

## SOLIHULL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CENTRE

### MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2018 AT THE BLOSSOMFIELD CAMPUS

**PRESENT:**

John Bolt (Chair)	Pat Knauff
Stan Baldwin	Sukhy Nijjar
John Callaghan (Principal)	Sue Strawford
Antoinette Farrell-Jones	Geraldine Swanton
Stevie Gray	Sally Tomlinson
Katie Higgins (Student Governor)	Matthew Warburton (Staff Governor)
Barbara Hughes	Eric Wiles

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Lindsey Stewart (Deputy Principal)
- Heather Evans (Vice Principal Finance)
- Pete Haynes (Vice Principal HR and Student Services)
- Beth Selwood (Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality)
- Theresa Lynch (Clerk to the Corporation)
- Randeep Sami (Director of Quality Improvement – item 6)
- Jayne Patmore (Governance Administrator)

The Principal explained that James Brokenshire, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and colleagues had visited the Woodlands campus on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 and met staff and students and had been interested in the excellent resources at the campus.

The Chair welcomed Randeep Sami to his new post of Director of Quality Improvement and Jayne Patmore who was covering the Governance Admin role.

It was noted that a good relationship was developing with the Stratford Herald, who had recently done a 2 part 50 year celebration of Stratford upon Avon College article, which had been circulated to governors.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Hayes (Staff Governor), Paul Large and Lucy Lee.

#### 2. **Declarations of Interest in relation to the Agenda**

The following declarations of interest were made in relation to the agenda:

**Stevie Gray** noted an interest relating to item 7.4 Sanctuary Housing, but noted that the interest was not directly pecuniary and she would not need to leave during the discussion.

**Katie Higgins** confirmed her interest in item 12 Bids and Projects with regard to her employment at JLR.

**Barbara Hughes** confirmed her interest in item 7.4 Sanctuary Housing and explained that she would leave during the discussion.

**Matthew Warburton** noted his interest in items 9.1 and 9.3 with regard to being a member of Stratford upon Avon College staff.

### 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**3.1 Matters Arising - Creative Alliance EOI** – The Deputy Principal explained that there were no further updates at the current time.

**3.2 Matters Arising - Dashboard Expert Group** – it was noted that a meeting of the Group would take place on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

### 4. Recruitment Report

The Deputy Principal presented the recruitment data for September 2018 and explained that numbers at Stratford upon Avon College had reduced, whilst numbers at Solihull College had increased. Recruitment overall was therefore in line with target. It was noted that a retention factor was built into the data to account for withdrawals in the first 6 weeks of term. Discussion took place regarding increases in Hair and Beauty and the improved curriculum offer. It was noted that relationships with feeder schools was continuing to improve and that the College was becoming college of choice for a number of local schools.

The Deputy Principal explained that progression routes at Solihull College was good, however, there was a need to increase the level 1 and 2 offer at Stratford upon Avon to ensure a good progression flow there too. She noted that a report had been commissioned to try to analyse student choices with regard to level 1 and 2 courses. Further, work was underway to establish why interview conversion rates were only 62%, compared to 68% and 70% for Solihull College faculties. Plans for 2019 would be based on evidence from analysis of the current recruitment data.

It was noted that HE numbers had seemed to transfer to higher and degree apprenticeships.

Q. Recruitment for Business was good, but was there any concern about the quality of provision as this had been an area for concern?

A. Business had been improving, with 2 out of the 4 courses out of intensive care and high maths outcomes for 2017/18.

Q. The information seems to suggest that 22 A level students were recruited – is this correct?

A. No, these are the students going into year 2 only.

Q. Is there evidence that the legal requirement for schools to be more independent regarding careers advice is the case?

A. There are differing approaches – it depends on the School and whether they have a sixth form or not. It is difficult to establish how independent advice is for their students.

Discussion took place regarding the HE strategy and the need to review it for the next few years due to the increasing competition from universities and the practice of giving unconditional offers and providing 4 year degrees that provide a first year that equates to an Access to HE course. These issues are affecting a lot of FE colleges that deliver HE programmes. Degree and higher apprenticeships may provide some opportunities working directly with employers. In some HE areas there are small classes and this would necessarily impact on contribution data – recruitment will carry on throughout the year, so it may be possible to increase numbers in due course.

