

SOLIHULL COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2016 AT THE BLOSSOMFIELD CAMPUS, starting at 6pm

PRESENT: John Bolt (Chair)
Scott Beasley (Student Governor)
John Callaghan (Principal)
Jane Coleman (*arrived 7pm*)
Mark Hayes (Staff Governor)
Joe Kelly
Summiya Khan (Student Governor)
Lucy Lee
Phil Mayhew
Alex Palethorpe
Geraldine Swanton

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Stan Baldwin and Heather Evans (Vice Principal Finance).

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th July 2016 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2016 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

3.1 Timetabling Report

The Deputy Principal presented the report and the timetabling protocols that set out a way of addressing issues as well as ensuring efficient utilisation of rooms.

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that timetabling underpinned good attendance and student engagement, so it was important to ensure it was as effective as possible.

Q. How are the protocols working on the ground?

A. The Staff Governor explained that it was working, but noted that timetables are inevitably difficult to get right for all. Building maths and English in between vocational subjects has had a good impact.

It was noted that timetables were continuing to be reviewed and any isolated cases were being resolved, as appropriate.

Q. What will happen if teachers change?

A. Where teachers change or where there is sickness there can be difficulties with timetabling,

however, this is very small scale and changes are kept to a minimum.

4. Collaborative Activities

4.1 Apprenticeship Organisation and Institute of Technology

4.1.1 Apprenticeship Organisation (AppOrg):

The Principal presented the report and explained that the AppOrg was being developed in collaboration with Birmingham Metropolitan and South and City (& Bournville) Colleges. It was anticipated that the colleges working together would be able to deal with capacity issues from the levy. The base for the AppOrg would be at Solihull College.

Companies are beginning to appreciate the need to engage with this and it is hoped that this will ensure good numbers of students from local large public sector organisations undertaking apprenticeships. New frameworks are being devised for new types of roles in the public sector, particularly in the NHS, ie practice manager qualification. A core delivery will be agreed between the colleges where certain subjects are replicated, but with specific subject areas, for example, engineering, individual colleges will take the lead and this will be agreed in advance, with profits being shared equally.

There will be an investment by each college of £150k each year for 3 years, however, it is anticipated that there will be surpluses from year 2. Delivery models are being reviewed and best practice from the private sector being incorporated, as appropriate. An Account Director would be appointed shortly (at the cost of Solihull College, in the first instance, until the AppOrg is set up) to start to work with employers.

The Principal confirmed that legal advice would be sought for the Corporation prior to the legal entity being agreed and it would be in line with the requirements of the Corporation's legal status.

Q. It is important that all partners commit to the project and work together – how likely is this?

A. The levy is the key change and from May 2017 companies will have money taken away by HMRC if they don't use it for apprenticeships. There could be capacity issues, as some of the organisations are large and will potentially have large budgets for apprenticeships and it may be difficult for one college to facilitate this. However, it is extremely important for the colleges to make this work or it is possible that private sector training providers could step in. The project has risks, but it is also key to ensuring FE success in apprenticeship provision.

Q. Decision making process about the organisation?

A. Failure, risks, staff. Government policy does have a habit of changing – if too many eggs in the basket then exposure can be a risk. There will be a full report in due course and a separate risk register for the AppOrg and the IoT.

The title suggested for the AppOrg was Skills Central (subject to no intellectual property issues being identified).

The Deputy Principal explained that the ESF project bid currently being explored would provide the initial £150k and be match funded, which would provide additional funds to support SMEs through the AppOrg.

Q. Would Solihull College be taking on the costs of the other colleges?

A. Yes, initially, but a clear agreement would be required to manage any potential risks.

4.1.2 Institute of Technology:

The Principal explained that the full nature of Institutes of Technology was still not complete. They had been Nick Boles' principal policies and now that he was no longer Minister of State for Skills it was uncertain whether they would continue to be pursued, however, the current policy

remained in place. Further clarity may be obtained after the Autumn Statement on 20th November 2016.

The College would continue to work with the partner colleges (BMet and South and City) and 4 local HEIS as it was important to be part of any development in the locality. The College's key priority was to protect and promote College's STEM provision and at Woodlands, in particular. The main areas of development seemed to be vocational routes to degree level and above qualifications in advanced manufacturing and engineering. The IoT project group was currently researching the potential offer with a clear curriculum map and progression routes, using the current provider network to avoid potential duplication of provision and funding. The protocol proposal had been submitted to the government for consideration.

Q. Does industry want an IOT?

A. It is a government initiative and colleges have been asked to get employers interested. Generally large employers are already involved in education provision, ie Jaguar Land Rover work with Warwick University and the new UTC.

Q. BREXIT – does it affect anything?

A. Part of this is to prepare for BREXIT – it may be necessary to train young people better if there isn't the current level of immigration from Europe.

Shared Services – the partner colleges had agreed not to pursue shared services.

