

## **SOLIHULL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CENTRE**

### **MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2017 AT THE BLOSSOMFIELD CAMPUS**

**PRESENT:** Stan Baldwin (Chair)  
John Callaghan (Principal)  
Jane Coleman  
Mark Hayes  
Barbara Hughes  
Paul Large  
Lucy Lee  
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)  
Rosa Wells (Director of Employment and Skills)  
Theresa Lynch (Clerk to the Corporation)

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from John Bolt, Joe Kelly and Keith Marriott.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest in relation to this agenda**

Jane Coleman declared an interest in relation to the IOT due to her employment at the University of Warwick.

#### **3. Minutes of the meetings held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

#### **4. Achievement Update**

The Deputy Principal presented the achievement update report and explained that there had been improvement at all levels except level 3 for 16-18 year olds.

Q. Level 3 is critical for the College and even though volumes are down, why has there been a decrease?

A. Would need to analyse the data further to establish underlying reasons.

Q. How reliable were predictions last year?

A. The College aims to achieve above predictions.

The Deputy Principal explained that results for English were good. Although results for maths were not as good, they were in line with sector for AQA qualifications. This would be a focus for 2017/18. It was noted that a plan of support was being implemented for 19 year olds (on full time study programmes as their maths results were low. Further, the curriculum mix for adults was being reviewed as a high number did maths and English, which was not necessarily the case across the sector.

It was noted that deeper analysis of the achievement data would be presented at a future

Corporation meeting. **ACTION.**

## **5. Student Numbers: Recruitment 2017**

The Deputy Principal presented the report on recruitment for 2017/18 and explained that there had been steady growth in 16-18 year olds. It was noted that SMBC were interested in working more collaboratively with the college for post 16 year olds in the borough. It was noted that some curriculum areas were down on recruitment in comparison to previous years, including health and social care and education and training and sport and public services. The curriculum in these areas will be reviewed to improve recruitment levels.

Q. Has the investment in equipment had an effect on recruitment levels?

A. Yes, areas where there has been investment in equipment has had high levels of recruitment, for example, aeronautics, even though a new UTC had opened only a mile away from the campus, with very similar equipment etc.

Discussion took place regarding recruitment at different levels and it was noted that this had remained similar to previous years.

Q. There had been some changes in recruitment from schools with sixth forms – what course are they coming to do?

A. Analysis can be done to look at what is attracting students away from their own sixth forms. The new linear A level is not necessarily working well for schools in that they have to be more robust in recruitment, as there is no longer the AS stepping off point. The College has good relationships with local schools, as we are not seen as competitors in terms of A levels. The College is developing some joint curriculum with some of the local schools ie pre-apprenticeship routes and degree level routes for A level students at the schools.

Discussion took place regarding the importance of geographical location in relation to the Blossomfield and Woodlands campuses and Stratford upon Avon College. Further analysis of the data would take place. Transport routes seemed to have an impact on student choice.

The Deputy Principal explained that recruitment at Stratford upon Avon College was slightly down, particularly in relation to A levels.

## **6. Strategic Direction – Merger with Stratford upon Avon College**

### **6.1 Financial Plan**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the Financial Plan and explained that the commentary provided an update on the position to date, including the ESFA funding protection.

Q. Are the pensions and banking covenants factored into the Plan?

A. No, the outcome of discussions with the Pension Funds and the Banks were not yet final. The Plan was based on current levels for pensions and bank covenants. If any changes were made these could have an impact on finances and financial health.

### **6.2 Consultation Document**

The Chair's Action to approve the Merger Consultation document dated 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017 was **ratified**.

### **6.3 Notes from the Merger Steering Group meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

The contents of the notes from the Merger Steering Group meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were reviewed and it was **agreed** that the legal name of the merged college would be Solihull College and University Centre, whilst the Stratford upon Avon campus would maintain its unique character.

## **7. Strategic Developments**

### **7.1 Apprenticeships and AppOrg Update**

The Director of Employment and Skills provided an update in relation to apprenticeships for 2017/18.

Q. Are there any areas that have been disappointing?

A. Yes the retail sector has been limited, but it is about building relationships and this is underway.

The Director of Employment and Skills provided an update regarding the AppOrg and explained that the College was still partnering with BMet to work with levy paying employers, but that the preferred supplier list process didn't necessarily respond to the current AppOrg arrangement. A Memorandum of Understanding was being developed with BMet to take the AppOrg arrangement forward, as appropriate. Setting up the AppOrg as a company presented problems in relation to procurement requirements and competition law, so it wasn't possible to set it up as originally planned.

### **7.2 Institute of Technology (IOT)**

The Director of Employment and Skills gave an update on the Institute of Technology. It has tended to focus more on universities rather than colleges, although the plan is for shared provision.

