

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation Held at the College at 4pm on 02 July 2019

Present: Mr Burke, Mr Craft, Ms Danvers Hewitt, Mr Mason (Chair), Mr Mbombo, Mrs Mbubaegbu, Mr Minter, Mr Pembleton, Mr Prangnell and Mr Royston-Ford.

Apologies: Mr Pretty

In Attendance:

Ms Brennan	MD Student Central LC
Ms Cole	MD Highbury Foundations LC
Mr Cox	Group Finance Director
Mr Graham	MD Highbury Technical Professional LC
Ms Schweitzer	Clerk to the Corporation
Ms Walter-Nelson	ED HR & Organisational Development
Ms Warren	ED Quality & Professional Development

Minutes

Minutes 2821 - 2823 were confidential.

1 - Standing Items

2824 Attendance and Participation

Mr Pretty sent his apologies. The Chair welcomed senior managers to the meeting.

2825 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2826 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2019 were **Agreed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2827 Matters Arising

Members **Noted** the Action Sheet.

Minutes 2728 & 2829 were confidential.

2 – Chair’s Report

2830 The Chair updated the Board on a number of issues:

- The Creative Showcase was an amazing display of staff and students’ talents. He encouraged other governors to attend and suggested that students show guests round and that presentations were held away from the entrance.
- The Chair thanked the College, in particular Public Services, for supporting Cage Cricket so enthusiastically. Cage Cricket was invented in Portsmouth and supported maths skills and team working.
- It had been a privilege to celebrate with staff at the Star Awards and he was happy to learn from a member of staff that Design Innovation was helping students develop their confidence. He thanked Mr Burke for attending.
- He was setting up a working group with Portsmouth College to meet in September.
- He had appraised the Clerk and started his 1:1 meetings with members to identify training needs etc.

Finally, the Chair proposed creating a second Vice-Chair post to support the Chair and ease the workload for the Chair and existing Vice-Chair. Members supported this idea and **Agreed** that the Clerk carry out elections.

3 - Principal’s Presentation

2831 **Highbury College Quality Framework**

The Principal presented the College’s quality framework and circulated a series of slides. Key features of the framework were:

- Comprehensive, whole College approach based on the EFQM Excellence Model which provided a framework to guide continuous improvement;
- Integrated planning, self-assessment and risk management
- Evidence based
- External reviews & kitemarks/standards
- Benchmarks, National Averages.

The College had worked with this model for over 15 years and so it was embedded within business processes. The framework supported the improvement of the quality of education and training through robust self-assessment of learning and teaching, assessment, qualifications, services, support, departments and the institution as a whole. Quality framework enablers included learning companies (where decision-making and ownership of quality were devolved), service level agreements, the Leadership Academy (supporting training and development), College Quality Council, clear roles and responsibilities (every member of staff had quality and standards in their job description), performance review cycle and partnerships. The Principal then outlined the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) process. The framework was evidence based including qualification achievement rates, progress and progression, destinations, observation outcomes, external reports and feedback from students, Apprentices, parents and employers. The quality cycle illustrated how each programme was quality assured. Learning and teaching was carried out through planned programmes of learning walks, scrutiny of work audits, core observations, support4success programme and reports (sector and College annual TLA reports and sector and College SAR).

Current College level challenges were to:

- Improve attendance
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment
- Recover organisational confidence
- Evolve College standards to the new Ofsted EIF
- Prepare for Ofsted re-inspection.

The Principal stated that improving attendance was still a challenge and noted the direct correlation between attendance and outcomes. Attendance in vocational courses was 87.6% (target 90%), with ME representing the greatest challenge. The Principal explained that over the last 30 years inspection and funding regimes had meant lecturers had become less curriculum focused and, College lecturers as industry professionals, were more orientated to workshop practice. However, the new Ofsted framework followed a different philosophy, focusing on the quality of education and the skill of curriculum development had to be relearnt. The challenge within the College was that lecturers were dual professionals. The College was doing a lot of work to prepare for the new EIF, with a range of activities taking place over the summer and a new structure of support for professional teaching practice being implemented within learning companies. The Principal believed that the College had started to recover its organisational confidence but managers were not complacent.

TLA challenges were:

- Planning for learning which inspired and enthused students / Apprentices
- Theory lessons were not always challenging enough / deepening knowledge
- Use of starting points to plan and deliver learning to meet individual needs
- Providing sufficient opportunities for improvement in ME
- Use of digital to support learning
- Development of skills in preparation for higher level study such as analysis and evaluation particularly at level 3
- Accelerating student / Apprentice progress in every class.

One of the key challenges was to ensure that lecturers were teaching interesting lessons and ensuring they really knew their students so could address their knowledge gaps. Progress had been made in ME but lessons needed to be more challenging. The presentation concluded with the continuous review and improvement upward spiral and with the Principal stating that the quality framework ensured that the College knew what it did well and what needed to be done to improve and that it maintained high standards which continued to be raised.

