

**GOVERNING BODY**
**Minutes of the meeting held at 2.00pm on 23 March 2018**

**Present:**

K Golding (Chair)	S Daley (Vice Chair)
D Wildridge	S Clarke
A Maltpress	S Healey Pearce
S Howard	C Higgins
K Heathcote	J Mann
N Savvas, Principal/CEO	

**In attendance:** S Jones, Vice Principal Finance and Resources  
L Moody, Vice Principal Employer Engagement  
C Shaw, Vice Principal Students and Learning Support  
R Sadler, Director of HR  
J Bridges, Clerk to the Corporation

There were no interests relevant to items on the agenda declared by members.

**Action**
**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from K Points, J Gazzard, T Hunt and R Berongoy.

**2 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2017**

The minutes of the meeting (minute book pages H445-H456) were agreed as a correct record.

**3 Matters Arising from the meeting held on 14 December 2017**

The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report (minute book page H457) and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

It has been agreed between the Chair, as Line Manager, of the Principal and CEO, with N Savvas, that his early return to work further to sustaining a broken leg over the February half term is supported by the Corporation. His rehabilitation and recovery needs have been discussed with his medical consultant, occupational health advisor and physiotherapist. College insurers are aware that it is his wish to return to work and they are content that he can be supported to work in a safe environment.

**4 Membership**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H458-H459).

A new member is required to join the membership of the Property Task and Finish Group further to the departure of R Carter, who left the Corporation and the group in December 2017.

As membership could not be drawn from the Corporation the Chair of the Resources Committee has approached a contact known to the College as a potential member to advise and help to progress the work of the group. Husband of the former Chair to the Corporation, Betty Milburn, Max has an irrefutable background as an Architect from a young age.

The Corporation **approved** the addition of Max Milburn as a Third Party Adviser to the Property Task and Finish Group whose focus is to progress the

development of the Vintens Project. **Proposed** by K Golding and **seconded** by C Higgins.

5 **Strategic Conference held over 18 and 19 January 2018**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H460-H463).

5.1 **Summary**

The Strategic Conference held over 18 and 19 January 2018 was well attended by the Boards of SAT and WSC. The feedback from the conference has been positive with the majority of participants agreeing very good and/or good levels of satisfaction against achieving the objectives of the two days.

Words used to describe the conference were informative, collaborative, productive, positive and inclusive and the ideas to enhance the experience will be used to shape and develop the conference for next year.

5.2 **Matters Arising**

The matters arising from the conference are all complete with the exception that the Common Strategy is to be written and the branding/identity of the Common Strategic Board is to be developed and created. This is being progressed by the Governance Implementation Task and Finish Group and the CEO and Trust Secretary are to present a draft Common Strategy to the Board at the meeting to be held in July 2018.

NSavvas  
JBridges

6 **Quality and Performance**

6.1 ***Key Performance Indicators***

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H464-H481).

***Financial***

There are currently 2,941 16-18s enrolled against the target of 2,910. This is 31 up on target and enrolments continue to happen in year.

It was noted that 2017/18 applications for HE are looking positive with actual offers made and accepted higher than the same point last year.

The forecast surplus has been reviewed this month and has increased the surplus by £282K. Forecast income has been increased by £297K and overall costs increased by £15K.

The staff cost to income ratio calculation for January 2018 YTD is at 63.9% which is better than the budget target of 68.6%. The forecast for year end has improved from 67.8% to 66.9% based on the revised forecast figures.

Loan covenant calculations have been based on the old agreed covenants and are all compliant.

The forecast cash balance has been increased in line with the revised forecast income and expenditure and has been increased by £600K. The lower than expected cash balance is a continuation of the situation as at December 2017.

The balance of debtors is also still higher than anticipated at January 2018 YTD (i.e. cash is lower) and this is due, in the main to SCC high needs funding owed of £250K and Vinten rent of £115K. Both of these debts were settled in early February

2018. The minimum cash requirement has been set based on the contours of the actual cash balance in 2016/17 with a £500K de minimus added in.

### ***Curriculum and Quality***

The quality of teaching as observed through learning walks remains strong with 83.5% of staff being identified as being good or better (green).