Q. Is HE provision viable at Stratford?

A. There are some unique offers that could be developed, e.g., a conservatoire for performing arts. Work is on-going to make links with the community and encourage them to use the College more.

Q. What is the % fallout in the first 6 weeks of term?

A. It will be between 5% and 10%, but not all will be withdrawals – some will be transfers to other courses in the College and some students transfer to apprenticeships if vacancies arise.

## 5. Achievement – Interim Report

The Deputy Principal presented the interim achievement report and confirmed that it was showing a positive picture currently. It was noted that a final report would be presented to the Corporation later in the Autumn term once all achievements had been confirmed. She noted that the RQF exams may have had an impact on some Level 3 outcomes.

It was noted that English and maths outcomes would be discussed in more detail at the Expert Group on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and all Governors were welcome to attend.

The Deputy Principal explained that achievement at Stratford was very good, with a very positive position in relation to GCSE English and maths.

Q. Are there any lessons to learn from Stratford in terms of good GCSE English and maths results?

A. Good practice was being shared and numbers taking the exams is much lower than at Solihull. It was noted, however, that attendance had been an issue, but that classes were smaller and functional skills had more time each week.

Apprenticeships – the Principal explained that legacy learners in Health and Social Care had either finished their programme or ended their study, so these issues would not show in future years data. It was noted that some of these students had been on roll for some time, but not engaged and had to finish their maths and English, which they were not willing to do, so the College had supported them to end their programme.

Discussion took place regarding timely completion of apprenticeships and it was noted that this element may be reviewed in terms of funding and the focus would probably move towards progress instead.

## 6. Teaching and Learning Update

### 6.1 Ofsted and Performance Reporting Update

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality provided a verbal update and explained that the College was in scope for an Ofsted monitoring visit in Spring 2019. It was likely to be a whole College visit, but would focus on the support and challenge issues raised during the Stratford upon Avon College inspection in 2017. It was noted that advice from Ofsted was not clear in terms of whether the visit would take place, but that the College would plan for that eventuality.

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality explained that there was a new inspection framework, which now be called the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) being piloted and there had been a change in the four key judgements to behaviour and attitude, personal effectiveness, leadership and management (including financial probity, impact of how

finances are used to ensure progress and management of sub-contracting) and quality of teaching (outcomes and teaching & learning) – teaching focussed on progress, skills and employment. Pilots would be starting this term.

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality provided a verbal update regarding Ofsted's approach to performance reporting for colleges and noted that there was currently a consultation underway to reflect the sector in terms of mergers and new college groups and therefore ensure reporting was done to provide accountability where a part of the institution has a clear identity and serves a specific community. This would result in the merged College being seen as 2 reporting identities for performance data. National reporting for the College would continue to be at Corporation or College level, with the separated information being used to supplement the overall picture and identify accountability.

## **6.2 Quality Improvement Plan 2017/18 Update**

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality presented the key headlines regarding the QIPs for 2017/18 and noted that there would be one College QIP going forward incorporating Solihull College and Stratford upon Avon College together following the Self-Assessment process.

## **6.3 Evaluation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy**

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality presented Policy and explained that a meeting had taken place with a group of governors to discuss the process in more detail. She gave a demonstration of the tutor portal and explained how this would be used to monitor performance for a range of quality measures and to underpin continued improvement in teaching and learning. It was noted that the Policy would be launched after October half term and would be presented to teaching staff during the Whole College Development Day on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

Q. Have the Unions been involved in the Policy's development?

A. Yes they have been consulted, but it was important to respond to area for improvement identified by Ofsted, which required the different teaching and learning measures to be triangulated to provide an overall picture to improve monitoring and performance. Staff had been positive about the new Policy and processes because it removed the annual observation.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Evaluation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

## **7. Property Report**

### **7.1 Property Update**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the property update and provided an update regarding TGH, Masons Road Stratford upon Avon, Rugby Campus Catering and three LEP projects.

### **7.2 Simon Digby Land**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and explained that Heads of Terms had been circulated and the Finance and Resources Expert Group had discussed this matter.

Q. What are SMBC going to do with it?

A. Plan is to develop the land as part of their housing development plan, but there are considerable costs involved in making the site accessible and ready for development.