In response to a question about tailoring teaching to each student, the ED Quality & Professional Development stated that all students were interviewed and did a diagnostics test on entry. Lecturers provided differentiated learning (additional classroom support was only available in certain circumstances) and ME lessons were streamed. More flipped learning, whereby students prepared by reading about the topic in advance, was being encouraged and regular homework was being introduced. One member noted that ME required a city-wide response and another member believed it was a national and parental issue. The ED Quality & Professional Development stated that the College was working hard to engage with

parents, with over 60 attending a recent event leading to eight joining ME classes for adults. One member asked if schools shared student information and the MD Student Central LC stated that schools no longer shared data as freely due to GDPR, however the College was seeking to resolve this with schools and other colleges.

The Chair thanked the Principal for her comprehensive presentation.

4 – Connecting with Owners

2832 Educational Character

The Principal presented Paper 2507/19/C setting out the College's educational character, reminding members that Corporation had considered an earlier paper on educational character at its meeting in May.

Corporation was responsible for the determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the College. The educational character captured a college's broad purpose and strategic direction, the nature of its educational programmes, patterns of its courses, special characteristics of the provision and overall ethos. The next review of the College's educational character was scheduled for 2020 but this had been brought forward to accommodate the new Ofsted inspection framework. The Principal reminded members that, due to the closure of A level provision, the College would have limited academic provision from September 2019.

The Principal circulated an *A3 Educational Character (2019 Update)* summarising current thinking within the College and stated that she welcomed members' early input into the draft. The key was that the College would offer predominantly vocational qualifications with technical and professional progression pathways. Members discussed the enrolments by level graphs which showed that the College had a predominance of entry and level 1 students. Strategically, the College needed to move students up. The GFD stated that for financial benchmarking purposes, the College worked on an 85% target for progression from level 1 to 2. In response to a question, the Principal stated that some students couldn't progress to level 2 but for those who could, it was beneficial for them to continue learning. One member acknowledged the hard work the College was doing to recruit level 2 students and asked if the College was getting its market share and what more could be done. The MD Student Central stated that the College worked hard in a variety of ways to recruit level 2 and 3 students, including working closely with schools (by the end of the following week 600 year 10 students would have attended a taster session). Another member asked if the College was offering what students wanted. One member stated that the graphs were really helpful and wondered if there was an optimal model of costs, provision etc. He noted that progressing strategic alliances was key in supporting the College's direction of travel. The GFD stated that the nature of the College's provision meant that most students wanted to complete level 2 and then enter the workplace. The challenge was to encourage them to progress to level 3 and then enter the workplace with a better job and pay. Solutions such as direct recruitment to level 3 and curriculum design (shorter courses) continued to be tried. One member believed the lack of sports facilities used to be an issue. The MD Student Support reported that this hadn't been picked

up in student feedback but noted that students tended to go where their family and friends went and that teachers' perception of the College influenced their choice.

The Chair thanked members for their views and stated that the College's educational character would be jointly considered with strategic planning.

2833 Strategic Planning

The Chair invited two governors to initiate strategic planning discussions (Paper 2508/19/C).

Mr Prangnell believed the College's current strategy had too many priorities and was too complicated. He stated that in his experience of strategic planning in the health sector, if a strategy encapsulated too much nothing got done. Instead a strategy needed to be short, simple and clear so that everyone could buy into it. He believed the College's strategy needed three priorities: quality of its output, finances/financial stability and links to the community, with a subset of three bullet points for each priority. This should fit onto one sheet of paper. It was the role of management to operationalise the priorities which would become the agreed reporting structure. Members agreed with this approach.

The Chair drew members' attention to Mr Pretty's written views as circulated. Mr Pretty wondered if it was time to take a five year view of strategic planning and believed the Board needed to take the opportunity to re-imagine further and technical education in the Portsmouth (and Solent?) region. He asked three key questions: would we create Highbury College if it did not exist? Did the Board want to consider radical options for financial sustainability or simply manage for decline? How could the Portsmouth (and Solent) region improve its FE provision?

The Principal responded that the College had a four year plan, with a rolling annual operational plan and that its mission, vision and priorities could fit on one page. After a brief consideration of these views, the Chair brought the discussion to a close, stating that there would be further discussions at the July planning day (he reminded members to respond to the doodle poll) at which senior managers would be welcome.

Minute 2834 was confidential.

2835 Investors In People Action Plan

The ED HR & Organisational Development (ED HR & OD) presented Paper 2506/19/C setting out the Investors In People (IiP) Action Plan.

This plan had been submitted to IiP as part of the amnesty process and provided actions against each element of the standard in order to move to the higher levels of accreditation. The actions were embedded in other strategies but had been collated in this document for convenience.

