumed.

R 17.15 Jacqueline Olson joined the meeting.

L 17.15 Cath Orange left the meeting.

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Jacqueline Olson, Interim Head of Quality Enhancement ("HQE") to the meeting.

6A Other Business

- 6A.1 A Governor asked whether the Corporation should by now have received information about the 2015-16 outturn; in particular how Bradford College students had performed compared to national outcomes.
- 6A.2 Acknowledging the pressing need to discuss Governors' expectations in terms of the provision of such information, the Chair said while the Corporation understands it is too early for a full report on outcomes, the general feeling is that it would be good to have a steer as to whether the College is broadly on target.
- 6A.3 David Harwood, the Principal, said, GCSE results nationally have shown the biggest ever year-on-year decline down to the lowest level since 2008. He said the fall is partly attributable to the implementation of Government policy requiring resits in maths and English for those who did not make a C grade the previous year, resulting in around 400,000 more entries this year. Bradford College had its share of those, with over 1,200 more entries than in 2014-15. There are a number of unknown outcomes, with some achievements not yet registered and these are being worked on. The likely success rate will be around 77%, i.e. a drop in performance from last year's 79%. The detail will be reported at the meeting on 20 October 2016.
- 6A.3 A Governor asked whether data will soon be available for local comparable institutions and HQE said she is seeking to obtain this.
- 6A.4 Governors **AGREED** that in future, they would wish to know at an early stage whether the Executive considers the College is on target in broad terms. They also **AGREED** that they would like to receive relevant press releases by email before the contents are made public, for their information. They **ACKNOWLEDGED** the Executive's cautionary advice that, by October, the picture may have changed in terms of the totality of the results.

RESOLVED:

- i. *The Standing Orders shall be amended by the introduction of a section on "Information and Advice", which shall provide as follows:*

"1. On the understanding that the overall picture may have changed by October, the Corporation shall receive from the Executive before the first Corporation meeting of each academic year a report commenting in general terms on the initial outcomes of all public examinations taken by College students in the preceding summer term; and stating whether the Executive considers that the College is broadly on target.

2. Before any press releases concerning the outcomes of public examinations are sent to the media, they shall be circulated to all Governors by email for information."

7. Governor Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Survey Results

- 7.1 The Clerk had distributed a report which analysed the results of the Governor Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Survey undertaken in July 2016, comparing the results with the outcomes of the January 2016 survey. The outcomes, she said, would form the basis of discussion around the Governor Self-Assessment review and would be used to update the actions, outcomes and to-date impacts in the 2016-17 Governor Quality Improvement Plan.

L 17.20

8. Governor Self-Assessment and Review

- 8.1 Governors acknowledged the preparation they had done ahead of the meeting:
- reflecting on the extent to which the Corporation's 2015-16 governance quality improvement goals were achieved;
 - considering the results of the Governor Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Survey;
 - reading the Committee self-assessment reports; and
 - assessing their compliance with the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges, by reference to the Clerk's report on the same
- and on the basis of those exercises:
- assessing and expressing the strengths and weaknesses of the Corporation in terms of the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) criteria and grade descriptors.
- 8.2 Governors **AGREED** to approach the self-assessment exercise by engaging in open discussion about what they think the Corporation is doing well and what they think it is doing less well. HQE was invited to input and it was **AGREED** that, at the end of the discussion, the Clerk would be asked to map Governors' overall conclusions and the evidence-based findings of the review of compliance with the Code of Good Governance to the CIF criteria to populate the Governors' Self-Assessment Report, a draft to be brought to the next meeting for information, with final approval deferred until the 2015-16 outturn is known.
- 8.3 Following debate, discussion and input from HQE, Governors **AGREED** as follows:

