

**SOLIHULL COLLEGE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY
12TH FEBRUARY 2015 AT THE BLOSSOMFIELD CAMPUS**

PRESENT: Lena Stockford (Chair)
Noreen Akhtar (Student)
Stan Baldwin
Chris Baranowski
John Bolt
John Callaghan (Principal)
Jane Coleman
Joe Kelly
Nick Mapp
Keith Marriott
Alex Palethorpe
Bill Wanley

IN ATTENDANCE: Lindsey Stewart (Deputy Principal)
Heather Evans (Vice Principal Finance)
Pete Haynes (Vice Principal HR and Student Services)
Beth Selwood (Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment)
Theresa Lynch (Clerk to the Corporation)

Dave Gartside (Network Manager) Item 2.1 only
Elaine Watton (ICT Services Manager) Item 2.1 only

1. Membership

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Estelle Birch and Phil Mayhew.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

2. Financial Strategy

2.1 Corporate IT Systems Review and other IT Developments

The Network Manager and ICT Services Manager gave a presentation relating to the introduction of a VDI (Virtual Desktop Infrastructure) solution. There would be an overall project cost of £1.5m over 3 years. Detailed discussion took place:

Q. What will happen after 3 years?

A. There will no longer be a need to replace desktop PCs. Thin clients last much longer and will only really need replacement if broken.

Q. Is this expenditure included in the budget?

A. Part of the expenditure is included in the 3 year financial plan, however, some is additional – further details will be discussed as part of item 2.2.

Q. Is this cutting-edge or are other organisations also implementing this type of technology?

A. The NHS is a big customer and the core VDI infrastructure works well. Some colleges are undertaking some really exciting projects. This is enabling technology that will allow future exciting potential developments.

Q. In terms of implementation, is there a possibility of having a staged approval process? Changes in technology etc may happen over the period of 3 years that might impact on this project.

A. This requires large investment in year 1 to ensure effective and efficient implementation. To keep the present system in place and tentatively implement the VDI solution would inevitably result in increased costs, so a staged approval is not an efficient way forward. The first and second year of the implementation requires additional funds for the IT budget, however, by years four and five there will be savings.

Q. Phase 2 of the implementation in April 2016 - is this a sensible time for completion, as it may have an effect during the teaching period?

A. This can be reviewed. It is not a high risk element of the implementation and would be preceded by a large amount of testing.

Q. Is expenditure on iPads being treated as capital or expenditure?

A. Capital.

Q. Are there different staffing requirements, in terms of recruitment and expertise and will it have an effect on current IT staff?

A. New appointments are taking account of future potential skills and expertise that will be required. Two senior network technicians are currently being appointed.

Q. Will there be training and support for all staff during implementation?

A. There will be testing, feedback and help and guidance will be provided, as well as, training, as appropriate. Although staff will not necessarily see a huge difference in terms of the desktop pc interface.

The Vice Principal Finance explained that the VDI project was the most significant of 5 listed in the report. The costs of each project were clearly stated.

Thanks to Dave Gartside and Elaine Watton for their presentation and they left the meeting.

2.2 Budget Reforecast and Revised 3 Year Financial Plan 2014-17

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and confirmed that it included a reforecast, carried out in December 2014, and additional capital expenditure, as discussed in Item 2.1 above. Discussion took place and it was noted that the revised Plan included an additional £507,000 capital and £410,000 revenue expenditure, over 4 years, to underpin the IT infrastructure development.

Q. Is there protection for the 18 year old funding cuts next year?

A. No there is no protection next year.

Q. Clarity regarding the status of the Aviation Engineering Training Centre and Advanced Life Sciences Centre LEP projects was requested.

A. Approval had not yet been received from the LEP. It was noted that expenditure for the Advanced Life Sciences project had to be incurred by April 2015, so it was hoped that there would be some news shortly.

The Principal explained that the College was positioned well with the local LEP and a good relationship existed.

The cash position was discussed and it was noted that even though it reduced in the short term, by 2017/18 it did increase again. The Vice Principal Finance explained that £5m would equate to about 50 days provision. It was **agreed** that the optimum level of cash required should be discussed when setting the budget for 2015/16.

