

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Thursday 07 December 2017 held at GPUTC, commencing at 1000 hours

Present (Board): Phil Brown (PB - Chair), Steve Warburton (SW - Principal ex officio), Karl Hicks (KH), Lauren Faulkner (LF), David Hiorns (DH), Peter Kelley (PK - staff governor), Jane Murton (JM), Lisa Russell (LR -Vice-Chair), Emma Ward (EW)

Apologies sent (Board): Anne Devlin (AD), Terry Jones (TJ)

In Attendance: Paul Cox PC (vice TJ), Habtom Mebrahtu HM (vice AD), David Bisley (DB), Roy Bird (RB), Mark Jackson (MJ -Rawlinsons), Natalie Drewery (Clerk)

The meeting was quorate throughout

1 Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1 The Chair opened and welcomed those present to the meeting. Introductions were made to Mark Jackson, from Rawlinson Accountant, and Natalie Drewery, Clerk. Apologies received from those listed above were accepted. The Chair noted that the exact order of the agenda may not be followed specifically, due to other commitments of those present.

2 Declarations of Interests

2.1 There were no declarations of interest pertaining to items on the agenda. The clerk was asked to follow up the annual declaration of interest forms and collate a summary for the website.

Action (123): All/Clerk

(EW arrived 10.10 hours)

3 Auditors' Report

3.1 MJ referred to the documents circulated prior to the meeting and talked governors through the content. Referring to the Management Information, he highlighted the carry forward, deficit and pensions reserve.

3.2 Referring to the document titled Trustees Report and Audited Accounts, the following points were noted:

- The trustees report was written by SW; it will be placed on the website and registered with Companies House.
- Reserves will need to be built up over time; this is difficult to achieve being a new setting. The reserves policy is connected with this.

Q/. A governor queried what the reserve amount should be.

A/. MJ suggested that 1-3 months expenditure is deal.

Q/. A governor asked if there is a particular target which the UTC should set, noting that charities suggest 3-6 months expenditure.

A/. RB advised that it will be a challenge to achieve £50k reserve; 3-6 months is not appropriate as the UTC has more guarantee for future funding than a typical charity, as if pupil numbers increase, funding increases. He noted that whilst the UTC has opening grants, governors should be aware that these will stop after 3 years.

Q/. A governor queried what the longest notice period is for members of staff.

A/. SW noted that it is for the principal – one term, adding that the total staff costs for 3 months are £500k.

Q/. A governor questioned if the staff costs were a high figure in comparison to other establishments.

A/. MJ suggested that it was in a typical range; a benchmarking exercise will be carried out next year to compare against similar schools. SW added that Simon Connell, Baker Dearing, will be invited in to see how we compare to other UTC's.

Q/. Referring to capital depreciation, a governor queried what the different rates were.

A/. MJ advised that the building depreciation is 50 years; all other fixtures and equipment is 3 years.

Governors noted that this appeared low, particularly for machinery which if maintained can last 10 years. MJ suggested that this was a national used figure, but can be reviewed going forward. It is a technicality, but the UTC can determine.

Q/. A governor asked what affect this would have on the accounts if the terms of depreciation were reduced.

A/. MJ advised that less depreciation would give a smaller deficit.

Action (124): Asset Register to be established for the machinery & to review the policy associated with this.

3.3 MJ referred to a document titled Report to Management; it was noted that this had not been circulated to governors; this will be followed up after the meeting. The document summarises housekeeping elements such as recommendations to formalise policies and procedures; set up an accounting system with full purchase ledger; governors to complete annual declarations of Pecuniary Interest.

Proposal: The Chair advised that governors were required to formally accept the accounts, which will then be ratified at the later AGM by Members.

Decision: On a show of hands, all governors were in agreement to accept the accounts for 2016-17.

(MJ left the meeting at 10.30 hours)

4 Appointment of a New Governor

4.1 The Chair reiterated a previous discussion that additional governors were needed, in particular with experience in education or commerce / finance; as such Emma Ward had been approached for her education background.

