

SOLIHULL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CENTRE

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2019 AT THE BLOSSOMFIELD CAMPUS

PRESENT:

Barbara Hughes (Chair)	Paul Large
Stan Baldwin	Lucy Lee
Dr Peter Bebbington	Tony Lucas
John Bolt	Sukhdeep Nijjar
John Callaghan (Principal)	Geraldine Swanton
Mark Hayes (Staff Governor)	Sally Tomlinson
Pat Knauff	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lindsey Stewart (Deputy Principal and Stratford Chief Operating Officer)
Heather Evans (Vice Principal Finance)
Pete Haynes - Vice Principal HR & Student Services
Rebecca Gater - Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum

Sue McGregor – Dean of HE & Curriculum Innovation
Rosa Wells – Executive Director Employment and Skills & IoT
Kam Virdee – Head of School Business
Sara Sweeney – Head of School Retail & Commercial
Mohammed Maher – Head of School Computing & Emerging Technologies
Theresa Lynch (Clerk to the Corporation)

Welcome by the Chair and introductions.

The Chair identified the key issues for the meeting and noted the focus on quality and curriculum.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Stevie Gray, Katie Higgins (Student Governor) and Matt Warburton (Staff Governor).

2. **Declarations of Interest**


There were no new declarations of interest.

3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd July 2019 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3.1 Institute of Technology (IOT)

The Director of Employment and Skills explained that due to on-going negotiations with Aston University and the DfE regarding the Hub building and completion of paperwork the IOT had not yet received formal DfE approval. It was noted that good progress was being made and the DfE had agreed learner numbers.

initials


Q. In terms of risk, what is the worst-case scenario?

A. The College being liable for a share of the value of the Hub and equipment of £4m. However, the DfE were suggesting that, as the Hub will be on the Aston University site, it was appropriate for them to underwrite the value of the Hub, whilst all partners would underwrite the value of the equipment.

Q. Is there student demand for the Hub?

A. The College had been monitoring recruitment alongside partners and there were no indications of any concerns in recruitment at the moment. The IoT needed to remain agile though and able to move between manufacturing and digital, for example, if the environment changes. It was noted that the DfE wanted to extend the IOT model to all cities.

Q. Are there trademark issues?

A. The logo was still being trademarked – it was hoped that this would be resolved in October 2019.

Q. From the timetable students will be working in the IOT from Sept 19 – is there promotional activity in place to ensure numbers are recruited? Are we targeting marketing and is each college responsible for own marketing?

A. Each partner has their own targets and will, therefore, undertake their own marketing. The first year is transitional, so the IOT has been not yet been specifically marketed. Current students will be approached to establish whether they wish to transfer to the IOT during the year.

Q. As IOT is government policy is there any way of re-negotiating the deal so the government takes more of the risk?

A. No, the DfE have created this specific model, where the partners take and share the risk. To date the DfE have never actually clawed funds back. The College has tried to push back on issues wherever possible and the DfE have been very responsive. If the licence was not to be renewed in year 6, the only requirement is that the Hub is used for educational purposes, so the partners would be well placed to continue with either a shared project or to transfer it to one or more of the partners, as appropriate.

Thanks were given to the Executive Director Employment and Skills & IoT and the team for all the work that is taking place to move the IOT forward.

3.2 Pension Update


The Vice Principal Finance confirmed that in-year funding for the Teachers' Pension Scheme had been granted and would also be funded for 2020/21.

4. Curriculum Intent 2019/20 – curriculum design and management

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality explained that the Heads of School would be presenting to inform governors of the curriculum intent for each area.

4.1 School of Retail and Commercial

Sara Sweeney presented the curriculum intent for the School of Retail and Commercial and explained that the hair and beauty industry was becoming more interdisciplinary. It was noted that there was increased closer working with local employers where those with specific specialisms and expertise often delivered with College staff.

initials


Q. As the industry is becoming more interdisciplinary, do the students have the opportunity to learn both make-up and hairdressing?

A. Yes, particularly at level 2 to meet industry needs, for example, make-up students often learn barbering too.

Q. Enrolment numbers – how will things change – are there likely to be more apprentices?

A. Have seen growth in student numbers, however, this has largely been in full time programmes since the apprenticeship arrangements changed. T Levels may have an impact on apprenticeship numbers because, with the increased number of work experience days, it may become difficult to differentiate between apprenticeships and T Levels. T Levels will be fully introduced from 2022 in this area.

