



CORPORATION

FINAL SIGNED Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 23 May 2017

at 5.30pm in The Source, All Saints' Building, Worcester

Present

Governors:	Neill Bucktin	Chair
	Steve Bolton	
	Amber Carrington	
	Sue Fowler	Vice Chair
	Kevin Gaffney	
	Vikki Greenfield	
	Peter Heath	
	Lucy Hodgson	
	Stuart Laverick	Principal
	Karen Lowe	
	Paul McCunn	
	Debbie Morris	
	Robert Pearce	
David Rowe		
Gary Woodman		

By Conference Call: Louise Gresty

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

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22.1 Apologies

- i) Apologies were received from Denis Miles and Fiona Hellowell. Louise Gresty would join the meeting by telephone.

22.2 Declarations of Interest

- i) The Clerk to the Corporation reported advice received from Ben Wood, Partner with Eversheds Sutherland. Although the specific context was no longer relevant the key principles remained as previously discussed. Under Instrument 11 and the Corporation's Standing Orders and Code of Conduct where a Governor has an interest, they cannot participate in the debate, vote or count as part of the quorum. The Governor would also have to leave the meeting in the event that a majority of Members required it. It was unlikely that general discussions about future possibilities would require Members to withdraw as long as the potential conflicts are declared and members appreciate that conflicts may arise as discussions develop. Potential difficulties for some Governors with possible interests were acknowledged and the importance of confidentiality stressed.

The Corporation **NOTED** advice from Eversheds Sutherland with regard to Conflict of Interests.

ii) Members were asked to declare any Interests, financial or otherwise, which they may have in any Agenda Item and the following declarations were made:

- Lucy Hodgson – Worcester City Councillor, re Cinderella Ground and Perdiswell.
- Paul McCunn – whose wife was a College employee – Staffing Matters.
- Gary Woodman – Chief Executive Worcestershire Learning and Enterprise Partnership – Engineering Faculty.
- Robert Pearce – Tender Committee – Robert received a pension from a company that had been subsumed into one of the tender parties but had not been aware of that until attendance at the meeting.

Members confirmed that, in line with Eversheds advice, there was no need for Paul McCunn to withdraw from the discussion about general staff awards. Other Members confirmed that they had no interests to declare.

22.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

i) The Corporation **APPROVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2017 as a true record for signature by the Chair.

ii) The Corporation **APPROVED** the Notes of the workshop held on 25 April 2017 as a true record for signature by the Chair.

22.4 Matters Arising

i) The Corporation reviewed the Action Points report and noted progress. Ten actions had been completed or would be completed during the meeting and seven carried forward. Members acknowledged the additional information provided in notes, which would form part of later Agenda items with the exception of:

26/11/16 - Strategic Planning Event, 3 iv) Governance Conference and Ofsted. At the meeting on 16 February 2017, the Governance and Search Committee proposed the use of the Ofsted presentation slides from the November Away Event as a tool for assessment and improvement at the Workshop on 25 April 2017. Due to pressure on time this was not included and had been added to the next Governance and Search Committee Agenda following discussion with the Principal, Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality and Assistant Principal Higher Education & Standards.

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.

Louise Gresty joined the meeting by phone at this point.

22.5 Determination of Any Other Urgent Business

i) There was no other urgent business.

22.6 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

i) Principal's Update for Governors

The Principal's Report provided updates with regard to the following, several of which were later Agenda Items:

- Financial Pressures in the FE Sector and the letter from Peter Lauener, the Chief Executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The Principal commented that it was vital to have a more accurate master budget for 2017/18 as the extent of the shortfall in numbers in 2016/17 had not been anticipated. This was not helped by poor communication of funding and policy changes, with the Education and Skills Funding Agency adding to financial uncertainties as a result of decisions relating to non-levy apprenticeship funding.
- NEC Facilities. Governors would be invited to see this provision.
- Stratford upon Avon College. The Principal had communicated the decision not to proceed further with the merger process. The College continued to work with Stratford upon Avon College number of curriculum and business support areas.
- Institute of Technology. The Conservative manifesto seemed to have realigned the Institutes of Technology to University degree and research level.
- Maths and English. These continued to be a condition of funding and this could well persist until T levels began in 2019.
- Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges Commissioners Letter to Colleges. The College continued to be conscious of the features of weak and strong Colleges. Capital pressure in the sector was likely to become an issue. (The Vice Principal Corporate & Resources confirmed that global estate and condition information was no longer provided to the agencies.) Members noted that eleven of the mergers proposed as part of Area Review (approximately a third) had collapsed before completion.

