

SOLIHULL COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11th JUNE 2018 AT THE STRATFORD UPON AVON CAMPUS

PRESENT:

John Bolt (Chair)	Sukhy Nijjar
Stan Baldwin	Geraldine Swanton
John Callaghan (Principal)	Sally Tomlinson
Mark Hayes (Staff Governor)	Matthew Warburton (Staff Governor)
Paul Large	Eric Wiles
Lucy Lee	
Adriana Mihai (Student Governor)	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lindsey Stewart (Deputy Principal)
Heather Evans (Vice Principal Finance)
Beth Selwood (Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment)
Pete Haynes (Vice Principal HR and Student Services)
Adam Thomas (Director of Student Services)
Sue McGregor (Dean of HE & Curriculum Innovation)
Theresa Lynch (Clerk to the Corporation)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Stevie Gray, Barbara Hughes, Betty LeFeurve (Staff Governor) and Sue Strawford.

2. Declarations of Interest in relation to the Agenda

Lucy Lee noted her interest in relation to Simon Digby land and confirmed that she would leave during this discussion under item 13.2 Property Report.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2018 were **agreed** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3.1 Matters Arising – Apprenticeships – Assessor Observations – The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum presented the update and explained that the majority of assessors observed had met the required standards. Strengths and weaknesses were noted.

3.2 Matters Arising - Level 3 BTEC RQF External Exams – The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum presented the report and noted that the pass rate for the January externally assessed units increased from 68% to 95% (excluding absences) following the introduction of N grades. Students who failed, or with an N grade were re-sitting their external units during May and June.

3.3 Matters Arising - Creative Alliance EOI – The Deputy Principal presented the report and explained that this was an initial expression of interest – an update would be provided at the next meeting. **ACTION.**

Q. What terms and conditions do staff have at Creative Alliance in relation to College contracts?

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A. It was at an early stage so this information had not yet been shared – this detail would be reviewed during due diligence and further negotiations, if the College wanted to take this further.

3.4 Matters Arising – Institute of Technology (IoT) Stage 1 Outcome Letter – the Principal explained that the College had had notification that the IoT proposal had been confirmed. Both Dudley and North Warwickshire and Hinckley Colleges had also been given confirmation to go forward to the next stage. A key partner would be Aston University, as it was likely the physical hub would be there – this could provide some positive opportunities for our students.

3.5 Matters Arising - T Levels – the Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum explained that the College would not be in the first round of pilots to launch the qualifications. She was a member of the AOC Curriculum Reform Group, so would be able to provide a further update in the Autumn term. **ACTION.** However, the College would be involved in the pilot of T level extended work placements in 2018/19.

Q. There would be 52 colleges in the first round – are there any local colleges that would present a threat to the College?

A. No, mainly outstanding schools and colleges have been invited to be part of the pilot, so no local colleges are involved. There have been some exceptions, but largely outstanding institutions and none in the area.

4. **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**

GS presented information regarding the new requirements of GDPR that was introduced via the Data Protection Act 2018 in May 2018.

Q. If we use register data to follow up students does this contravene data protection rules?

A. No, that would be a reasonable use of personal data and is a requirement of ensuring support for students.

Q. If the student is under 18 can you still contact their parents In relation to their studies?

A. Each individual can decide on how their data is used, if they are mature enough to make the decision. Traditionally colleges have contacted parents and asked them to support the student in terms of improving their attendance etc. It was noted that at Stratford consent is obtained from students to contact parents. The College would continue to do this and make students aware – it is important to support students and if challenged the College would defend the position.

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services explained that the College was currently ensuring policies and privacy statements were in place to protect and secure data for staff and students and all stakeholders for whom data is held.

Discussion took place regarding governor email addresses and whether they should be shared with other governors when sending emails. Further the use of College email accounts was considered. It was noted that some colleges used blind copy to send group emails and that a College email address was of benefit in terms of security of confidential information and personal data.

Q. Clarity was sought regarding the sharing of student data with collaborative partners?

A. It was noted that it depended on the nature of the arrangement, but that there would be obligations under the Data Protection Act for all contracts and agreements and

these would be addressed on an individual case basis.

The Chair of the Audit Committee noted that an internal audit report regarding the implementation of GDPR was to be considered at Audit Committee on 18th June. It was agreed that the Audit Committee terms of reference should be reviewed to incorporate the additional requirements of the Data Protection Act/GDPR to ensure that the recording of breaches should be reported to the Committee and through to Corporation, as appropriate. **ACTION**

5. HE Annual Report 2017/18 and Strategy 2018/19 and BDAP Proposal

The Dean of HE and Curriculum Innovation presented the HE annual report and provided an update on applications for 2018/19, which seemed to be good, given the current HE environment of students being given unconditional offers for some courses. It was noted that preparation was underway to apply to have degree awarding powers to enable flexibility for employers. Discussion took place regarding the HE strategy for the College.

