

**SOLIHULL COLLEGE
MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2015 AT THE
WOOLANDS CAMPUS**

PRESENT: Lena Stockford (Chair)
Chris Baranowski
Scott Beasley (Student Governor)
John Bolt
John Callaghan (Principal)
Jane Coleman
Lucy Lee
Summiya Khan (Student Governor)
Phil Mayhew
Alex Palethorpe
Geraldine Swanton
Bill Wanley

IN ATTENDANCE: Lindsey Stewart (Deputy Principal)
Pete Haynes (Vice Principal HR & Student Services)
Heather Evans (Vice Principal Finance)
Beth Selwood (Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment)
Theresa Lynch (Clerk to the Corporation)
Sue McGregor (Dean of Higher Education and Curriculum Innovation) –
Item 3
Patrick Geary (Director Quality Improvement) – Item 4

1. Membership

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Stan Baldwin, Nick Mapp, Keith Marriott and Joe Kelly.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

Phil Mayhew noted his potential interest in relation to Item 2.2 and the Simon Digby site.
Geraldine Swanton raised her potential interest in relation to Item 3.1 and Shakespeare Martineau' client relationship with the College's validating partners.
No further declarations of interest were made.

Scott Beasley and Summiya Khan left the meeting during consideration of their appointment.

1.3 Student Governor Appointment

The Chair presented the report and explained that the appointment process had taken place. It was proposed and **agreed** to appoint 2 new student governors:

Scott Beasley with effect from 10th November 2015, for a term of office of four years or when he ceases to be a student at the College;

Summiya Khan with effect from 10th November 2015, for a term of office of four years or when she ceases to be a student at the College.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2015 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2015 were **agreed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Confidential Items:

The confidential item would remain confidential.

2.1 Health and Safety Annual Report

The Vice Principal Finance presented the Health and Safety Annual Report. Discussion took place regarding the reporting of health and safety for the Corporation and the Audit Committee. It was **agreed** that a Health, Safety and Safeguarding report would be produced for each meeting of the Corporation, but presented on an alternating basis at each meeting as either a main agenda item or for information only. **ACTION.**

The Vice Principal Finance confirmed that she would provide a definition for RIDDOR in relation to the College context. **ACTION.**

2.2 Property Update

The Vice Principal Finance explained that negotiations relating to the Simon Digby site were on-going and a full report would be presented to the next meeting.

2.3 Area Review

The Principal provided an update on the Area Review and gave indications of the discussions relating to Solihull College. The Review was still on course to report in December and complete by the end of January 2016. A meeting for governors was taking place on Monday 14th December between 7pm and 9pm at Solihull College and all governors were invited to attend. Further updates would be provided as meetings of the Review Steering Group took place.

2.4 Sub-contracting Update

The Deputy Principal presented the report and explained that discussions were on-going with Auctus. Discussion took place regarding the proposed contract with McDermott Building and Civil Engineering Ltd.

Q. How many students will there be?

A. 18. And it will be for apprenticeships in ground work, which is a growing area. The students will work for McDermott and study on a day release basis.

Q. Does McDermott Building and Civil Engineering Ltd have enough experience in delivering apprenticeships?

A. They are relatively inexperienced and, therefore, for the first year the contract will be based on a higher management fee to provide additional support.

Q. Does the employer receive a payment from government?

A. No the new levy model has not yet been introduced, so the College will receive the funding and pay the employer 70%.

Q. Are there likely to be more students in the future?

A. It is anticipated that more students will be employed and that employees in sub-contracted companies may be included in the scheme in due course.

Q. How will the College know the contract has been successful?

A. There will be on-going quality checks and ultimately success will be through achievement and employment of the students.

Q. What qualification do the students get?

A. They work towards level 2 and 3 qualifications and hopefully progress through to higher level apprenticeships studying for HNCs.

RESOLVED to approve entering into a contract with McDermott Building and Civil Engineering Ltd.

3. QAA Briefing and HE Update

3.1 QAA Briefing and Self Evaluation Document

The Dean of Higher Education and Curriculum Innovation gave a presentation to update the Corporation on preparation for QAA. The visit would take place week commencing 22nd February 2016. The SED was due for submission by 30th November and would be made available to governors for information. The Action Plan from the previous QAA visit would also be circulated. **ACTION.** QAA to be put on future agendas for an update report. **ACTION.**

Q. Was it anticipated that QAA inspectors would want to meet with governors?

A. No, QAA did not really include a review of governance.

Discussion took place regarding some concerns in the sector about Pearson provision that had been recently highlighted. The Dean of Higher Education and Curriculum Innovation explained that Pearson provision at the College was good.

