

Solihull College and University Centre

Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 6th July 2022 in the Damson Suite, Blossomfield Campus

Present

Barbara Hughes (Chair)
Stan Baldwin
Paul Assinder
Christine Abbott
Scott Beasley
Tasleem Chaudary
Sarah Horton-Walsh
Lucy Lee
Tony Lucas
Lindsey Stewart (Acting Principal)
Harrison Thompson

Vic Gwozdz (FE Student Governor appointee)

In Attendance

Heather Evans (Vice Principal Finance)
Pete Haynes (Vice Principal HR and Student Services)
Rebecca Gater (Principal Designate/Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum)
Sam Bromwich (Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance)
Rosa Wells (Executive Director Employment & Skills and IoT)

Announcements

The Chair welcomed Andrew Lucas and Vic Gwozdz to the meeting. The Chair noted;

- Badri Gargeshnari and Neil Ladwa had both resigned as Governors. Badri is staying as expert advisor for IT.
- Zane Richter is leaving for university
- Stan Baldwin and Lindsey Stewart's last Corporation

Key Risks

Top Strategic Risks

The key risks were discussed.

Top Risks – Principal-[Clerk]-Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance

This item was deemed confidential and members of EMT, other senior staff and the FE Student Governor all left the meeting.

There was also a discussion regarding the revised job description of the Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance.

- 2. Apologies for Absence** were received from Badri Gargeshnari, Neil Ladwa, Geraldine Swanton, Sally Tomlinson, Donna Poole, Amirun Nehar and Lee Jamieson.

3. **Declarations of Interest in Relation to this Agenda**

There were no new declarations of interest.

4. **Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 26th May 2022**

4.1 **Minutes of 26th May, Matters Arising and Actions**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th May 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair, subject to the alterations identified being made.

4.2 **Matters Arising and Actions**

4.2.1 **Agile Working Policy**

It was noted that the second answer needed rewording.

Vice Principal HR & Student Services to reword the response. **Action**

4.2.2 **Gender Pay Gaps**

Summary data from other Colleges was requested.

Vice Principal HR & Student Services to bring to October meeting. **Action**

4.2.3 **Draft Strategic Plan 2022-5 and Annual Priorities 2022/23**

The Principal Designate reported that the Strategy SIG would now take place at end of September 2023.

4.2.4 **Feedback from Ofsted SIG**

Notes are now available on BoardEffect.

4.2.5 **Curriculum Structure and Staffing Changes 2022/23**

This item was deemed confidential so members of EMT, other senior staff and the FE Student Governor all left the meeting

5. **Financial Planning 2022/23**

Vice Principal Finance presented the report and provided an update including the Budget 2022/23 and Financial Plan 2022-5 and covering agenda items 5.1 to 5.5.

Q: Are the utility costs fixed?

A: Yes, for 12 months but will increase by at least 30%.

Q: A 3% increase in learner numbers seems optimistic. What other scenarios are modelled that show it's been stress tested?

A: Vector analysis shows students numbers will increase without an increase to market share. Curriculum areas planning for 6-7% growth.

Q: Learners seem very low. Value for money and quality of experience to students need to be looked at.

A: Principal Designate confirmed that we do analysis and future planning. Merging of key curriculum content across discipline to improve the student experience, e.g. engineering, construction and apprenticeships.

Q: What assumptions are being made regarding Stratford Funding?

A: We are assuming funding will be received from DfE, which is just under 50% and that phases 4 and 5 will go ahead. Nothing has been assumed regarding student residences ie no receipts from the sale or demolition costs. At the moment the receipt is considered most likely but as its not certain its not built into the budget.

The Vice Chair noted that many Colleges would like to be in such a strong financial position.

Q: Are other Colleges wanting to move from Financial Health Outstanding to Good?

A: Not many Colleges are in outstanding.

Agreed to **approve** Budget whilst noting the Financial forecast and ESFA financial return

5.6 Notes from Financial Oversight Group 29th June 2022

The notes from the Financial Oversight Group 29th June 2022 were received for information. It was noted that the College is in a very good financial position with £21 million in the bank with an underlying surplus of £1.9 million.