4.2 EW summarised her background – primary teacher; Headteacher, brought in to turn around a failing school (Highlees) which she took from Special Measures to Good, through to academisation. Subsequently she has taken on the role of Executive Head at Highlees Academy & Eyrescroft School.

5 Draft Minutes of the meeting 14 September 2017 (for ratification)

- 5.1 The minutes of the previous meeting 14 September 2017 were agreed by the board as an accurate record, with the following amendment being made on the signed copy: Item 1.1, 4.1 references to LF should be LR. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

Action: Clerk to file

6 Matters Arising and Action Log

- 6.1 It was noted that the last action item on the previous minutes, regarding setting up parent pay, had not been added to the action log. SW advised that this did not make the deadline, however the IT support has been asked to set this up.

Action: Clerk to amend the log.

- 6.2 The Action Log had previously been circulated, the Chair asked that governors update the log and close off any action items as appropriate.

7 Sub-committee Reports

- 7.1 Curriculum & Standards – the minutes of the last meeting held on 15.11.17 were circulated prior to the meeting.

- 7.2 Finance & Resources - It was noted that KH, SW, RB & PB met to review the current financial position. RB explained the breakeven operation is almost there, the ideal position will be to have £10k in the bank, daily. The committee discussed how to build up the reserves going forward. A 5 year plan is needed; the funding received for transition, of £200k is only available for 3 years. SW advised that although the building has the capacity for 500, for operational issues, the DfE had agreed a minimum viable number of students at 400 by 2019-20. PB added that the UTC has a number of pressures, as highlighted on the RAG rated reports provided by SW for this meeting, there is a need to invest to achieve results. This is a crucial point, the exam results next year are key to future recruitment.

Q/. A governor questioned if the UTC has received the £200k per year extra grant.

A/. SW confirmed that it continues to receive it for 3 years; this ends 2019-20. It is important to know what other grants / funding can be obtained and generally review finances.

Q/. A governor queried if the UTC was confident it had captured all FSM & PP students; reminding that it is anytime during the last 6 years.

A/. SW advised that based on the files which the school have, this has been collated; the UTC relies upon parents in current receipt to sign up for the funding.

Governors discussed at length, how they could explore the additional resources / grants / sponsors available.

Action (125): PB to discuss with Steve Bowyer, CEO Opportunity Peterborough, to see what is available.

Action (126): SW to raise with Baker Dearing to explore what funding other UTCs receive and to see if they have someone who may be able to explore grants / funding available.

Q/. A governor noted that the Treasury budget statement had included additional funding for pupils needing mental health support and queried if this resource could be tapped into.

A/. SW advised that he would welcome any additional funding for SEN, having recently signed off a number of counselling sessions for students. This was previously discussed with Anne Devlin, whether there is capacity for social work students of Anglia Ruskin University to provide a counselling support service.

Action (127): SW to provide a briefing paper for KH to take to the treasury to discuss Skills in Construction

Q/. A governor questioned if leasing of the building had been considered as extra income.

A/. SW advised that it is a difficult building to lease for traditional lettings, as it has no sports field, studios etc which would commonly be used. Whilst it can host events over the summer holidays, the income generated may not benefit the effort made by staff. The focus needs to be on securing money with minimum effort.

7.3 Health & Safety – DH circulated a H&S report for information and talked through the notable points, which included a list of action items:

- PAT testing is required.
- Extraction issues were identified which need addressing.
- Noise exposure needs assessing.

SW advised that the Capital Funds Budget received from the DfE needs reviewed, to see if the money covers them. Some of the actions are definitely building construction/opening related.

Q/. A governor queried who is responsible for fixing equipment etc. in the building.

A/. SW advised that staff are able to fix, or it may be covered under warranty. There is also a maintenance management contract, along with caretaker and facilities management for the site.

Q/. A governor asked what happens regarding the recent accident at work involving a staff member.

A/. SW explained that as the incident required the person being off work for more than 7 days; it became a reportable incident under RIDDOR.