-
- i. Governors are highly committed and dedicated and work well as a team, as evidenced by time committed, training records, attendance at events, participation in panels, task and finish and working groups, staff feedback, and the pace and quality of the work transacted at Corporation meetings.
 - ii. The skills mix of the Corporation is good. Governors relate their personal and professional experiences to the role in a productive way and ask challenging and insightful questions. They are supportive of the senior team while stretching them and both Governors and Executive members agree that there is a positive working relationship. Governors are aware of the risk of ineffective governance and the need to look beyond the Executive for information to support their judgements; they are committed to ensuring that they make optimal use of benchmarking data and undertake a broad range of activities in order to effectively hold the Executive to account.
 - iii. While there is confidence in the way in which Governors work together and challenge evidence presented by the Executive, Governors are mindful that to fulfil their responsibility to assure themselves that the College is well run, they need to be able to triangulate various sources and types of information and must be satisfied that systematic processes are put in place to facilitate this through specific communication and engagement plans and projects.
 - iv. Governors commented on the benefits of simply walking around the College, eating in the cafeteria and attending events; and they agreed to look at opportunities to engage further with staff and students. Governors' existing support for College events was identified as a particular strength, in particular staff training days and graduation ceremonies. A Staff Governor commented that Governors' additional engagement with staff this year had been well received. In light of the positive impact of these interactions and contributions and in recognition of the tension and difficulty in the time available to undertake them, the Corporation asked the Search Committee to overhaul the Governor appraisal system, relaxing the emphasis on meeting attendance and giving more weighting to attending events, exhibitions, etc. It also set an objective of reducing the overall time Governors are asked to spend in Corporation meetings.
 - v. Governors identified a specific objective that increasing numbers of staff and students should know what the Corporation is and what its values and aspirations are. They agreed that the staff team is the most powerful tool the College has in achieving its goals and objectives and the risk of staff being unconnected to or unaware of the activities and the plans of the Corporation and how they relate to their own roles is significant.
 - vi. Time and workload demands are significant and there is an ever-increasing need for a smarter and leaner approach to governance. Tradition and the external regulatory environment bring certain procedures, budgets, plans and programme designs to the Corporation for approval but Governors must not give disproportionate attention to such items; rather they should conscientiously focus on controlling for primary risks and capitalising on opportunities that will substantially contribute to the achievement of the strategic goals. There is the potential to transform the fortunes of the business with a strategic and consistent approach to prioritisation and time management.

- vii. To maximise their effectiveness and efficiency, Governors challenge the Executive to reduce the length of papers presented, as well as to improve the timeliness of their delivery. More than two pages should be the exception rather than the rule and papers should be delivered in sufficient time to allow for thorough reading in by Governors.
- viii. The majority of communications from the Corporation currently go through the Executive, as is entirely appropriate. Other key channels include the Strategic Plan 2015-2020, extracts of which are displayed on screens around the College; as well as the published minutes, policies and procedures. A remark by the Student Governor about the quality of the communications taking place around induction prompted **AGREEMENT** that the Corporation should seek to have greater visibility on such occasions, for example, a refreshed version of the "meet the Corporation" poster should be displayed.
- ix. The slimming down of the Corporation committee structure is felt to have given the whole board a more holistic view of how the College works and to have strengthened the board significantly in terms of ability to challenge, and also continuity of members' experience and skills, reducing the risks around succession.
- x. The priority Governors give to promoting all forms of equality and fostering understanding of and the embedding of equality and diversity in the curriculum and within the organisational culture of the College is a particular strength. Although there are some minor weaknesses around measuring impact in this area, Governors are already addressing these via the monitoring of the implementation of a new strategy they have both contributed to and approved as a board. In terms of the extent to which Governors and the Executive promote equality in their own behaviours and foster greater understanding of and respect for people regardless of their personal characteristics, Governors consider that their impact now is at least as great as when Ofsted last visited, if not greater.

L 18.20

- 8.4 Governors noted that, while they had received relevant and appropriate information to inform their monitoring, decision-making and reporting, the usual Equality and Diversity report was not presented at the November meeting in 2015 due to capacity strain and staff changes during the restructure. Andy Welsh, the Group Chief Executive Officer ("GCEO") acknowledged the gap and said he would personally ensure that a full report is provided this year.

R 18.25

- 8.5 Governors acknowledged the difficulty of drawing firm conclusions about their impact before the 2015-16 outturn is known but agreed that their ambitions for the College's performance had been effectively communicated, pointing to the substantial evidence of shared understanding as between the Corporation and the Executive, in particular the exchange of information through the data dashboard and the monitoring of the Quality Improvement Plan. They agreed that their Away Day interactions with senior staff and the practice of having senior managers report directly to Corporation meetings had been beneficial, both in terms of increasing Governors' assurance and knowledge, ultimately allowing for more effective challenge; and demonstrating to managers that the Corporation is supportive of their work and plans for the future. Governors

noted that many senior staff had expressed enthusiasm about interfacing directly with Governors and it was agreed that the practice should continue.