Attendance remains good at 91% (16-18) and 88% (19+) which is the same as this point last year; however, attendance at Maths and English sessions remains consistently lower than attendance at vocational sessions.

Assessment progress is behind where it was at the same point last year; however, this will be addressed during Progress and Review (PAR) week (commencing 19 March 2018) when staff will be updating student progress and recording results from recent examinations onto MarkBook. The main reason for areas appearing to be behind with progress (Red RAG Rated) has been due to the introduction of externally marked assessments and changes to curriculum in areas such as Science and Computing. The Vice Principal for Quality and the Student Experience is working with the Executive Directors to ensure individual plans are in place for students who are behind with their work. To date there are now only 7 areas remaining Red RAG Rated so significant progress is being made by students and the staff to ensure that the students do stay on track to achieve.

It was noted that the recognised teaching Union (UCU) has made an initial positive response to move away from formal graded observations to ungraded; and to move from announced learning walks to unannounced. Consultation continues but there are early indications that this will be met with positivity by teaching staff as a supportive process.

Student retention remains strong for both 16-18 (97%) and 19+ (93%), although 19+ is 1% lower than this point last year.

### ***Employer Engagement***

As predicted last month apprenticeship recruitment has broken through the 700 barrier despite national figures (released recently) showing a 35% decline in Apprenticeship starts year on year so the team are continuing to buck the trend and recruitment and enrolments are going from strength to strength.

81% of learners are ahead or on target but focus and activity continues on improving this further. The national rate is 67.7%.

All learners who are behind on target have individual action plans with specific interventions in place. These are monitored by Programmes Managers on a monthly basis and overseen by the Director of Operations. Results are being seen and reports are showing a positive 3% increase month on month.

The transition from frameworks to standards continues to grow and there are now 320 learners on an Apprenticeship Standard.

### ***Workforce***

*Confidential item under paragraph 18(2) of the Instrument and Articles of Government*

S Healey Pearce joined the meeting at 4.20pm

R Sadler left the meeting at 4.25pm

### 6.1.1 **Financial Performance**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H482-H485).

At month 6 the finances are healthy and on target to achieve if not perform better than the budgeted surplus of £70,195 with continue good management. Some income lines are behind profile but with the exception of two lines (full cost and commercial incomes) are predicted to achieve budget for the year end. Non-pay expenditure is slightly higher than profiled budget but will be managed within the existing full year budget and pay expenditure is lower than profiled budget which is also strengthening the bottom line.

Lastly, the additional Vintens rental income is on budget and ring-fenced for the budget of the project.

Overall, income for the first half of the year is almost exactly on budget in total but within it has a number of sizable variances. The significant variances relate to both 16-18 and 19+ apprenticeship income but also the adult (AEB) budget. These negative variances at month 6 are then mitigated in full by extra grant income and extra fee income when compared to budget. The forecast income is predicted to be £297K better than budget (excluding any Vintens rental income).

Overall the College remains in outstanding financial health with a secure balance sheet and is likely to deliver an operating surplus for the year (excluding Vintens rental) that will perform better than budget.

### 6.2 **Covenants**

The resolution was received and considered by members (minute book pages H486-H487).

The implementation of Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS102) has necessitated the revision of the loan covenants. An exercise has been undertaken with the College's bankers to ensure that the loan covenants reflect FRS102 but without increasing the risk of covenant breach to the College. The Resources Committee has been involved in considering the outcome of this exercise and the proposed new covenants, and subject to clarification on one point in the resolution the Corporation will be asked to pass the resolution to amend the bank covenants.

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources confirmed that assurance has not been sought on the point under clarification from the bank so delegated power was given to the Chair of the Corporation, K Golding and Chair of the Resources Committee, S Clarke to pass the resolution on behalf of the Corporation once clarification has been received.

KGolding  
SClarke

### 6.3 **SLA Review**

The SLA was received and considered by members (minute book pages H488-H489).

It was noted that the Principal and CEO, Vice Principal Finance and Resources and Clerk registered their interest in respect of this agenda item as all three hold positions at the College and for the Trust. It was noted that they are not beneficiaries under the terms of the agreement.