Q. Links between staff and employers are excellent, but do staff leave the college and work for competitors?

A. It is a risk, but it is necessary to develop the staff through industry working and links. The Principal confirmed that with the advantage of increased links with industry there was an increased risk of losing staff from all curriculum areas. The benefits outweighed the risks.

It was noted that there were a lot of College photos on Instagram that showed the excellent work taking place at the College, for example, photos of theatrical make-up done by the students. It was confirmed that Instagram helped to attract students.

Q. The integration of curriculum and employers is good, but are there some constraints given the teaching year?

A. Staff have to work with it – the curriculum area has to adapt to fit work experience opportunities - remodelling the curriculum to respond to employer needs and opportunities for the students. It was noted that demands for work experience with employers were low in July and August.

Q. Is there cross-curriculum input and collaboration?

A. There is some collaboration with other curriculum areas for example, there is quite a lot work with Art and an industry week in January every year with a focus on self-employment because a lot of students want to set up businesses.

4.2 School of Computing and Emerging Technology

Mohammed Maher presented information about the School of Computing and Emerging Technology and explained that there were some key developments with big local employers including LeapIT, Virgin Trains and cyber security firm, CCL. He confirmed that 80% of the staff in the department had masters level qualifications, 2 are CISCO trainers and there is a Microsoft academy.

The Principal explained that Mick Westman, Vice President of Solihull Chamber of Commerce, who operates Digital Innov8tors in the college, supported the School as he had raised the issue that students were not work ready, so he now comes into College to work with students and improve their work readiness.

Q. IT is a very fast-moving environment - how do staff keep abreast of developments in the area?

A. There are a range of connections with industry and as emerging technology

initials


comes online the department will try to purchase equipment and/or work collaboratively with industry firms, for example, a connection has just been made with a drone company. Staff are always very excited and keen to get new skills and get involved with new technology. The LEP has also provided funding for the new virtual reality (VR) and cyber security room.

Q. Do you get sufficient budget to buy the equipment you need?

A. The curriculum we follow is quite old – but as new T Level qualifications come online it will be necessary to review needs and plan how to develop and renew resources, but also have access to many emerging technologies through collaborative arrangements.

Q. What are links with the Stratford campus like?

A. Some staff from the department work at both campus and all staff work collaboratively, so can share curriculum materials.

Q. What are links to the Innovation Centre in Birmingham like?

A. The Head of School is on a number of local groups, so is very involved in local developments.

Q. Do you do masters level programmes?

A. No, not at the moment – the department is just developing HE programmes.

4.3 School of Business and Administration

Kam Virdee presented the curriculum intent for the School of Business and Administration and explained that her focus tends to be on FE students. Business students go into a range of different industries. Students often have a clear career direction, but for those that do not there is careers advice and support to start to consider future direction.

Q. Could modules be taken from different disciplines?

A. The qualification that the students take does not really lend itself to this – the qualification limits interdisciplinary opportunities. Some students in the department can be challenging and need a lot of support, so it is difficult for them to work across multiple departments.

Q. Has the size of the department changed?

A. The department has effectively been split, so Kam Virdee manages the FE courses and Mary Younan focusses on management and professional programmes with adults including HE courses. There are currently about 240 FE students and 40 apprentices, with about the same number for adults and HE.

Q. It sounds like a challenging area, how do you keep staff? Is there anything else you can be doing with employers to get them to come in to speak to students?

A. There are a number of employers that visit the college and speak to students and offer work experience.

The Principal explained that there is a tension about staff being lost to employers and often students too during their course and, whilst this is an excellent outcome it is also very de-stabilising for the College and has an impact on retention and outcome data.

Q. Do we publicise the potential for getting a job?

A. Yes, all the student successes are publicised.

Thanks were expressed to the Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum and the Curriculum Managers.

The Chair explained that there are a range of opportunities for governors to come in to College and meet with staff and students and to find out about programmes and successes, including:

- Learning Walks
- SAR validations
- Visit areas of interest – meet staff, students and see resources
- One Million Mentors opportunity for governors – to mentor students
- Social media – access College sites. Related news items for each curriculum area is also on the website.

5. Performance against Target

5.1 Update on Performance against Target for 2018/19

The Deputy Principal presented the report and explained the proposed targets. Targets for 16-18 were higher than 2018/19 even though numbers were not currently as high as the target. She noted that there was a continued shift from HE to apprenticeships, due to higher level apprenticeships. There were significant part time and some adult students.

