

SOLIHULL COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER 2015 AT THE BLOSSOMFIELD CAMPUS

PRESENT: Lena Stockford (Chair)
Stan Baldwin
Chris Baranowski
Scott Beasley (Student Governor)
John Bolt
John Callaghan (Principal)
Jane Coleman
Joe Kelly
Summiya Khan (Student Governor)
Nick Mapp
Phil Mayhew
Alex Palethorpe
Geraldine Swanton
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)
Hilary Baird (Director of Student Services and Equality)
Patrick Geary (Director of Quality Improvement)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Lucy Lee and Keith Marriott.

2. Declarations of Interest

A declaration was made by Phil Mayhew, as employees of SMBC, in relation to the Simon Digby site.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3.1 Financial Regulations Update

The Vice Principal Finance presented the updated section 9 of the Financial Regulations where terms had been clarified in relation to OJEU and EU regulations. The amendments were approved.

3.2 QAA Update

The Deputy Principal confirmed that the SED had been submitted to QAA and any further lines of enquiry would be communicated to the College by 21st December 2015.

4. Principal's Briefing

4.1 Health, Safety and Safeguarding Report

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and explained that the increase in the number of accidents had been investigated by the Health and Safety Officer and Committee and no trends or patterns had been identified.

4.2 Bids and Projects Update

The Bids and Projects update was received for information.

Advanced Life Sciences – LEP Growth Fund Project: The Vice Principal Finance presented the report, explaining that following discussion with the LEP the project costs had now increased to include some additional expenditure on IT.

RESOLVED to approve the revised Advanced Life Sciences LEP Growth Fund Project with a total project cost of £1,020,159, subject to approval and funding of £444,672 from the LEP.

4.3 PMR October 2015

The Vice Principal Finance presented the PMR for October 2015.

Q. Is a surplus of £3.3m planned?

A. The position at the end of October is based on high levels of income than expenditure that have been received, however, current indications were that the surplus would be in line with forecast.

Q. Are issues relating to cash being addressed – has the forecast been updated?

A. The cashflow and balance sheets would be updated as part of the re-forecast exercise that would be reported in the New Year

4.4 Dashboard: Quality Quadrant

The Director of Quality Improvement presented the Quality Quadrant and explained what developments had taken place following feedback from Governors regarding content.

4.4 KPIs and Annual Priorities 2014/15 Outturn

The Principal presented the outturn position for 2014/15.

Q. Where in the cycle do governors have information about appraisals?

A. Appraisals are being completed. Reporting would be through the Human Resources Annual Report and the dashboard.

Discussion took place regarding attendance levels and it was noted that strategies had been put in place in 2015/16 to address issues in previous year and currently levels were on target.

It was noted that attendance issues in 2014/15 had related particularly to English and maths and that reports had become more robust.

Detailed discussion took place regarding growth targets for HE and the difficulty in setting targets that were both ambitious and realistic. The Principal confirmed that there had been growth in HE numbers, particularly for part time students (200 at Woodlands, compared with 50 five years ago), but this did not necessarily show a comparable growth in income. It was noted that comparison

with local colleges through the Area Review had indicated that the College was in a good position for HE provision.

5. Self-Assessment 2014/15

5.1 Achievement 2014/15 Report

The Deputy Principal presented achievement data for 2014/15.

Q. When will national average data for 2014/15 be available?

A. Data will not be available until March 2016 - this will be the same time that Ofsted receive it.

Detailed discussion took place regarding the impact English and maths were having on achievement. For some students they create a barrier to achievement. Students often progress well with their level 2 vocational subject, but struggle with the maths and English requirements. This means that the level 2 outcomes are lower than would be anticipated. The number of exams that will be taking place will be extremely high.

Discussion took place regarding the new qualification specifications for GCSE maths and English and the impact of replacing level 2 functional skills qualifications with the GCSE. It was clarified that functional skills would remain for apprenticeships. Results were disappointing for Hair and Beauty, bricklaying and horticulture. It was noted that there may be some difficult decisions required for subjects, such as horticulture if they cannot be staffed adequately to provide excellent provision.

