

SOLIHULL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CENTRE

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21st JUNE 2017 AT THE BLOSSOMFIELD CAMPUS

PRESENT: John Bolt (Chair)
Stan Baldwin
John Callaghan (Principal)
Jane Coleman
Mark Hayes
Barbara Hughes
Joe Kelly
Lucy Lee (*joined meeting at 7pm*)
Sukhdeep Nijjar
Geraldine Swanton
Sally Tomlinson

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)
Sue McGregor (Dean of HE and Curriculum Innovation) – Item 4
Theresa Lynch (Clerk to the Corporation)

1. Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Scott Beasley, Keith Marriott, Alex Palethorpe and Liz Watson

2. Declarations of Interest regarding this Agenda

There no new declarations.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th May 2017 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th May 2017 were **agreed** as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

3.1 Stratford upon Avon College (SUAC) – the Principal confirmed that the College had received notification that they were the chosen college to merge with Stratford upon Avon College. Congratulations were offered to all that had been involved in the process.

It was noted that one of the applicants had submitted a challenge to the decision. The ESFA were working with SUAC to deal with this.

He explained that staff at Solihull College would be invited to information sessions for a Q&A opportunity. There seemed to be a lot of positivity and excitement about the merger from staff. It was noted that Scott Beasley, Student Governor, had attended the presentation at SUAC and had spoken well on behalf of the College. Governors confirmed that it was too early to invite SUAC governors to the annual dinner on 4th July.

It was noted that it would be necessary to commission financial and legal due diligence and tenders would be requested. Due to timing it may be necessary to take Chair's Action to award the contract. Further information would be provided at the next meeting in relation to the

process towards a full merger by 1st January 2018.

3.2 Tuition Fees Policies – the Vice Principal Finance presented the updated policies.

RESOLVED to approve the Tuition Fee Policies for FE and HE students.

4. **Higher Education Annual Report 2016/17 and Strategy 2017/18**

The Dean of HE and Curriculum Innovation presented the annual HE report. She provided information about assurance procedures in place and explained that the information available to Solihull College was much more than other colleges in the sector, with some not even complying with the HEFCE requirements. QAA and TEF provided good external assurance, but it may be necessary to obtain other external assurance in 2 years for example.

Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Results – it was noted that this information was embargoed until 22nd June. The College had been awarded a Gold award. It was the only Gold award for an FE college in the West Midlands and there were only 14 nationally. Overall there had been 24% Gold, 50% Silver and 26% Bronze.

It was noted that the link for the TEF site would be shared with governors so that they could review the results for the College and partner and competitor institutions. **ACTION**

Q. Does the College keep destinations data with regard to HE students?

A. Yes destinations data has always been maintained for validated programmes and was part of the TEF award. However, data was not kept for franchised provision, so it was difficult to obtain an overall position.

It was noted that the Award would be for 3 years, however, merger with SUAC could have an impact on this.

Q. Did SUAC apply for TEF?

A. No, they do not have a lot of HE provision.

Degree Awarding Powers – The Dean of HE and Curriculum Innovation explained that advice was being sought in relation to applying for degree awarding powers. It was noted that 5 other colleges had foundation degree awarding powers and one with teaching degree awarding powers. The process for applying and being awarded was long, so a cost-benefit analysis exercise would take place prior to taking this forward. It was **agreed** that a costed feasibility take place.

Thanks were expressed to the Dean of HE and Curriculum Innovation and she left the meeting.

RESOLVED to approve the HE Strategy for 2017/18.

5. **Quality Improvement Plan 2016/17**

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the Quality Improvement Plan for 2016/17 and noted updates to outcomes for courses in intensive care. It was noted that update to the 2016/17 QIP would cease shortly and this would be used to inform the self-assessment process. The 2017/18 QIP would then be produced.

Discussion took place regarding Visual Arts and Media and it was noted that Photography outcomes were good, however, Visual Arts and Media had improved but were still not performing as well as expected. There had been staffing issues and a full time appointment would be made in Performing Arts shortly.

6. **Quality Improvement Strategy for 2017/18**

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the proposed strategy for 2017/18 and explained that some minor amendments had been made..

Q. As the Director of Quality Improvement had now left the College, what was planned in terms of replacing him?

A. No appointment was going to be made immediately, as the merger with SUAC may present some opportunities. A good handover had taken place.

RESOLVED to approve the Quality Improvement Strategy for 2017/18.

7. **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

7.1 Teaching, Learning and Assessment – End of Year Report 2017/18

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the report and noted that areas for improvement included attendance and punctuality, appropriate support and challenge and levels of planning. The impact of coaching and support had been substantial throughout the year.

7.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment – Policy 2017/18

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the Policy for 2017/18 and explained that the ungraded model would be maintained, but that information for performance reviews would also include learning walks and quality of target setting. It was noted that quality of marked work would also be linked into the observation process.

Q. How many learning walks take place?

A. In the region of 150 learning walks.

Q. How long are staff in coaching when observation outcomes are not adequate?

A. There is usually about 8 weeks before the re-observation. If the first observation is in May, then the re-observation will be early in the new academic year to give time for improvement. Each case is managed on an individual basis. Some people improve and others are unable to improve and can move into a capability process, although support is provided to try to avoid this situation.

Q. Is there correlation with under-performing courses?

A. In some cases this is there is a correlation.

RESOLVED to ^{approve the} Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy for 2017/18.

8. **Student Voice End of Year Report 2016/17 and Strategy 2017/18**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the report. He noted that the Learner Voice Executive Committee had worked really well during 2016/17 with the President working well to lead the Committee. It was noted that the Committee worked with the Learner Voice Steering Group to test effectiveness of learner voice around the College.

