

WIGAN AND LEIGH COLLEGE: GOVERNING BOARD

MEETING OF GOVERNING BOARD

TIME/DATE 5.00pm, Tuesday 10th December 2019

VENUE PAGEFIELD CENTRE, WIGAN

ATTENDANCE Independent Governors

Ann Harrison, Chair
Katherine Causey
Susan Loudon
Susan Spibey
Diane Brennan
Andrea Ferguson
Janet Minto
Jenny Bullen
Michael Ferraby
Gill Edwards
Alison Chambers
David McDonald

Staff Governors

Jennifer Cockram
Rebecca Armstrong

Student Governors

Rachel Coombs
Kodie Anderson

Principal

Anna Dawe

Clerk to the Governing Board
Vice Principal, Curriculum
Vice Principal, Corporate Services
Finance Director
Assistant Principal, IT, MIS and
Sub-contracting

Robert Smith
Claire Foreman
Louise Brown
Steve Scott
Dave Harrison

Italics denotes absence

PART 1 MINUTES

Item		The meeting opened at 5.05pm and was quorate with at least 7 members present.
1	GB/19/12/028	APOLOGIES Apologies for absence were received from Kath Causey, Jenny Bullen and Susan Loudon. The Chair welcomed David McDonald to his first Governing Board meeting following his recent appointment. The Chair commented on the tour of the new Pagefield Centre facilities that preceded the meeting and reported that all members that took part in the tour were delighted to see the significant improvements brought about by the investment in this area.
2	GB/19/12/029	APPOINTMENT OF STUDENT GOVERNOR The Chair welcomed Rachel Coombs to the meeting and advised members that Rachel and Kodie Anderson had been elected as nominees for student governor positions. It was noted that Rachel was a second year Animal Management student and performing at a Distinction Star level. It was also noted that Kodie was a first year AS Level student studying Sociology, Media, Psychology and English, and had been a

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		<p>student ambassador at all college open evenings. The Clerk advised that, due to heavy traffic in Leigh, Kodie's arrival at the meeting would be delayed.</p> <p>The Chair explained that, whilst the student body had nominated Rachel and Kodie for these positions, formal appointment would need to be determined by the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) That Rachel Coombs be appointed Student Governor with immediate effect for a period of four years or until she leaves the college upon the completion of her studies; ii) That Kodie Anderson be appointed Student Governor with immediate effect for a period of four years or until she leaves the college upon the completion of her studies; iii) That Rachel Coombs be appointed a member of the Curriculum & Student Matters Committee with immediate effect; and iv) That Kodie Anderson be appointed a member of the Curriculum & Student Matters Committee with immediate effect.
3	GB/19/12/030	<p>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in relation to matters to be discussed under the Part 1 agenda for this meeting.</p>
4	GB/19/12/031	<p>PART 1 MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BOARD MEETINGS HELD ON 15TH OCTOBER 2019 AND 26TH NOVEMBER 2019</p> <p>The minutes were approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.</p>
5	GB/19/12/032	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>The Clerk advised that actions within the Board's Action Sheet had either been completed or were not yet due for completion.</p>
6	GB/19/12/033	<p>STRATEGIC UPDATE</p> <p>The Principal outlined recent political changes affecting the sector and members noted that further changes could be expected after the general election on 12th December. The varying manifesto pledges relating to further education were discussed and it was noted that the funding position relating to colleges would become clearer in the coming months, although previously announced increases in learner base rate funding and premiums for high value courses would be welcomed. It was also noted that the election outcome could affect future policy in a number of areas, including T Levels, apprenticeships and Institutes of Technology.</p> <p>In relation to the latter of these, the Principal provided an update on regional planning for an Institute of Technology (IoT) and reported that a formal bid process to establish an IoT in the Greater Manchester area was expected to open early in 2020. She also reported that informal discussions between higher education institutions, colleges and other local providers were taking place but that it was too early to give an indication of the likely form and approach for any IoT bid.</p> <p>The Principal also provided an update in relation to the GM Colleges Group and it was noted that the group would be holding a strategic event in the coming days to look at Colleges of the Future and how best to work collaboratively in relation to higher education provision and responding to over-supply.</p> <p>Members discussed the headline data for 2019/20 and the Principal reported that 16-18 retention was slightly behind the same point in the previous year (-0.2%). She</p>