Q. Could this create adverse relationships with employers?

A. Feedback from employers if currently very good and any changes would be fully communicated to employers.

Q. Isn't the emphasis on apprenticeships?

A. Yes, apprenticeships need to be increased. It was noted that Russell Jordan (HMI) had provided advice regarding this area and these were reflected in the SAR and QIP. Some areas perform very well, so the focus would be on areas performing less well.

Q. Overall, is the College improving or standing still?

A. 19+ is getting much better; 16-18 level 3 is improving and English improving significantly. HE is better than last year. However, 16-18 levels 1 and 2 are a concern and apprenticeships are marginally worse than last year, but are in line with national averages. It was noted that there was a big increase in numbers sitting maths and English. The underlying position for vocational provision without maths and English was improving. It is key that these issues are addressed in 2015/16 – to feed into the next inspection. With support from HMI there is much more rigour this year – vocational areas improving; apprenticeships are already at 58%. Maths and English continues to be a concern – with a 7 fold increase in the numbers of students taking the qualifications, many of whom have failed previously.

Discussion took place about how Governors were monitoring performance and progress in detail and it was noted that the Ofsted Action Plan Expert Group would be meeting during the Spring and Summer terms 2016 to undertake 'deep dives' into data and areas of concern and report back to the Corporation, as appropriate. The Clerk explained that there was still a need for a governor to join the Group, with special interest for work experience and apprenticeships. **ACTION.**

5.2 College Self- Assessment Report

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the report and explained that following advice from the HMI, all areas had 'double-graded' by providing an in-year progress grade for 2015/16, so that the SAR provided an up-to-date position for the College. Some amendments had been circulated relating to apprenticeships, following review of the SAR by the

HMI. Russell Jordan had endorsed the SAR, subject to these additions.

Thanks were expressed to all staff involved in the hard work since inspection and in producing a SAR that demonstrated improvement and had been endorsed by the HMI.

Q. What are the areas for improvement?

A. There are 3 T&L areas where improvement linked to stretch and challenge is required. Stretch and challenge continued to present a challenge for the College and was difficult to report on. Planning of learning was now a strength, although there was still some CPD to improve differentiation.

Q. Governance was not shown as a strength or weakness, but is a key area?

A. It would be added as a strength.

RESOLVED to approve the College Self-Assessment Report for 2014/15, subject to governance being added as a 'strength'.

5.3 Ofsted Action Plan and Quality Improvement Plan December 2015

The Director of Quality Improvement presented the Action Plan and QIP

Q. How many courses are in 'intensive care'?

A. Eighteen currently, but this was based on a more stringent criteria for entry to intensive care. The dashboard is being used to underpin monitoring.

Discussion took place regarding attendance for maths and English and strategies in place to improve it.

Q. How do you know that the T&L Coaches will have a more profound effect on teaching and learning now, than they did before? Are there any other mechanisms in place to supplement them?

A. The team of coaches have been refreshed and they are being deployed differently – they are no longer attached to a specific school. The management of observations is under the Director of Quality Improvement, whilst deployment of the team is under Lindsey Tanner (title). The team are therefore more involved in carrying out the observations and planning for improvement with staff. The Head of School is also now involved in the process of teaching observations and is involved in the meeting between the Coach and member of staff.

There is also more peer review, with 'Communities of Practice'. Most staff have peer review actions as part of their development plan. External peer review processes are logistically difficult to operate.

5.4 Success Rate Targets for 2015/16

The Deputy Principal presented the proposed Success Rate Targets for 2015/16.

Discussion took place regarding the attendance target of 86% and whether this was ambitious enough, but also how it related to previous years and other colleges. It was suggested that this be set with a view to a long term ambition of setting higher levels at 88%, which presented an improving direction of travel.