ACTION. It was noted that outstanding financial health required 25 days, so there was some flexibility.

Staff costs were discussed. Clarity was requested regarding plans for restructuring. Currently vacancy factors are higher than the assumptions made within the plan.

Q. Why is the pay award for 2015/16 in brackets?

A. A confidential report was distributed and the Vice Principal Finance explained that it modelled saving requirements for 2015/16. This provided assurance that the Financial Plan was achievable based on the assumptions discussed. The pay award was in bracket because it would be dependent on affordability.

Q. Recruitment of English and maths teachers had an impact in 2013/14, so presumably this would not be the case this year and on-going?

A. Costs would be mitigated by more effective delivery methods.

It was noted that there were 670 FTEs and senior managers were working with vacancies that arise. The Vice Principal HR and Student Services confirmed that decisions about staffing never impinged on quality of teaching and learning and the experience of the student.

RESOLVED to approve the revised Financial Plan for 2014/16 and Budget for 2014/15.

RESOLVED to agree the pay award for 2014/15, with effect from 1st August 2014.

RESOLVED to approve the investments in the IT infrastructure and increased capital budget as outlined in the report.

2.3 **Benchmarking Information**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the information and explained that the data related to 2012/13 and was therefore relatively out of date.

The forecast for the financial health for the college remained outstanding in the foreseeable future, this was becoming unusual in the sector.

Q. Is the average college losing money?

A. Yes and a rise from 20 colleges in 2013/14 to 50 colleges in 2014/15 facing inadequate financial health.

2.4 **PMR – December 2014**

The PMR for December 2014 was presented and received.

2.5 **Governors' Dashboard**

The Principal explained that the dashboard was now available to governors, although there had been connection issues on some of the iPad via Boardpacks. This seemed to relate to iPads using Safari, whereas Google Chrome seemed to work better. Further advice would be circulated to support governors in gaining access to the dashboard. **ACTION.**

The Principal explained that the main risk areas were listed in the PMR for December 2014. He explained that there were some issues regarding student attendance and intensive work had been going on since the Christmas break, which seemed to have reduced absence rates. The attendance data did indicate an issue for maths and English classes. This seemed to be a sector-wide concern. The college was issuing a letter to students stating progression was dependant on good attendance, including English and maths lessons. Governors were aware that significant extra resources had been put into the study programmes which partly explained the increase in teaching pay costs. The Chair explained that there would be a national discussion in the summer to explore the issues surrounding maths and English in FE. The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that she would be attending a meeting in March 2015 with Lorna Fitzjohn, the Director of FE and Skills at Ofsted. The meeting included 12 FE professionals working at all levels from a diverse range of provisions across the country and included, on the agenda, a focus on the implementation of the new requirements and the range of English and maths qualifications.

Discussion took place regarding the expectation that all students should undertake work experience, however, the practicalities of finding placements for all students and them then missing critical learning time is sometimes difficult to fulfil.

3. **Principal's Briefing**

3.1 Bids and Projects Update

The Vice Principal Finance explained that the current concern was the Aviation Engineering Training Centre, as approval had not yet been received from the LEP. Approval was required as soon as possible as the contractor was on board and work was underway. If a formal decision was not received from the LEP by the next meeting it would be necessary to consider whether to progress further and therefore incur additional expenditure. **ACTION.**

Jaguar Land Rover Apprenticeship Programme – the Deputy Principal explained that the college had submitted a proposal to JLR, working with BMet and Wolverhampton University, to provide apprenticeships. Warwickshire College were also making a bid. It was noted that it was important to be involved with JLR as a key provider and to continue to build a good relationship with them.

Q. Should we be competing with Warwickshire College?

A. Yes, it is important that Solihull College has links with JLR. There is a large amount of work, so it may be difficult for one college to provide all that is required.

Kier Gas Training – Kier were still in the process of making a decision and it was anticipated that the outcome would be known in late March 2015. There will be some refurbishment work required, but it will be minimal and can be completed quickly once approval is received.