4.2 Bids and Projects – ESF Project Bids

The Deputy Principal presented the report and focused on the ESF project bids. There had been £12m funding available, however, the College had been unable to take advantage of it. The only viable project was Business Elevator. It had been hoped that one of the projects would have enabled the College to reinstate the unemployed offer. However, this had not been possible. A recent circular had been received confirming continuation of ESF funding at the current time, so it may be possible to obtain further funding in due course. The bid for the Business Elevator project was submitted on 30th September 2016.

5. Student Numbers: Recruitment 2016/17 Initial Indications

The Deputy Principal presented recruitment data for 2016/17. Trends suggest that increased numbers in 2014/15 may have been an anomaly probably based on the opening of the new buildings at Woodlands. Overall recruitment at 3rd October 2016 was in the region of 3,600 students, so recruitment was likely to be similar to 2015/16 figures.

Animal and Land Management – discussion took place about attracting more students and whether making career opportunity information more available would have any impact.

Q. Are there as many jobs available in this area as there were 4 years ago?

A. There are probably more jobs than there were 4 years ago. Applications have increased, so interest was high, but last year they did not convert into entrants. The industry is very healthy. Quite a few potential students that were contacted said that they stayed on at school to do A levels.

Discussion took place about the use of social media and marketing and what resources may be needed to increase use of social media.

It was confirmed that there would be a marketing briefing for governors in the Spring term to explain the approaches being used by the College to attract students and to respond to the training need identified through the governors' skills audit. **ACTION**

Data from 2014 regarding study destinations for Solihull and Birmingham students was noted.

The 2015 data would be available in due course and would be shared with governors, as appropriate.

Detailed discussion took place regarding trends relating to recruitment for certain subject areas, competition from sixth forms and the focus of school education for specific subjects. It was noted that recruitment information informed curriculum direction, to some extent.

Progression between levels and subsidiary progression had improved and increases and decreases in relation to feeder schools were noted.

6. **Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy Review and Annual Summary Report**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services explained that normally the Director of Student Services would present with him to explain referrals and case studies from the previous academic year, however, she was unable to attend this meeting. This would be held over to a future meeting. **ACTION.**

Keeping Children Safe in Education – new guidance had been introduced on 5th September 2016. The Vice Principal HR and Student Services explained that the guidance had been incorporated into the Safeguarding Policy, but to a large extent most of the new elements were already part of college processes.

It is a statutory requirement that governors read and understand the guidance, particularly Parts 1 and 2. Managers had been asked to disseminate the guidance to their staff during staff meetings, so that records would be held to show that staff had been briefed. Other staff groups would also be targeted, to ensure all staff were aware and engaged in safeguarding procedures.

The guidance stresses increased autonomy for individuals to be able to refer directly to external agencies and this would be the case if there was not a senior member of staff available or in exceptional circumstances, however, normally referrals would be through the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) process in place.

Q. What is the % of LDD in the college and are they at higher risk of safeguarding issues?

A. There is about 20% LDD (inc. self-declared) in the College and they are significantly more at risk.

Q. Have there been any allegations against staff?

A. Not in terms of a safeguarding referral. One allegation was referred on, but was not in relation to a young person. It was not a significant safeguarding issue.

PREVENT – it was noted that work had been done around staff training on PREVENT and lately in relation to delivery of tutorials and raising students' awareness of radicalisation.

Q. What are you doing about external speakers?

A. A policy is in place to manage the process for having external speakers. An approval process is in place and is reinforced with CMT.

Q. Have you turned any speakers away?

A. Not so far. It is important to uphold the principal of freedom of speech, whilst ensuring safeguarding. It was noted that there was a code of practice for allowing speakers freedom of speech. It was noted that it was also important to oversee speakers when premises are hired by external customers.

The Vice Principal HR and Student Service noted that governors had requested an audit on safeguarding/PREVENT in 2015/16 – this audit had taken place and provided assurance. Discussion took place about whether a further audit was required in 2016/17. The Safeguarding

Governor explained that he had met with the Vice Principal HR and Student Services and Director of Student Services to review assurance processes in place and that they were of a high level negating the need for an internal audit in 2016/17.

British Values:

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment gave a briefing in response to requests at the Governors' Development Day about British Values. It was noted that the tutorial process provided a range of units relating to PREVENT/radicalisation and British Values. It was noted that second year students also had tutorials that reinforced the messages about radicalisation and British Values, explored in the first year.

It was noted that there was an event planned in November to explore issues around the PREVENT agenda: Playhouse Theatre – Tapestry – Prevent Play – 7th & 8th November 2016. There would be 4 performances over the 2 days. There would be a further performance on 16th November at Woodlands. Further details would be circulated and governors were welcome to attend. **ACTION.**

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment demonstrated the British Values tutorial for governors.

RESOLVED to approve the Safeguarding Policy as set out.

7. **Projected Position Statement 2015/16**

The Deputy Principal presented the report and the contents were noted.