Q. The HE Strategy was presented in May 2015 and there was no indication regarding potential issues with Pearson provision. Why was this the case and what are the risks?

A. There was no issue in May, it has only arisen in the last month.

There had been a suggestion a year ago to take Pearson (HNC/Ds, some FDs) out of HEFCE funding. There had been some issues with regard to private providers relating to delivery of guided learning hours and quality. The College has carried out a careful review of this area.

Discussion took place regarding the different quality requirements for different partners and it was noted that it was appropriate to apply the highest standards for all and to use the expertise of partners to ensure a high level of quality provision and student experience.

Q. Have you spoken to other colleges that have had successful QAA visits?

A. Yes, Loughborough College staff will be coming in to do a 2 day mock review in January 2016. There are a number of advisers providing good challenge. External advice was being received to provide a level of assurance.

Q. What responses are the advisers giving to indicate the likely outcome?

A. With QAA you can respond to problems as you work towards the Review. Where issues arise they are responded to.

Q. Is there a feel for where we currently are in terms of the outcome?

A. It is not the same as Ofsted – you can respond to issues as they arise, so it is a longer term process to respond to QAA requirements.

It was noted that after the first submission on 30th November, further evidence could be requested by the reviewers. It will be possible to identify areas of interest of the QAA team from these requests. Timings in terms of evidence deadlines was discussed and it was noted that there would be some flexibility due to the impact of the Christmas holiday on timescales, but that some work would continue over the holiday period to meet the deadlines.

It was also noted that feedback would be through a letter 2 weeks after the Review that would be followed-up by the final report. There may not be any verbal feedback at the time of the Review.

The Student Lead, Scott Beasley, explained that the Student SED was also being prepared. It incorporated the student view (about 250 students involved) and had been compiled following focus groups and Student Council feedback. It was important to ensure the student voice was incorporated and to demonstrate the response of the College to those views.

A feedback board was displayed to show how an artist had captured the student voice pictorially. It included the following messages to demonstrate that:

- Students felt well supported;
- Communication with staff was good and that staff listened to students;
- Students felt there was the ability to progress in their lives through their study.

Q. What are the possible outcome grades?

A. Poor provision can attract a 'requires improvement' grade and then there is a 6-12 month period to improve in order to remove that judgement.

Q. What would be the implications for HE development if a 'requires improvement' judgement was given?

A. If the College was unable to improve in the timescale there may become a time when funding would be withdrawn. QAA is very much a development process, so there would be support to improve.

3.2 Consumer Rights Act – Implications Report

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the report and explained the need to ensure accurate and comprehensive information for all stakeholders. He identified 5 key areas that were being reviewed. The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that a meeting of managers reviewing the key areas would take place shortly and an update would be provided at the next meeting. **ACTION.** Discussion took place and it was noted that HEIs and FE colleges had to ensure compliance.

Q. What are the implications?

A. It used to be a criminal offence, but now it is most likely that people would claim damages or request return of fees etc. Further implications were discussed.

4. Quality Update

4.1 Ofsted Action Plan and QIP Update

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the Action Plan and QIP and provided an update on progress. She explained that the criteria for courses going into intensive care had been strengthened and therefore more courses were included. Learning walks were underway for maths and English – there was some good practice seen and some areas for improvement. An application had been made for funding from the Education and Training Foundation to try to build capacity and confidence for maths and English teachers.

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that the timing of self-assessment was being reviewed to incorporate on-going progress. For 2015 an interim grade would be ascertained during Faculty Checks to reflect progress since the end of 2014/15. This was in line with advice provided by Russell Jordan.

It was noted that a provisional date had been set for the Ofsted Action Plan Expert Group to meet. The Clerk would confirm arrangements in due course. **ACTION.**

4.2 Quality of Teaching and Learning Update

The Director Quality Improvement presented the report and explained that each member of staff had an individual action plan. Plans identify key strengths and areas for improvement. It was noted that monitoring of teaching and learning needed to incorporate a range of measures,

including observations, learning walk outcomes and quality of target-setting etc.

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that work was underway to address the following areas in particular:

- Checking of learning;
- Pockets of poor attendance/punctuality; and
- Differentiation.

Q. Where issues arise in an observation, how do you check that progress is being made?

A. The member of staff would be observed again and the areas identified checked to ensure improvement. Further, there are a variety of activities taking place to support and improve practice, including Heads of School learning walks and peer observation. Generally it was felt that the more developmental approach to observation was being received positively by staff.

Detailed discussion took place regarding the data being presented and how effectively it portrayed performance. It was agreed that data presentation in terms of areas of strength and weaknesses would be reviewed to ensure clarity for monitoring performance. **ACTION.** It was acknowledged that this was a developing process and it was important to ensure effective monitoring.

