



CORPORATION

FINAL SIGNED Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 7 February 2017 at 5.30pm in the Function Room, Peakman Campus, Redditch

Present

Governors:	Neill Bucktin	Chair
	Steve Bolton*	
	Kevin Gaffney*	
	Vikki Greenfield*	
	Lucy Hodgson*	
	Stuart Laverick	Principal
	Karen Lowe	
	Paul McCunn*	
	Denis Miles*	
	Debbie Morris	
	Robert Pearce*	
	David Rowe*	

By VC: Gary Woodman
(Louise Gresty)

In Attendance: Kelvin Nash Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality
Nicki Williams Vice Principal Corporate & Resources
Sue Frost Clerk to the Corporation

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Governor Development

The meeting was preceded by training on Higher Education, including the new assurance regime. The Chair thanked Peter Robinson, Assistant Principal HE, Standards and Professional for leading the session and the Governors who were able to attend.

* Indicates Governor attendance.

Paper format

The Chair reminded Members that the papers were in an experimental format with an Executive Summary pack and supporting papers in a folder on the Governor Portal. Feedback would be gathered at the end of the meeting.

19.1 Apologies

i) Apologies were received from Sue Fowler (Vice Chair), Amber Carrington, Peter Heath and Fiona Hellowell. Louise Gresty was available for the meeting but, due to technical difficulties with the skype link not accepting two calls in, kindly stepped aside to allow Gary Woodman to participate.

19.2 Declarations of Interest

i) Members were asked to declare any Interests, financial or otherwise, which

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they may have in any Agenda Item. Paul McCunn declared his wife's employment at the College and Lucy Hodgson declared her membership of the County Council in the context of the Perdiswell development. Other Members confirmed that they had no interests to declare.

19.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

- i) Two minor amendments to the Minutes were highlighted in the pack. The Corporation **APPROVED** the revised Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2016 as a true record for signature by the Chair.

19.4 Matters Arising

- i) The Corporation reviewed the Action Points report and noted progress. Eight actions had been completed and five were later Agenda items. The following points were noted:

18.16 i): Staff Data – Turnover. 73% of leavers had exit interviews. (Excluding redundancy and those who left for performance management reasons including dismissals or via ill-health.)

13/12/16: 18.14 iii) Governor Insight Scheme. The proposed changes had been made to the scheme and feedback forms and the Governor Insight Scheme would be discussed at the next Corporation Workshop.

24/05/16: 15.8 Ofsted. A meeting had been arranged with Solihull College on 13 March 2017 to discuss Governance issues and Members were asked to contact the Clerk to the Corporation if they were able to attend.

13/12/16: 18.25 (i) HE Advertising: The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality reported that local competition may have affected numbers on some courses. The College continued to develop its Higher Education offer and was considering relocating some courses in 2017/18.

Members

- ii) The Corporation **MONITORED** action taken and remaining to be taken in respect of Matters Arising from the Minutes of previous meetings and Notes of workshops.

19.5 Determination of Any Other Urgent Business

- i) There was no other urgent business.

19.6 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

i) Principal's Update for Governors

The Principal presented his report which included commentary on the College position with reference to the West Midlands Combined Authority, Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP – Growth Fund Allocations, Night Schools, Work Experience in Study Programmes, Brexit and the Apprenticeships/Levy. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality had met with Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils, earlier in the day and was informed that over 100 projects had been submitted to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership. The College bid for the Engineering and Construction improvements in Redditch and Bromsgrove was graded a "C" in terms of importance, where "A" was highest priority. No decisions would be made until after the Stoke By-Election. The Quality Group was asked to look at the Study Programme, particularly the Work Experience component. The Staff Governor reported that this was a valuable part of study for students, including those with Special Educational Needs. Brexit provided opportunities in respect of the need to grow home grown workers and was in the College Risk Register.

ii) Curriculum and Quality Key Performance Indicators

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality presented RAG rated statistics as at

21 and 26 January 2017 for Retention (green), Attendance (3 amber, 1 red), Maths and English attendance (1 green, 2 amber, 1 red) and Lesson Observations (green). Retention at all ages and within all Directorates was above the KPI set. Overall, for 16 -18 year olds, retention was 97.3%, 1% point lower than previous report and 0.5% point lower than prior year; For adults, retention was 96.8%, 0.5% point lower than previous report and 2.3% point lower than prior year.