The current SLA has been in place for nearly three years and it is proposed that this arrangement continues due to its benefit to both the College and SAT. Although it is almost certainly going to change in its nature and content as both

organisations work even closer together with the advent of Abbeygate Sixth Form, it was proposed prior to Christmas that despite the prospect of change, it would be worthwhile formally agreeing that the current SLA is approved for the 2018/19 academic year. This will ensure that any approval is ahead of time as opposed to retrospective whilst the detail of a revised SLA is finalised and proposed for approval.

There are no proposals to make any changes at this time but it is widely expected that it will require modification as efficient arrangements for the support of the College and SAT and incorporating Abbeygate Sixth Form are prepared, ahead of its opening in September 2019, an example of this is the appointment of an Operations Director who will be involved in the implementation of Common Services for both the College and the Trust.

All charges under the SLA will have to be confirmed via a cost certificate appropriately signed at the end of the year, which is provided to the external auditors of the Academy Trust.

The Corporation **approved** the continuation of the SLA for 2017/18 into the 2018/19 academic year. **Proposed** by C Higgins and **seconded** by S Clarke.

## **Strategic Matters**

### **7.1 *Principal's Briefing***

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H490-H502).

There have been a number of events since the last meeting of the Corporation. The most notable being our progress to a Common Strategic Board with SAT (covered under agenda item 9.2 below); the appointment of a very experienced and successful Principal for Abbeygate Sixth Form; the implementation of a much flatter and more agile Senior Management Team structure and the start of our new Head of Maths and English; the College being granted 'direct funding' status to enable the College to have its own HE student numbers and the submission to the DfE to lead a major collaborative bid to create the Eastern Institute of Technology.

As well as a myriad of projects, events and successes that put the students at the heart of everything we do, and the College at the heart of the community it serves, the Principal's report explained the factors impacting the College, the external strategic engagements and highlighted the impact this has for our students.

K Heathcote left the meeting at 3.45pm

### **7.2 *Update on Multi Academy Trusts (SAT and SENDAT)***

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H503-H509).

#### ***Suffolk Academies Trust (SAT)***

SAT has appointed the Principal for Abbeygate Sixth Form, David Gartland. David is well-known and well-respected across Suffolk and Norfolk as the Principal of Lowestoft Sixth Form College. In brief David has been instrumental in establishing Lowestoft Sixth Form College as a beacon of educational excellence on the Suffolk Coast and so is a natural fit for Suffolk Academies Trust, to help us establish Abbeygate Sixth Form as an Outstanding post-16 education institution to serve West Suffolk and beyond.

There were two interview panels involved in the process; the main interview panel comprised the Chair of the SAT Board, Elton D'Souza, the CEO, Nikos, SAT Member, Sue Daley, Sid Slater of the DfE and Ruth Sadler HR Director at WSC. The other panel led by Alan Whittaker, comprised of the Heads of the founder schools. The two day interviews were held over Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31 January. Sid Slater commended our process as 'one of the best he has ever seen' in his many years of recruitment experience.

Kier and Wates have been selected through the ESFA framework for the design and build contract. The planning application will be submitted to Suffolk County Council in the week commencing 5 March 2018. A decision is expected by the end of April 2018.

K Heathcote joined the meeting at 3.50pm

The Competition to design the Abbeygate logo went very well and attracted 48 entries from students across WSC, Suffolk One, Stour Valley Community School and Newmarket Academy. The final logo was unveiled at an event on 16 January 2018 and was detailed in the report.

The Abbeygate website is almost ready for launch and social media accounts are starting to attract followers.

### ***Suffolk Educational Needs and Disabilities Academy Trust (SENDAT)***

The Local Authority competition application to open a new Free Special SEMH/ASD (Social, Emotional and Mental Health/Autistic Spectrum Disorder) School in Ipswich was unsuccessful.

Two further Free School applications are to be submitted through the next DfE wave 13 standard application for an SEMH/ASD Special School in Bury St Edmunds and an Alternative Education School in Bury St Edmunds, in partnership with the College.

First Base have deferred their decision to continue with their Academy conversion so it seems unlikely that they will join SENDAT at the present time.

Recruitment for September 2018 to Angel Hill is slow and in order to be financially viable, SENDAT needs to secure guaranteed funding for a minimum of 12 places. Every effort is being made to secure and fill these places for this much needed provision.

