

**SOLIHULL COLLEGE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 18<sup>th</sup> MAY 2015 AT THE WOODLANDS CAMPUS**

**PRESENT:** Phil Mayhew (Chair)  
Noreen Akhtar  
Chris Baranowski  
John Bolt  
John Callaghan (Principal)  
Joe Kelly  
Nick Mapp  
Alex Palethorpe

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Lindsey Stewart (Deputy Principal)  
Pete Haynes (Vice Principal HR & Student Services)  
Heather Evans (Vice Principal Finance)  
Beth Selwood (Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment)  
Theresa Lynch (Clerk to the Corporation)  
Sue McGregor (Director of HE and Curriculum – Item 4.1)

**1. Membership**

**1.1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Stan Baldwin, Jane Coleman, Keith Marriott and Bill Wanley.

**1.2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no new declarations of interest.

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015 were **agreed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

*Confidential Items:*

*It was agreed that the confidential item 5.5 Curriculum and Structural Changes for 2015/16 remain confidential.*

**2.1 Aviation and LEP Grant**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the update and explained that the final contract price would be £960,000 and the contract, with Thomas Vale, was in the process of being finalised.

Discussion took place regarding the LEP grant funding and whether the grant could be transferred from equipment to cover additional building costs and whether there was an option to increase the grant to its original level as building costs had a lower intervention rate than equipment. It was noted that the LEP grant of £834,000 would not reduce, but a request may be submitted to increase the overall project budget. Any changes to project funding would be discussed at Corporation prior to any agreements with the LEP.

**2.2 HMI Visit 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment reported that a very productive meeting had taken place with Russell Jordan, HMI to introduce him to the College and discuss plans for changes to the teaching observation model. These would be further discussed at the Teaching and Learning Task Group due to take place on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015.

The HMI had indicated approaches for calibrating teaching learning and assessment measures that would enable the College to monitor effectiveness. He also contributed to the discussions about value added and suggested the introduction of milestones to identify progress throughout the year. Discussions also took place regarding self-assessment and the relationship between school and whole College assessment. The HMI also recommended that senior staff visit other Colleges where best practice had been identified by Ofsted relating to the areas discussed.

The Principal confirmed that the Chair and Corporation would receive a report from the HMI following each visit and this would provide an update on progress to date.

### 3. Dashboard Launch

#### 3.1 Teaching, Learning and Quality Quadrant

The Deputy Head presented the quadrant and explained the targets currently in place.

Attendance: it was noted that attendance rates should be between 85% and 90% - discussion took place regarding areas of concern.

Q. Hair and Beauty – does that attendance rate indicate that there are still problems?

A. The new Head of School only started in January 2015, so there were levels of poor practice during the autumn term that have been difficult to change. However, since January levels have been increasing and it is moving in the right direction. Strong messages are being given to students and staff about good attendance, however, it will probably not be before the start of the new academic year when the levels will be maintained at a high rate, when the messages can be given to new students and actions taken to ensure and encourage good punctuality and attendance.

There has recently been a significant increase in attendance at maths and English classes.

Q. Will it be possible to have direction of travel included on the dashboard, to show term on term or year on year improvement?

A. At the end of the year the data will be frozen and will then provide a baseline for termly or annual comparison. This baseline will then provide useful direction of travel information.

Retention: levels are looking good for 2014/15. It would be a useful addition to include volumes of students, by putting a hover button with data included over the retention level data. **ACTION**.

Q. Maths and English – how can students withdraw from maths and English but then remain in vocational subjects?

A. The College receives funding as long as students remain in attendance for the first 6 weeks. Students are encouraged to continue the maths and English programmes, however, some choose to withdraw from this, but stay on their main vocational course.

The HMI had indicated that there is an expectation that maths and English will still be reinforced in courses where most of the students with GCSE, for example, level 3 courses.

There are a large proportion of students having to do maths and English and it is anticipated that this number will increase in future as many of the sixth forms in Solihull are not going to accept A level students without GCSE maths and English.

Any courses causing concern are being closely monitored and will be included in the QIP that will be presented at the next meeting. **ACTION.**

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the information about measuring teaching and learning. It was anticipated that this area of the quadrant would be re-developed to reflect the new models being explored. The Teaching and Learning Task Group would consider how observations would be measured and how this might be presented to governors in future.

An addition to the quality quadrant would be the inclusion of a link to the QIP, which would incorporate impact RAG ratings. The QIP, including the Ofsted Action Plan was currently being finalised and would be submitted to Corporation at the next meeting for approval. **ACTION.**

### **3.2 Student Numbers Quadrant**

The Deputy Principal presented the quadrant and explained the current position with regard to student numbers.

Discussion took place regarding the student/finance dials and it was agreed to remove them because the information was already adequately presented in the PMR. **ACTION.**

John Bolt presented the EFA and SFA funding information that underpins the student numbers quadrant.