8. **Human Resources Annual Report**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the report and explained how staffing costs had been reduced in 2015/16, with no adverse impact on teaching and learning. He explained that 39 members of staff had taken voluntary severance, of which 32 were teaching members of staff. Generally, teaching staff were from areas of curriculum in decline. There had also been 9 compulsory redundancies in 2015/16.

It was noted that in a recent inspection Ofsted had criticised a college for focussing too much on finances, so it was important to be clear that the reduction in costs has not had an adverse effect on quality.

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services referred to the consultation exercise that took place under TULCRA section 188 in May-July. This had been a successful exercise and the required savings had been achieved with no compulsory redundancies. It had originally been proposed that two areas, Teacher Training and World English would close, but, after constructive consultation, it was agreed that the provision could be scaled down and provide a satisfactory contribution. In relation to Teacher Training, it had been identified that the student concerns had been around BCU's design of the PGCE curriculum and this was not running in 2016/17.

Q. What does the future look like in terms of any further reductions?

A. Just going through the budget in relation to recruitment – this will highlight any areas of over or under staffing and this will be addressed in relation to needs.

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services confirmed that the College's target for increasing numbers of BAME staff had reached the target of 15%. This target would now be increased to 17%.

Q. Were there any shocks in relation to requests for severance/redundancy during 2015/16?

A. Staff are aware of the indicators of decline: if recruitment is reducing and timetable/teaching

hours are less it is clear that changes will be required, so generally there was little shock. A few people were shocked, but the process was very transparent and supportive. The viability of programmes is reviewed twice per year and trends and data shared with the Assistant Principals and staff, as appropriate.

Discussion took place regarding any long term absence trends.

Gender and BAME pay gap reporting would be interesting. The Vice Principal HR and Student Services would build this information into the annual Equality & Diversity report. **ACTION.**

A report on CPD and staff training was requested to show teaching and other qualifications being studied/achieved by staff. **ACTION.**

9. Sub-contracting Annual Report and Update 2016/17

The Deputy Principal presented the report and explained that sub-contracting was likely to end in May 2017, due to the changes to apprenticeship funding. She confirmed that sub-contracting would continue with Auctus as the quality of provision was now good. CIPP (Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals) provision was now under review in terms of quality and the outcome of investigations would be reported in due course.

The Chair's Action dated 6th September 2016 approving the Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy was ratified.

It was agreed that a cash retained % would be included in the next report. **ACTION.**

10. International Strategy Update

The contents of the International Strategy report were noted and it was also noted that the requirement to have an annual international strategy report was contained in the Financial Regulations, even if the strategy was not to proactively engage in international marketing activities.

It was agreed to remove the following statement from the College's Public Value Statement 'Develop and promote opportunities internationally to promote the College and the locality.'

11. Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting on 26th September 2016 and matters arising

11.1 Membership Report

The Chair presented the report

The Chair explained that Paul Large had expressed an interest in becoming a governor. He explained that Mr Large had had senior management experience at Oxford Brookes University for 20 years, and as Registrar for the last 7 years. He was now working part time at the University on a specific project relating to sale of property and infrastructure investment, so any conflicts of interests would be minimised. It was noted that Mr Large was a qualified accountant (CIPFA) and had had extensive experience in education management in the FE and HE sectors at senior levels. He had worked for the FEFC and been involved in HE provision in FE through Oxford Brookes for some years. It was noted that the Chair and Principal would meet with Mr Large to discuss the role further following his appointment.

Each governor left the meeting during consideration of their appointment, as listed below.

RESOLVED to approve the following appointments:

Alex Palethorpe as Chair of the Audit Committee and

as a member and Vice-Chair of the Remuneration Committee with effect from 1st October 2016.

Lucy Lee as a member of the Audit Committee with effect from 1st October 2016.

Geraldine Swanton as a member of the Audit Committee with effect from 1st October 2016.

Joe Kelly as the Governor with Special Interest for Finance with effect from 1st October 2016.

Paul Large as a full Governor to the Corporation with effect from 3rd October 2016 for a term of office of 4 years.

11.2 Governors' Handbook 2016/17

The Chair presented the Governors' Handbook for 2016/17 and it was noted that RSM would be asked to review the content to ensure it is appropriate, given the minor changes to the Instrument and Articles of Government that had taken place during recent years. Any issues raised would be reported back to the Corporation, as appropriate.

RESOLVED to approve the contents of the Governors' Handbook 2016/17.

11.3 Appointment Process for Vacancies

The contents of the Appointment Process report were noted.

12. Declarations of Interest for Governors and Management Representations for 2016

The contents of the Declarations of Interest for Governors and Management Representations for 2016 Report were noted.

13. REGULAR UPDATES FOR INFORMATION

13.1 Tender Update – none to report

13.2 Use of College Seal – the seal had not been used since the last meeting.

14. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 2nd November 2016 at 5.30pm at the Woodlands Campus – the first half an hour will be a presentation from staff/students from the Woodlands Campus.

The meeting ended at 8.25pm.

Signed: J R Boer Date: 2/11/16.