Q. What is the strategy in relation to higher level and degree apprenticeships?

A. Higher level and degree apprenticeships are evolving at the moment. There are about 50 students on Higher National (HNC/D) programmes, but with the standards changing it is difficult to be robust and confident about future curriculum and programmes. It is possible to be responsive regarding higher level and degree apprenticeships for employers.

Q. The College's strategy for HE is to increase student numbers. Many organisations, however, are seeing decreases in student numbers? How will this be addressed?

A. Currently the College was popular with students and tended to offer a different experience to traditional HEIs. Numbers are healthy, with positive numbers of applications for 2018/19, so the College was not seeing this trend. The curriculum offer was constantly reviewed and innovative programmes developed to respond to market demand. Governors requested regular updates to ensure robust oversight for an ever-changing area of business and potential high risk area.

Q. Will competitors also apply for degree award powers?

A. The criteria is difficult to meet for smaller providers and will mean that some competitors are unable to apply. Some of the well-established private providers may apply and this could be a potential threat for the College. However, private providers are likely to specialise in a particular area, so competition with a GFE isn't likely apart from in particular areas of provision, but this would be considered when reviewing the curriculum offer. The OfS is openly encouraging competition in HE.

5.1 HE Student Governor

The Chair explained that a Student Governor appointment process had taken place in May 2018. Thanks were expressed to Stan Baldwin, Pat Knauff and Sue McGregor for conducting the interviews. It was noted that 2 HE students had been interviewed and both had performed well. It was **agreed** to appoint Katie Higgins for a term of office of 4 years to 10th June 2022 or until her status as a student at the College ended.

6. Stratford upon Avon College – update on harmonisation of contracts

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services provided a verbal update regarding harmonisation of contracts for teaching and support staff and confirmed the discussions with the union representatives had been positive. There seemed to be consensus regarding the need to achieve parity between staff and ensure a positive

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outcome for all staff.

7. **Strategic Plan and Annual Priorities**

The Principal presented the draft Strategic Plan and Annual Priorities for 2018/19. Governors were asked to provide any comments regarding the Plan so that it could be finalised for the next meeting and approved. **ACTION.**

8. **Tuition Fee Report and Policy Review**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and explained that the Policy for HE students had been slightly amended and outlined the changes for Governors. The Stratford and Solihull policies had been combined.

Q. Clarity was sought regarding refunds and the terms and conditions that underpin these. GS will send a sample to use as a basis for development of T&Cs. **ACTION.**

Q. References are made to HE fees being competitive – how is this assessed and what flexibility is there in setting the fees?

A. There is a standard hourly rate, but there is flexibility for the Principal to change fees based on market conditions. Staff are very aware of competitors' fees and what is viable for the College.

The Tuition Fee Policies were **approved.**

9. **Stratford Support and Challenge Feedback from visit on 22nd May 2018**

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum presented the letter and confirmed that the Governors meeting with the HMI had gone very well. The Chair explained that he had confirmed that the Governors from the 2 colleges appeared unified.

It was noted that the HMI letter stated that there were 3 governors that joined the Corporation from Stratford, whereas there were actually 6.

The process towards re-inspection was discussed and it was confirmed that a 2 day monitoring visit would take place in the Spring 2019. It was possible that the full inspection could be relatively soon after that in the same academic year, but it was unknown as to when it would be. Could be as late as 2020.

10. **Bids and Project – confidential**

This item was deemed confidential

11. **Health, Safety and Safeguarding Report**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and noted that accident statistics were reducing and now included Stratford data. She explained that there had been an additional claim at Blossomfield, since the report had been written, due to flooding during the recent storm. It was anticipated that this would cost in the region of £28k.

Q. Would it be possible to include the report details relating to fire wardens, alarm tests and first aiders – to demonstrate prevention measures?

A. Perhaps this more detailed information would be appropriate for the report that the Audit Committee receives and the Committee could consider the information that is required to go forward to the Corporation.

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Q. There were 115 safeguarding referrals for Stratford – did these relate to internal or external risks?

A. They are student related referrals so can relate to anything, but they don't tend to relate to internal issues regarding staff.

12. Dashboard 2017/18 Update and PMR April 2018

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report. The Chair noted that it was important to have a Governor with special interest for finance and that this would be discussed during the 1:1 meetings with each member of the Corporation.

13. Regular Update Reports

13.1 Tender Update Report

The contents of the Tender Update Report were noted for information.

13.2 Property Report confidential

This item was deemed confidential

Signed: J. Dever

Date: 4 July 2018