5.6.1 Notes from Financial Oversight Group 29th June 2022 – Confidential from EMT

This item was deemed confidential so members of EMT, other senior staff and the FE Student Governor all left the meeting?

6. Institute of Technology Report

Executive Director Employment and Skills & IOT presented the report and provided an update. Changes to Board membership. UCB now offering engineering and construction therefore they need a new executive member. The main hub is now open and would welcome a Governor visit.

Arrange a Governor visit. **Action**

Q: Under section 3.7, why did DfE need to calculate under performance?

A: There was under recruitment in 20/21 due to challenges of the pandemic so the DfE wanted to support IoT networks where there was underperformance

Q Could you summarise why being involved with the IoT is beneficial to College?

A – It raises College profile and helping to influence policy. RW was invited to Chair round table with Minister Donelan.

Q: What are the benefits to the students?

Investment in Capital to improve equipment and opportunities for staff development with state of art software training

Q: Is there a risk of any key partners not pulling their weight equally?

A: To date, some partners are more engaged than others but this is planned strategy due to best fit but will monitor. **Action**

Q: Are there any concerns regarding the Pearson construction issue? South and City College reduced their numbers but UCB have picked up their numbers. Only a shortfall of 5 and the DfE are happy.

Q: Any issues with a delay?

A: No

7. Apprenticeships Report

Executive Director Employment and Skills & IOT presented the report which included significant funding rule changes that is still in draft and reported that work was taking place with assessors, so they are ready for the changes. There is an ongoing risk as there are 2 sets of funding rules (new and continued apprentices) therefore we need to ensure curriculum teams are clear on the rules.

More age balanced enrolment is now being seen following the pandemic.

Q: Should we look at setting targets to improve and are they published?

A: We can look at doing so, if required. They currently sit in our QIP.

Q: If feedback was published, how wide an audience does it get?

A: Likely to be employers but available for anyone to access

Q: There is a sentence that doesn't make sense

Update the sentence. **Action**

Level 2 apprentices still have to be supported to upskill if they **have** time remaining to make meaningful progress

Q: How confident are you that assessors are contacting employers routinely to give/receive feedback about progress of apprentices?

A: We have a dashboard which all assessors access which gives full oversight. Need to ensure assessors are fully engaged in their development, including in the classroom.

Q: And there is training for employers?

A: Principal Designate confirmed there was.

Q: Have we seen any migrational demand, particularly within 16-18 year olds, from T Levels to Apprenticeships?

A: Possibly, but they are a slightly different group of students. However, we will be using T Levels as providing progression routes onto higher apprenticeships and we're hoping it will open up further opportunities.

- *The meeting considered Item 11 – Subcontracting Update immediately after Item 7.*
- *Rosa Wells, Executive Director Employment & Skills and IoT left the meeting after both items.*

8. Quality and Curriculum

8.1 QIP and Ofsted Action Plan Update

Principal Designate presented the report. She confirmed that Sandra White was appointed as Assistant Principal for Creative and Foundation from 1st September 2022.

Q: Are the Ofsted actions embedded in the QIP?

A: Yes.

Q: Is the QIP hyperlinked to the Safeguarding Improvement Plan?

A: Should be hyperlinked. Will put the link on before putting QIP onto Governors dashboard when document is made live.

Link to the Safeguarding Improvement Plan to be added to the QIP before uploading to the Governor dashboard. **Action**

Q Any feedback on how the staff development fortnight went?

A: Went very well with a wide range of programmes. PH confirmed that the Run, Hide, Tell activity was very well prepared. Level of engagement was very high with a serious message behind it. Will continue next academic year, maybe with student involvement.

8.2 Deep Dive Report

Principal Designate presented the report.

Q: Assume Findings in deep dive validate QIP, how does that happen?