One member asked how staff views were taken into account and if they were anonymous. The ED HR & OD stated that this year's annual staff survey was tailored to the Investors in People (IiP) report and broke down responses to learning company level. Whilst data could be broken down to team level, it was not felt

appropriate this year as it would jeopardise the confidentiality of staff responses. Each learning company would then draw up an action plan which would feed into a College-wide plan. The member asked that the survey results be brought to the Board in October. The Principal stated that the annual staff survey was a well-established part of College operations and provided the opportunity for year on year analysis. She also noted that, as stated in her earlier presentation, the College used nationally recognised standards such as the liP to inform the College's work.

There was a brief discussion about the Nolan principles and the Highbury Way, with the Principal stating that the Highbury Way was owned by staff and therefore distinct from the staff survey. The MD Highbury Foundations stated that the Highbury Way came into being some years ago and captured the feeling that staff had at that time about what made the College such a special place to work. The ED HR & OD stated that Nolan principles were reflected in the Staff Code of Conduct but could be mapped to other documents.

Members **Noted** the Investors In People Action Plan.

Minutes 2836 – 2838 were confidential.

6 – Governance Process matters

2839 Committee minutes (for information)

The minutes of the **Audit Committee** meeting held on 21 May 2019 were **Noted**.

Minute 2840 was confidential.

2841 Governor Liaison Meetings Feedback

Mr Minter reported that he had had a very helpful meeting with the MD Highbury Foundations. Mr Royston-Ford stated that he had a useful meeting with the MD Highbury Technical Professional and found the paperwork sent out in advance very helpful. The Chair stated he had useful meetings with the MD Student Central. Mr Craft stated that he had just had his final visit with the Head of Business Intelligence & Achievements and had learnt about the impact of Promonitor and the overall quality of the SQIP. Mr Pembleton stated he had a useful meeting about Apprentices. The Chair stressed the importance of reading the SQIP prior to each liaison visit. Although Mr Prangnell had not yet had a liaison meeting, he had found his induction meetings very helpful and particularly enjoyed visiting Northarbour.

7 – Required Approvals

Minute 2842 was confidential

2843 Careers Programme

The MD Student Central presented Paper 2491/19/C setting out the College's careers programme.

The paper outlined how the College ensured that students and Apprentices were

provided with high quality impartial careers education and guidance to help them understand the full range of opportunities available to them. It also sought approval for the Careers Education and Guidance Programme (Corporation approval was necessary to meet the Gatsby standards).

The College was required to meet a number of standards concerning the quality of careers provision (Gatsby standards). These included having a stable careers programme and a level 7 qualified careers leader (in the College's case, a Careers & Progression Coordinator supported by the MD Student Central). The College had self-assessed against these standards and achieved 69.5% of the criteria. The College had achieved 44% of the benchmark that required that *'all learners should have encounters with employers and employees that result in a better understanding of the work place and the potential career paths.'* More robust mechanisms were required for recording employer inputs across the College, as well as ensuring that students' part-time jobs were recorded and considered during discussions about progression. The MD Student Central emphasised that delivery of careers education and guidance was a whole College responsibility. The report appendix provided a visual representation of how the careers education and guidance programme was delivered within the College. One member asked how the College linked with the Solent LEP careers initiative, to which the MD Student Central stated that the Careers & Progression Coordinator attended those meetings. At present they were less relevant because the College already had a level 7 careers leader but it was hoped the meetings would become more beneficial in time. In response to a question, the MD Student Central clarified that the 44% figure was likely to be better but at present not all data was recorded. However, in the future, Promonitor would be used. The College target was to achieve 100% of all benchmarks.

Members **Agreed** the College Careers Education & Guidance Programme.

8 – Next Meeting: 01 October 2019

2844 Members **Noted** the draft agenda for the meeting on 01 October 2019.

9 – Self-Evaluation

2845 Mr Bruke evaluated the meeting against a number of criteria using the grades Satisfactory, Requires Improvement or Unsatisfactory or yes / no.

	Statement	Evaluation	Comments
1	The Board was prepared for the meeting.	Satisfactory	
2	The Board's time was appropriately spent on Ends as opposed to means.	Satisfactory	
3	Each Board member was given an adequate opportunity to participate in discussion and decision making	Satisfactory	
4	The Board's treatment of all persons was courteous, dignified, and fair.	Satisfactory	
5	The Board's deliberations were open, fair, thorough, timely and orderly with discussions kept to the point.	Satisfactory	
6	The Board adhered to its Standing Orders	Satisfactory	
7	The Board adhered to its adopted Governance style:	Satisfactory	
	a. It emphasised outward vision	Yes	
	b. It encouraged diversity in viewpoints	Yes	
	c. It exercised strategic leadership more than overseeing management detail	Yes	
	d. It maintained a clear distinction between Board and management roles	Yes	
	e. It used collective decision making	Yes	
	f. It looked to the future.	Yes	

The Chair thanked senior managers for attending the meeting.

The meeting finished at 6.40pm.