

Central Sussex College

Redacted - Minutes of a meeting of the Board held on 15th December 2014

Present: Clive Behagg, Rachel Booles, Alison Brown, Anahita Henry, Charlotte Frost, Chris Maidment (Chair), Patrick McHale, Clive Nicholas, James Sarmecanic, David Scott, Ramesh Shingadia, Sarah Wright.

In Attendance: Sam Brasier, Roger Crossley (Clerk), Andy Forbes, Richard Hailstone, Lois Johnson, Kim Morton, Clare Wallace and Dean Wynter.

Chris Maidment opened the meeting at 5:08 pm.

2014-15/27 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Ryan Sallows.

2014-15/28 **Declarations of Interest**

Clive Behagg declared an interest as Vice Chancellor of Chichester University.

2014-15/29 **Report of a meeting of the Search Committee.**

Chris Maidment introduced an oral report of a meeting of the Search Committee held earlier that afternoon. He told Members that the Committee were recommending the appointment of Alison Brown as a staff member of the Board until 14th December 2018. He outlined the process followed and the reasons for the recommendation. Members agreed to appoint Alison to the Board.

Alison Brown joined the meeting at 5:12 pm

2014-15/30 **Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2014**

The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the last meeting of the Board. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

2014-15/31 **Schedule of decisions**

The Clerk introduced the schedule of decisions:

- i The hearing decision regarding the refund of VAT for phase 3 had been lost. Kim Morton told Members that the decision had a number of reasons, but was predominately based on no zero rating certificate being issued during phase 3 build and the time lag between phase 2 and phase 3 build meant the HRMC could designate it as an extension, because the college was already in and using phase 1 and 2 buildings. The Counsel's advice was that going to appeal would almost certainly be pointless and very expensive (minute 2012-13/121 iv refers).
- ii The Principal gave an update on the proposed sale of the Haywards Heath playing field (various minutes to 2014-15/22 refers).
- iii The Clerk told Members that he had approached Clive Nicolas, as

requested by the Standards Committee. Clive had agreed to move from the Resources Committee to the Standards Committee to assist that committee with work on data (minute 2014-15/16 refers).

Members noted the schedule.

Patrick McHale joined the meeting at 5:18 pm

2014-15/29ii Report of a meeting of the Search Committee (continued).

Chris reported on other matters discussed at the Search Committee meeting earlier and gave two recommendations from the Committee to the Board:

that Chris Maidment be re-appointed for a second four-year term of office, until 14th December 2018;

that Clive Behagg be re-appointed from the end of his second term of office on 28th March 2015, for an additional two-year term of office, ie until 27th March 2017.

Members noted the recommendations and agreed the re-appointments.

2014-15/32 Post-inspection action plan.

Richard Hailstone introduced the circulated paper. He said that the paper represented 'headlines' which summarised actions being taken at several levels in the College.

Chris Maidment asked what the greatest challenges were. Richard said that there were two issues of crucial importance: the first was around the provision, accuracy, timeliness, interpretation and use of data; the second was improving teaching and learning and thus improving outcomes for students. Chris said that these were issues which were easy to identify but were they easy to correct? Richard told Members that an improvement of 5% in outcomes was required to achieve the desired grade 2 at inspection: this was a challenging target but ELT's modelling showed that it was achievable.

Sarah Wright commented that the position on data is improving. She continued by saying that some poorly performing courses have been dropped and that this alone will produce a 1.2% improvement in outcomes.

Richard told Members that every course now has specific targets for retention and achievement. His calculation showed that some of the worst performing courses which had been retained were capable of a 15% improvement in outcomes.

Clive Nicholas said that the Board couldn't monitor achievement until results were available in the summer but could monitor retention. He asked what the level of retention was currently. Richard said it was between 98% and 99% but that the biggest hurdle was the Christmas holiday, when 'drop-out' was at its highest. This would be the subject of discussion in staff meetings and training to be held on 5th January.

Patrick McHale asked why each of the three divisions of the plan weren't being managed by one of the Vice Principals. After extensive discussion, Patrick accepted that the way the plan was to be managed was satisfactory.

Clive Behagg welcomed the plan. However, he said, there were no indication as to which of the fifteen main actions (and many sub-actions) were the most important. If some indication were given of the priorities, it would be easier to monitor the plan without spending excessive time on more minor matters. Clive felt that this action would be useful for staff as well as Members. Sarah agreed that setting strategic priorities and key tasks vital to success would make monitoring more focussed. She said that task 1.1, "improve outcomes for all students..." was the key task.

