

SOLIHULL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CENTRE

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 28TH NOVEMBER 2016 AT THE BLOSSOMFIELD CAMPUS, starting at 7pm

PRESENT: John Bolt (Chair)
Stan Baldwin
Scott Beasley
John Callaghan (Principal)
Mark Hayes
Joe Kelly
Lucy Lee
Phi 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)
Sian Moxon (College Legal Counsel) – *Item 2.1 only*

1. **Membership**

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Jane Coleman.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd November 2016 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2016 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair, subject to a minor change relating to attendees – Joe Kelly had sent apologies and Stan Baldwin had attended.

2.1 TGH Update

This item was deemed confidential due to commercial sensitivity.

3. **Strategic Partnerships: Apprenticeship Organisation**

The Chair welcomed Sian Moxon, the College Legal Counsel and she was thanked for attending.

3.1 Apprenticeship Organisation (AppOrg)

The Principal presented the report and business plan relating to the AppOrg proposal. He explained that the apprenticeship levy would be introduced in April 2017 and the government were keen for colleges to be able to deliver a larger market share than the current situation. Collaboration was encouraged and the LEP endorsed the partnership proposals between South and City, BMet and Solihull colleges.

Legal advice had been received from Eversheds and the report had been circulated. The Principal confirmed that Eversheds had confirmed the Corporations ability to set up a company, as outlined in the business plan. Clarity was still being sought regarding the business model in

relation to VAT and procurement.

It was noted that governors had submitted questions which were answered through a presentation and further discussion took place. The Principal explained that the AppOrg could provide a good income stream, that might be able to underpin the financial decline after year 2.

Corporations at the 3 colleges would be considering the proposal and approving it in early December.

Q. The legal basis seemed appropriate. However, the business case and how this would compete with private provider required further clarity, as private providers had been more successful to date in delivering apprenticeships.

A. Private providers have been successful, but they tend to focus on niche areas. The business plan for the colleges would aim to work with public sector type organisations including hospitals, universities and councils. It was anticipated that these organisations would welcome being able to work with one company that could provide a wide range of accredited courses and levels of qualification for their employees. It was hoped that there would be a level trust between similar organisations. Further, a number of private providers were being to receive poor Ofsted outcomes, so there was a potential issue around quality, whereas the colleges have a full quality and safeguarding infrastructure that can be drawn upon.

Q. Are all 3 colleges equal or is Solihull College bringing the others along?

A. Solihull College was well placed to take the lead as the recent Ofsted inspection had been 'good'. Further, the College can offer a range of HE courses, which provide more breadth of offer than could be offered by the other 2 colleges alone. However, the other colleges do offer other opportunities for example South and City already work with the NHS, which could be advantageous for the group.

Q. It seems that this is an early response to the levy, but is also a bit of a leap of faith.

A. Budgets are going to decline and the colleges have a very small share of the apprenticeship market. It is an opportunity that, if successful, could ensure increased funding for the College and ensure growth in market-share, which would be great for FE in the area. The reason for setting up a private company is to ensure the ability to respond quickly, but also to be able to compete in the current market.

Q. Whilst the direction of travel is supported and it seems that the colleges are responding to the technical issues it is really important that there is a good understanding of the current market and how those in it survive and thrive to ensure the colleges model can compete effectively.

A. Work is being done on cost-based analysis, although, the aim is not to compete in the current market, rather tap into the new market that will be created by the levy and particularly in relation to public sector type organisations. It will be ensured that the AppOrg is as efficient and effective as public providers and a piece of work has been commissioned to identify 'fleet of foot' mechanisms. Positioning of the AppOrg in the market would be clearly stated. It was suggested that the levy may reduce the cost-sensitivity of purchasing apprenticeships and quality would increasingly become an issue for employers.

Q. What would induce a company to choose the AppOrg over other organisations?

A. Universities don't necessarily have the infrastructure to offer apprenticeships, so colleges are likely to be well placed. Some employers already have relationships with the 3 colleges, so may wish to continue these relationships. Students already choose the college to undertake HNC/Ds. Many students who choose HNC/Ds are at a point in their careers when they choose the College for a range of reasons including additional support.

Q. Will the unions have any issues about contracts given by the AppOrg?

A. Legal advice was being sought to ensure equal pay issues are addressed. Many staff will remain employed by the College on current contracts. Assessors employed via the AppOrg will agree to contracts, as appropriate.