Q. What is the benefit of being part of the IOT?

A. It is a difficult concept to work around, because there isn't necessarily a clear definition. It seemed that the government saw this as a physical entity, whilst local partners were aiming to build a shared, cohesive message for students and parents regarding further and higher education pathways. A curriculum plan has been produced and shows Solihull College and University Centre as a key player due to the amount of HE provision, through part time study, offered. It was confirmed that the curriculum plan would be circulated to all governors. **ACTION.** It is hoped that through this shared platform, Solihull College and University Centre would be able to further promote its HE offer and ultimately increase enrolment numbers.

Q. Is the IOT linked with the Midlands Engine?

A. The IOT was supported by the WM Combined Authority and the Chamber of Commerce and progress was being reported to the Midlands Engine Strategy. The Midlands Engine Investment Hub did seem to be transforming into an international investment channel for the region.

## **8. Projected Position Statement 2016/17**

The Deputy Principal presented the learner number element of the report and explained issues relating to the adult offer in 2016/17 and actions being taken.

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the report in relation to sickness.

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and explained that there would be a surplus that would be confirmed following the external audit currently taking place.

## **9. Sub-contracting Annual Report and Ratification of the Supply-Chain Fees and Charging Policy**

The Deputy Principal presented the report and the Supply-Chain Fees and Charging Policy that had been approved via Chair's Actions was ratified.

It was noted that there were some minor errors in the Policy and these would be communicated to the Deputy Principal.

## **10. Human Resources Annual Report**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the report and discussion took place.

Q. E&D stats on turnover of staff would be useful – is it in the E&D report?

A. There is information reported about starters but not on leavers. This could be a useful measure and would be incorporated in the E&D report in future.

Q. What has been the impact of savings by not recruiting to vacancies?

A. Savings are only made where the management team are sure that there will be limited impact. Where appointments are needed they are made, for example, in growth areas. Every vacancy is discussed at EMT prior to advertising.

Q. What is being done about the levels of long-term sickness relating to stress? What does 'other' relate to?

A. The instances and number of days lost due to stress had reduced. There is a Stress and Well Being Policy. The Health and Safety Committee monitor the situation closely and a well-being programme had been introduced for all staff. Stress in FE is a national issue – it is not a significant problem for Solihull College and University Centre, but is managed carefully on an individual basis. Generally there did seem to be an increase in mental health issues for staff and students.

It was noted that 'other' related to a broad category of reasons for sickness and the list could be supplied outside the meeting.

Q. Is there succession planning for the management team as the age profile increases?

A. There are some good managers coming through who may be able to take on roles in the future. There was a plan to devolve increased responsibility throughout the management team to bring on younger managers. But sometimes it was also good for an organisation to bring in new people too.

Q. Disability profile – there is no key showing what the disability is?

A. The profile relates to the % of staff declaring a disability.

Q. There are large numbers of staff not declaring gender or religion?

A. When you introduce new characteristics there does seem to be some reticence. This is a relatively new form of reporting.

Q. Capability – how much support do staff receive and over what length of time?

A. Support is provided within a framework but depends on the individual case and what the member of staff needs in terms of support. The length of time tends to be a 2-3 month period to allow a review period and adequate time for support and improvement. Once out of capability further support and on-going review continues.

Q. Appraisal – what has been included in the recent review?

A. The paperwork and timing of the annual review. Dashboard information provides the ability to have checkpoint meetings throughout the year for on-going performance review – similar to the way student progress is monitored. Although it is recognised that the annual reflective meeting is useful too.

## **11. Regular Reports and Updates**

### **11.1 Bids and Projects Report**

The contents of the Bids and Projects report were noted.

### **11.2 Property Report**

The contents of the Property Report were noted.

### **11.3 Tender Update**

The contents of the Tender Update were noted and clarity was sought regarding the Car Park contract to replace the Residences. The contract had been let to Colas Ltd and had been within budget. Completion was due by the end of November 2017.

It was noted progress was being made in relation to the redevelopment of TGH in that Octopus Healthcare Ltd were currently applying for planning permission and were due to meet with Heritage England. Public consultation would be taking place on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017.

### **11.4 Use of the College Seal**

The contents of the Use of the College Seal Report were noted.

## **12. Expert Group Notes**

### **12.1 Finance meeting dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

The contents of the notes of the finance meeting that took place on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were noted.

### **12.2 Maths and English meeting dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

The contents of the notes of the Maths and English meeting that took place on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were noted and attention was drawn to the excellent presentation that had been discussed by the Group.

## **13. Governance – Membership Report**

The contents of the Governance Membership report were noted.

*The meeting ended at 7.30pm.*

Signed: J Rbov

Date: 1/11/2017