

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation  
held on Thursday March 22nd 2018 at 8.00am  
in the Boardroom of Matthew Boulton Campus**

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Apologies:</b>
Keith Horton (KH) (Chair)	Deborah Edmonds (DE)
Steve Hollis (SH)	
Veronica Docherty (VD)	
Andrew Cleaves (Principal)	
Simon Thompson (ST)	
Hilary Smyth-Allen (HA)	
Michele Larmour (ML)	
Amardeep Gill (AG)	
Dan Zastawny (DZ)	
Joel Blake (JB)	
Mohammed Al-bukair (MA) (student governor)	
Jane Smith (JS) (Staff Governor)	
Sonia Crook-Lake (SCL) (Staff Governor)	
<b>In Attendance:</b>	
Louise Jones (LJ)	
Liam Nevin – (LN)	
Simon Cosson (SC)	

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Deborah Edmonds

**Declarations of Interest and Matters Arising**

No declarations were received in addition to those contained in the register although with regard to discussion on item 4 AG asked it to be noted that Trowers and Hamlins were retained to advise the West Midlands Local Government Pension scheme.

SH advised governors that this might be the last meeting of the Corporation prior to an Ofsted inspection and that whilst governors challenge and support on teaching and learning was always important it was imperative that governors raised any concerns during the meeting if they were not satisfied with the assurance or evidence before them.

**Item 1 – Open and Confidential Minutes of the Meeting of 16 February 2018 and Action Log**

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting save that SH asked that it be noted that he participated by telephone

In respect of the Action Log SH advised that he would be speaking to governors individually over the next few weeks.

**Item 2 – Report of the Chair of the Academic Standards and Quality Developments Committee**

(i) Draft Minutes

These were noted

(ii) A Level Review

VD presented the key points in the paper as discussed at the Committee and invited questions or comments from governors.

ML noted that redundancies were not anticipated and queried whether the position had changed and LJ advised that a number of staff were being performance managed but it was not expected that this would result in redundancy. The business case cost was a worst case scenario but the aim was to avoid redundancy all together. All the affected staff from Stourbridge College had been met with and whilst a couple had indicated their intention to leave the majority wanted to teach out the A2 students and then look to take up a broader role in the College. In respect of Sutton College the majority of staff wanted to apply for roles in the new A level centre and for those that were not successful consideration was being given to whether they could be accommodated into the wider curriculum delivery teams.

SH asked LJ to summarise the two different approaches to A level delivery that had been considered, and the rationale for choosing the more traditional delivery arrangement (model A). LJ advised that consideration had been given to a vocational delivery model that would involve 2 A levels and a vocational qualification delivered by a vocational team. However, this model did not have a track record in the sector at present, and it was important that the College focussed on getting teaching to the right standard through a more traditional model of delivery before it considered other approaches.

Thereafter it was agreed that members of the Academic Standards Committee should be involved in the appointment of the A level Director as this was such a key position to drive the required quality improvements. Following debate on the form of involvement it was determined that the most appropriate arrangements would be to have representatives of the Committee involved in the final stage selection panel.

ML asked whether the College's financial position allowed the level of investment proposed to support the A level project and SC advised that capital expenditure was included in the College's plans for the next financial year and these were now with the ESFA Transaction Unit for approval.

Accordingly it was

**RESOLVED**

- **That the Corporation approve model A**
- **That the Corporation endorse the implementation plan set out in the report**

(iii) SAR Refresh and Post Inspection Action Plan

VD summarised the updated SAR and advised that Solihull College had peer reviewed it and advised on the content. Thereafter she advised on the recent Ofsted support visit where it was apparent that the Inspector was interested in the steps being taken to address the areas of concern and the extent to which governors were satisfied that decisive action was being taken.

KH stated that his discussion with the Inspector had focussed on the extent of confidence that governors had on the rate of progress and whether there was sufficient information to support those conclusions. This had caused him to reflect on the metrics on how whether sufficient progress is being made in the classroom can be satisfactorily evidenced. Attendance and retention and, student feedback were all measures of this but it was a difficult subject and one that he had reflected on since the meeting.

SH asked whether MA felt that students were being sufficiently challenged and MA stated that the position had improved since the focus in the classroom was now on student progress. However, partly the issue was about student motivation as well as challenge.

HA stated that she had undertaken a couple of learning walks recently and she had witnessed challenge in the classroom but could not say that it reflected aspirations for excellence, in terms of driving students to achieve the higher outcomes.

