

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2016 AT THE WOODLANDS CAMPUS, starting at 5.30pm**

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

**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)  
Sue McGregor (Director of Higher Education and Curriculum Innovation)

Student Presentations:

Fatima Ramji – Assistant Principal STEM Faculty  
Mick Nicholl – Head of School Engineering and Construction

Students:

- Samantha Atkins (Engineering Level 2 Diploma)
- George Lewis (Engineering Maintenance Level 3 Diploma)
- Frank Matthews (Aeronautical Engineering Level 3 Extended)
- George Harris (Aeronautical Engineering Level 3 Extended)

**Student Presentations:**

The Head of School Engineering and Construction gave a presentation about Engineering and Aeronautical provision and the students gave insight into their experience of studying at Woodlands. Discussion took place regarding student use of equipment and their individual engagement with their studies.

The following areas were discussed:

- Reasons for choosing Solihull College and University Centre and/or engineering – the students explained that they had left school with very few qualifications and this was an opportunity to obtain qualifications, doing something hands-on that they really enjoyed. Some of the students were studying maths GCSE. They explained that they had chosen a vocational course rather than A'levels because they felt that they preferred coursework to exams and therefore BTEC would be more appropriate to their learning styles;
- Experiences on course – use of equipment for engineering and aeronautical courses was discussed and it was noted that students on the more advanced programmes were exposed to the more specialist equipment, but that new students on level 2 programmes were aware of and introduced to the type of equipment and experiences that would take place when progressing;
- Work experience opportunities for students – it was noted that students had had opportunities to undertake work experience at companies including National Grid, Jaguar Land Rover, MGF and Rolls Royce;
- Prior knowledge of the College – it was noted that students had visited the College and been made aware of the equipment and facilities available. Lack of prior knowledge of the College often led to a

change of programme or progression in different directions than anticipated;

- Health and safety – discussion took place regarding the PPA requirements when working with machinery;
- Progression aspirations - students were asked about their future aspirations and it was noted that they were hoping to obtain a degree or HND, either at the College or at a university (Leicester or Loughborough). Some of the students were also considering higher level apprenticeships;
- Travel to the Woodlands campus – the students were asked where they travelled from and their experience of using public transport to get to College and generally this was a positive experience.

*The students and staff were thanked and they left the meeting.*

## 1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Joe Kelly and Alex Palethorpe.

## 2. **Declarations of Interest**

The following interests were noted:

- Jane Coleman – governor at the WMG Academy for Young Engineers, Coventry since September 2016. This would be recorded in the Membership and Declarations Report.
- Lucy Lee – employee at Solihull MBC, declaration in relation to Item 10 and Simon Digby land.
- Geraldine Swanton – employee of Shakespeare Martineau and declaration in relation to Item 8 Apprenticeship Organisation.

## 3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

### **3.1 Achievement Update**

The Deputy Principal explained that this update would be provided under Item 5 SAR Validation.

### **3.2 Dashboard: Recruitment Update**

The Deputy Principal gave a presentation regarding recruitment for 2016/17 and provided specific performance updates in relation to HE recruitment.

Q. How is recruitment in terms of FTEs?

A. Mainly constant – there are some slight reductions in Oxford Brookes numbers, but then increases in other areas.

Discussion took place regarding Land Based and the Sports offer and the need to review both to ensure that they were offering something unique and different from other colleges. Where curriculum was common it was becoming more difficult to recruit, for example, business. Niche areas were recruiting well, eg, biosciences, engineering and aeronautical, although this tended to be mainly at the Woodlands campus and therefore could indicate a potential for decline at Blossomfield. It was noted that the growth at Woodlands was having an impact on parking on campus and in the surrounding roads. It was noted that the green transport strategy needed to be promoted more at the Woodlands campus. The Vice Principal Finance explained that a group of students, supervised by the Facilities Manager, were undertaking a project to review parking and encourage alternative travel plans. She confirmed that there had been issues raised by local residents and that it was important to find solutions, however, providing additional parking spaces was not possible as there was no space on the campus.

The Principal explained that computing and art were looking at new provision opportunities and that there were potential growth areas in IT security.

It was suggested that further analysis relating to recruitment trends would be useful – ideally covering the actual impact of competition, improved facilities and whether there are more subtle factors affecting increases and decreases in recruitment. This type of information would be useful with investment decisions and marketing plans for the future.

Overall HE recruitment had been good given increases in competition and changes in HE policy. Work-based provision remained attractive to students. The potential effect on recruitment of Brexit, higher level apprenticeships, the Teaching Excellence Framework and universities' future plans for supported courses was discussed.