Q. Is there any news on the ATA?

A. The name of the ATA had changed to UK Apprenticeship Agency. It was noted that a more detailed report would be submitted to the Corporation at a future meeting.
ACTION.

3.2 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2014/15

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the report and explained how important it was for governors to engage with the QIP, which provided the road map towards college improvement.

She explained that when issues were identified for individual courses a series of 'intensive care' meetings would take place to support course managers to resolve any emerging problems. It was noted that where this had been the case progress was good for the courses identified, with a small number of courses continuing to cause concern and subject to on-going support and scrutiny.

Discussion took place regarding a learning walk where it had been apparent that there was student dissatisfaction. It was noted that the governor had observed the difference of student engagement and enthusiasm on a course causing concern, compared to other curriculum areas. The Deputy Principal confirmed that actions were being taken to manage the issues.

It was noted that sometimes the issues causing concern were difficult to solve, for example, where retention is affected by students leaving for employment. Whilst this was a positive outcome, it was not reflected in funding and performance measures. This was a particular issue in courses in Brickwork in Construction, and therefore a review of programme structure and student expectations was being carried out.

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that a teaching and learning survey had been carried, that asked questions about the quality of the student experience. Findings of the survey would be reported to a future meeting.
ACTION.

RESOLVED to approve the Quality Improvement Plan for 2014/15.

3.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Update

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the report and explained that further observations would be taking place and results would be presented in due course. She confirmed that a profile of 85-89% for good and outstanding lessons was good and provided a measure of quality of teaching and learning, although this was not the only method to inform performance monitoring.

3.4 Ofsted

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment confirmed that the college was continuing to prepare for Ofsted. The college development day on 5th January 2015 had been a valuable opportunity for staff to share good practice and feedback had been good.

The Clerk noted that it was important for governors to be aware of the PREVENT agenda and that a briefing sheet would be circulated as an initial introduction, with a

follow up briefing at a future meeting. **ACTION.** It seemed that this was now a focus for inspectors.

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services explained that the PREVENT agenda related to a duty on the college to set up procedures to prevent extremism and terrorism. He confirmed that risk assessment was being carried out, briefing events for staff were on-going and a policy/plan was being developed.

Lena Stockford left the meeting due to illness and Bill Wanley took the Chair.

4. **Monitoring and Performance Reports – Quality**

4.1 Complaints Report and Review of Policy and Procedure

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the report and explained that a new component had been added to the complaints form to capture protected characteristics. She confirmed that there was a duty to refer unresolved complaints to the SFA.

Q. In terms of the staff conduct category of complaints is there anything to worry about?

A. This tended to relate to the perception of the student that the member of staff was a little over zealous. An investigation took place and it seems that the relationship between the student and the member of staff it was difficult.

Q. How do you assess whether people are comfortable to complain?

Q. The Complaints procedure is very visible on the college website. Students are introduced to the complaints procedure at induction. In surveys there is no specific question about whether people are comfortable about complaining, however, there had not been any indication that this was an issue.

The Student Governor explained that the procedure was clear and that students generally are able to raise issues. She confirmed that she would feel comfortable to raise any issues in her school.

The report covers the high level complaints. There may be more minor complaints that are dealt with at school and course level. This process tends to be those issues that have not been resolved at that level or that are of a more serious nature.

RESOLVED to approve the Complaints Policy, as set out.

4.2 Equality and Diversity Report

Discussion took place about whether this report should be held to the next meeting for approval, as it is a large document, which had only been available electronically. It was noted that it is largely a factual document that sets out how the college meets the equality duty and is presented to governors to demonstrate this. It also presents objectives to ensure continued improvement.

Q. Objectives on page 57/58 – ought there to be an objective about increasing the number of ABME staff.

A. It was agreed that the objectives would be reviewed and would be presented to the next meeting. **ACTION.**

RESOLVED to receive the Equality and Diversity Report, subject to final amendments that will be discussed at the next meeting.

4.3 Student Destinations Report 2013/14

The Deputy Principal presented the Student Destinations Report for 2013/14 and confirmed that there was only 4% unknown. Data was getting more accurate each year, with staff engaging well with the need to establish and record student destinations.