Q. Does the College monitor retention within the first 6 weeks of the programme and are there any issues?

A. The rate tends to be between 5% and 6%. It is monitored carefully by management. Where the number rises above this then recruitment processes, in that area, are carefully reviewed.

Discussion took place regarding the future reductions in funding from EFA adult skills budget.

### **3.3 Finance Quadrant**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the quadrant and explained that there were less income lines on the front page now. She explained how the RAG rating worked and highlighted the areas with red ratings currently: higher education and fee income.

Q. How is the risk managed where numbers anticipated are not recruited?

A. The budget for 2015/16 will assume 90% of anticipated numbers. EMT is ambitious about anticipated recruitment numbers, however, cautious when converting this to income in the budget.

Q. Wouldn't it be possible to have all the income lines on the front?

A. There were a few possibilities explored. The dashboard presented provides the streams of income whereby the student number list and the finance list correspond across the dashboard.

Q. The dashboard does not give the cash position?

A. Financial Health does incorporate a number of these indicators and the information is in the PMR. It was agreed to have the cash indicator compared against budget and re-forecast on the front page of the dashboard. **ACTION.**

### **3.4 Human Resources Quadrant**

The Vice Principal Human Resources and Student Services presented the quadrant.

Appraisal: the Vice Principal Human Resources and Student Services explained that the focus for the teaching staff appraisals was being reviewed. Discussion took place regarding the RAG rating indicators and it was noted that where staff are on long term sick or maternity leave, they are not included in the appraisal data.

Q. Pie charts relating to appraisals don't add an enormous amount of information. It will evolve and what would be useful is what is actually happening about the amber or rag rated areas. It can then track what is being done about it, rather than just numbers complete. It will become a good management tool with more qualitative information included over time.

A. At the moment, the data is really useful for managers, but it can be developed further. It was agreed to keep the bar charts and remove the pie charts. **ACTION.**

The Principal suggested that a similar report to the PMR be produced for the teaching, learning and quality and HR quadrants to provide further information to explain the data and actions being taken. It was agreed that this would be a useful addition to the dashboard. **ACTION.**

Sickness: the data was discussed and it was noted that overall sickness levels equate to about 10 days per member of staff, per year, overall. It was noted that this presented a high level of absence and would need to be monitored carefully. It was also noted, however, that the reasons behind some of the long term sickness levels related to recovery from operations or illnesses, which were unavoidable.

Q. What number of staff does this relate to?

A. About 75.

The Vice Principal Human Resources and Student Services assured the Corporation that all instances of long term sickness were robustly managed. It was noted that short term illness was often more difficult to manage and that the two types of sickness were very different and required different management approaches.

It was agreed that the Vice Principal Human Resources and Student Services would produce a report detailing sickness levels and issues and this would be reported termly. **ACTION.**

Q. Do we have an issue of sickness due to stress?

A. The Vice Principal Human Resources and Student Services confirmed that this had increased slightly, but that the stress was not necessarily College-related. Stress often related to personal issues. It was noted that that AOC and UCU had been raising stress as an issue nationally and the College was in the process of reviewing the stress policy.

The Vice Principal Human Resources and Student Services explained that he would review the second page of the dashboard showing sickness data and would aim to include trend information. **ACTION.**

#### **Dashboard and Reporting –**

It was agreed that governors would use the dashboard to initiate any questions or queries either between meetings via the Clerk or at meetings, as the Dashboard would be an item on each Corporation agenda. It was agreed that the full dashboard would be discussed once per term and that a report would be provided monthly alongside the PMR for the teaching, learning and quality quadrant and the HR quadrant.

It was noted that when reporting any performance information members of EMT should aim to include the following information:

- Profiling data;

- Progress against target, including in year progress;
- Benchmarking information;
- Progress information - direction of travel indicators, trends etc.

#### 4. Strategy for 2015/16

##### 4.1 Higher Education Strategy and Annual Report

The Deputy Principal and Director of Curriculum presented the annual report for 2014/15 and the strategy for 2015/16. It was noted that the College was not currently seeking degree awarding powers, as working with partners was a good way of ensuring affordable, high quality Provision. It had been suggested that local employers should be changed to employers, to incorporate a wider range of stakeholders.

It was suggested that the strategic ambition to double student numbers by 5 years, had to be underpinned by appropriate investment.

QAA would take place in February 2016 and in preparation for this the HE Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy was considered.

Q. 10% growth each year – intense competition – how was the College promoting its HE provision?

A. Promotion is done via the website and other multi-media approaches. School visits and attendance at recruitment fairs. Internal progression is very important for recruitment to HE programmes. There are open evenings 3 times per year. The change of the Colleges name to incorporate University Centre was also a good promotion tool.

The Deputy Principal explained that for 2015/16 applications were on target and that by the end of June acceptances would start to become firm, so it would be possible to estimate numbers for September.