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		<p>explained that this was primarily the result of a significant increase in Level 1 recruitment following the recent closure of two local providers. It was noted that there was also a negative variance at Level 2, which was mainly in the construction area. The Principal explained that this was largely due to the recruitment of a number of students who had hoped to start an apprenticeship but had been unable to secure employment to be able to start on an apprenticeship programme. Members were pleased to note that there was a positive year-on-year variance in relation to 19+ retention (+0.2%).</p> <p>The Principal was pleased to report that apprenticeship data was on track to show significant improvements for both overall completion and timely completion. She explained that the effect of historical data was now reducing but that the changes were also the result of significant improvements in apprenticeship delivery. The Principal also reported that higher education performance had been subject to intervention and investment in leadership and management and pastoral care.</p> <p>Members were pleased to learn that 16-18 enrolments had again increased in 2019/20 and that this would result in increased targets and funding in 2020/21. The Principal explained that the increases had been across the college's curriculum, although there had been no growth in A Level recruitment. Members were also pleased to learn that adult enrolment was also on track to meet the college's allocation for both the devolved and national contract. The Principal also reported that higher education and advanced learner loans were on track to meet budget.</p> <p>Apprenticeship recruitment was reviewed and it was noted that 16-18 non-levy recruitment was not likely to meet budget. Members acknowledged that the early cessation of recruitment in 2018/19 due to meeting funding allocations early in the year had impacted on recruitment in 2019/20. The Principal reported that 16-18 levy recruitment was over budget to a similar value to the under-recruitment of non-levy apprentices. Whilst members recognised that this would have the effect of balancing out the two income lines in-year, they also recognised that reductions in non-levy recruitment could impact on the level of funding available in future years.</p> <p>The Principal highlighted the need to have sufficient space to accommodate growth in student numbers and commented that current recruitment levels were close to the college's space capacity. She explained that careful consideration would need to be given to investing in increased space and facilities, given the need to balance the accommodation of growth and carrying the cost of such investment should student numbers decline again in the future. The Principal also provided a brief update on progress of capital works, although it was noted that this would be discussed in more detail under the Part 2 agenda.</p> <p>Members were pleased to learn that the college had been rated joint 7th out of 170 colleges in the annual NICDEX ratings. The Principal explained that these ratings were compiled by FE Week based on a number of factors, including student satisfaction, employer satisfaction, 16-18 progression and adults progressing into employment. It was noted that this position also meant that Wigan & Leigh College was rated higher than any other college in the Greater Manchester area.</p> <p>Members asked how T Levels were expected to impact on the college's provision. The Principal responded that the college would start T Levels with relatively low numbers and aim to grow the provision in such a way that quality could be maintained. However, the Principal also commented that, should equivalent BTEC provision be removed, the college may need to expand T Level provision more quickly</p>
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7	GB/19/12/034	<p>AUDIT COMMITTEE – 20TH NOVEMBER 2019</p> <p>The Clerk advised that the Chair of the Audit Committee had not been able to attend the latest committee meeting and that Gill Edwards had been elected to act as Chair for the meeting. The Chair presented the draft minutes of the meeting of 20th November 2019. She drew members' attention to the Internal Audit Annual Report and highlighted the auditor's unqualified opinion that audit outcomes provided 'reasonable' assurance for the Governing Board that the college's governance and risk management, and systems of internal control were operating adequately and effectively. It was noted that most individual audit outcomes rated controls in the associated areas as providing 'substantial' assurance, with the remaining two achieving a 'reasonable' assurance rating. The Chair commented that this was a positive report in terms of audit outcomes and recommended it to the Board for approval.</p> <p>The Chair also drew members' attention to the External Auditor's report on the college's Annual Report & Financial Statements and Regularity Audit. It was noted that the auditor had provided an unqualified opinion for both audits. The Chair highlighted the final accounting position, which showed a financial deficit. However, members noted that the college had delivered an operating surplus and the deficit was the result of the pensions actuarial valuation. The Chair also commented that the auditor had confirmed that he had no concerns regarding the college's going concern status.</p> <p>Members noted that the report contained two recommendations which would be monitored by the Audit Committee. The Chair of Resources Committee commented that the annual financial statements were previously presented to this committee and, whilst it was correct that the Audit Committee should recommend the financial statements to the Board following auditor advice, it would be helpful if they could also be presented to the Resources Committee in order to review the year-end financial position. The Clerk agreed to amend the business schedule to accommodate this change for 2020/21.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Clerk</p> <p>The Chair commented on the Annual Report & Financial Statements and the advice provided by the External Auditor. She confirmed that committee members had been comfortable with the report and had acknowledged that future financial planning was appropriately prudent and assumed only reasonable levels of growth. She also confirmed that the auditor had reported no concerns in relation to the reliability of the financial statements in terms of reported accounting values. The Chair also reported that the committee had reviewed the Regularity Audit Questionnaire and had received advice from the auditor, which indicated no concerns in relation to regularity matters. The content of the Annual Risk Management Report was noted and members recognised that this was a snapshot of the risk position at the end of 2018/19. Members also reviewed the draft Audit Committee Annual Report, which provided detail of the committee's activities and drew a number of conclusions in relation to the effectiveness of governance and systems of control.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) That the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2018/19 be approved; ii) That the Annual Report to Members of the Corporation on the External Audit for year-ending 31st July 2019 be approved; iii) That the Annual Report & Financial Statements and associated Letters of Representation for 2018/19 be approved for signature by the Chair of the Governing Board and Principal as required; iv) That the Regularity Audit Questionnaire for 2018/19 be approved for signature by the Chair of the Governing Board and Principal as required; and v) That the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2018/19 be approved.
