

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation  
held on Thursday September 15th 2016 at 8.00am  
at Matthew Boulton Campus**

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Apologies:</b>
Steve Hollis (Chair)	Jenni Ord (JO)
Veronica Docherty (VD)	Sheetal Sahdev (SS) (Student Governor)
Keith Horton (KH)	Louise Jones (LJ)
Andrew Cleaves (Principal)	
Andrew Madden (AM)	
Joel Blake (JB)	
Henry Millin (HM) (Student Governor)	
Jane Smith (JS) (Staff Governor)	
Sonia Crook-Lake (SCL) (Staff Governor)	
<b>In Attendance:</b>	
Adrian Morris (AMO)	
Rebecca Hayes - (RH) – Item 2 only	
Helen Ainsbury (HA)	
Simon Cosson (SC)	
Liam Nevin – (LN)	

**Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Jenni Ord, Sheetal Sahdev, and Louise Jones (Executive Team)

**Declarations of Interest**

**Item 1 – Actions Arising from the Last Meeting**

(i) Open and Confidential Minutes of meeting held on 21 July 2016

These were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

(ii) Matters Arising and Action Log

SH welcomed the new independent governors Keith Horton and Joel Blake to the meeting and also the new staff governors; Jane Smith and Sonia Crook-Lake.

SH advised that Anthony McCourt had resigned from the Corporation as a result of his growing business commitments and it was agreed that the Corporation record its gratitude for his contribution to the College as an independent governor.

The Principal advised the Corporation on the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Harborne Academy. Since the inspection the school had also received its results which was demonstrating an upward trend in grades and Progress 8, with good progress being made in Maths and English, but less impressive results in other subjects, notably sciences and business studies. SH and the Principal had met with the Chair of Governors and an improvement plan had been requested. A progress review would be a standing item on the Corporation and Academic Standards Committee subsequently and the Corporation would consider the strategic relationship with the Academy at the October Away Day.

SH agreed to consider item 13 as the first substantive agenda item, although for the purpose of these minutes it is recorded as set out in the agenda.

## **Item 2 –Proposals for Apprenticeship Growth and Levy Update**

RH delivered a presentation on the growth targets, action plan and delivery structure aligned to the apprenticeship delivery plans and which supplemented the paper before the Corporation.

AM stated that the independent governors were well connected with the local business community and could assist the College in building relationships.

The Principal noted that more could be done to develop this opportunity and proposed that RH bring a proposal to the Away Day.

SH agreed and asked that this address how the College would penetrate the London head office of firms who were operating through regional subsidiaries.

JB questioned the recruitment plan supporting the growth targets and RH advised that she was working closely with the National Apprenticeship Service, outreach services with the DWP and community partners. In addition, team members worked closely with curriculum staff to identify learners who could be moved into the talent bank.

KH stated that differentiation in the College's market offer was important and that consideration needed to be given to how the College crafted pathways for employers drawing on other partners such as universities.

JB stated that the Apprenticeship Programme could be used to help students achieve personal objectives as part of a distinctive College offer and it was agreed that he would discuss this idea further with RB.

VD stated that it was pleasing to see how the proposals were addressing the bottleneck in the College's process and asked that RH consider whether safeguarding was adequately built into the management of apprenticeships.

RH advised that she had identified this is an issue and training on safeguarding had been arranged for training account managers and delivery managers.

The Principal stated that the new arrangements would be followed by monthly reporting on market intelligence, sales activity and account management which would be routinely reported to the Corporation.

HM asked whether there was a unique selling point that the College could offer and RH confirmed that the College could operate as efficiently as a commercial provider but with the wider expertise and a broader offer of a major College.

The Principal stated that the College's current market share was approximately 3% and these proposals were aimed at a 5% market share. The further ambition of the College was to double this figure over the next few years, but this needed testing at the Away Day.

Thereafter the Principal advised on progress with the development of the IOT and Apprenticeship Organisation.

VD questioned what impact these developments would have on the College's business, and the Principal advised that the demarcation between the College's growth proposals and those of its partnerships would require careful consideration. However, both the App Co and IOT presented opportunities to complement the College's commercial portfolio and it was important to now develop the business case for funding and development.

It was proposed by the Principal and agreed that commercial sponsorship for the IOT would be beneficial and it was agreed to consider this further at the away day.

Accordingly it was

## **RESOLVED**

**That the Corporation note:**

- **The priorities that will be pursued to deliver the apprenticeship growth strategy and the organisational improvements that will facilitate this.**
- **The progress with the IOT and App Co projects and the next steps.**

### **Item 3 – Academic Results**

AMO advised that the paper contained a summary and detailed analysis of the 2015/16 performance as well as detailed improvement actions. In summary “A” Level pass rates had improved slightly but “AS” levels were significantly below forecast. Both sets of results (so-called QAR) were below the College’s previous year performance and the national rate for 2014/15. GCSE results were better than forecast in both English and Maths but also reflected a fall from the 2014/15 results that was consistent with the national picture. Thereafter AMO summarised the analysis of the reasons for this performance, and in particular the significance of staff reductions at the start of the academic year.

AM questioned whether there had been an assessment of the ability to turn round performance for the AS students and GCSE students who were progressing.

AMO advised that the College was focussing on ensuring that students were only progressed through enrolment if they had a grade “D” or above, and this was part of the commitment to “right student/right course.” In addition, and by reference to the recently approved 5 point plan, there would be a stronger focus on tutorial support, and early intervention with students who were underperforming.

VD commended the clarity and openness of the report but expressed concern with the forecasting accuracy as this had also been a problem in previous years. The effect of staff reductions on the performance was not something that had been explored with the Corporation previously, and was a risk management point that needed to be reflected upon.