**RESOLVED** to approve the sale of the Simon Digby land to Solihull MBC, as set out in the Heads of Terms document.

### **7.3 Stratford upon Avon College Development**

The Vice Principal Finance provided an update regarding the outcome for the Stratford upon Avon College feasibility study and explained that the cost of new build or substantial re-furbishment was too expensive at around £30m for each of the options.

It was therefore suggested that a scaled back re-furbishment option (based on overall budget of £8-10m) be pursued. Since merger there was a lot more detailed knowledge about the buildings, curriculum needs and student numbers that would inform re-furbishment requirements. Architects are currently creating designs to rationalise some buildings and try to create a more pleasing environment with a centre courtyard on the campus. It was noted that a lot of M&E work was required to make the buildings more efficient. The re-furbishment plan would be reviewed annually based on financial position and student numbers/curriculum requirements. A further report would be considered in December 2018. **ACTION.** The feasibility study had cost £50k and it was envisaged that the further work to develop the scaled back plan would cost £30k, but that this was important to ensure any investment was adequate and value for money.

The Deputy Principal explained that a lot of security measures had been done over the summer to make the campus less accessible from a variety of entrances. Two security guards were on duty and it was felt that the campus was feeling more positive.

It was confirmed that no further work would be undertaken on a new-build option at this point.

### **7.4 Sanctuary Housing**

*Barbara Hughes left the meeting for this item due to her declared conflict of interest in relation to Sanctuary Housing.*

The Principal presented the report and provided an update on the position regarding Sanctuary Housing.

*This item was deemed confidential.*

## **8. Notes of the Finance and Resources Expert Group meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

The notes of the Finance and Resources Expert Group meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018 were received for information.

## **9. Staff Terms and Conditions**

*Matthew Warburton left the meeting during consideration of items 9.1 and 9.2 due to his interest as a member of staff at Stratford upon Avon College.*

### **9.1 Harmonisation of Employment Contracts for Lecturing and Support Staff**

*This item was deemed confidential.*

## 9.2 Human Resources Annual Report

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the report for 2017/18 and highlighted the key points. It was noted that all policies would be reviewed to ensure all processes were harmonised.

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services explained that in response to the Governors' request for information about diversity data in regard to turnover, this would be included in the annual Equality and Diversity report that would be presented in Spring 2019. This report would also include 12 months of data for the merged College.

Q. The College's policy for paying higher rates to ensure staff retention or recruitment in specific areas – does that present any issues?

A. The Policy will be used in very isolated cases where it hasn't been possible to attract industry staff with the right skills.

Q. Does the College's sickness rate compare to the sector benchmarks?

A. The College's sickness rate is very close to sector averages.

Q. Stress seems to still be a main cause of long term sickness – what processes are in place to support this area?

A. The College's Stress Policy identifies the need to carry out risk assessments and the HR Managers work closely with managers and individuals to raise issues of stress and support to find strategies to deal with them. The College also has a Care First package for counselling outside of the College. This is a national issue and work is continually underway to manage and support staff experiencing stress. It was noted that the union had stated that processes work well at the College.

Q. Is there need to reflect more on why the College isn't attracting more applications from people with BME backgrounds?

A. The number of applicants and appointments has increased in recent years and work continues to attract a wide variety of applicants to foster diversity.

Q. What demographics is the College drawing from?

A. The student population largely comes from Birmingham. The College's diversity rates are probably more in line with the Solihull population. Further background information would be included in the Equality and Diversity report in Spring 2019.

Thanks were expressed to the HR Manager and Deputy HR Manager for their significant contribution in harmonising HR arrangements with Stratford upon Avon College.

## 9.3 Pay Award 2018

*This item was deemed confidential.*

## 10. Projected Year End Position for 2017/18

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and explained that this provided an indication of the year end position for 2017/18. The annual audit was underway and the final position would be clarified at the Audit/Corporation meeting to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Budgets for 2018/19 would be monitored very closely to ensure targets were maintained throughout the year.

Discussion took place regarding the poor quality of ESFA remittances particularly for apprenticeship income and these could not be reconciled to the ESFA claims. This is being followed up with the ESFA.

It was noted that the final merger costs were identified in Item 17.

