



CABINET: 14 March 2017

Report of: Borough Solicitor

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ian Moran

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SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT TO WEST LANCASHIRE COLLEGE BOARD

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of an approach by the National Training and Colleges Group (NCG), inviting Ms Kim Webber, Chief Executive, to join the West Lancashire College Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the invitation from NCG be considered and the Chief Executive be authorised to accept the appointment for the reasons set out in paragraph 5 of the report.
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3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 West Lancashire College (WLC) is a community-based college operating in association with NCG (National Training and Colleges Group), as a provider of further and higher education and apprenticeship training. WLC has around 3,500 learners of different ages. Programmes from entry level to degree level are offered, including BTECs and Apprenticeships.
- 3.2 Occupying buildings in Skelmersdale and Ormskirk, WLC offers a range of facilities for learning and social activities. As a division of NCG, WLC has recently become the first college in the UK to be able to develop and award its own Honours and Masters degree.

- 3.3 Together with Edge Hill University, and local schools, WLC contribute to an increasingly strong education/learning offer for students in West Lancashire and beyond.
- 3.4 The importance of the education/learning offer to the economic and general wellbeing of West Lancashire residents and businesses is recognised in the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025, a key theme of which is 'Advantage Through Knowledge and Skills.'
- 3.5 Economic forecasts for West Lancashire present a positive picture, with employment growth expected to out-perform the national, regional and Lancashire averages. Demand for premises is buoyant, and a number of transformational projects are set to benefit the local economy in the strategy period. These include, but are not limited to, Superport, Skelmersdale Town Centre regeneration, and housing delivery as part of the current Local Plan 2012-2027. Growth is anticipated in construction, energy and logistics sectors in particular.
- 3.6 The combined effects of sectoral growth will increase demand for a skilled local workforce, at a time when a significant proportion of the workforce will be anticipating retirement. Is it therefore important that West Lancashire utilises its resident workforce, raising skill levels and economic activity.
- 3.7 The Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025 recognises that further and higher education establishments in the Borough play a vital role in shaping the skills base of the Borough: "Building on existing work, it is important that both..... establishments are fully engaged with the Council to ensure that the skills demanded through major capital programmes and other economic development projects are sourced within the Borough."
- 3.8 The Strategy sets out the following key ask:
- "Improve the skills Gap and Raise Qualification Levels.** Both the higher education and further education establishments within the Borough are developing initiatives to raise skills levels and match these with local employers, however improved co-ordination and sharing of information is required in order to fulfil this objective."
- 3.9 The Council Plan 2017-18, elsewhere on this agenda, sets out the Council's corporate aims to be a Council which is Ambitious for West Lancashire: Our Economy, Environment and for Health and Wellbeing

4.0 ESTABLISHMENT OF A WEST LANCASHIRE COLLEGE BOARD

- 4.1 WLC currently has an Advisory Committee which involves three external individuals to support the management of the College. As part of a recent review of governance, involving the devolution of powers from NCG, WLC is now looking to build on and strengthen these arrangements.
- 4.2 A newly constituted Board is to be established involving around 7 external appointments, together with the Interim Principal, staff and student representation. The Terms of Reference of the proposed Board are set out at Appendix 1. The role description for Board Members is at Appendix 2.

- 4.3 The Council has received a letter indicating that NCG would like Ms Kim Webber, the Chief Executive, to become a member of the Board, on the terms set out (see Appendix 3). The role does not carry a remuneration, but involves a time commitment.

5.0 CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 In considering the invitation, Members will wish to have regard to the extent to which such a position contributes to the wellbeing of the Borough, furthers the Council's stated aims, and is in line with key strategies.
- 5.2 In this regard, it is considered that, should Members be so minded, membership of the College Board complements the Council's economic aspirations for the Borough, and the Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025.
- 5.3 The role description indicates a time commitment of circa 35 hours per annum plus events, which would be accommodated alongside other work commitments. Indemnity/insurance arrangements are understood to be in place, in relation to the role, and which would cover Board Members acting in this role.
- 5.4 The role description and the WLC Board Terms of Reference have been reviewed and no conflicts of interest are deemed to arise at this stage. Should there ever be a situation where such an interest arose, e.g. in relation to an item on the Board, accepted protocols would be followed.
- 5.5 The Council has in place sophisticated guidance and policies to assist the fulfilment of such arrangements e.g. the 'Guidance Note for Members and Officers Involved with Outside Bodies' and the 'Officers' Code of Conduct.'

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 6.1 The WLC Board will take an overview of quality and curriculum; and is considered consistent with the aims of the Community Strategy.

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are some resource implications arising from this report in respect of officer time, and these will be met within existing resources.

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Involvement in the Board will help mitigate the risks, and further the asks identified in the Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025 in respect of skills.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Role Description of a College Board Member
- Appendix 2 West Lancashire College Board Terms of Reference
- Appendix 3 Letter of Invitation dated 3 March 2017