Overall attendance figures were below target. Attendance on main qualification was at 89.6%, 1% point lower than last report, comparable with the same period in 2015/16; Functional Skills attendance was 4% points higher than the same period in 2015/16 and GCSE was 6.8% points higher than at the same period in 2015/16, showing the impact of College strategies to target English and maths attendance issues. Four programme areas had low English and maths attendance: Public Services, Sport, Travel and tourism and Automotive and there were action plans in place at course and individual level to improve these areas.

Lesson Observations were about 60% complete, 83% Good or better and a breakdown was provided by programme area.

Governors challenged the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality, asking:

- Why was English and maths attendance significantly lower in the Directorate of Access, Care, Service Industries and Sport? This area included three of the four Programme areas being targeted for improvement. There were no national benchmarks but anecdotal evidence indicated that these were common problem areas for English and maths.
- Was behaviour an issue? Yes, in some cases, but this was being action planned on an individual level. Russell Jordan had seen evidence of this alongside improved attendance in his recent Support and Challenge visit. The Staff Governor stated that Russell Jordan had shown staff information about College grades and has stressed the importance of impact on progress in English and maths, not just end qualifications.
- With improved attendance, the key risk to success was the quality of teaching – how was that secured for students with tutors with poor observation grades? Tutors with grades 3 or 4 lessons were supported by a quality mentor who would suggest tools and shadow learning, then reobserved within four weeks. Students would continue blended learning and would be supported by Personal Trainers and Personal Learning Coaches. Learning Walks would be used to monitor the situation. A further Grade 3 or 4 would result in the use of the Capability Procedure. New teachers had three observations whilst in probation.
- Could poor attendance be correlated with poor teaching? There were some links, as attendance was a component of the observation grade. There was a supportive process to improve those with poor grades and there were some areas which did not score highly in observation but had high satisfaction and success rates. (For example IT, because of the screen focus.)

iii) Financial Key Performance Indicators

The Vice Principal Corporate & Resources presented the RAG rated December 2016/17 data including student numbers (4 amber), financial outturn (2 red), financial health (1 green, 1 amber, 1 red) and bank covenants (3 red) and an actual against budgeted cash forecast for 2016/17. The Vice Principal Corporate & Resources explained that these were the first figures

which included actual adult learner funding (based on the First Statistical Return) and reflected the impact of Higher Education under recruitment. The current projection for the year end was a £615k deficit against a budgeted £163k surplus (December Corporation forecast £62k deficit). Steps were being taken to control non pay expenditure and manage vacancies.

Governors challenged the Director of Finance, asking whether the College and Governors should have known about the position earlier. Higher Education income had many variables and was difficult to predict accurately so the November return was key. Higher Education fees were at 86% of target, due in part to Worcester University successfully recruiting to its new law course. This was unlikely to improve in year. There might be some further income in respect of the Apprenticeship Levy, as predictions there were cautious, but that was unknown.

iv) Health and Safety Update – Term 1 2016/17

The Vice Principal Corporate & Resources reported that the summary included some trend data as requested, with more detail available in the meeting folder on the Governor Portal. There had been 97 reported incidents, including 39 accidents (Term 1 2015/16: 51 accidents). There were no accidents reportable under RIDDOR. More staff members were being trained in First Aid and this was being written into some job descriptions. A small stock of a potentially dangerous and explosive chemical, 2,4 Dinitrophenyl hydrazine, had been disposed of by the Army Bomb Disposal Unit, in accordance with Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services instructions.

The Corporation **RECEIVED** the Principal's Report and **MONITORED** progress against targets.

Members agreed to discuss the loan position next, original Agenda numbering retained for consistency.

