

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2016 AT THE BLOSSOMFIELD CAMPUS

PRESENT: John Bolt (Chair)
Stan Baldwin
Scott Beasley
John Callaghan (Principal)
Jane Coleman
Mark Hayes
Joe Kelly
Summiya Khan
Paul Large
Lucy Lee
Phi Mayhew
Alex Palethorpe

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) – *Item 1 and 5 only*

Student Voice Executive Representatives (*Item 1 only*):
Hamzah Rattigan (President)
Adam King (Vice President)

Paul Large, new governor, was welcomed to his first meeting and introductions were made.

1. Student Executive and Learner Voice Presentation

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services provided a learner voice update and explained that the Ofsted student survey had provided student feedback during the Autumn term. The Student Conference had also been rescheduled, due to the Ofsted visit. He explained that 346 students had taken part in the Ofsted survey and outcomes had been positive and reflected responses in College surveys. It was noted that 92% of students would recommend the College to others.

Q. Are there any benchmarks for the student Ofsted survey?

A. It was felt that there were not specific benchmarks, but it may be possible to compare against other college surveys. The Deputy Principal explained that she would research benchmarks for Ofsted survey results. **ACTION**

The Student Voice Executive representatives were welcomed.

The President provided a commentary on the work of the Student Voice Executive in 2016/17. He confirmed that there had been good student engagement. It was noted that the Executive met regularly with managers on a range of issues. 300 students had taken place in the multi-faith survey and the outcomes confirmed that the College was inclusive and dealt with any issues effectively. It was noted that the Student Executive had arranged a visit to Parliament to lobby ministers about student funding and cuts in education.

The Vice President explained that College surveys had been completed by students at the Student Conference held on 12th December. Data was collected relating to achievement of goals and potential barriers to learning. It was noted that focus groups may be set up to further explore this data.

Q. When issues are raised with management do students get an effective response?

A. Yes, responses are good. A number of issues raised have been addressed adequately and where it is not possible to make changes feedback is always provided to explain.

Q. What is making students get more involved?

A. Enrichment is enabling students to get more involved. There are more trips that students want to go on. The President and Vice President are proactive about student engagement.

Q. How much time do the President and Vice President spend on Executive duties and does this impact on studying?

A. Both confirmed that it was possible to fit in the time spent on executive duties alongside study. Executive duties were flexible and fitted around study and assignment deadlines. The President explained that he was paid for 10 hours per week for his executive duties, but that these were flexible and manageable alongside studies.

Discussion took place about the election process for the executive roles and it was confirmed that a full election had taken place, with campaigning etc. It was noted that it was good preparation for University.

The Student Voice Executive President and Vice President were thanked and they left the meeting.

2. **Membership**

2.1 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Geraldine Swanton.

2.2 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no new declarations of interest.

3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th November 2016 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2016 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

3.1 Adult Education Budget Shortfall 2016/17 – in line with the discussion relating to the need to increase adult education income a tender for sub-contractors had been agreed through Chair's Action. The Chair's Action was ratified and the Clerk confirmed that it would be distributed to all governors. **ACTION.**

4. **Strategic Partnerships: Apprenticeship Organisation**

The Principal provided an update relating to the Apprenticeship Organisation. He confirmed that clarity had been received regarding procurement and tax arrangements.

Q. What are the procurement issues that had been clarified?

A. It relates to procurement rules with regard to the award of contracts, as the AppOrg is aimed at servicing the 3 colleges.

The Principal explained that one of the colleges in the partnership had requested an extension for approval until mid-January 2017. Details were provided relating to the need for the extension. Dependent on the outcome of discussions, the business and financial plans would be re-visited early in the New Year and presented to governors. Governors were invited to set up an expert group or it was noted that this could be considered at the Governors' Development Day on 21st January 2017.

Discussion took place regarding the importance of complying with area review recommendations. It was noted that the transition grant had funded the project to date, so no direct costs had been incurred by the College.

Detailed discussion took place regarding the consequences of potential changes to the delivery model, but it was noted that the market had not changed and there would still be good opportunities for the colleges involved.

The Chair suggested that the Principals and Chairs of the colleges meet in the New Year to discuss progression of the AppOrg. **ACTION.**

It was **agreed** in principle to pursue the AppOrg with only 2 colleges involved, but that approval would be subject to submission of revised business and financial plans.

5. **Safeguarding Update**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services and the Director of Student Services and Equality presented the Safeguarding Report and provided examples of cases dealt with by the College, to demonstrate the diversity and seriousness of the issues that occur. The Director of Student Services and Equality described cases relating to child exploitation and PREVENT.