The scale of the potential increases in apprenticeships was discussed and it was noted that from May 2017 this would also include degree level apprenticeships.

It was confirmed that the additional AppOrg meeting scheduled for Wednesday 30th October 2016 would not be required, although, Governors were asked to confirm whether they required any further information prior to approval of the AppOrg at the next meeting.

3.2 Apprenticeship Levy Briefing

The Apprenticeship Levy briefing document had been circulated and further information would be available at the next meeting, as required. The Chair explained that it would be useful to have a briefing for him and any interested governors about the levy.

4. Ofsted Outcome Update

Confidential until Ofsted report published (Dec 16).

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment gave a presentation relating to the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection that took place week commencing 7th November 2016. She explained that the draft report had been received and was being checked for accuracy. It was noted that of 12 college inspections since September 2016 only the Solihull outcome had been an improvement in grade, with 8 reducing in grade and 5 maintaining their previous grade. This reinforced the achievement of the College in achieving good in all aspects.

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that the inspectors had been very impressed with the College's investment in STEM subjects and that the inspection had been collaborative and useful for College staff. The Quality Improvement Plan would now be reviewed and updated, in light of areas of improvement identified during the inspection.

Discussion took place regarding the Ofsted outcome.

Congratulations were expressed to all staff involved in the process and particularly in relation to Beth Selwood and her team.

The Principal also congratulated the staff and paid tribute to the great contribution by students, who spoke highly of the College and the support they had received from staff whilst studying. The positive comments from the students were recorded throughout the draft report.

5. Health and Safety Update

5.1 Health and Safety Annual Report 2015/16 – Assurance Presentation

The Vice Principal Finance presented the annual report for 2015/16 and explained that it provided good assurance in relation to health and safety procedures at the College. She explained that there were a low level of accidents and external assurance from UMAL (College insurers), the school advisor report and from Ofsted.

It was noted that the level of on-line training was exceptional and managers should continue to encourage staff to do the training.

Q. How often are risk assessments carried out?

A. Annually or as required, for example, for trips.

5.2 Health, Safety and Safeguarding Autumn 2016 Report

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report for the Autumn term 2016 and noted that accident statistics to October were similar to the previous year, whereas safeguarding referrals seemed to be lower.

Discussion took place regarding on-line training and it was noted that modules were not compulsory. A number of staff had chosen to take the stress module and this had helped some to identify and address how stress was being experienced. It was noted that the recent road traffic incident at the College had been dealt with very quickly and sensitively by management.

6. Dashboard

6.1 Funding

The Deputy Principal presented the student numbers for 2016/17 and noted that less students (16-18 year olds) had been retained than anticipated and numbers were lower than in 2015 by about 200. FT HE numbers were also lower than target.

Clarity was sought regarding the targets on the dashboard.

It was noted that a report on apprenticeship and adult student numbers would be produced at a future meeting. **ACTION.**

6.2 Finance – PMR 2016 and Budget 2016/17 Update

This item was deemed confidential and the Staff and Student Governors were asked to leave the meeting, due to commercial sensitivity and implications for staff.

7. Solihull College Foundation Trust Trustees' Report and Financial Statement for year ended 31st July 2016

The contents of the Solihull College Foundation Trust Trustees' Report and Financial Statement for year ended 31st July 2016 were noted and clarity was sought regarding the purpose of the Foundation Trust and implications for the future.

8. REGULAR UPDATES FOR INFORMATION

8.1 Bids and Projects Update

The contents of the Bids and Project Report were noted.

8.2 Tender Group Updates – none to report.

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

9. SFA Financial Health Letter and Dashboard dated 11th November 2016

The contents of the letter from the SFA were noted and that the financial health of the college had been identified as outstanding.

10. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 13th December 2016 at 5.30pm, with student/staff presentation and Governors' Development Session: Saturday 21st January 2017 9.30-1pm.

11. GOVERNANCE STANDING ITEMS

11.1 Membership

The contents of the Membership Report were noted.

11.2 Register of Interests for Governors and members of EMT

The contents of the Register of Interest were noted and governors were asked to notify the Clerk if any changes were required.

11.3 Training Log

The contents of the Training Log were noted.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm.

Signed: J R Boy Date: 13 Dec 2016.