A: Audit and Quality assurance processes themes feed into school or College QIP. Attendance fed into College QIP. We don't cross reference where all the areas for improvement come from.

Q We need confidence that QIP reflects deep dive.

A It would be useful to have the individual Schools Deep Dive report when Focus Group and Learning Walks are done.

Ensure Schools Deep Dive report included in Focus Group and Learning Walk procedures.

Action

Ask RG about Need to reinstate impact report – 1.42. Action

8.3 In-Year Progress Report

Principal Designate presented the report and highlighted the following;

Issues with low numbers in Business at Stratford and Performing Arts at Solihull. Need to ensure that we get enough numbers.

GCSE's predicted progress may not be as high, although considering national average if we can achieve predicted grades then we will still be in line with national average.

Apprenticeships, Minister Burghart wants to see a target of 67% achievement on apprenticeship programmes by 2025. Target is currently 52%. Only a minority of our programmes are below national average.

Q: What is the rationale behind it being so low, nationally?

A: Acting Principal confirmed that programmes got longer due to COVID, as practical programmes haven't been able to do the work e.g. Hairdressing and Barbering. National average is 27% and we are 83%

Q: You have the achievement line in, can we have that table with the line with actuals against predicted?

A: RG Yes

To show actual numbers against predicted in the progress report. **Action**

8.4 Destinations Report

Acting Principal presented the report.

8.5 Student Satisfaction Survey Spring Terms

Principal Designate confirmed lower response due to the lateness of the Easter break and Bank Holidays

Next year will be done 3 weeks before Easter. **Action**

Q The 2,000 students? What proportion is this of eligible respondents?

A Just under 50%.

Q The Ofsted SIG group raised concerns regarding lower levels of student satisfaction regarding students feeling safe and also lower scores regarding students behaving appropriately. It is important to check in on this at the beginning of the next academic year.

A Noticeable difference in student behaviour compared to previous years due to COVID.

Q Would it be sensible for some of focus groups to be themed, rather than asking full breadth of questions for Governors?

A That would be good as would triangulate what we're doing and can dig more into the progress they are making on the course when they've got into it more.

Consider focus groups to be themed. **Action**

Q Should students be made aware of this survey in their first 6 weeks and given an opportunity to ask questions?

A Vice Principal HR & Student Services suggested this timing may have more effect. There is certainly a lot of discussion when the surveys are taking place with focus on tutors to emphasise importance.

8.6 Feedback from Governor Learning Visits (May 2022)

The Chair thanked those who were able to do these. Key thing is how we then hear back about aspects that needed answering/improvement.

Q: Principal Designate asked if they received the feedback from Anne?

A: No

Anne to send the feedback grid to Governors. **Action**

Q: It would be beneficial to have more time with Additional Learning students as it takes time to build a rapport with them.

A: Principal Designate to ask Anne to reply to Tony

Anne to reply to Tony. **Action**

8.7 Notes from Ofsted SIG 20th June 2022

The notes from the Ofsted SIG 20th June 2022 were received for information. The Chair assured Governors that we are supporting and challenging the improvements needed.

Q Did the meeting with Ian Smith take place?

A Principal Designate confirmed yes and it was very positive. He will be very active on a regular basis and give an objective review to provide external reassurance.

9. Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting on 14th June 2022

Vice Principal Finance presented this item which included a recommendation from the Risk Appetite session to build this into Governors papers in the future where significant decisions need to be made.

Q Can we try this with the Stratford residences discussions?

A Will trial on the Heat Network project first.

3 items were **approved**. Risk register and board assurance report and plan, internal audit plan for next year and KPMG's Financial Statements Audit plan.

An Auditors' discussion will be on the October Audit Committee agenda. **Action**

Post-meeting amendments

Item 9.4 – Health & Safety Report

Item 9.5 – Key Projects and External Funding

The above were presented to the meeting and the items noted

10. Policies

10.1 Expenses Policy

Vice Principal Finance presented the policy explained that the HMRC need to approve any new subsistence rates. Car mileage claims to become an online process.