ii) Curriculum and Quality Key Performance Indicators

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality presented the KPI report which included RAG rated indicators for retention at 27 April 2017 which were green and above overall targets, but were lower than at the same point last year, reflecting the tightening of student standards. Overall retention was at 93.3% for 16 – 18 year olds (target 92%, prior year equivalent 94.5%, previous month 93.1%) and at 94.2% for adults (target 93%, prior year equivalent 94.6%, previous month 94.4%).

The data included RAG rated indicators for attendance at 27 April 2017 (3 amber, 1 red) and Maths and English attendance (1 green, 3 amber). Attendance figures continued below the targets, which were appropriately aspirational, with English and maths having improved compared with this time last year. Attendance on main qualification was at 88.78%, (target 91%, prior year equivalent 89.11%, previous month 88.94%) Functional skills 84.50% (target 86%, prior year equivalent 80.52%, previous month 84.6%) and GCSE at 79.92% (target 86%, prior year equivalent 76.48%, previous month 81.4%). Lower attendance levels continued to centre on the Directorate of Access, Care, Service Industries and Sport courses in Public Services, Sport, Early Years and Media and Games. There were concentrated low level attendance patterns with some year two groups who would be moving on at the year end.

231 lesson observations had been carried out (excluding re-observations)

Action

with 83% graded Good or better. The papers included a breakdown by vocational area and a note to Matters Arising included information about Agency staff observations. Lesson Observations and Learning Walks had now ended.

VPCQ

Members discussed what was required in response to Minute 21.6 ii), a request for “further information on attendance distribution in order to inform target setting (possibly at a more granular level) for 2017/18”. Members explained that this was a request to isolate variables such as known problem groups and groups affected by ill health to see what underlying trends were, expressed as a quarterly trend for the year and prior year (if possible). Governors also requested an analysis of the success of students with poor attendance who were given extra support.

Governors challenged the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality, asking:

- How had retention increased 0.2% points since the previous month? This was due to additional adult course such as Prince’s Trust courses starting or to late register input.
- What measures would be put in place in September to improve English and maths? Much work had been done to stress the importance of the subjects and achieving the qualifications. This was seen in Student Department Leadership team meetings and in tutorial feedback – those students progressing internally would understand the need to engage with English and maths.

iii) **Financial Key Performance Indicators**

The Director of Finance presented the RAG rated data including student numbers and funding (1 green, 3 amber), financial outturn (2 red), financial health (1 green, 1 amber, 1 red) and bank covenants (2 red) and an actual against budgeted cash forecast for 2016/17 which had been updated to reflect the repayment of the Barclays Bank Loans at 31 March 2017. The current projection for the year end was a £917k operating deficit against a budgeted £163k surplus (March Corporation meeting year end forecast £1071k deficit). Financial health remained good, although further action to reduce costs could result in this becoming unsatisfactory. Cash flow was at its lowest at £8.8m due to the repayment of the Barclays Bank loans.

Governors asked what impact the pension valuation adjustments would have. This was not known until August/September and bore little resemblance to the actual pension position, so it was impossible to react in advance.

iv) **Health and Safety Update – Term 2 2016/17**

The Vice Principal Corporate & Resources reminded Member that a more detailed report was available on the Governor Portal. The data showed and reported that there had been 83 reported incidents, including 41 accidents and 2 near misses (Term 2 2016/17 43 accidents and near misses). There was one accident reportable under RIDDOR and there had been two serious incidents involving apprentices at their place of work. The College was employing Hettle Andrews risk assurance services to increase assurance over Health and Safety matters and Governor Training was offered as part of the package.

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

v) **Strategic Plan 2016/17**

The Corporation **NOTED** that progress against the Strategic Plan 2016/17 was monitored at the Corporation Workshop on 25 April 2017.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

22.7 Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges Commissioners Letter to Colleges

- i) The Corporation **RECEIVED** the letter and **NOTED** matters raised and the comments under the Principal's Update at 22.6 i).