Q. The number of students recorded is low, based on overall college student numbers?

A. This is full time students only. There is a detailed analysis on unemployed- offer students. The report will include unemployed-offer figures next time too. **ACTION.**

Q. A small percentage have gone on to employment?

A. Yes, it is hoped that more will go into employment in future. The college was working on ensuring greater employability.

Q. Do more ABME students leave the college than other groups?

A. More ABME students go on to HE, with very few going onto apprenticeships.

Discussion took place regarding a visit to Amadeus at the NEC for students to see apprenticeship opportunities.

4.4 QSR Data for Employer Responsive

The Deputy Principal presented the report and it was noted that further discussion would take place at the next meeting, as required.

4.5 QSR Data for Classroom Based

The Deputy Principal presented the report.

Q. Annual priority 1c – Overall long course success rates will be at least in the upper quartile for FE colleges – is this realistic?

A. It may be helpful review the target to relate to the substantial qualification. **ACTION.**

5. Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 26th January 2015

The minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 26th January 2015 were received.

5.1 Areas of Special Interest for Governors

The Clerk presented the report and explained that following approval this scheme would be fully implemented.

RESOLVED to approve the Area of Special Interest Scheme for Governors.

5.2 Year End Audit and Finance Corporation Meeting Terms of Reference

The Clerk presented the report and explained that this formalised the arrangements for the annual Year End Audit and Finance Corporation meeting that takes place in November/December and considers the Members' Report and Financial Statements.

RESOLVED to approve the Year End Audit and Finance Corporation Meeting Terms of Reference.

5.3 Code of Governance – Consultation Feedback

The Clerk presented the report and explained that the Chair of the Corporation had attended a consultation workshop and it seemed that there was a feeling that the Code was somewhat directive, however, there was no element that could not be met by the college, so there was no further comments proposed for feedback to the AOC by 5th March 2015.

5.4 Governance Quality Improvement Plan and Position Statement 2015

The Clerk presented the report and explained that this presented the current position with regarding to governance developments during 2014/15.

RESOLVED to approve the Governance QIP and Position Statement.

5.5 Expert Groups

The Clerk presented the report and explained that initial feedback regarding the expert groups was positive. Further feedback would be collated and the process for approval be formally adhered to.

5.6 Advert and Person Specification for New Governors

The Clerk presented the report and explained that the advert would be placed on the college website and organisations and individuals would be contacted to initiate applications for vacancies that would occur during 2015/16.

It was suggested that the equal opportunities statement on HR documentation be included in the advertisement for new governors. **ACTION.**

RESOLVED to approve the advert, subject to the suggested amendment, and the person specification for governors.

6. Expert Project Groups

6.1 Aviation Tender Group

The tender approval notes for the Advanced Aviation building works were received.

6.2 Marketing and IT Expert Group

The notes of the Marketing and IT Expert Group held on 21st January 2015 were received.

6.3 KPI Dashboard Group

It was noted that the expert group to consider the contents of the KPI dashboard would be set up for after half term.

7. Minutes and matters arising from the meeting of the Corporation held on 16th December 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8. Minutes of the meeting of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 26th January 2015

This item was deemed confidential.

8.1 EMT Targets for 2014/15

This item was deemed confidential.

9. Property Report – for information

The Vice Principal Finance explained that the report provided an update on projects and work currently taking place. She explained that the Director of Property had left the college at the end of January 2015, to take up another post. Arrangements were in place to manage current projects.

Q. Have the college now moved out of Griffin Park?

A. Provision had now left Griffin Park. Small provision had been made to cover final exit costs.

The Principal presented Solihull College and University Centre signage and explained that this would hopefully ensure the full extent of provision was communicated more widely.

Q. Will this be a formal change of name?

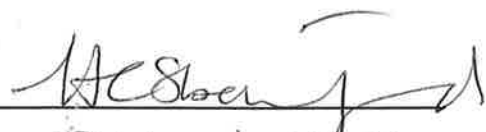
A. No, the registered name will remain Solihull College.

10. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 19th March 2015 at 6pm.

Signed:

Date:


19 March 2015.