Q. There seems to be more complex and difficult cases in 2015/16 than in previous years. Are there any trends emerging?

A. No trends have been noticed, however, it would be possible to carry out some comparable analysis to review this in more detail.

Q. At what point does the College decide the case ceases to be in their jurisdiction?

A. The main College issue is that the person can function as a student, however, support is provided, as appropriate to support young people to either get back on track with studies or to take a break from College. The College works in a multi-agency way to support young people, as required, so it isn't always straight-forward in terms of the end of the College's involvement. Ultimately, the key issue is the young person's welfare.

It was noted that Ofsted had not raised any issues regarding safeguarding and thanks were expressed to the Director of Student Services and Equality and her team for providing such an excellent service to students.

Q. At the AOC conference student mental health had been raised as a growing issue – how was the College addressing this?

A. There had been 46 mental health referrals in 2015/16. Numbers had been increasing since the recession, due to situational depression and family problems. It was noted that anxiety had become a major problem for young people. Additional workshops and support were planned from January 2017. The College had a triage-type approach, where students were seen by support officers initially and if more serious issues are presented, referred onto the College nurse and/or safeguarding officers, as appropriate.

Q. What support is provided by external agencies?

A. Once referred, services are good, particularly if a student is unable to cope or are a danger to themselves or others. The College operate a 'Fitness to Study' system, which provides assessment to ensure that the College can support a student appropriately to complete their studies.

Q. On the safeguarding report there were pre-16 students mentioned – who are these?

A. There are about 40-50 students under 16 who study a programme at the College. If issues are raised for pre-16 students then an investigation has to take place and Social Services are involved in that investigation.

The Director of Student Services and Equality was thanked and she left the meeting.

6. **Demographics – Achievement Gap Report**

The Deputy Principal presented the report identifying achievement gaps and trends and confirmed that Ofsted had provided assurances relating to potential issues.

Q. There seemed to be a lower number of black students undertaking apprenticeships.

A. This was a national picture – more black students aspire to go to university. It was anticipated that higher apprenticeships may have an impact.

Q. There seem to be a high number of students with autism – is this number increasing?

A. It is an expanding area of work and there is an increase in the number of students, however, it also shows multiple enrolments per student.

7. **Complaints Annual Report and Policy/Procedure Review**

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the report and confirmed that the overall number of complaints had increased in 2015/16. This may be due to more students being willing to submit complaints. It was noted that all complaints were investigated, but were not always upheld.

The number of complaints from September to December 2016 had decreased, particularly around course organisation and management. This was due to improvements that had been made in response to previous complaints received.

Q. What sort of complaints were there around enrolment/interviews?

A. They often related to queues during enrolment or mis-communication, but there was no particular trend identified in the data.

Q. Is there a systematic process for learning based on complaints received?

A. Lessons learned are recorded in the records kept about complaints. Where there were a number of issues raised in one area, this would require further exploration.

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the policy and procedure and noted that it had been fully reviewed prior to QAA, so no further changes were required.

RESOLVED to approve the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

8. **Report on Staff Development Activity**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services requested feedback on the Governors' requirements in relation to the Staff Development Report and it was noted that it would be useful to have a summary of expenditure on CPD.

Q. Does the College full or part fund training?

A. Largely part-funded, with a pay-back period should the employee leave the College, although Masters programmes for HE teachers are fully funded, with a longer payback period. There was a need for more HE teachers to have a Masters, as more top-up degrees were being delivered.

Q. Has the CPD budget changed year on year and how does it compare with other colleges?

A. The budget has reduced, but there is quite a lot of in-house training being delivered, so not necessarily less training provided. The Teaching and Learning Coaches deliver quite a lot of support for teaching staff, however, having the current and planned level of HE provision there is a need for on-going CPD investment for HE teachers.

Q. How do you balance the value of a person doing a Masters against a number of staff doing a

shorter, cheaper course?

A. CPD needs to be in line with College priorities and sometimes the answer is no for training requests. The budget is planned in advance in relation to areas of expenditure.

Q. How will the levy impact on the College?

A. There is a need to establish what frameworks are being developed. Standards are changing, so the College was currently reviewing the situation and would be planning the approach to apprenticeships when further information was available. It was anticipated that there would be a teaching framework and this may be useful for the College. The amount of the levy for the College would be about £90k.

9. **Dashboard: Quality and Staffing Quadrants**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services and the Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the quadrants and it was noted that Ofsted had been positive about the dashboards.

Q. The only item that does not have a RAG is appraisals – why is this the case?

A. This would be done. **ACTION.**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services explained that sickness was 3.8% against a target of 3.3%. Focussed work would be taking place with managers to address this increase in sickness rates.