19.12 Barclays Bank Loan

i) The Vice Principal Corporate & Resources explained that bank covenants were projected to be breached at the year end and that the College had re-examined the cost and benefit of repaying the Barclays Bank loans. (Considered by the Corporation in April 2016 with no action taken at that point.) The College had entered discussions with Barclays Bank because of the covenant breaches at 31 July 2016. As a result of the proposed insolvency regime, renegotiated terms would be imposed on a secured basis, requiring revaluation of the College estate and legal costs and an increased loan margin.

ii) The pack included detailed figures for the loan balances, rates, annual interest and interest over the remaining loan life and the conclusions from an external report commissioned from Finalysis. (The Governor portal included the full report.) The Finalysis report supported the repayment of the Barclays Bank loans at a breakage cost estimated by Barclays of £394k. If repaid, the £394k would be an exceptional charge to the Income and Expenditure account, increasing the deficit position and reducing cash balances - the impact on key ratios and financials was modelled using the KPI data in the pack.

iii) Repayment of the Barclays loan would reduce the stress on the NatWest and Santander covenants by reducing the ongoing debt servicing costs and the College would discuss the position with each lender. If the Corporation

approved the repayment, Barclays required specific information in the Minutes and it was hoped that an appropriate draft could be brought to the meeting on 21 March 2017 for formal approval. Repayment could then be made before the next quarter rollover, 31 March 2017, subject to Barclays Bank processes.

- iv) The Corporation **RECEIVED** the report from Finalysis, **CONSIDERED** the repayment of the Barclays Bank loans and **APPROVED** the repayment of the Barclays Bank loans, including the exceptional break charge currently estimated at £394k.

The meeting returned to the Agenda order.

TEACHING LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

19.7 Curriculum and Quality Key Performance Indicators

- i) The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality confirmed that the information in this additional paper had been covered in the KPI report.
- ii) The Corporation **MONITORED** Retention and Attendance and maths and English/ Functional Skills attendance against prior year equivalent data.

19.8 Quality Group

- i) The Quality Group Chair, Karen Lowe, reported that the Quality Group had been benefitted from a presentation from Julia Breakwell, Assistant Principal Information Systems and Student Experience on the Learner Survey and from a deep dive presentation on Apprenticeships from Tony Green, Director Employer and External Relationships. Some changes were being considered to the Learner Survey questions. Regarding Apprenticeships, it was useful for the members to see the drill down of Apprenticeship information to an individual level and to understand the difficulties with overall and timely completion, particularly in regard to Engineering and Construction. There was an issue with sign offs for timely completion which might be due to resourcing difficulties. Vikki Greenfield added that with the move to end of framework assessment under the levy, not being timely would cost money. The Principal agreed to look at the case loading and staff availability of assessors with the Director Employer and External Relationships.

Principal/
DEER

- ii) All Members were invited to meetings – 27 February 2017 would include a Deep Dive into maths and English, consideration of the Study Programme and employability and an update on the work of the Teaching, Assessment, Learning and Quality Group (TALQ). The Clerk to the Corporation agreed to recirculate dates to Members.
- iii) The Corporation **RECEIVED** the Notes of the Quality Group meeting held on 18 January 2017.

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19.9 Governor Insight Scheme – Autumn Term 2016

- i) The Governor Insight Scheme Champion, Denis Miles, reported on Autumn Term activity. Three Governors had attended Self Assessment Report validation meetings, two had attended Directorate Quality Reviews, one had taken part in an accompanied Learning Walk and there were five feedback forms on the Portal. The limited data meant that it was not appropriate to pull out the key themes but this would be done for the next report in the summer term. The Governor Champion felt that the Scheme offered the opportunity to learn and to triangulate management information. If the Scheme proved informative for Ofsted, that was a useful by-product, not a purpose. Reporting

was important because not every Governor had the time to participate.

- ii) The Corporation **RECEIVED** a summary of activity from the Governor Champion and **NOTED** that the Governor Insight Scheme would be discussed at the 25 April 2017 Workshop.