Q. Risk management – does the report identify the risks around recruitment and how they are managed?

A. The College is only committed to the provision if recruitment in September is good. Where it is low the course would not run, so risk is mitigated by managing class sizes closely as students join the College in September.

Q. Are areas of weakness indicated in the report and where is the action plan for improvement?

a. Where weaknesses arise then decisive action is taken – courses close if recruitment doesn't occur, for example.

Q. So when the QAA report will they identify areas for improvement?

A. It is anticipated that the QAA outcome will be positive. They will report on academic standards and working with partners. Standards will include: working with students, learning opportunities and public information. There must be consistent public information available for students, parents and other stakeholders.

Where feedback has been received from students about areas for improvement, action has been taken, for example:

- Development of physical space for HE centre; and
- Students' union.

It was agreed that an executive summary of the SEF would be provided for governors, in the autumn term alongside a briefing about the QAA process and expected outcomes.  
**ACTION.**

**RESOLVED** to approve:

The Higher Education Strategy for 2015/16; and  
The Higher Education Teaching, Learning and  
Assessment Strategy.

#### **4.2 Sub-Contracting Annual Report 2014/15 and Strategy for 2015/16**

The Deputy Principal presented the report and explained that it included the policy, which identified how relationships are set up with partners. She explained sub-contracting arrangements that were causing concern and two potential new partners: Creative Alliance and the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals (CIPP).

**RESOLVED** to approve:

- The Sub-Contracting Plan for 2015/16 and the Supply-Chain Fees and Charges Policy for 2015/16; and
- Entering into the procurement process with Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals (CIPP) and Creative Alliance.

#### **4.3 International Provision Annual Report 2014/15 and Strategy for 2015/16**

The Deputy Principal presented the report and explained the strategy for 2015/16. She explained that it was taking longer than expected to build relationships in China and confirmed that further work would take place over the summer, but that the position would then be reviewed regarding the continued development of this work. An update would be provided to the Corporation in the autumn term. **ACTION**.

#### **4.4 Learner Voice: Students' Union Proposal**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the report and explained that this formed part of the Learner Voice Engagement Strategy. It was hoped that the students would become more proactive in engaging with the College and facilities and provision. It is also important for HE students and the QAA review. As a University Centre it is important that there are similar facilities to a HE institution.

Q. Is this the NUS?

A. It is the NUS model, but it is the Solihull College student union. Students would become members of the NUS. Students could opt out of the model.

Q. Will there be an extra cost to the College?

A. Yes, but not significant. There is also some funding returned from the NUS, although this has not yet been clarified. Potential expenditure is anticipated at about £10,000pa.

Q. Will the President be a full time student and can they undertake to do 10 hours alongside their studies?

A. This has been considered and it is anticipated that it would be possible. It is likely that the President will be a HE student in the first year of operation. There are a number of different models which are currently being explored. Discussion took place regarding the demands of the role and the need to manage this alongside HE studies.

Q. Will it be only students or staff and management too?

A. Primarily students, but supported by key staff. The Union office would be adjacent to the Link and the Student Enrichment Officer would work alongside the Student Union Executive and oversee the day to day work.

It was noted that the students' union at BCU had a full time post. It provided a good level of engagement with the university and provided the Board with really good student feedback.

**RESOLVED** to approve the setting up of a

Students' Union, in principle, based on the constitution and other documentation that the Corporation would be asked to approve at the next meeting.

**5. Performance Monitoring**

**5.1 PMR (March 2015)**

The Vice Principal Finance presented the PMR for March 2015.

Q. Difference in cash in the forecast – why FRS 17 has changed?

A. A set of assumptions from actuary are received each year. The overall calculation has changed and has therefore changed the figures in the PMR. The outturn for the year is still balancing to the forecast surplus of £369,000, therefore a cash adjustment is required.

Q. Are you comfortable with the cashflow position?

A. Yes, the targeted surplus will be achieved. This will, however, include a number of changes and adjustments. EMT are working to achieve the surplus at the moment, however, there are still some income streams not known. Aiming to achieve this is difficult due to a number of uncertainties relating to funding, which could impact on projects taking place over the summer.

Discussion took place regarding whether the 1% would be maintained. It was noted that there would be a Finance Task Group at the end of June and the final outturn position would be discussed at the July Corporation.

**6. Governance Matters**

**6.1 Attendance Report**

The Clerk presented the report and it was noted that issues relating to individual attendance rates would be reviewed during the 1:1 meetings with the Chair to the Corporation.

**6.2 Use of the College Seal**

The Clerk presented the use of the College seal report for information.

**7. Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 6pm at the Blossomfield Campus.

**8. Minutes and matters arising from the meeting of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

*The Principal left the meeting for consideration of item 8.1.*

**8.1 Probationary Outcome**

This item was deemed to be confidential.

**8.2 EMT Mid-Year Review 2014/15**

This item was deemed to be confidential.

Signed



Date

9 June 2015.