Action (128): Following discussion it was agreed that SW will ask Perkins Engines to undertake an investigation into the incident.

8 To approve salary increases

8.1 The Chair advised that the cap on teacher salaries has been removed and governors need to determine whether the UTC should follow other schools and provide a cost of living increase. SW clarified local schools have adopted a 1% increase, backdated to September, in line with standard teacher pay and conditions. UTC staff have more contact time with students, this should be recognised; as such recommended the 1% cost of living increase be applied to GPUTC and backdated to September. The overall cost will be an additional £14/15k; and it was noted that this has not been budgeted for.

Q/. A governor queried if the funding received from government was increased to balance this additional payment.

A/. SW advised that it had not been increased to compensate, the money would have to be found out of the UTC accounts.

Q/. A governor questioned if recruitment of teaching staff was easy.

A/. SW advised that recruitment is not easy.

Governors discussed that within industry, pay increases are only given in line with performance. Recognising that retention is a challenge, governors wished to explore engaging with teachers to get good results, which they would then be rewarded for. It was noted that a bonus scheme had previously been discussed, but wasn't followed up. If extra income could be found, there could be money available for a bonus payment, depending on results.

Decision: Governors agreed that 1% increase will be backdated to September, 2017, with the exception of those staff on Performance Plans.

Action (129): A working party of LF, EW, PK to be established to consider a performance incentive payment. Any agreement will need to be ratified by the Full Board. To report back at the next Full Board meeting – 08 February.

Action (130): PB to write to staff to advise them of the increase.

9 Employer Sponsor

- 9.1 SW reported that the Royal Navy have become an additional sponsor; they sponsor 5 UTC's across the country. They offer challenges and experiences for students, such as Royal Engineering Challenge, Work Experience, Year 10 STEM day. Governors recognised that there is a wealth of other additional sponsors in the locality to explore links with, such as Network Rail, Morgan Sindall, Nestle, ECITB.

(RB left the meeting at 11.35 hours)

10 DfE Reports

SW reported on the two DfE reports from this term:

- 10.1 Safeguarding visit – this was conducted by Jane Low, arising from a DfE request; they had noticed some UTCs were struggling to get safeguarding right. She identified some areas of outstanding practice, some areas to improve upon. An action plan has been drawn up, as circulated. Governors were reminded they should undertake annual Safeguarding training; the training should be based on school's data and the types of safeguarding which students are involved in.

Q/. A governor queried whether they should be aware of the reasons behind the safeguarding data.

A/. SW advised that the data shared in July's meeting summarised the information which governors are required to be aware of.

- 10.2 EA 4th term visit – this was challenging but positive; the draft report has been circulated. An action plan will be produced by the end of term; the leadership team are taking ownership of different areas. Whilst the UTC is improving, there needs to be a greater emphasis on results. The biggest difference to be made will be on student outcomes; if they are achieving, they are likely to be happier. It was notable that the KPI summary provided shows the areas identified under the report as successful. LR advised that she attended, vice PB, and spoke of the recent governor training on their Ofsted responsibilities. The progress the GB had made was good, given the circumstances and number of governors. Next step is to review the skills gaps.

Action (131): All governors to return the Skills Audit to the Clerk to collate a summary for the next meeting.

11 Principal's Report to Governors

11.1 SW clarified that the DfE report highlighted that the usual report to governors does not include KPI's; going forward this will be incorporated. Notable highlights:

- Student numbers – 284 funded on; 276 actual. An automatic correction will be made next year to the funding.

Q/. A governor queried the reasons for students leaving.

A/. SW clarified the reasons were mixed, some decided UTC was not for them.

- Staffing – there is some movement; the Student Support Director is leaving (other staff will be moved around to compensate); an art teacher is leaving; Computer Science teacher is going part-time (a full time replacement has been appointed); a Chemistry teacher is leaving (this will be filled by an agency teacher)

Q/. A governor asked which specialism is hardest to fill – Maths, Chemistry or Physics.