SH asked the staff governors to comment on the morale within the College.

JS stated that there will still be pockets of concern over the increased teaching hours but her perception was that the College was improving and had better intelligence on the quality issues.

The Principal advised that average class size had increased to 19 in the last academic year. Approximately 300 staff had left the College through its planned efficiency programme but this had been compounded by further staff departures and the combined impact of these had proved challenging.

AM asked how the College would improve forecasting, and the Principal advised that there would be more rigorous triangulation with coursework, on-going tutor assessments and mock results.

KH stated the Corporation needed to be satisfied that all reasonable steps were being taken to ensure that the College was maximising the chances of success for the A2 students in particular, and the Principal agreed and proposed to address this issue in more depth at the away day.

Accordingly it was

## **RESOLVED**

- **That the Corporation note the results and the actions being undertaken to improve performance and that updates on these actions would be provided to the Academic Standards and Quality Development Committee.**

### **Item 4 – Performance Report**

HA summarised the year-end performance against target.

SH noted that in relation to the summary dashboard there were a significant number of outturns that were rated Red and the performance against the people management KPIs presented a particular challenge to the culture of the organisation.

The Principal stated that whilst the performance in this area had improved from the previous year it was not acceptable and that he expected every member of staff to have an action plan agreed as part of the performance review process.

KH stated that the number of red rated outturns either indicated performance concerns or inappropriate target setting. HA advised that these points would be reflected upon and that consideration was in any event being given to the composition of the report as some of the measures, particularly those relating to finance, were too similar and would produce the same progress rating.

Accordingly it was

## **RESOLVED**

- **That the performance report be noted.**

### **Item 5 – Partnerships Report**

SC presented the report and advised that, whilst the final ILR report had not yet been run, the year-end forecast was £2.7 million, consistent with the College's drive to increase internal delivery. It was expected that success rates would outturn at 78%.

The Corporation was also advised that all contracts for 2016/17 had been issued with the exception of two that were still undergoing due diligence.

Accordingly it was

## **RESOLVED**

- **That the report be noted.**

### **Item 6 – Management Accounts**

This item is recorded in a confidential minute

### **Item 7 – Property Disposal Update**

This item is recorded in a confidential minute

### **Item 8 – Bank Covenants**

This item is recorded in a confidential minute

## **Item 9 – Update to Financial Regulations and Financial Authorisation Levels**

SC introduced the paper and summarised the main changes to the financial regulations. Aside from aligning the regulations with the new Executive structure, the principal change was to provide for the Duty Director, the Finance Director and the Principal to incur expenditure in exceptional circumstances without following the normal procurement procedure and providing that such expenditure was reported to the next Corporation meeting.

AM noted that the procedure for confirmation of sign-off of receipt of goods had been removed from the document and SC confirmed that this was now being dealt with through the College's automated system and was also signed off on the invoice.

Accordingly it was

### **RESOLVED**

- **That the revised financial regulations be approved**

## **Item 10 – Bad Debts Wrote Off**

SC presented the paper and reminded the meeting that Corporation approval was required for write offs of over £10k. The majority of bad debts were under this amount and the main strategic issue raised by the debts was a need to more effectively limit risk exposure on bad debts arising from students on courses delivered in partnership with universities.

Accordingly it was

### **RESOLVED**

- **That the bad debts totalling £750k and listed in annex A to the report are written off.**

## **Item 11 – Governor Away Day**

LN introduced the paper setting out the proposed agenda for the governors away day.

SH suggested that it would be helpful to the longer serving governors if JB and KH could speak with some teachers prior to the sessions in order to have a fresh perspective to share at the away day.

SH emphasised that he was keen that the day had a strong focus on delivery.

Accordingly it was

### **RESOLVED**

- **That the agenda for the away day be approved.**

## **Item 12 - Data Assurance Review**

HA provided a verbal update of the SFA data audit that was being undertaken this week. Having explained the grading system HA advised that progress to date was good and that the auditors had not identified matters of concern. She was optimistic that the outcome would be an "A" rating.

## **Item 13 – Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

KV introduced this item and advised the Corporation that new statutory guidance had been introduced in respect of safeguarding and also the College had reviewed its systems and processes in respect of Prevent. There were changes to the policy and procedure as set out in the report which would address the requirements in respect of both matters. In addition there were a number of activities in the staff development plan to ensure that these changes were embedded in staff practices.

JB asked KV to clarify how the evidence of implementation and impact was considered. KV advised that an annual report and action plan was shared with governors and analysis of the number and types of referrals was undertaken. At the case management level there were frequent case reviews and students were briefed through the personal tutorial programme.

SH asked how the College were addressing social media and radicalisation and HA advised that monitoring software had been introduced and a policy would be presented to the next audit committee.

Thereafter, KV advised the Corporation of the role of the staff Safeguarding Committee and it was agreed that consideration would be given to how the outputs from this meeting were shared with the Academic Standards and Quality Development Committee.

KH noted that there was sometimes genuine difficulty in separating evidence of radicalisation from what was genuine academic discourse and it was important that staff were trained to confidently raise concerns.

KV stated that a key principle instilled in staff was to take advice in cases of doubt and KV or a deputy safeguarding lead would assist in making that distinction.

Accordingly it was


**RESOLVED**

- **That the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy be approved.**

**Item 14 – Governor Confidential Discussion and Any Other Business**

This item is recorded in a confidential minute.

**Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 20 October 2016 (governor away day).**

Signed.....  


**Chairman**

Date.....  
20<sup>th</sup> October 2016