- 8.6 In terms of their contribution to improving teaching learning and assessment through high quality professional development, Governors noted the positive impact of their engagement with the staff development strategy; their investment in research and scholarly activity to boost the College's reputation; and their recent interventions to address high rates of sickness absence, which had already begun to show a slight return. They agreed that their strategy of appointing separate individuals to lead on Further and Higher Education had yielded a positive impact so far; in particular, Governors knowledge of the Higher Education curriculum has increased and the College's reputation as a Higher Education provider has been enhanced. Governors noted that concerns persist about the robustness of some performance management measures and controls are being implemented to address those.
- 8.7 Governors voiced general approval of the steps they had taken as a board to support learners in improving their levels of skills in maths and English, in particular thanking the Further Education Link Governor for chairing the Task and Finish Group set up to identify and remove the barriers to success. They resolved to maintain the same level of involvement, including their monitoring of the area via the data dashboard and the Quality Improvement Plan.
- 8.8 HQE invited Governors to give examples of monitoring they had undertaken of the progress of groups of learners to ensure that none is disadvantaged or underachieved. Governors noted that the reports from the Academic Board and the maths and English Task and Finish Group had informed them in this respect, as had the progress reports accompanying the College Quality Improvement Plan. They also referred to the data they received in the previous year's College self-assessment report, which they will compare with this year's in due course. They identified that high needs provision is monitored via the data dashboard, allowing for intervention at an early stage in the event of slippage against targets. It was agreed that next year, additional metrics will be introduced to the data dashboard(s) to ensure effective monitoring of this area.
- 8.9 While Governors concluded that the Corporation provides a good level of challenge as well as a supportive role, they were committed to maintaining and improving on that level of challenge, in order to ensure that quality provision for learners is maintained. For the same reason, they also committed to ensuring that there is appropriate prioritisation, agreeing that maintaining strategic focus is something the Corporation, in common with almost all boards of trustees, can always do better.
- 8.10 Governors asked the Clerk to work on a draft self-assessment report before the next meeting, drawing on the content of the meeting's discussion as well as the evidence-based findings of the report on compliance with the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges and the outcomes of the Governor survey. They **AGREED** to aim to agree a final version as soon as practicable following the reporting of the 2015-16 outturn.
- 8.11 The Chair thanked HQE for all the preparatory work she had done and her useful contributions.

RESOLVED:

- i. The Clerk to work on a draft self-assessment report before the next meeting; Governors to agree a final version as soon as practicable following the reporting of the 2015-16 outturn.*

Clerk,
Agenda
26.09.16

L 18.45 Jacqueline Olson left the meeting.

9. Annual Reports of Committees:

9.1 To inform the Corporation of their work during the course of the academic year 2015/16, reports were presented from the following Committees:

- Audit Committee
- External Affairs Committee
- Remuneration Committee
- Search Committee

9.2 The Committees were thanked for their work during the course of the year and it was **AGREED** to receive the reports and **NOTE** the contents.

RESOLVED:

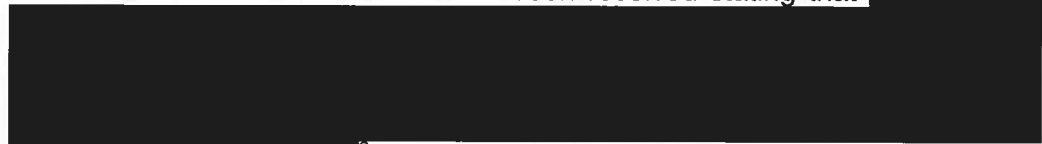
- i. To receive the reports of the Corporation's Committees and note the contents.*

10. Dates of Meetings 2016

Monday 26 September, 2016 special meeting 1600 – 1900
Thursday 20 October, 2016 1300 - 1800

11. Other Business and Close

11.1 David Hambleton, Director of Finance and Corporate Services ("DFCS") informed Governors that a letter had been received stating that



². DFCS said he would report again at the next meeting on any progress.

11.2 There being no further business the meeting closed at 18.55.

² Information exempt from disclosure by s43(2) Freedom of Information Act 2000 as disclosure at the present time would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person.