#### **4. Higher Education**

##### **4.1 Higher Education Report**

The Director of Higher Education and Curriculum Innovation presented the report and explained that the date for the next QAA review was 2021. She explained the process in relation to the Teaching Excellence Framework and how this might impact on the College. The key indicators that would be taken into consideration were noted and those which were being developed, ie Learning Gain and subject data.

The Deputy Principal explained that QAA provided a lot of assurance of good quality processes, however, on-going it would be necessary to devise a plan to ensure continual review and improvement, particularly as HE scrutiny was increasing.

It was suggested that additional information be obtained from other colleges about how they were providing the required assurance. **ACTION.**

##### **4.2 HEFCE Annual Quality Assurance Return**

The Deputy Principal explained that the Higher Education Report provided the detailed assurance that underpinned the HEFCE Quality Assurance and Accountability Return that needed to be signed by the Accounting Officer, in his role as a Governor.

**RESOLVED** to approve the HEFCE Quality Assurance and Accountability Return and for the Accounting Officer to sign on behalf of the Corporation.

#### **5. SAR Validation and Quality Improvement Plan**

The Chair commented on the revised versions that had been circulated and it was noted that the changes were minor and did not change the data of the key messages of the SAR.

The Vice Principal Teaching and Learning presented the SAR for 2015/16 and the QIP for 2016/17. It was noted that further updating of the QIP would take place.

Q. The target for work experience/work-related experiences was 100%, but it does not seem to feature now?

A. The target was still 100% and would be included in the QIP and that work related experiences included a range of opportunities for students, including attendance at the Skills Show, employers coming to talk to students, etc.

Discussion took place regarding whether safeguarding should be identified as a key strength, but it was felt that it should be a given that safeguarding is strong. It is a key area and is clearly identified throughout the SAR.

The Deputy Principal provided an update on achievement for 2015/16 and discussion took place regarding adult provision.

It was suggested that achievement by demographics be an agenda item for a future Corporation meeting. **ACTION.**

**RESOLVED** to approve the College Self-Assessment Report for 2015/16.

**6. Quality of Teaching and Learning Update**

The Vice Principal Teaching and Learning presented the report and explained that observations were prioritised according to a risk-based approach and 3 schools had been observed so far in 2016/17, as well as English and maths provision attached to each of these schools. It was noted that issues consistent with 2015/16 were present, including, attendance and punctuality issues and ensuring stretch and challenge. Actions were being taken to address these issues.

**7. Dashboard: Staffing Quadrant**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the staffing quadrant of the dashboard and explained that overall the numbers of appraisals that had been completed were good. There was only one school where numbers were low and this was due to the appointment of a head of School for the latter part of the academic year. The new Head of School had only commenced employment with the College in September 2016 and was currently planning in appraisal appointments with staff.

**8. Strategic Partnership Developments - Apprenticeship Organisation (AppOrg) and Institute of Technology (IoT)**

The Principal presented the report and provided an update regarding progress towards setting up an Apprenticeship Organisation and taking part in an Institute of Technology.

**8.1 Apprenticeship Organisation:**

He explained that recommendations from many Area Reviews were now suggesting the setting up of AppOrgs. This was due to the desire by government for FE to be much more instrumental in the delivery of apprenticeships. He confirmed that the name of the AppOrg would be Skills Central Training (subject to legal confirmation) and discussion took place about whether this reflected fully what the company would be doing.

It was noted that 4 legal firms had been invited to quote to support the development and setting up of the AppOrg. They would be advising on legal and tax issues and would confirm that the Corporation was acting within its legal powers with regard to the setting up of the company and the legal structure that was adopted.

A business plan would be developed providing detailed information about the strategy and financial plan for the AppOrg and this would be available for the Corporation to approve in December 2016. Issues relating to the company linking to the College's mission and vision; appointment of directors; financial and quality monitoring, risks and liabilities and exit arrangements would be relayed via the business plan and legal advice.

It was noted that the Clerk had suggested setting up an Expert Group to go through the plan and proposals in more detail, however, it had been difficult to find a suitable date. It was therefore suggested that a section of the Corporation meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016 be devoted to full consideration of the AppOrg proposal prior to approval on 13<sup>th</sup> December.

The Principal confirmed that each college involved had confirmed in writing that they would contribute £150k per year for 3 years to the AppOrg.



Q. What will the company actually do?

A. It will have a core offer that it will deliver, which will largely be non-resource intensive programmes. Where the offer requires more specific input, ie aeronautical, engineering etc, each of the colleges will be identified as the delivery-college. The company will engage with SMEs to develop training plans. This is an efficient way of co-ordinating the delivery of apprenticeships.