Q Are we paying the HMRC mileage rate?

A: Yes, the unions have accepted our policy.

To get approval from HMRC for the subsistence rates and to bring policy back to Corporation in October for approval. **Action**

10.2 Paternity Policy

Vice Principal HR & Student Services presented the policy. Only minor changes regarding entitlements over stillbirth or loss of babies.

Under 3.2 it refers to maternity instead of paternity.

Vice Principal HR & Student Services to amend report. **Action**

Q Consider merging maternity/paternity as it could be deemed sexist?

A They are very different policy entitlements in terms of entitlements, so we have made sure the terminology is appropriate.

The Paternity Policy was approved

10.3 Shared Parental Leave

Very few changes except references to adoption.

The Shared Parental Leave Policy was **approved**

11. Subcontracting Update

Acting Principal presented the subcontracting plan for approval. Executive Director Employment and Skills & IOT to continue to report each term. £1.4 million contract with WMCA. We will continue to monitor the profile and report back. Proposed to bring, Apprenticeships, IoT and Subcontracting as a suite of 3 reports. This was agreed.

3 reports to be combined from the next Termly update on future agendas. **Action**

Q Does RMF contract allow us to scale up?

A No. We have to request specific funding from WMCA.

Q: Can we have pre tender rates so the price is fixed.

A: Vice Principal Finance confirmed we have a tender amount of £3.6m over 3 years. We cannot go above this amount so if money used before the end of tender would mean bringing to an end earlier.

Q: 20% retained by the College is really good income for the College.

A: It's why it's significant in the risks. but we do spend a lot of time with them.

Happy to **approve** updated Subcontracting plan 22/23.

- *The meeting considered Item 11 – Subcontracting Update immediately after Item 7.*
- *Rosa Wells, Executive Director Employment & Skills and IoT left the meeting after both items.*

12. IT Update

Vice Principal Finance reported that she and Director of IT had met with Badri to look at how the IT paper can be simplified so it's more of a table format. She reported that the contract for the Manage Threat Response had been approved on an 8 month trial.

It was noted that Badri had played an important role in the report. A note of thanks to him as he's stepping down as a Governor but remaining as an advisor.

To simplify the format of the next IT paper in November. **Action**

13. Property Update

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and provided an update regarding:

13.1.1 Heat Network

The Vice Principal Finance confirmed there is still one main item for discussion which is cap on liability. SMBC need to know that we are committed and want us to sign letter of intent. She would prefer to get overall approval next week which gives opportunity to review and forward any questions before next meeting.

Q: Do we sign a letter of intent with a view to ratification of the agreement next week?

A: Vice Principal Finance confirmed SMBC need us to be happy with contract terms. They need to be 100% sure that we are in Phase 1, so they can award their D1 contract. We can't sign it first, but SMBC need to know we're in before they can get their cabinet to approve.

Q: Can we ensure we have no financial liability?

A: No. As their financial model extremely tight. We need to accept that we will incur some costs, however, there is potentially extra costs if we don't do it, as our own heat Network costs will be significantly higher.

Q: Will we know the costs by next week?

A: No. There will be some of our own costs which SMBC won't cover.

Q: Who has control over the tariff and rates?

A: That will be written into project and will be a commitment from SMBC to continue to benchmark that for best value.

Q: What's ESCo based on? Carbon/Non carbon based?

A: Carbon, as it's gas.

Q: What happens if they make a profit?

A- That company would make a profit, but margins would be so low they are not anticipating it will happen. If they do it will be part of ESCo.

The Vice Principal Finance confirmed she will get more background around the tariffs and can have a separate call if necessary to go through detail. SMBC would be happy to

Q Where and with who, has detailed scrutiny of the contract?

A Vice Principal Finance, our Legal Counsel, 3 consultants, our legal team Shakespeare Martineau and a Heat Network expert.

Q: Should there be some Governor scrutiny on this?