The Principal stated that lecturers were expected to know their class and to stretch students whilst acknowledging that from their starting point not all students could attain an excellent grade.

LJ stated that progress in the classroom was measured in different ways including through observations and learning walks, and Inspirometer surveys of students. The extent to which students were on track to achieve their target grades had substantially increased and the feedback from students was increasingly positive. The Big Teaching and Learning survey had now been received and the responses to 8 questions were now in the top quartile. This was significant progress on last year's Big Teaching and Learning Survey and the induction survey from earlier in this academic year.

SH asked LJ to summarise by reference to each of the Key Judgement grades where the grade was secure and where there was further work to do to consolidate it:

Effectiveness of Leadership and Management: There was a strong evidence base to support this judgement, and no concerns.

Quality of Teaching Learning and Assessment: The recent Ofsted support visit had confirmed that the College had all the necessary mechanisms in place. However, the outcome would depend on what inspectors saw in the classroom.

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare: There was a strong evidence base; retention and attendance had improved, the student enrichment programme was more developed with a good level of participation and the work on employability was stronger.

Outcomes for Learners: Although this was still graded as a 3 there was reasonable in year information to show to inspectors to support a grade 2. This included the functional skills results, the GCSE re-sits and the forecast results for 2017-18.

Types of Provision: Apprenticeships and high needs learners were good in the previous inspection and the challenge was to get these to excellent. Adult learning programmes were strong and 16-19 programmes had robust evidence to support the grade whilst recognising the importance of what the Inspectors saw in the classroom.

ML asked what preparatory work was done with staff prior to inspection and LJ advised that the observation scheme was closely aligned to the inspection framework. These were led by Progress and Learning Coaches who had been Ofsted trained. Staff were also being briefed through webinars and professional development generally was gearing up staff to be inspection ready. Also, all staff who may have been interviewed by Ofsted had been through reviews with an external facilitator and had been briefed on the key points that the College needed to emphasise concerning the quality of delivery.

JS confirmed that her teams had used team meetings for teachers and students to review evidence for likely inspection questions

MA stated that teachers may act differently in observed lessons and LJ stated that this had been recognised so that if a teacher was graded "good" in an observation but other indicators such as attendance, retention or student progress were a cause for concern then unannounced observations were being done. All of these measures were not simply about Ofsted preparation they were about ensuring the quality of teaching.

VD observed that of the recent learning walks that she had undertaken she felt that three were satisfactory and one was outstanding but in all classes attendance was higher than she had seen in previous learning walks.

LJ then summarised the feedback from the recent Ofsted support review which confirmed that there were robust processes for monitoring progress, particularly in relation to Level 3, there was good progress on vocational courses, but less so on A levels. Observations were consistent and energetic but he had suggested that the College consider the impact of professional development undertaken, and more pace on "I- Care" courses should be encouraged. Generally things were moving in the right direction but he invited the College to consider the pace of improvement. He was also satisfied that the governors were asking the right questions and that these were evidence based, but the Corporation needed further teaching and learning expertise.

Accordingly it was

## **RESOLVED**

- **That the Corporation approve the content and grading of the SAR refresh**

### (iv) Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan

VD introduced the paper and advised that the Strategy had been revised following challenge in the Committee. VD stated that whilst the Strategy was supported by the Committee, there were aspects that could perhaps be set out in a slightly different way and that the document could be shaped over time. KH added that whilst the document was now acceptable the subject was a work in progress.

SH asked what measures would translate the document into actions and LJ advised that there were actions and targets on page 7 including timescales that had been tightened following challenge from the Committee. These were being incorporated into next year's plans to ensure that there would be College wide ownership of the actions.

JS stated that the Diversity and Inclusion Manager was attending staff meetings to discuss the practical implications of the strategy and this was a positive development from past practices.

JB stated that it would be beneficial to have some quick wins to demonstrate delivery against the plan and build up a sense of ownership. A longer term task would be to align the plan with those of other local stakeholders.

ML stated that in her previous work on this issue three issues had emerged – leadership, governance, and retention and development. Ownership had to be at executive level but also throughout the College. As a Corporation this had not been discussed much during her tenure and this raised a question as to whether diversity and inclusion was fully integrated into the College. She suggested and it was agreed that a KIT session led by the Diversity and Inclusion Manager would be useful given the importance of the issue to culture change.