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that no further observations had taken place since Ofsted and the programme would begin again in January 2017. Further, she explained that the dashboard was being reviewed to include quality of target-setting. She noted that attendance rates had improved against the 2015/16 rates at this stage in the year.

10. **Feedback from Maths and English Expert Group**

The Chair of the Maths and English Expert Group provided feedback relating to the meeting held on 5th December 2016. He explained that information had been discussed relating to baseline data, attendance and the maths quality improvement plan. Targeted learning walks were planned

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that the College had been approached by the DFE to be involved in research and survey regarding the College's approach to maths teaching. She explained that it had been initiated with a 45 minute interview and a visit would take place on 5th January 2017. It was confirmed that Stan Baldwin would attend to provide governor support.

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that the College was in the top quartile nationally for maths outcomes and that at a Teaching and Learning conference she had attended, there didn't seem to be strategies that the College were not currently implementing.

Interviews were taking place for a new maths teacher and applications received had been positive. It was noted that there were 5,000 maths teacher vacancies across the country, so competition to appoint enough good teachers was strong.

Discussion took place regarding approaches internationally to the teaching of maths and whether there were techniques and strategies that led to success in other countries. It was noted that an FT article had provided information about the maths teaching techniques in Singapore. It was confirmed that the article would be circulated for information. **ACTION.**

It was noted that students had provided feedback about maths attendance issues and it was noted that some did not see the relevance of maths in relation to their vocational subject. It was

suggested that it might be useful for past students to speak to current students to try to provide clarity about the importance of maths for all.

11. **Apprenticeship Termly Report**

The Deputy Principal presented the report and explained that the content came from a range of other reports and data sources, which governors had access to. She requested views on the value of producing the report and it was confirmed that it was a good source of information for a strategically important, growth area. It was suggested that the report would be useful, particularly during implementation of the levy and once the effect of the AppOrg was known on College provision.

12. **Code of Conduct for Staff and Governor Review**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services explained that the Code of Conduct had last been reviewed in 2013. Having conducted another initial review, it was suggested that further work be undertaken to enhance links to the safeguarding policy and outline what the expectations are of staff and governors. The Code would be updated and presented at a future meeting.
ACTION.

13. **Governance: Membership**

The Chair explained that 5 application forms had been received for the 3 current vacancies. To date, 3 of the applicants had visited the College for a short interview and CVs had been reviewed. The 2 applicants that had not yet visited the College were from large, local companies and it was suggested these could provide good governor links to stakeholder companies. Further short interviews would take place in the new year with the further 2 applicants. **ACTION.**

RESOLVED to approve the following appointments:

SUKHDEEP NIJJAR as a full governor with effect from 1st January 2017 for a term of office of 4 years.

BARBARA HUGHES as an external governor with effect from 1st January 2017 and moving to become a full governor from 1st June 2017, when Phil Mayhew's term of office come to an end, for a term of office of 4 years.

14. **Bids and Projects – Business Elevator**

The Deputy Principal presented the proposal relating to YEI Project on Employer Engagement, in partnership with Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMet). The total cost of the project was £705,400. The project aimed to support up to 16,610 Birmingham and Solihull young people (15-29 years) who were classified as NEETs.

Q. If the bid was successful and 11 people were employed, would it still be anticipated to exploit existing networks?

A. Yes, the plan would be to work with existing networks. It would be possible to co-locate services. Discussions were taking place with current providers and the College already worked in partnership with a number of the existing groups.

Q. The proposal suggests a start date of February 2017 – will it be possible to have staff in place by then?

A. A detailed financial plan was being developed, that identified a staggered start.

RESOLVED to approve the submission of the bid for

the YEI Project on Employer Engagement at a total project cost of £705,400.

15. **Remuneration Committee meeting held on 5th December 2016**

This item was deemed confidential and all members of EMT, the Clerk, Staff and Student Governors left the meeting.

16. **Annual Priorities Outturn 2015/16**

The Principal provided an update on those priorities that were not ragged as green.

17. **REGULAR UPDATES FOR INFORMATION**

17.1 Bids and Projects Update

The contents of the Bids and Project Report were noted.

17.2 Property Report

The contents of the Property Report were noted.

17.3 Tender Group Update Report

The contents of the Tender Group Update Report were noted.

17.4 Finance Dashboard: PMR October 2016

The contents of the October 2016 PMR were noted.

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

18. **Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 7th February 2017 at 6pm and the Governors' Development Session: Saturday 21st January 2017 9.30-1pm.

19. **GOVERNANCE STANDING ITEMS**

19.1 Membership

The contents of the Membership Report were noted.

19.2 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.

19.3 Training Log

The contents of the Training Log were noted.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm.

Signed: J.R. Boul

Date: 7th February 2017.