Higher Education

19.10 Academic Board

- i) The Corporation **RECEIVED** the Minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 9 December 2016, verbally reported on 13 December 2016

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

19.11 Tender Committee

- i) The Corporation Chair reported on the Tender Committee Meeting held on 19 January 2017 where the tenders for the third phase of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) project (to create a dedicated, refurbished space for SEN students at Worcester & Redditch, including the acquisition of specialist equipment) were considered. The contract was awarded with the proviso that the contractor would work with the College to reduce costs without detriment to the scheme as the tenders were all over budget. When asked why the tenders were so far from the budgeted sum, the Vice Principal Corporate & Resources explained that the specification had been changed in some respects, following the experience of the Worcester project.
- ii) The Corporation **NOTED** the outcome of the recent Tender Committee appointing a contractor to undertake the third and final Phase SEN (Special Education Needs) Project at Peakman Street Redditch.

AUDIT

19.13 SFA Provider Financial Management & Assurance

- i) The Corporation **NOTED** the KPMG Funding Assurance Review Final report, including management responses, related to the Audit Reports to the Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency approved at the last Corporation meeting.

GOVERNANCE

19.14 Inspection

- i) Kevin Gaffney reported on the meeting with Russell Jordan HMI which had been attended by six Governors and the Clerk to the Corporation. Russell Jordan had reported on the national and regional picture and provided some information from his observations of English and maths that day. (Subsequently reported by letter to the College, emailed to Governors.) Points arising included:
 - The need for Governors to prove how they make a difference
 - The fact that English and maths had produced poor regional grades in the last year in a well performing region
 - Solihull suggested as a good exemplar of maths and English practice and as a possible model for Governor tracking of improvement from a Grade 3 Ofsted report
 - The importance of academic expertise on the Corporation
 - The difficulties of mixed ability groups and limited funding to provide classroom support to alleviate this
- ii) The Corporation:
 - **CONSIDERED** verbal feedback from the meeting with Russell Jordan HMI on 19 January 2017

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- **NOTED** Governance extracts from West Midlands Inspections provided by Russell Jordan
- **NOTED** the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2015/16

19.15 Corporation Calendar

- i) The Clerk to the Corporation explained the basis for the formation of the Corporation Calendar for 2017/18, asked Members for comments as to balance and asked Committee Chairs to advise as soon as possible if any dates posed problems for them.
- ii) The Corporation **CONSIDERED** the Corporation meeting schedule for 2017/18.

Committee Chairs

Members agreed to discuss Confidential Items 19.19 to 19.21 at this point, which are recorded as Confidential Minutes 1 of 2. The meeting then returned to the Agenda order.

19.16 Any Other Urgent Business

- i) There was no other urgent business.

19.17 Meeting Reflection

- i) The Chair asked for comments on the trial format for papers and the meeting and the following points were made:
- One Governor said that the Executive Summary pack was easy to access on the Governor Portal and it was easy to dive into the supporting papers, which received some assent in the room
 - One Governor preferred to have all the documents in one combined format
 - It would be helpful:
 - for the Chair to make reference to where in the papers or the folders to look, as screen shifting was sometimes necessary
 - if the Executive summary cover papers contained better reference to the papers in the folder
 - if the folder could be persuaded to store the supporting documents in numerical sequence
 - to include a place marker sheet in the Executive Summary pack where there were papers with no cover sheets
 - Governors might find it easier to move the folder with the supporting papers into Adobe
- ii) The Corporation **REVIEWED** the meeting, being generally positive about the trial papers format, and were **INVITED** to complete the Meeting Effectiveness Form.

19.18 Date and Time of Next Meeting

- i) Tuesday 21 March 2017, 5pm for 5.30pm, All Saints Building, Worcester
- ii) Tuesday 25 April 2017, Corporation Workshop, 5pm for 5.30pm, Function Room, Redditch

The Staff and Student Members left the meeting at this point.

Members discussed Confidential Items 19.22 to 19.23, which are recorded as Restricted Confidential Minutes 2 of 2.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

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Signed:

Date:

Sue Frost
Clerk to the Corporation
8 February 2017