The Principal confirmed that stakeholders, including the Combined Authority, Birmingham City Council, Solihull MBC and the Chamber of Commerce had been involved in development discussions.

Q. What will be the size of the company?

A. There will be about 15 members of staff, including ESF staff and assessors. Staff numbers will be determined by caseload.

Q. Will staff be seconded or newly appointed?

A. The advert will be both internal and external – it would be good to have a blend of new and current staff.

Q. Will the staff need workplace pensions?

A. Yes, pension advice is being sought.

The Principal explained that funding arrangements had recently been published, but the College was still awaiting publication of framework standards.

Q. What is the Governors' role?

A. Governors will be required to give approval for the AppOrg following adequate information provision, including exit arrangements (ie, via a shareholders agreement) and subsequent liabilities, related risks etc. A separate risk register will be established for the AppOrg and shared with Governors.

Q. What will be the financial arrangements?

A. The AppOrg will have its own bank account. Advice will be sought regarding funding and how interaction between the 3 colleges will work in practice.

Governors were asked whether they would be interested in being involved in discussions about the AppOrg and whether a governor may wish to take this on as a special interest area.  
**ACTION.**

## **8.2 Institute of Technology**

The Principal explained that the IoT was being led by BMet. It was unlikely that this would progress in the same way as the AppOrg. It would not require funding by the College, but rather students would be directed to the College for specific areas of provision. It was hoped that it would be launched by September 2017. It was noted that the interim research report was not yet available.

## **9. Tuition Fee Policies**

### **9.1 Tuition Fee Policy (excluding HE)**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and explained that 2 policies had been created to ensure that the HE policy was more accessible for HE students. Minor amendments had been made to the policies.

Q. Are fees lower in the north of the borough?

A. Community learning course fees are lower – fees are based on location and students can travel if they wish to.

## **9.2 HE Tuition Fee Policy**

The HE Tuition Fee Policy was presented.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Tuition Fee Policy (excluding HE) and the HE Tuition Fee Policy, as set out.

### **10. Property Report**

This item was deemed confidential

### **11. Expenses Policy Review**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the Expenses Policy and explained that no changes had been made during the bi-annual review.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Expenses Policy, as set out.

### **12. Bids and Projects**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the Bids and Projects report and explained that the ESF Project, Business Elevator was linked to the AppOrg. Following approval the DWP would require that the contract be signed this term.

Q. How much funding has the College received from the LEP?

A. The College has received considerable funding and is one of the only colleges in the region to benefit from LEP funding. The Vice Principal Finance would provide further detail of actual funding. **ACTION.**

**RESOLVED** to approve the ESF Project – Business Elevator with a total project cost of £2,158,593 (with contribution of £419,766 over 3 years for Solihull College).

### **13. Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and related matters**

#### **13.1 Risk Management Annual Report 2015/16**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the Risk Management Annual Report for 2015/16.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Risk Management Annual Report 2015/16

#### **13.2 Risk Management Strategy 2016/17**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the Risk Management Strategy for 2016/17 and explained that a minor amendment had been recommended by Audit Committee in relation to clarification of the internal monitoring process of the risk register and this had been amended.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Risk Management Strategy 2016/17

#### **13.3 Strategic Risk Register 2016/17**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the Strategic Risk Register for 2016/17.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Strategic Risk Register 2016/17.

**13.4 Health and Safety Annual Report 2015/16**

This item was deferred to the next Corporation meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

**13.5 Insurance Annual Report 2015/16**

The contents of the Insurance Annual Report for 2015/16 were noted.

**13.6 Regularity Audit**

The contents of the Regularity Audit for 2015/16 were noted.

**13.7 Draft Report of the Audit Committee and Principal to the Corporation**

The contents of the Draft Report of the Audit Committee and Principal for 2015/16 were noted.

**14. Governance Items**

**14.1 Maths Expert Group**

The Clerk explained that Governors had been invited to be members of the Maths Expert Group and that suggested dates had been circulated.

**14.2 Financial Statements and Financial Regulations Review Group**

The Clerk explained that a group to review the financial statements and financial regulations in detail, before being presented to Corporation, would meet on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 4pm. All Governors were welcome to attend.

**15. REGULAR UPDATES FOR INFORMATION**

**15.1 Tender Update – confidential**

The contents of the Tender Update were noted.

**15.2 Assessment Malpractice Policy**

The contents of the Assessment Malpractice Policy were noted.

**15.3 Membership and Declarations of Interest Report**

The contents of the Membership and Declarations of Interest Report were noted.

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

**15. Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting would take place on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 5.30pm

The meeting ended at 8.50pm.

Signed: J BOLA Date: 28 Nov. 2016.