#### 11. **Sub-contracting Annual Report and Strategy**

The Deputy Principal presented the report and explained that the situation was getting more complex in terms of AEB and apprenticeships. Whilst sub-contracting is an important tool to provide an element of flexibility, the College's strategy was to minimise its use in terms of apprenticeships. Discussion took place regarding the likely changes when the Combined Authority took over distribution of the AEB funding. Clarity was sought regarding funding for Stratford upon Avon College and it was noted that the College would have its own allocation. It was **agreed** to approve the Sub-contracting Strategy and Plan for 2018/19 and to ratify the Supply Chain Fees and Charging Policy. It was noted that the College would aim to increase its own delivery of AEB and this would be reported to a future meeting.  
**ACTION.**

Clarity was sought regarding the budget set for Skillswise at £150k for 2018/19 and whether this was likely to be met as only £50k had been achieved in 2017/18. It was noted that management were confident that this target would be achieved as contracts had been issued in a more timely fashion.

#### 12. **Bids and Projects Report**

*Katie Higgins left the meeting for this item.*

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and explained that the IOT was progressing to the next stage and the full proposal would come to the next meeting for approval. This was a government initiative and it was felt it would be very positive for the College. The deadline for the next stage submission was 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018.

It was noted that the College's contract with JLR for Employee Learning Scheme (ELS) ended on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 and confirmation had not yet been received about whether this would continue.

Q. The FE environment seemed to be becoming ever more complex, particularly in relation to funding through more bidding processes.

A. Yes, there had been a lot of changes and the number of bids and projects had markedly increased. The College had a good rate of success in making bids.

It was agreed to ratify the Chairs action for the Coventry and Warwickshire College LEP (CWLEP) bid for Creative provision at Stratford upon Avon College (B120)

#### 13. **Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

The Chair of the Committee presented the minutes.

##### **13.1 Membership Report**

The Chair presented the report. Attendance levels for 2017/18 were discussed.

**RESOLVED** to approved:

- Re-appointment of **Eric Wiles** to April 2020 as a member of the Corporation and Audit Committee;
- Leave of Absence for **Sue Strawford** from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018;
- Appointment **Kate Whiting** as an external member of the Remuneration Committee, for a one year term of office from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019, in the first instance and subject to her meeting the Chair and Principal.

### 13.2 Self-Assessment Report

The contents of the Self- Assessment report was received for information and it was noted that actions were being taken to respond to the issues raised by governors during the 1:1 discussion and questionnaire responses.

### 13.3 Register of Interests

The contents of the register of interests that had been updated for 2018/19 were received.

### 13.4 Eligibility Statement for Governors and OfS Fit and Proper Person

The Chair presented the Eligibility Statement for Governors and explained that there had been an expansion of criteria under changes to the automatic disqualifications for charity trustees that came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018. The Statement also now incorporated the requirements of the OfS relating to fit and proper person guidance.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Eligibility Statement for Governors.

### 14. Public Value Statement and Corporate Governance Statement for the Members' Report

The Chair presented the Public Benefit Statement and Corporate Governance Statement that formed part of the annual Members' Report and noted that the Public Benefit Statement needed to be updated to incorporate Stratford and Warwickshire in terms of the communities served and to be reviewed to ensure it was still appropriate. It was suggested that the following be amended:

- *'respond to local, regional and national priorities to provide appropriate vocational training for the continued economic development of Solihull, the West Midlands and beyond;'*

**RESOLVED** to approve the Public Benefit Statement and Corporate Governance Statement.

### 15. Audit Minute of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017 – Extension of Appointment of the Internal and External Auditors

*This item was deemed confidential.*



**16. Regular Update Reports**

**16.1 Use of the College Seal**

The contents of the Use of the College Seal report were noted for information.

**16.2 Tender Update Report**

The contents of the Use of the College Seal report were noted for information and were deemed as confidential, due to potential commercial sensitivity.

**17. Final Merger Costs**

The report outlining the final merger costs with Stratford upon Avon College was noted for information.

**18. Date of the Next Meeting**

A Governors' Development meeting would be taking place on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2018 from 9.30am to 1pm

The next Corporation meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 5pm at the Woodlands campus.

The meeting ended at 8.30pm

Signed: JR B L

Date: \_\_\_\_\_