RESOLVED to approve the targets for 2015/16, as follows:

Overall Success Rates	86%
16-18 Overall Success Rates	87%

Level 1	80%
Level 2	82%
Level 3	91%
19+ Overall Success Rates	88%
Level 1	90%
Level 2	87%
Level 3	85%
Apprentices Success Rates	
Overall	75%
Timely	65%
HE Success Rates	90%
ATTENDANCE	
Full Time	86%
Part Time	86%

6. Area Review Discussion

The Principal and the Chair provided a verbal update regarding progress for the Area Review. It was noted that options had been considered at the Area Review Steering Group that had taken place on 14th December 2015. Key issues for the College were discussed including:

- The proposal to create an Apprenticeship Delivery Company;
- Development of an Institute of Technology and the College's potential role; and
- Shared services opportunities.

It was confirmed that the Principal and the Chair would continue to ensure Solihull College's role in the implementation of the eventual recommendations and particularly in relation to the on-going development of an Institute of Technology.

It was noted that further Steering Group meetings would take place on 27th January and 4th March 2016, as the timeframe for reporting for the Area Review had been extended. The meeting for Governors had been scheduled for Wednesday 27th January 2016 at 7pm and would take place at Joseph Chamberlain College.

Funding for subsequent recommendations was discussed and it was noted that, if all possible savings had been identified throughout the process, there may be an opportunity to bid for re-structuring funding to underpin the changes.

It was noted that the skills agenda would continue to be a priority of the Combined Authority, led by the LEP and that this would also impact on the shape of FE in the region in due course.

7. Learner Voice and Safeguarding

7.1 Learner Voice Activities – Autumn Term 2015

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the report and discussion took place regarding key areas highlighted in student surveys. It was noted that the Student Voice Executive Group was working well and high levels of participation was seen in the officer elections.

Q. Could there be more feedback to students about student voice involvement and impact?

A. The Hub is used to provide feedback – it was noted that the Hub may need to be promoted more to students, as many tended to use Moodle more.

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services explained that students had requested a Conference for Peace, as a response to some of the issues around extremism and this was being arranged for Spring 2016.

It was suggested that the names of the Student Voice Executive Officers be shared and that they be invited to a future meeting to meet governors. **ACTION.**

7.2 Safeguarding Report and Policy Review

The Governor with Special Interest for Safeguarding, Phil Mayhew, presented the item and expressed congratulations to the Student Services team for their contribution to safeguarding students. He explained that the PREVENT agenda had moved on and the College was involved in providing training to other institutions. It was noted that staffing levels in this area had increased, due to the increasing level of support required by students. There remained disparity between the level of referrals at the 2 campuses with lower numbers at Woodlands, although the College is now confident that there is consistency in the application of safeguarding processes and the awareness of staff around correct procedures. Discussion took place regarding the different nature of the 2 campuses and it was suggested that it would be useful to know the % of students at each campus in the data.

The Director of Student Services and Equality presented complex case studies to demonstrate the type of work, support and involvement of staff.

Discussion took place and it was confirmed that robust safeguarding processes were very important. External assurance was required to confirm that adequate processes are in place. It was noted that the Audit Committee would review the assurance plan for 2015/16 to ensure adequate assurance is obtained. **ACTION.**

8. Consumer Rights Act Compliance Update

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the report and provided assurance that many actions had already been taken to ensure compliance with the Consumer Rights Act. Further work was continuing to refine processes and information available to students to ensure clarity.

It was noted that approval had been obtained from BIS to change the College's trading name and to use the sensitive work 'University.'

RESOLVED to approve the change of the College's trading name to Solihull College and University Centre.

9. Governors' SAR and QIP

The Clerk explained that through the completion of questionnaires and 1:1 meetings with the Chair, there was substantial data to analyse for the Governors' SAR and QIP. The format proposed was confirmed and it was suggested to make it clear that the assessment included progress in 2015/16.

It was suggested that the HMI be asked to confirm that the format proposed would meet Ofsted expectations and requirements. **ACTION.**

10. Date of the Next Meeting: Tuesday 9th February 2016 at 6pm

The Governors' Development Day is scheduled for Saturday 30th January 2015.

11. Remuneration Committee – minutes of the meeting on 24th November 2015

This item was deemed confidential and the *Staff and Student Governors and members of EMT (except the Principal)* left during consideration of 11, 11.1 and 11.2.