Q. How will it be possible to know whether teaching and learning is improving over time?

A. Reporting of the outcomes will be reviewed and it may be possible to add directions of travel to indicate progress.

4.3 Work Experience Strategy

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the Work Experience Strategy and explained that students had been encouraged to find placements at the beginning of term and that the message would be communicated again to ensure all students had opportunities, as appropriate. Business Sales Advisers, who talk to employers about apprenticeships, were also exploring work experience opportunities when contacting employers. It was noted that if governors had any contacts useful to finding work experience placements for students, that would be very helpful. It was confirmed that the Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment would provide for governors a list of curriculum areas where it was particularly difficult to find placements. **ACTION.**

It was suggested that an incentive scheme for students to attend and perform well on placement could be beneficial.

4.4 Dashboard – Quality Quadrant

The Dean of Higher Education and Curriculum Innovation demonstrated developments taking place with regard to the quality quadrant of the dashboard and it was noted that this would now be finalised and made available to governors. It was suggested that a RAG style rating for the colour sections would be useful.

Q. Will the dashboard incorporate any new themes that may start to come through inspections carried out under the new framework?

A. Yes, it is an evolving format and will be able to incorporate new performance indicators if there are specific issues coming through new inspections.

Q. How are staff informed and supported in terms of delivering British Values?

A. BVs are incorporated within the existing College Values, so all staff and students should be demonstrating them on a daily basis. Students seem to be very confident in talking about issues around British Values, as demonstrated in the recent Student Conference. Staff can be more reticent, but are supported through briefings and training have these conversations with students. A specific tutorial package has been created to underpin the discussions.

4.5 Notes of the Governors' meeting with Russell Jordan – Ofsted HMI on 22nd October 2015

The content of the notes of the meeting with Russell Jordan were noted for information.

5. Staffing and Development

5.1 Human Resources Report for 2014/15 and Dashboard – Staffing Quadrant

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the report and explained that staffing had been managed very carefully throughout 2014/15, with outturn savings of £1m against the re-forecast budget. There had only been 8 compulsory redundancies, which compared to other colleges, was very low. A large element of staff reduction had been managed through the voluntary severance scheme.

Q. Is there a reserve to fund voluntary severance payments?

A. Yes.

Discussion took place regarding staff sickness and appraisal data contained in the staffing quadrant of the dashboard.

It was noted that disruption had been minimal during the UCU strike which focused on issues around pay.

5.2 Staff Development Report and CPD Strategy

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the report and explained that it demonstrated the wide range of activities taking place and that there would be further development opportunities identified for business support staff in the future. Specific Ofsted-related CPD was identified.

6. Bids and Projects

6.1 Bids and Projects Update

The Bids and Projects update was received for information.

6.2 Advanced Life Sciences – LEP Growth Fund Project

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report, explaining that it had been updated to give further investment appraisal information.

Q. In terms of Biomedical courses have the issues around health and safety been explored and resolved, as there may be high-risk substances on site, which would require additional procedures and arrangements?

A. The original scheme has been reduced with fewer labs – matched against planned student numbers. It may be useful to obtain some expert advice with regarding the curriculum that may be encompassed within this project to ensure adequate arrangements can be put in place. Support and advice has been provided by university partners, employers and external consultants. It was noted that it would be useful to have further information on any potential risks presented by the nature of the provision and the costs of any mitigating action that would be required to limit those risks. **ACTION.**

Q. Is it right to consider investment when the Area Review is underway?

A. This is the right course of action for students and is in line with the College strategy and LEP priorities. The project will not go ahead without LEP approval and following this, Corporation will have another opportunity to confirm that the College progresses the project. By that time it is likely that the outcome of the Area Review will be known and the potential impact on the College assessed.

Discussion took place regarding the importance of continuing to work towards broadening knowledge of the HE level courses offered at the College. There still seemed to be a lack of awareness in some parts of the wider community.

RESOLVED to approve the Advanced Life Sciences LEP Growth Fund Project with a total project cost of £762,320, subject to approval and funding of £321,368 from the LEP.

7. Governance

7.1 Draft Governors' SAR and AOC Code of Governance

The Clerk explained that self-assessment questionnaires had been collated and meetings with individual governors were still taking place. She confirmed that the draft outcome of the self-assessment processes would be circulated to garner any further updates or comments and to give new governors an opportunity to input into the process. **ACTION.**

7.2 Register of Interests for Governors and Staff Management Representations

The contents of the Register of Interests for Governors and Staff Management Representations report were noted for information.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

8. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 30th November 2015 at 6pm and it was noted that this would be the annual Audit Committee and Corporation meeting.

Signed; JRB

Date: 30/11/2015