Accordingly it was

## **RESOLVED**

- **That the Corporation approve the strategy and strategic action plan.**

### (v) Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report

There being no questions

Accordingly it was

## **RESOLVED**

- **That the report be approved for publication**

(vi) Gender Pay Gap Report

There being no questions

Accordingly it was

**RESOLVED**

- **That the Corporation approve the report for publication**

**Item 3 – Performance Report**

SC summarised the report drawing the Corporation's attention to areas where performance was below target.

ML noted that there were five red areas and seven that were amber and she questioned whether this would have an impact on the Ofsted inspection.

LJ advised that Ofsted would scrutinise the teaching and learning areas of performance that were contained in the PIAP.

SH agreed that the red and amber areas of performance were of concern in the context of the College's business model and these would need to be addressed between the Corporation and the Executive but presently the focus of both needed to be on teaching and learning.

**Item 4 – Report of the Chair of the Finance Committee**

HA advised that the business transacted by the Committee was broadly categorised as income, cash and loans;

(i) Draft Minutes

These were noted

(ii) Management Accounts and Cash Flow Management

This item is recorded in a confidential minute

(iii) Loan Refinancing Update

This item is recorded in a confidential minute

(iv) Property Disposals

This item is recorded in a confidential minute

(v) Old Arts School Security over Proceeds of Sale

This item is recorded in a confidential minute

(vi) Framework Policy for Fees

It was observed that the policy required the Corporation's approval and

Accordingly it was

**RESOLVED**

- **That the draft Fees Policy for 2018/19 be approved**

## General

KH stated that an overall review of the College's finances and business model would benefit from a trend analysis showing the trajectory over the last few years and showing the position relative to Colleges of a similar size.

SC advised that the College had data including from the ESFA that would allow this analysis to be done.

ST stated that the analysis would need to consider the pension liabilities of the College and that this issue generally warranted more scrutiny at the Corporation.

AG added that having an understanding of liabilities in respect of current employees, and future liabilities having regard to their age profile was important to consider in the context of a strategy that was sustainable.

## **Item 5 – Report of the Chair of the Audit Committee**

ST summarised the business transacted by the Audit Committee

### (i) Draft Minutes

These were noted

### (ii) Risk Management Update and Policy

ST advised that the Committee would focus on risks that were high profile or where there had been a change in the risk profile and he invited SC to comment on how the Executive used the register.

SC advised that there were regular reviews of specific subjects at the Executive, that Executive members discussed and prioritised risks within their teams and updated the register accordingly.

KH stated that he was surprised that neither LJ nor the Principal were identified as risk owners, particularly in relation to academic matters. For example the A level centre was not identified as a risk.

LJ advised that the A level centre was a departmental risk and there had been a discussion as to whether this should be on the corporate register and this was under consideration.

SH queried whether as a general point the concerns discussed by the Corporation featured on the register.

The Principal advised that in his capacity as CEO he effectively owned all of the risks and that the Executive reviewed the register on a monthly basis. The register aimed to achieve a balance, setting out key risks but not including so much detail that it became unusable as a management tool.

ML stated that the Corporation had previously discussed whether the risk register adequately described the academic risks under risk 13 and that it was understood that the detail of the risks and mitigations were contained in the PIAP which was also a Corporation document.

The Principal stated that the A level Plan was part of the Getting to Good project and the risk register was designed to capture a general risk that may incorporate a number of specific challenges.

ST stated that it was important to keep the register to a manageable number of risks that were fundamental to the College and if the register became too big it would not be used.

KH queried whether the risk register was properly weighted towards teaching and learning risks rather than finances and buildings.

ML stated that not all risks were equal and that a significant amount of the Corporation's time was dedicated to addressing the teaching and learning risk because it was such a significant part of the business.

In relation to the Risk Management Policy, there being no questions

Accordingly it was

**RESOLVED**

- **That the Risk Management Policy be approved.**

(iii) Health and Safety Update

ST advised that the Committee had considered that a target for workplace stress was counter intuitive but that analysis of causes would be helpful,

SH asked whether levels of stress absence were in line with other Colleges and SC advised that this was currently being looked into and would be reported to the Committee.

(iv) Sub Contractor Control Assurance

ST advised that the independent audit had identified two technical breaches of the rules but these were not significant.

General

The Committee were advised of the internal audit reports received at the meeting of the Committee and two matters were considered under any other business that would be dealt with under item 6 of this agenda.

**Item 6 – Any Other Business and Governor Confidential Discussion**

This item is contained in a confidential minute.

**Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 15 May 2018**

Signed..... 

**Chairman**

Date..... 