22.8 Education and Skills Funding Agency Chief Executive Letter to College Accounting Officers

- i) The Corporation **RECEIVED** the letter and **NOTED** matters raised and the comments under the Principal's Update at 22.6 i).

22.9 Skills Funding Agency

- i) The Director of Finance reported that the Skills Funding Agency had reviewed the College submission, which had rated the College as satisfactory underlying Financial Health and had upgraded it to good with no significant concerns to report.

- ii) The Corporation **NOTED** the Skills Funding Agency Financial Statements Letter and Financial Dashboard.

ESTATES

22.10 Engineering Faculty

- i) The Corporation **NOTED** the proposed support of the Worcestershire LEP for a new Engineering Faculty in Worcestershire.

22.11 Institute of Technology

- i) The Corporation:
- **NOTED** the comments under the Principal's Update at 22.6 i).
 - **NOTED** that approval in principle was not being sought at this time because any progress with the programme is on hold until after the General Election in June.

22.12 The Base – Specialist Educational Needs provision

- i) Several Governors had been able to attend the two opening events and meet staff and students. Debbie Morris, Staff Governor and CRQ Leader SEN Foundation, reported that the students loved the new facilities. The Vice Principal Corporate & Resources reported that the works had been completed on time and close to budget, with some adjustment made for some additional features.

- ii) The Corporation
- **NOTED** the opening of the new facilities
 - **RECEIVED** a report on the achievement of the plans against time and cost

22.13 Perdiswell

- i) The Vice Principal Corporate & Resources reported that work on the College facilities had been completed and that Sports staff and students were delighted with the new studios and staff room. There had been additional costs with air conditioning but these had been met from contingency funds.

- ii) Governors challenged the Vice Principal Corporate & Resources, asking:

- How visible was the College presence? There was signage above the double doors to the studios and external signage would be put in place at the football pitch entrance.
- How long was the contract? Freedom Leisure had a ten-year minimum, contract which was extendable for three years and the College had to be offered usage with that. If the operating company changed then the College would negotiate with the City Council for inclusion and continued use. Favourable annual pass terms were offered to staff and students.

iii) The Corporation **RECEIVED** an update on developments at the Perdiswell Leisure Centre.

TEACHING LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

22.14 Quality Improvement Strategy 2017-20

i) The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality reported changes to the Quality Improvement Strategy 2017-20 which was available in full on the Governor Portal. It was substantially as previously approved, with adjustments to titles, groups and dates.

ii) The Corporation **APPROVED** the Quality Improvement Strategy 2017-20.

22.15 Quality Group

i) The Quality Group Chair reminded members that the Notes were in the Supporting Papers folder on the Governor Portal and reported that the Staffing Deep Dive, presented by Angela Richardson, the Quality Manager, had been valuable. Governors had been struck by the low numbers of staff employed to teach English and maths and had **ASKED** the Principal to consider recruiting more English and maths teachers (or upskilling existing staff) even if only for one year. A Member recalled that Full Time Equivalent English and maths teachers had decreased from 13 to 10 and the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality said that this was due to a change of mix requiring fewer lecturers and more business support staff for Functional Skills delivery.

The next Deep Dive was on SOLA (Scheduled On Line Assessment), to understand it and improve Governor knowledge of its use and effectiveness.

ii) Governors challenged managers, asking:

- Could Agency staff be replaced with permanent staff? The Vice Principal Corporate & Resources said that Agency staff were not a preference but sometimes a necessity due to short term need or shortage. Some Agency staff did convert to permanent.
- Was English and maths still taught between other teaching blocks in the middle of the day, in order to improve attendance, thereby making recruitment difficult? The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality said that two hour blocks of English and maths were taught each week to students at 9-11, 1-3 or 4-6 and they were trying to integrate this better in 2017/18 with maths changing to two one hour blocks at student request.

iii) The Corporation **RECEIVED** Notes of the Quality Group meeting held on 4 May 2017. Members **NOTED** that they were invited to the next Quality Group meeting on 26 June 2017.

22.16 Governor Insight Scheme – Spring Term 2017

i) The Clerk to the Corporation reported that the Quality Group had reviewed

the Spring Term forms and felt that the forms should not be placed on the Governor Portal as comments could easily be misinterpreted out of context. Supporting Papers folder on the Governor Portal included two summary reports from the Governor Insight Scheme Champion, one concentrating on “Key Points” of process assurance and one being questions for review by the Quality Group. It was hoped that these would be of use to Members who were not able to participate fully in the Governor Insight Scheme.