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8	GB/19/12/035	<p>CURRICULUM & STUDENT MATTERS COMMITTEE – 26TH NOVEMBER 2019</p> <p>The Chair presented the draft minutes of the meeting of 26th November 2019 and highlighted key topics of discussion. The Chair explained that the committee had received a presentation on the college's Sports provision and had been delighted to see the way this area had progressed in recent years. She commented that it had been helpful to explore a well-performing area in order to consider the sustainability of high-level performance and the identification of relevant good practice that could be shared across the college.</p> <p>Members noted that the committee had also reviewed the draft Admissions Policy, which had been approved under delegated authority.</p> <p>The Chair outlined committee discussions relating to the Quality & Curriculum Update and commented that members were pleased to see signs of positive improvement in relation to apprenticeships. She also highlighted discussions relating the Quality & Curriculum Dashboard and it was noted that this was included in the Board papers for information. The Chair of the Board commented that the dashboard indicated that attendance data was behind target and asked whether measures had been put in place to address this. The Vice Principal confirmed this was the case and provided some examples of the approaches used to improve student attendance. She confirmed that there were now signs of improvement in attendance rates and that higher education and apprenticeship attendance were both encouraging.</p> <p>Members also discussed the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and it was noted that the SAR was presented as an executive summary, followed by more detailed narrative and supporting data. The Chair explained that a cautious approach had been adopted in agreeing the self-assessment judgments, although there was significant evidence of year-on-year improvement. Members noted that one of the key reasons for the cautious approach was the introduction of Ofsted's new Education Inspection Framework (EIF). The Chair explained that, as the new EIF created new expectations, it was right not to increase grades unless it was very clear that these could be justified. The Vice Principal, Curriculum commented that the SAR reflected a very positive year with further improvements in retention and pass rates. Members commented that the SAR and QIP clearly showed that the college understood the reasons behind positive and negative outcomes and had clear plans in place to deliver further improvements. It was noted that the proposed overall judgment for the college was Grade 2 ('Good').</p> <p>The Chair of Resources Committee drew members' attention to those areas graded 3 within the SAR and commented that the Board had been kept fully informed about challenges in apprenticeship provision, so the grading was as expected. However, she asked for further information about other areas graded 3. The Vice Principal outlined the key challenges in each area and it was noted that challenges in recruitment and managing the modernisation of the curriculum provision were often common factors in these areas. It was also noted that a number of key appointments had been made recently that were expected to bring about further improvement during 2019/20.</p> <p>The Chair also outlined discussions relating to the Annual Complaints Report and the Annual Safeguarding Report. It was noted that the latter had been circulated to all members and it was agreed that the activity and outcomes outlined in the report provided clear evidence of wide-ranging and effective safeguarding arrangements.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Self-Assessment Report for 2018/19 and Quality Improvement Plan for 2019/20 be approved.</p>
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9	GB/19/12/036	<p>RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 21ST NOVEMBER 2019</p> <p>The Chair of the Resources Committee presented the draft minutes of the meeting of 21st November 2019 and highlighted a number of matters discussed at the meeting. She reported that the HR Dashboard data was very positive and that staff survey responses had been encouraging, both in terms of the number of staff taking part and the positive responses received. She advised that there were still challenges in some areas of specialist recruitment, although it was noted that the college continued to use a variety of approaches to address these. The Chair also advised that staff utilisation rates had been discussed and that members had asked for utilisation variances to be presented both as percentages and number of hours in future so that the extent of the variances could be better understood.</p> <p>The Chair asked the Vice Principal, Corporate Services to comment on the HR Dashboard and she responded that there were no significant concerns at this time. However, she reported that there had been a recent spike in staff sickness absence as a result of increases in seasonal illness. It was noted that this was likely to be reflected in the following term's dashboard report. The Vice Principal also explained that, whilst staff turnover had reduced, this was currently being closely monitored due to a significant number of recent appointees who would be required to successfully complete their probationary period.</p> <p>Members discussed the Finance Dashboard and it was noted that most areas had been RAG rated as green. However, the Chair highlighted debt servicing covenants, which were now much closer to target. The Chair explained that this had been discussed with the Finance Director who had indicated that these covenant requirements should be achieved at year-end and were currently not a cause for concern. The Chair also commented on the forecast income shortfall for 16-18 non-levy apprenticeships and explained that the college would produce revised budget forecasts in the new year.</p> <p>The Chair explained that the committee had discussed the Annual Estates Report, which had included a significant focus on recent investments and capital developments, which had positive impacts on teaching and learning, and the student experience. The Chair also explained that the committee had considered the Health & Safety Annual Report and reviewed the Health & Safety Policy. It was noted that a number of minor changes were recommended to the policy and that this would require Board approval.</p> <p>The Chair of the Board asked for further information in relation to the gap between targeted staff numbers and actual staff numbers. The Vice Principal responded that this variance did not reflect actual gaps in teaching provision as the shortfall was covered either through increases in part-time staff hours or through agency staff.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the proposed revisions to the Health & Safety Policy be approved.</p>
10	GB/19/12/037	<p>REMUNERATION COMMITTEE – 26TH NOVEMBER 2019 (PART 1)</p> <p>The Chair presented the draft minutes of the meeting of 26th November 2019 and it was noted that these did not reflect any of the substantive items considered at the meeting, and that these would be covered under the Part 2 agenda.</p>