Q. What evidence is there that achievement rates will be higher?

A. There is evidence because the legacy apprenticeship issues that had an impact on 2018/19 will have worked through the system and the quality of apprenticeships is improving, often due to take-up of higher apprenticeships.

It was noted that at level 3 for 19+ it would be necessary to reconsider funding decisions because some students doing maths and English were not succeeding. Although ideally the attendance target would be 100%, the context is important and with students with personal issues and with adult students it was not possible, so a target of 90% still provided an achievable but realistic objective. There are no benchmarks for attendance.

Attendance – target of 90% - not 100% because of context.

Q. Are there any national averages for attendance?

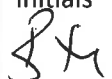
A. No, there are no national averages.

RESOLVED to approve the targets for 2019/20 as follows:

Learner Numbers	Target 2019/20
16-18 FT Numbers	4,587
16-18 Apprenticeships New Starts	174
Adult Classroom	5,647
19+ Apprenticeships New Starts	257
HE	728
Advanced Learner Loan	311
Full Cost	952

Achievement Rate	Targets 2019/20
16-18 overall	87%
16-18 Level 1	81%
16-18 Level 2	89%
16-18 Level 3	88%
19+ overall	86%
19+ Level 1	89%
19+ Level 2	87%
19+ Level 3	80%
Apprenticeships - Overall	75%
Apprenticeships - Timely	70%
HE	89%
Retention	Target 2019/20
16-18	95%
19+	96%
Apprentices	86%
HE	85%
English and maths	94%
Attendance	Target 2019/20
16-18	90%
19+	
HE	
English and maths	
Finance (confirmed as agreed in July 2019)	2019/20
	£'000
Core ESFA 16-18 Funding	23,091
Apprenticeships	2,618
Adult Education Budget	5,485
Higher Education Grants and Fees	3,992
Fee income – excluding HE fees	1,813
Pay expenditure	28,353
EBITDA (Education Specific)	2,451 1,808
Surplus/(deficit)	(1,821) (2,464)
Financial Health	Good
Cash	11,181 10,538
Banking covenants	Achieved
Partnership Delivery as a percentage of income	2.5%
Contribution	37%
Staffing as % of income (ESFA revised definition)	65% 66%

Note: Figures in red relate to KPIs if 2nd overage receipt for TGH is excluded. The outturn for 2018/19 will be reported separately to Corporation in November 19.

initials


5.2 Interim Achievement Report 2018/19 – presentation

The Deputy Principal presented the report and explained that it was an interim position, with final outcomes being reported via the SAR in December 2019. It was noted that there were a number of challenging entry and Level 1 students that meant that the outcomes were not as high as anticipated. Level 2 includes the English and maths GCSE results. A number of Level 3 qualifications now have end of year exams, which is having some impact on outcomes.

Q. Will people outside the College understand the decline in GCSE results?

A. Yes, for example, Ofsted will understand that progress is being made and is positive. It was noted that the maths and English results would be reviewed at a future meeting and that the impact and perception of the results would be clearly explained in the SAR. Explaining the context and individual progress is critical to inspection results.

The Principal explained that the adults' results were difficult to compare across the sector because different colleges include different qualifications. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality stated that those achieving a grade 4 and above increased from last year where in previous years only those with a grade 3 were allowed to re-sit GCSEs.

Q. How are the issues regarding maths and English being addressed?

A. New strategies have been put in place and there will be a change of strategy with regard to 'accidental adults' (those students that are under 18 when they start the course, but turn 19 before the end of their programme and therefore are included in the adult data). There are competitions to encourage achievement and the learning hubs are important in continuing to support learners to achieve.

6. Higher Education Update

The Dean of HE and Curriculum Innovation presented an update for Higher Education provision and developments.

It was noted that had been 76,000 unconditional offers in 2019 and this had a huge impact on colleges, as students were less likely to have the same level of commitment to their HE programme.

The Access and Participation Plan had been approved by the Office for Students with one condition. The final Access and Participation Plan would be circulated to all governors and the dashboard would be shared in due course. **ACTION.**

Degree Awarding Powers (DAP) – it was noted that the College was requesting exceptional circumstances to be able to apply for DAP.

Q. NSS – how were internal students surveyed?

A. A series of online teaching and learning surveys and module surveys. Internal students also take part in focus groups and Governors can be reassured that there are a range of activities that ensure student feedback is received and acted upon.

Q. Some issues were linked to staff changes – is there more stability for this year?

A. Yes, the staffing situation is much more stable this year.

7. **Quality Improvement Plan 2018/19 Update**

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality presented the update regarding the Quality Improvement Plan for 2018/19. She noted that attendance levels across the College were inconsistent and this indicator would remain amber in the 2019/20 QIP.