David Scott was critical of the plan as, once again, there were no metrics in such areas as "improve the use of data to evaluate and improve provision". There was general discussion. Clive Nicholas asked why the plan wasn't oriented on the inspection judgements and wanted to see metrics applied to allow judgements of how improvements were progressing. Sarah suggested that too much complexity might cloud the issue and suggested that the position on each action could be given a 1 to 4 grade (as with OfSTED) with changes over time indicated by improving (ie decreasing) numbers. Kim Morton explained how ELT will judge progress and how this is measured at lower level in detail in order for progress to be judged, but all agreed with Patrick that the measurements applied should be at the highest level of aggregation. Clive Nicholas summarised that what Members want to see is "to have straightforward targets for improvement, which are readily understood, and to receive measurements of whether there has been progress towards those targets". This was agreed.

Members agreed that ELT should take the post-inspection action plan and use it operationally but should report back on fewer key, high-level themes, giving regularly measures of progress against these high-level themes.

2014-15/33 Report of a meeting of the Resources Committee - Minuted as confidential – Not for public record

Chris Maidment introduced the circulated minutes.

Members noted the report.

2014-15/34 Finance Report to 30th November 2014 - Minuted as confidential – Not for public record

Members noted the report.

2014-15/35 Report of a meeting of the Standards Committee

Clive Behagg introduced the circulated minute. He told Members that the majority of the meeting was spent considering the self-assessment review of 2013-14 and the quality improvement plan for 2014-15. For this reason he would questions on matters dealt with in the rest of the Standards Committee meeting and hold the other discussion for the next agenda item. There were no questions and Members noted the report.

2014-15/36 Self-assessment review and quality improvement plan 2013-14

Clive Behagg introduced the circulated papers. He told Members that the SAR

which was seen by OfSTED inspectors in October (for 2012-13) was highly descriptive and short on data. This had led to considerable criticism in the inspection report. He said that the new SAR (for 2013-14) was modelled very much on the changed, data-heavy model which now seems to be favoured by OfSTED. The review must be data-based and any descriptors must reflect the reality of what the data shows. Clive gave examples.

Clive said that one lesson, gained from the meeting Members had with OfSTED, was that the Board must set targets for the Executive to achieve. The QIP must now be target- and data-based, with targets selected by the Board and achievement of those targets measured only by reliable, objective, systems-based data. This scheme should run all the way through the College, down to classroom level.

Richard Hailstone distributed a 're-moderated' set of grades for the programme areas and outlined a new training initiative, starting on 13th February, aiming at ensuring all for teaching staff were thoroughly proficient in 'Proachieve'. This would aim to ensure that all teaching staff, not just managers, could analyse data output and come to valid actions on the basis of that analysis.

Clive asked Members to note that in many cases, good results shown by classroom observation was not reflected in outcomes: the conclusion was that issues other than teaching were important – the so-called 'wrap-arounds' such as homework and the marking of work.

There was discussion on how the Board would set targets. Most members agreed that where targets were set, they must be quantifiable and measurable. It was agreed that the key is for teams and individual teachers to be realistic about, and must 'own', the improvement needed.

Clive said that the committee recognises that data is central to any improvement scheme and would work with ELT to make central a system which allowed Members, staff and managers to access timely, accurate and meaningful data and use it properly. He said that the Committee were recommending acceptance of the SAR and QIP as progress towards a data-based system which shows the way forward. However, he emphasised, only the first step had been taken and further progress was needed.

Members agreed the review and plan.

2014-15/37 Whole College Targets

Richard Hailstone introduced the circulated papers. He said that the College itself now sets targets for achievement at all levels. He said that the tables set out the targets in a variety of 'views' and set against national averages (although these were the latest available they refer to 20112-13).

Patrick McHale felt that some of the targets were too challenging and therefore unrealistic. However, Richard Hailstone and Andy Forbes demonstrated that many targets were linked and reinforced others. Patrick accepted this logic but was keen to know what was the risk of not achieving each target – this measure should be numeric so Members can monitor progress towards each target. Sarah Wright agreed with this approach and said that further work would be done to produce such measures – the result would be taken to the next Standards Committee meeting.

Members approved the targets

2014-15/38 Report of a meeting of the Audit Committee - Minuted as confidential – Not for public record

2014-15/39 Risk register

Andy Forbes drew Members attention to changes in the risk register. He said that these had been drawn to committee members' attention and had been approved.

2014-15/40 Confidential Business.

The Clerk advised that the minutes and papers relating to any financial matters should be kept confidential. This was agreed.

The meeting ended at 8:05 pm.

signed Chris Maidment (Chair) Date