11	GB/19/12/038	<p>DRAFT EQUALITY & DIVERSITY REPORT AND OBJECTIVES</p> <p>The Vice Principal, Curriculum drew members' attention to the draft Equality & Diversity Report and highlighted a number of matters within the report. This included the further narrowing of performance gaps. She commented that the gaps were fairly small and suggested that there were no significant causes for concern. She also commented that most performance gaps were in areas where the college had experienced other issues, such as in apprenticeship provision. It was noted that this suggested that the gaps were likely to be for other reasons, rather than being a direct equality and diversity issue. Members were also pleased to note that there had been an increase in the recruitment of female students for courses at the Pagefield Centre, including engineering and construction.</p> <p>The Vice Principal reported that the Gender Pay Gap remained small based on sector averages and had closed further in 2018/19. The Vice Principal also reported that the college was now focusing on softer equality and diversity aspects, such as ethos and culture to help bring about further improvements.</p> <p>It was noted that there were no proposals to change the current Equality & Diversity Objectives as these remained appropriate. However, it was also noted that these were likely to be reviewed again in 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) That the draft Equality & Diversity Report be approved; and ii) That the current Equality & Diversity Objectives be re-affirmed. <p>Kodie Anderson joined the meeting at 6.15pm and was welcomed by the Chair and other members.</p>
12	GB/19/12/039	<p>DEVELOPMENT SESSION: GOING CONCERN</p> <p>The Finance Director explained that the external auditor had delivered a development session in advance of the last Audit Committee meeting and that the Chair had suggested that one of the slides should also be presented to the Governing Board. The Finance Director advised that this slide related to guidance to governors in terms of monitoring the college's financial position and its maintenance of 'going concern' status. He also advised that he had produced a matrix showing the ways in which the college met the requirements of each of the factors identified by the auditor.</p> <p>Members noted that the evidence within the matrix indicated that the college met the requirements identified by the auditor, including effective financial monitoring and governance arrangements. They also noted that going concern was largely focused on cash balances and that those of the college were very positive.</p> <p>The Chair of the Audit Committee commented that the development session had been very useful and reminded members that every governor shares responsibility for the college's financial health. The Chair of the Board commented that it was very helpful that the Board included three accountants within its membership, but also acknowledged that it was the responsibility of all governors to ensure that they understand the college's financial position.</p>
13	GB/19/12/040	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no further business.</p>

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		DATE OF NEXT MEETING 5.00pm Tuesday 24 th March 2020
		Part 1 of the meeting closed at 6.25pm