- ii) The Corporation **RECEIVED** a summary of activity from the Governor Champion

22.17 Higher Education: Academic Board

- i) Fiona Hellowell, the Governor representative on the Academic Board, had provided notes which were read by the Chair. Key points were:

- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Review. Substantial preparation had taken place for this week’s QAA Quality Review Visit.
- Self Evaluation Document (SED) production. Work had begun on the 2016/17 SED including a review of 2016/17 and an improvement action plan for 2017/18. The June Quality Enhancement meetings would feed into the document.
- Academic development and support. Much activity aimed at supporting and promoting a culture of improving teaching and learning for students. This included reports on Peer Observations an AoC/HEFCE project and Staff Development Day.
- Quality assurance planning. The Quality Manager was developing appropriate processes for September 2017 to align the College with Pearson’s new quality assurance processes that are more in line with university processes including annual monitoring reviews and periodic course reviews.

- ii) The Corporation **RECEIVED** a verbal report on the Academic Board meeting held on 22 May 2017.

22.18 Higher Education: Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Review

- i) The QAA Review was underway. It was hoped that a final meeting would be held with the reviewers on Thursday morning where senior staff would get a sense of expected outcomes. Thanks were recorded to Fiona Hellowell and Paul McCunn for representing the Corporation in interview and to Peter Robinson, Assistant Principal Higher Education & Standards and his team for their work in this area and particularly in preparation for the visit.

- ii) The Corporation **RECEIVED** a verbal update on the QAA Review.

22.19 Partnerships

- i) The Vice Principal Corporate & Resources explained that this paper had been requested by the Governance Planning group (Chair, Vice Chair, Principal and Clerk to the Corporation) in order better to understand the governance implications of the College partnerships. It acted as a summary of the agreements and proposed Governor involvement going forwards. The paper covered the following partnerships:

- Artrix
- ATA
- Cinderella Sports Ground
- Perdiswell Sports Centre
- NEC

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- Blended Learning Consortium

- ii) The Chair felt that the information was important to ensure the management of financial and reputational risk, particularly where there was community outreach, and that Members needed to be aware of legal commitments. Members agreed that it was very useful and should be added to the Cycle of Business for annual update. Members asked about a press report implying that the locals had been excluded from access to the Cinderella Ground site. The Vice Principal Corporate & Resources said that the site had been very overgrown and had previously belonged to a private company so there was no right of access. **CC**
- iii) The Corporation **NOTED** the background, status and governance implications of the College's collaborative projects.

22.20– CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS 22.23

These matters are recorded as Confidential Minutes 1 of 3.

22.24 Vice Chair Position

- i) The Corporation:
- **NOTED** the pending vacancy for the Corporation Vice Chair
- ii) • **NOTED** that nominations for the role of Vice Chair should be sent to the Clerk to the Corporation **Members**

22.25 Any Other Urgent Business

There was no other urgent business.

22.26 Meeting Reflection

- i) The Corporation **REVIEWED** the meeting and commented that it was good to see the extent of what the College was involved in and to discuss exciting developments. Governors had also engaged in critical discussions around finance and partnerships.

22.27 Date and Time of Next Meeting

- i) Tuesday 20 June 2017, Corporation Workshop, 4.30pm for 5.00pm, Function Room, Redditch
This would consist of:
- Inspection preparation with the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality and Assistant Principal Higher Education & Standards to develop the narrative of improvement
 - A review of Governance Models and Relationship Dynamics with an external consultant, to consider the position at the end of the third year of the merger and whether changes were needed going forwards
- ii) Tuesday 18 July 2017, 5pm for 5.30pm, All Saints Building, Worcester

In accordance with Instrument 13 of the Instrument and Articles of Government, Peter Heath, Staff Governor and Union Representative, left the meeting at this point

22.28 RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

These matters are recorded as Confidential Minutes 2 of 3.

In accordance with Instrument 13 of the Instrument and Articles of Government, as the Corporation so resolved, the Staff and Student Governors left the meeting at this point

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22.29 RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

These matters are recorded as Confidential Minutes 3 of 3.

The meeting closed at 7.54pm.

Signed:

Date:

Sue Frost
Clerk to the Corporation
24 May 2017