Although the % had decreased for maths and English, this did not reflect a reduction year on year because in the previous year only students that achieved a D or a 3 were entered, where in 2018/19 all students were entered, so the comparison needed to be against progress too, which showed good improvement.

The strategy for putting students on GCSE that had achieved grades 1-3 was discussed and it was noted that it was a condition of funding and putting them on Functional Skills would mean that they had to undertake a different qualification and would have to move back on to GCSE in year 2 anyway.

8. **Quality Improvement Strategy and Cycle 2019/20**

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality presented the Quality Improvement Strategy and Cycle for 2019/20. She noted that the main change was the implementation of curriculum and quality deep dives, as these would reflect the new Ofsted EIF methodology. Governors will discuss the EIF at the Governors' Development Day on 19th October 2019.

Thanks were expressed to governors who did settling-in learning walks during September 2019 – these sessions had been found very useful to the college and governors.

RESOLVED to approve the Quality Improvement Strategy and Cycle for 2019/20.

9. **Student Voice Strategy and Activities for 2019/20**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the strategy and activities for 2019/20 and explained that the list of activities provided key dates for governors to get involved.


Q. It is important for governors to be approachable – we meet students at Corporation as Student Governors and the conference. Would it be advisable for a governor to go on the Student Voice Steering Group?

A. Yes, governors have been asked about their areas of interest and this will be communicated to governors shortly. Barbara Hughes had previously attended the student voice committee. It is very important to ensure there are opportunities for learning walks as they are a good way of meeting students and seeing learning in action. Pre-Corporation small group meetings with students should continue to allow another opportunity for governors to meet students and hear their views first hand.

RESOLVED to approve the Student Voice Strategy and Activities for 2019/20.

10. **Bids and Projects**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and confirmed that the Access & Participation Plan had been approved and the College was on the Register of

initials


Apprenticeship Training Providers again.

Feedback had not yet been received regarding Northampton County Council Level 5 Management Apprenticeships. The College had previously had a good relationship with the Council.

An update was provided regarding the CW LEP and the fact that they would not be providing funding for Stratford upon Avon College. The Principal had written to the local MP to explain the College's disappointment.

The extension to the existing Business Elevator Project was presented and it was noted that this would be another joint bid with South & City College Birmingham and Birmingham Metropolitan College and was planned to start on 1st April 2020.

RESOLVED to approve the extension of the Business Elevator Plus Bid - with a total project cost of £2,518,193 subject to ESF funding of £1,259,092.

11. **Minutes of the meeting of the Search and Governance Committee that took place in 16th September 2019 and related reports**

The Chair of the Committee presented the minutes of the meeting of the Search and Governance Committee held on 16th September 2019.

RESOLVED to approve:

Reduction of Corporation numbers as follows:

With effect from 1st October 2019 reduce overall number to 19 full Corporation members (with no external members);

With effect from 1st July 2020 reduce overall number to 18 full Corporation members, reducing from 2 staff members during merger, back to 1 staff member for the College.


Appointment of both **Peter Bebbington** and **Tony Lucas** as full members of the Corporation.

Re-appointment of **Geraldine Swanton** to Dec 2023 as a full member of the Corporation and Audit Committee.

Re-appointment of **Tony Worth** to July 2023 as an external member of the Audit Committee.

12. **Minutes of the meeting of the Remuneration Committee that took place on 23rd September 2019 and related reports**

The Chair of the Committee presented the minutes of the meeting that took place on 23rd September 2019 and related reports. He explained that the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality Probationary Period, Senior Staff Remuneration Code and the clerking arrangements had been considered at the meeting.

initials


RESOLVED to approve the Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference and Policy on the Remuneration and Appraisal of Senior Post Holders and the Clerk.

13. **Governors' Development Day on 19th October 2019**

The Chair explained that the draft agenda had been circulated and would be finalised in due course.

14. **ETF Training for Governors**

The Chair noted the recent information about the ETF training opportunities and encouraged governors to study the courses – online and face to face. It was noted that governors would be required to update their online safeguarding training.

15. **Regular Update Reports**


15.1 Use of the College Seal and Chair's Signature – it was noted that the College Seal has not been used since the last meeting.

15.2 Tender Update Report – the contents of the tender update report were noted.

16. **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 15th October 2019 at the Woodlands campus, starting at 5.30pm.

Finish 8.25pm

Signed 
Date 16.10.19