A/. SW advised that all are challenging areas to recruit into.

Q/. Noting that the Chemistry teacher had only started this term, a governor queried if the current term's assessment results are known for those students.

A/. DB advised that the data will be available at the end of term. The new agency teacher knows the job that is required of them.

- 2018 Student Recruitment – SW advised that Year 10 figures are strong, with over 50 applicants. Year 12 may be a challenge; possibly 20 of the current Year 11's.

Q/. A governor queried if the same catchment / spread of students is expected.

A/. SW confirmed that it was, advising that the UTC is currently receiving a number of in-year swaps

Q/. A governor asked if there was scope for those students not achieving in Year 11 to resit Year 11.

A/. SW clarified that he would prefer they did not re-sit the year, but bespoke packages are being looked at to help those pupils to move forward into Year 12 to prepare them for apprenticeships etc.

- Exclusions – SW informed governors that an exclusion case was ongoing. It was confirmed that in the event of the need for a Governors Discipline Committee, this will be formed by LF, EW, TJ.

Q/. A governor questioned what happens to students in this position.

A/. SW advised that student support packages, for SEN and Child in Care should be triggered.

12 Risk Register & School Action Plan

12.1 SW advised a draft was presented to the Finance & Resources committee; the result of that discussion was that the committee asked for the red areas to be costed, these costing are contained in the Achievement Intervention Plan, as presented. He noted that the costings are largely for extra staffing.

Q/. A governor queried how quickly this could be put in place.

A/. SW advised that some of the activities are already in place, such as maths tutoring, but not those which incur expenditure, which needs Full Board approval.

Q/. A governor noted that there would be a potential saving with the Senior Leader who is leaving and questioned if the maths tutoring was having impact.

A/. SW confirmed that impact has been seen with those students who the tutor has managed to engage with.

Q/. A governor queried which groups are being targeted.

A/. SW clarified that Years 12/13 A 'Level have been a focus of improvement, along with some Year 11 higher potential students who are not yet achieving.

Q/. A governor questioned if the timetable revision would assist with implementing the plan.

A/. DB confirmed that it would as it will release key staff to support students. He advised there are already detailed plans in place behind the costed plan. By the end of term there should be evidence of impact.

Q/. A governor questioned if the costings for this had been included in the budget.

A/. SW advised that it had not. He added that KS4 Engineering did not go as well with some Year 10 students, these students have been retained for Year 11 in Engineering, rather than moving on to Built Environment. For Built Environment 120 hours has to be completed by the end of 2018.

Q/. A governor queried which students will complete Built Environment.

A/. SW advised that it will be available to those students who indicated they wanted to take it at the start of Year 10; the technical, rather than craft side will be taught. The idea is to ensure that everyone achieves an Engineering qualification.

Q/. A governor asked if the UTC has the staff in place to deliver this.

A/. SW confirmed that there is capacity to achieve this.

A governor highlighted that concern is being expressed by a few parents and students regarding their under achievement, therefore in order that the grades stand up to scrutiny, this money needs to be found. There is a risk to reputation by not implementing this.

Q/. A governor questioned if governors or the employer sponsors can help out in any way. Could it help to set up a Parents' Forum to discuss/ air concerns.

A/. DB advised that Student Managers could be used to assist with the Parents' Forum. SW noted the offer of support and agreed to consider how help could be given.

The results of current assessments were advised to governors.

Decision: all governors were in favour of agreeing to this plan, amounting to £36,500 and requested that the budget be revised with this included.

Any Other Business discussed – for noting only

The Chair advised that the DfE had made planning to join a MAT a condition of our additional funding; whilst governors and the SLT have other concerns at the moment, a project outline will need to be created to share with them in the new year.

In response to a governor question regarding the need to recruit a new Parent Governor, SW agreed to provide a formal notice to parents, asking for nominations to be submitted to governance@gputc.com

The meeting closed at 13.05 hours

Date of Next Full Board Meeting: Thursday 8 February 2018 10am – 12.30pm