SENDAT has drawn up a proposal to apply for Opportunity Area funding in respect of reviewing and improving the curriculum offer, to include vocational learning in partnership with the FE Sector, for students in Special Schools, PRUs and AP provision to increase their opportunities for further study and employment. SENDAT aims to work with these categories of schools and education providers in three geographical locations; Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Lowestoft.

## **8 Information, Discussion and Decisions**

### **8.1 Financial Regulations**

The Financial Regulations were received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H510-H511).

The Financial Regulations are reviewed annually to ensure that they remain relevant and up to date and where required they are modified accordingly. Before such modifications are made, the proposed changes arising from the review are



brought to the Resources Committee for information, discussion and recommendation of approval to the Corporation. The Resources Committee has undertaken this review and recommends the Corporation approve the document.

There are no significant changes proposed to the regulations. There are some typographical changes required and some names and job title description changes are also proposed but in summary the document is only being modified so that it remains current and allows the College to operate effectively.

The Corporation **approved** the Financial Regulations as amended. **Proposed** by J Mann and **seconded** by s Daley.

## **8.2 Committee Chair's Summary Reports**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H512-H520).

### ***Standards and Excellence***

There were no further items to discuss in addition to the report received by members.

### ***Governance Implementation Task and Finish Group***

There were no further items to discuss in addition to the report received by members.

### ***Audit and Risk Management***

There were no further items to discuss in addition to the report received by members.

### ***Resources***

The Chair of the Committee reported that the Committee has requested a Treasury Management Report at key points in the year for review and consideration of the Committee and further discussion is to be held at the meeting to be held in June 2018 to review the appropriateness of the College's current investment arrangements in this respect.

## **8.3 Safeguarding Board Update**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H521-H524).

In the 2016/17 academic year there were 186 instances of bullying and harassment. To date in this academic year there are 60 reported cases. The largest number of bullying/harassment incidents occur with students on Entry Level or Level 1 courses but this is closely followed by Level 3 courses, of which we have seen the largest cohorts.

The Welfare team continues to see an increase in the number of students accessing the service for help and support.

## **8.4 Health and Safety Update**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H525-H526).

The College is looking at how we can fund First Aid training for students.

The accident and incident data for this term shows no concern for reporting.

The Copse area remains low risk and regular checks are made in addition to visits and assessments by an Arboriculture company. Following the last inspection the Copse was closed in order to carry out the recommended remedial work. These works are now complete and the area is open again to all users.

The Barrack Wall remains low risk with no issues to report.

Lock Down was tested in October 2017, the counter-terrorism office has been booked to deliver two training sessions at the College on the next PD day; 4 July 2018; a Project Griffin and Project ARGUS after which a subsequent test of lock down will be undertaken. The Home Office does not advise testing Lock Down with students however the College will consider how we involve and engage students in such a 'drill'.

S Howard left the meeting at 4.00pm

### **8.5 *Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Update***

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H527-H531).

There are no emerging gaps with WBL withdrawals by BME categories. There are no large numbers of students withdrawing from programmes and therefore no significant patterns with specific cohorts.

The SEND reforms became law back in 2014 but there has been a lengthy process of transition and the College effectively has had two SEND systems running in parallel since then.

The government has confirmed that there will be an additional £1.3 billion for schools and high needs across 2018 to 2019 and 2019 to 2020, in addition to the schools budget set at the 2015 Spending Review. This will mean that, in 2018/19, all Local Authorities will receive some increase over the amount they have planned to spend on schools and high needs from the DSG in 2017 to 2018. It was noted that a formal request has been raised with Suffolk County Council to postpone this review in September 2018 and we await their response.

### **8.6 *Risk Management Update***

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H532-H537).

The number of risks with a high likelihood of occurrence has decreased by 1 leaving just 2 risks in the red zone between the months of October 2017 and February 2018 and the number of risks within the medium (amber zone) has also decreased by 2 from 11 down to 9. Risks in the yellow zone (16) have increased by 2 from 14 (October 2017) with the same number (12) in the green zone (low risks) from October 2017 to February 2018. There are no new risks added to the register and one risk (R089 – failure to recruit international students into HE courses for 2018/19) has been removed.