Q. Will there be an election for the President for 2017/18?

A. This has taken place and a new President has been elected, Amna Hijazi. She will work to set up the whole Committee by November 2017.

Discussion took place regarding survey responses and it was noted that the Learner Voice Steering Group had been reviewing and refining questions to ensure they were fully understood

by students.

Q. Three weeks does seem to be a long time to mark work.

A. This is normal in the sector and is College policy. 21% students had raised this, so not all saw this as a problem. Tutors are going to be encouraged to find different ways for providing feedback on work. Overall there were positive messages from the student surveys.

RESOLVED to approve the Student Voice Strategy for 2017/18

9. **Dashboard 2016/17 Update**

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the quality quadrant and explained that the quadrant was being re-developed to reflect key elements of the QIP.

It was suggested that a Governors' Dashboard Group be re-convened to work through the contents of the quality quadrant. **ACTION.**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the staffing quadrant and confirmed that long term sickness was being managed and there were low levels of short term sickness.

Q. Weren't there going to be RAG ratings for appraisals?

A. Yes, this was discussed, but it would be good to be able to provide information about how staff are performing and the quality of the appraisal, rather than quantity of appraisals carried out only.

It was suggested that a Governors' Dashboard Group be re-convened to work through the contents of the staffing quadrant. **ACTION.**

10. **Maths and English Expert Group Notes from 8th May 2017**

The Chair of the Maths and English Expert Group presented the notes of the meeting held on 8th May 2017. It was noted that the College was best in the West Midlands for English and second for maths, so performance was improving. The Group would meet once more in the Autumn term.

Thanks were expressed to the Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment and the team for providing information and for their hard work to improve outcomes.

11. **Finance Report Presentation**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the risks, assumptions and sensitivities that would underpin the budget and financial plan for 2017/18 and discussion took place. The Chair and Finance governors had reviewed the plan in detail prior to Corporation.

It was noted that income based on apprenticeships was cautious due to the current uncertainties regarding the levy and funding. It was also noted that merger-related costs had not been incorporated into the plan or budget to date.

Q. Is a 0%-based budget presented every year?

A. It had been in 2016/17 and would be for 2017/18. It seemed to be a better way to get staff to review spending and expenditure required for the next financial year.

Q. Is growth a factor?

A. Yes, it is planned, but will be reviewed in terms of growth areas in September 2017 when actual recruitment is known.

12. **Audit Committee meeting held on 12th June 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2017 were received.

12.1 Strategic Risk Register for 2017/18

The Vice Principal Finance presented the Strategic Risk Register for 2017/18 and explained that the Audit Committee had recommended it for approval. She explained that the Register had evolved over a period of time and there had been a suggestion to link the Register with the Board Assurance Framework. Each area of the Board Assurance Framework had been presented to the Committee during 2016/17. Risks relating to the merger had not yet been incorporated.

RESOLVED to approve the Strategic Risk Register for 2017/18.

12.2 Internal Audit Plan 2017/18

The Vice Principal Finance presented the Internal Audit Plan for 2017/18 and noted that the number of days had reduced due to assurance levels. The Audit Committee recommended approval of the Plan.

RESOLVED to approve the Internal Audit Plan 2017/18.

12.3 KPMG Financial Statement Audit Plan and Strategy for 2016/17

The Vice Principal Finance presented the KPMG Financial Statement Audit Plan and Strategy for 2016/17 and noted that it was in line with tender and previous years.

It was noted that the format of the report was unhelpful, so it would be useful to have an executive summary in future years.

RESOLVED to approve the KPMG Financial Statement Audit Plan and Strategy for 2016/17.

12.4 Health and Safety Policy

The Vice Principal Finance presented the Health and Safety Report and Policy.

RESOLVED to approve the Health and Safety Policy.

12.5 Data Protection Update

The contents of the Data Protection Update were noted.

12.6 Insurance Update

The contents of the Insurance Update were noted.

13. Property Update

The Vice Principal Finance provided a verbal update and explained that exchange with Octopus was expected at the end of June, with the hope that the sale would be completed by the end of July 2017. A full report would be provided for the next meeting. **ACTION.** Discussion took place regarding the cost of demolition and the car parks if the sale of TGH did not take place and it was noted that demolition would be nearly £2m, but that the car park would only take subject to sale going ahead, but there were other possible buyers of TGH if the Octopus sale did not take place.

14. **Governance: Self-Assessment 2017**

The Clerk presented the report and noted that governors' emails would be provided for the regional self-assessment process.

UPDATES FOR INFORMATION

15. **Solihull College and University Centre Travel Plan Update May 2017**

The contents of the Solihull College and University Centre Travel Plan Update May 2017 were noted.

16. **Regular Update Reports**

16.1 Bids and Project Updates

The contents of the Bids and Project Updates were noted.

16.2 Tender Update

The contents of the Tender Update were noted.

16.3 PMR April 2017

The contents of the PMR for April 2017 were noted.

16.4 Use of the College Seal

The College Seal had not been used since the last meeting.

17. **Dates of the future meetings:**

Corporation and end of year dinner Celebration – Tuesday 4th July 2017 at 5.30pm for Corporation and 7.15pm for dinner

Dates for 2017/18 were confirmed.

18. **Governance Items**

18.1 Membership

The contents of the membership update were noted.

18.2 Register of Interests

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

18.3 Legal Framework for FE

The contents of the Legal Framework for FE were noted.

The meeting ended at 8.40pm.

Signed: J. R. B. U. Date: 4 July 2017.