A: Agree

An invite to Governors to be sent to consider who would happy doing this. **Action**

The Chair recommended approval of the letter of intent. The letter was **approved**.

13.1.2 Stratford Campus Redevelopment

The Vice Principal Finance noted that the demolition contractor has come back with extended program that says can't start demolition until 8th August. We will award the contract subject to being able to resolve that.

She also noted that F Block refurbishment has to happen after the demolition is complete.

Approval is required around F Block so we can award the contract.

13.1.3 Student Residences

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and recommended to go ahead with Nantes Property Limited.

To agree Heads of Terms and enter into exclusivity agreement. This allows the developer to put in their planning application. **Action**

Q: Have we had a conversation with original owners?

A: The Vice Principal Finance confirmed we had. They didn't respond with a proposal. She also confirmed this paper is **confidential** to this meeting due to commercial sensitivity.

13.1.4 Growth in Construction Learners

The Vice Principal Finance confirmed a planning application has now been submitted for an additional brick workshop.

13.1.5 Woodlands Campus – future property strategy

The Vice Principal Finance has confirmed discussions are continuing with SMBC.

13.1.6 Tudor Grange House – Overage Deed Variation

It was noted that the Overage Deed Variation was agreed.

13.2 Notes from Property SIG 20th June 2022

These were received for information.

14. Bids and projects

Vice Principal Finance presented the report which was for information except for a bid to approve which is a Capital bid for Office for Students for lesson capture software and room configuration which is 100% funded.

The bid was approved.

15. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair proposed that there were joint vice chairs.

The item was deemed confidential and the two candidates for the role of Joint Vice-Chairs left the meeting

The two candidates returned and the Chair was pleased to confirm their appointment as Joint Vice Chairs (for a maximum tenure of four years which is approved annually by Governors):

- **Paul Assinder** – for a period of one-year in the first instance with effect from 01 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.
- **Tony Lucas** - for a period of one-year in the first instance with effect from 01 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.

16. Governance

16.1 Membership as at 1st July 2022

The item was deemed confidential from the FE Student Governor [appointee] and she left the meeting

The FE Student Governor will be appointed in the new term.

The FE Student Governor left the meeting following discussion of this item.

16.2 Register of Governors and EMT interest

The Chair requested to notify the Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance of any updates.

17. Dates for 2022/23

The Chair requested that if Governors were unable to attend any of the dates, to please let us know.

18. Senior Staff update

The item was deemed confidential from the Vice Principal Finance and the Vice Principal HR & Student Services and they left the meeting.

The Chair said what an extraordinary year it had been and it had been a privilege to work with both Stan Baldwin and Lindsey Stewart. She expressed her thanks to them on behalf of the Governors.

Post-meeting amendments

19. Items for Information

The following items were received for information

19.1 Termly Procurement Report

19.2 Use of the College Seal and e-signature

19.3 Tender Update Report

19.4 PMR April

19.5 Fraud Log

19.6 Access and Participation Plan

Date of the Next Meeting

- A Strategy SiG had been scheduled for Monday 20th June 2022 at 5pm on Teams
- **The first Corporation meeting of the new academic year takes place on Wednesday 05 October 2022 in the Damson Suite at the Blossomfield Campus.**

Signed



Date 05 October 2022

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Harrison Thompson

In attendance Sam Bromwich (Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance)

These items were deemed confidential and members of EMT, other senior staff along with the FE Student Governor, left the meeting.

1. Top Risks – Principal-[Clerk]-Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance

4.2.5 Curriculum Structure and Staffing Changes 2022/23

5.6.1 Notes from Financial Oversight Group 29th June 2022 – [Confidential from EMT]

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The item was deemed confidential and the two candidates for the role of Joint Vice-Chairs left the meeting

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Sam Bromwich (Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance)

The item was deemed confidential from the FE Student Governor appointee – and she left the meeting

16. Governance

16.1 Membership at 01 July 2022

The FE Student Governor left the meeting following discussion of this item.

Solihull College and University Centre

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18. Senior Staff update