The Corporation agreed to uplift the risk score of R080 to reflect the challenge ahead to recruit sufficient 16-18 student numbers and increase market share.

JBridges

## **9 Governance**

### **9.1 *Student Engagement***

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H538-H540).



There are a number of student engagement activities which currently take place between staff and students. These happen at student, course, curriculum, College and Governor levels.

The format of student representative meetings has altered slightly this year to enable the Student Representatives to choose to attend one of three meeting dates, enabling the Student Representatives to fit this commitment around their time at College.

The student governor, J Mann, is reviewing the methods used to collect student views with the Vice Principal for Quality and the Student Experience, to see if some meetings could become student only meetings with no representation from College staff.

The Student Representative for HE attend the Student Voice termly meetings, with training provided to understand the expectations of the role. They are involved with supporting fellow students to complete both the Internal Student Survey (ISS) and the National Student Survey (NSS).

## **9.2 Progress against Governance Implementation Plan**

The Chair of the Governance Implementation Task and Finish Group, C Higgins reported that the group is making good progress against the implementation plan to establish the branding/identity of the Common Strategic Board and associated communication plans. More detail and formal approvals will be required at the Corporation meeting to be held in July 2018 to establish the Common Strategic Board and align our governance arrangements with effect from 1 September 2018.

L Moody left the meeting at 4.10pm

## **9.3 Draft 2018/19 Calendar of Meetings**

The draft calendar was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H541-H542).

The Board was asked to consider the draft schedule of meetings for the 2018/19 academic year for the new governance structure of the Common Strategic Board and its associated Committees.

It is proposed that the CSB meets 3 times a year; December, March and July. The Audit Committee is to meet 4 times a year; October, November, February and June. Finance Committee to meet 5 times a year; November, December, March, May and June. Curriculum and Quality Strategic Committee to meet 3 times a year; November, March and June. Standards and Excellence of WSC and the LGBs of Suffolk One and Abbeygate 6 times a year; October, November, February, March, May and June. The Remuneration Committee to meet once a year; December and the Search/Nominations Committee (Members) to meet twice a year; January and May.

The Corporation noted and **agreed** the proposed meeting schedule for the 2018/19 academic year and new governance arrangements.

# **10 Governors' Reports and Information**

## **10.1 Representational Activities**

Governors have attended and represented a range of events during the past few months including attending performances in Conservatoire EAST and a number of dinners and other social events.

**10.2 Training, Development and Governor Link activities**

Governors are invited to attend a number of Learning Walks that are scheduled to happen over 18 to 27 April 2018.

The Clerk will contact governors to arrange their First Hand activities.

JBridges

**11 Any other business**

The question was raised by the Corporation as to whether there was a need for the College to take out 'Key Man Insurance' in the event that a Senior Manager, such as the Principal and CEO was absent for any period of time. The Senior Management Team in place is competent to take on short term responsibilities and it was further noted that it would be the responsibility of the Corporation to find an acting Principal should a long term absence require to be covered. The College operates a robust Succession Planning process so alternate post holders are identified for short, medium and long term arrangements so the Corporation felt satisfied that in the event of covering 'key' posts the College has appropriate planning in place.

The College is open tomorrow for a Community Open Event together with the HE Open Event.

Governors are also invited to attend the International Festival of Learning on 16 April 2018 hosted here at the College.

The Chair thanked K Heathcote for her involvement and valued contribution over the years as Staff Governor and staff member of the College. K Heathcote leaves the College in April 2018 to take up a post at Edinburgh College.

The Corporation agreed to share the papers of our meetings with the Trustees of SAT and were acceptable to invite them to attend the next meeting of the Corporation to be held in July 2018 as observers.

JBridges

**12 Review of Meeting**

The Clerk was asked to sense check the content and volume of papers received by Members as it was noted that duplication of content appeared in a number of places in the pack of papers for this meeting. The Corporation felt that releasing the pack of papers a week prior to the meeting was helpful and better use of Executive Summary reports with links to the work of Committees may be a solution to avoid repetition of effort and duplication of content.

JBridges

**Date of next meeting**

Thursday 5 July 2018 at 2.00pm Room TG1.16

The meeting ended at 4.35pm