

## The Role of the Governor in Burnley College General Information

### Burnley College

- 1 Burnley College is part of a further education sector which is increasingly recognised by government and other national bodies as a key contributor in many ways to the future wellbeing and economic success of individuals, communities and the country.
- 2 Burnley College itself is a key public service and community hub for Burnley and the surrounding area. It has an important and successful sixth form role, is a key provider of education and training for employers and contributes significantly to university level education locally. Its mission is to be an avenue for individuals to build their futures and change their lives.
- 3 The College is a significant player. It has an annual budget in excess of £17m, some 600 employees and it provides education and training for over 7000 individuals annually including 1800 sixth form students, 750 university level students, 500 apprentices, 2000 adult students and over 2000 people sponsored by their employers.
- 4 Standards are high and the College is recognised as high performing by government agencies. For instance, there has been a 100% pass rate at 'A' level and Advanced Vocational level for four years running with high grades exceeding all national norms; apprenticeship success rates are very high; and university level success rates compare with national figures.
- 5 The College is at an exciting and challenging phase of development. In 2009, it will move to a wholly new campus, currently under construction, on Princess Way. This campus will comprise a sixth form centre, a skills and adult centre and a university centre controlled by the College's partner, the University of Central Lancashire. The new campus, which at an investment of £81.5m is one of the largest college projects in the country, will provide state of the art facilities to underpin the College's future success.

### The Governing Board

- 6 The Governing Board as a whole and individual governors have a central role and a key contribution to make to the continuing development of the College. The Board's position is based on statute. The control of the College is vested in the Governing Board. The Board, in essence, represents the interest of the local community, including the business community, and the public interest in general. It is there to oversee the operation of the College and to ensure it provides what the community needs in a way that reflects the highest professional and ethical standards and makes best use of resources. It is accountable for the quality of the College's services, its financial solvency and its sound management. It is specifically accountable for the proper use of the public funds the College receives.

- 7 In carrying out these responsibilities there is a clear distinction between governance and management. The governors provide oversight, monitoring and strategic direction. For instance, it was the Governing Board's decision alone to commit to the development of the new campus. The operations and management of the College are the responsibility of the Principal, who is appointed by and is directly accountable to the Board.
- 8 College governing boards vary in size and composition. The Burnley College Board has a membership of 19 which includes governors drawn from the local business community, our partner university, community leaders, public service and the local council, students and staff. The Board has significant high level financial and other expertise.
- 9 The work of the governors is conducted through its formal meetings and through other engagements with the College community. There are four standard meetings of the full board each year. There is also a structure of committees where detailed work is carried out. Currently these are Curriculum and Standards, Finance, Audit, Human Resources, Remuneration and Search and an Accommodation Working Group monitoring the development of the new campus. Typically, committees meet three times a year.
- 10 To prepare for meetings, governors are asked to read reports which are circulated a week in advance. Depending on the weight of business, preparation should not take more than one, or exceptionally two, hours.
- 11 The Board also holds a special meeting once a year for strategic planning purposes and holds an annual 24 hour residential event for review and planning at a local hotel. This is held from Friday teatime to lunch Saturday and is well supported.
- 12 Governors have the opportunity to attend a range of college events, which is particularly rewarding in providing a human insight into the College's work through meeting students and staff. There is a prestigious Awards for Excellence event for our sixth form students held at Towneley Hall annually. Additionally, there are annual certificate presentation events for students of all departments and industries. Governors attend to present certificates and meet staff and students. Governors are invited to student performances and displays of students work. They are also encouraged to attend the Student Council and the Academic Board.
- 13 To familiarise themselves with the work of the College, new governors are asked to undertake an induction which is flexibly tailored to meet the convenience of the new governor.

## **Conclusion**

- 14 The Governors' role is key to the effective operation of Burnley College which would not enjoy its current success without a committed and effective governing board. Governors have the opportunity and, indeed, the responsibility to shape the success and future development and direction of a significant local service. This responsibility is balanced by the awareness that all governors are very busy individuals in their own right.