

## Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation Held at the College at 4.50pm on 12 November 2019

**Present:** Mr Ahmed (Staff Governor, Min 2880 onwards), Mr Burke, Mr Mason (Chair), Mr Mbombo, Mr Minter, Mr Pembleton and Mr Royston-Ford.

**Apologies:** Mr Craft, Ms Danvers Hewitt, Mrs Mbubaegbu and Mr Pretty

**In Attendance:**

Ms Brennan	MD Student Central LC
Ms Cole	MD Highbury Foundations LC
Mr Cox	Group Finance Director (GFD)
Mr Morgan	Head of IT Services (Min.)
Ms Schweitzer	Clerk to the Corporation
Ms Walter-Nelson	Caretaker Principal
Ms Warren	ED Quality & Professional Development

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### Minutes

**Minutes 2876 and 2877 were highly confidential.**

The Chair apologised for the late start of the meeting.

#### **2878 Attendance and Participation**

The Chair welcomed Mr Ahmed, Staff Governor, to the meeting and congratulated Mr Pembleton on his election as second Vice-Chair of Corporation.

Mr Craft, Ms Danvers Hewitt and Mr Pretty sent their apologies.

**Minute 2879 was confidential.**

#### **2880 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest. The Clerk reminded members of the importance of declaring any interests at meetings. She would bring the Register of Interests to all meetings so that members could update their declaration as and when necessary.

#### **2881 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 01 October 2019 were **Agreed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **2882 Matters Arising**

Members considered the Action Sheet. There were no matters arising that were not covered on the Agenda.

## 2 – Chair’s Report

**2885** The Chair updated members on a number of issues:

- The Chair had attended a College HE careers event and presented attendance awards for Public Services students.
- He had received a request to meet with the Havant & South Downs College Chair.
- He had attended a recent ESFA meeting with the Principal and GFD and a subsequent letter confirmed the College would be graded good for 2018/19 and 2019/20. Separately the Chair had updated the ESFA on the Governors’ Action Plan.
- In response to a request from Portsmouth City Council, the Chair had written in support of the rapid transit project bid for funding.

The Chair wanted to ensure governance was embedded throughout the College and asked senior staff to inform the Clerk on all issues related to governance. He noted that Mr Minter would resign as governor at the end of the year and on behalf of the Board, thanked him for all he had done for the College. Finally, the Chair noted the continuing adverse press coverage of the College.

**Minute 2886 was confidential.**

## 4 – College Performance Objectives

**2887** Paper 2560/19/C was circulated summarising progress on the College Performance Objectives, against which the Principal would be appraised.

The Chair noted that the SAR had assessed leadership and governance as good and that this was over optimistic. He noted that the FE Commissioner had recommended the College externally validate the SAR to ensure it was robust.

One member noted that the previously circulated ESFA Finance Dashboard was useful, asking that it be used in the future, and sought clarification on how it linked to the financial objectives. The GFD replied that the dashboard contained some additional information, some of which was only available quarterly. The Chair stated that the financial scrutiny working group could explore this further.

## 5 – Ends Policy matters

**2888 IT Strategy**

The Head of IT Services joined the meeting. Paper 2537/19/C set out the rationale and direction for the design of the College’s IT infrastructure and support services.

The Chair stated that he had visited several local colleges and had been impressed by their IT facilities. The Head of IT Services stated that learners had access to IT areas in College and that providing an infrastructure to enable them to use their mobile

devices was key. Remote learning would continue to be important. Academic staff were keen on technologies and the College had invested in Microsoft 365. There was a brief discussion concerning the cost efficiency of the local fibre 5 network versus JISC and it was agreed this would be explored further. In response to a question, the Head of IT Services stated that there was a hybrid phone system at present and that the new system would be rolled out as and when finances permitted. The strategy was to move to the Cloud where possible.

The IT Strategy was **Noted** and the Head of IT Services left the meeting.

## 6 – Monitoring Organisational Performance

**Minute 2889 was confidential.**

### 2890 Draft People’s Strategy

The draft People’s Strategy (Paper 2546/19/C) was submitted to the FE Commissioner and the Chair had therefore asked that it to be brought to Corporation. The strategy followed up the Investors in People and annual staff survey outcomes addressing issues such as recruitment, leavers and how the College infrastructure could be better organised with devolved decision-making to support staff in delivering their roles. It was **Agreed** that this item would be reconsidered at the next Corporation meeting.

## 7 – Governance Process matters

### 2891 Committee minutes (for information)

Minutes from the Search & Governance Committee (23 September 2019) and Governors’ Action Plan working group meetings (10 October and 04 November 2019) were **Noted**.

### 2893 Governors’ Action Plan

Paper 2544/19/C updated members on the Governors’ Action Plan. The Chair took the paper as read and drew members’ attention to the recommendations.

Members **Agreed**:

- To limit the number of College credit cards to three (College Accountant, chief purchasing officer and Marketing & Communications Manager);
- The Senior Postholder Remuneration Framework;
- That CLT would discuss the Nolan principles and then cascade them to staff;
- Nolan principles would be included in the next All Staff training day;
- A Financial Scrutiny working group would review how Corporation kept abreast of financial information and management, identifying gaps and amending procedure/reporting as necessary. This group would be chaired by Mr Pembleton and comprise two potential governors with financial expertise as identified by Mr Pembleton and the University of Portsmouth.
- An update on staff morale would be brought to Corporation’s next meeting;
- An external advisor would identify options for the College’s transition strategy;
- A Cultural Change working group would take forward organisational culture change within the College. This group would be chaired by Mr Mason and

would comprise potential independent governors as well as Mr Ahmed and Ms Woods (who had come second in the recent staff governor elections).

Consideration of the Principal's budget would be brought to the following meeting. The Chair stated that the action plan would be completed in full by the end of the calendar year and its outcomes audited in the spring term by the internal auditors.

#### **2894 Governor Liaison Meetings Feedback**

**Mr Burke** would meet with his link in December.

**Mr Mason** had reported on his autumn term visit at the previous meeting.

**Mr Mbombo** had attended a Health & Safety meeting and had been encouraged about the acquisition of special chairs for use during fire evacuation. However, he was concerned about resources for estate management as there didn't appear to be clear picture of outstanding work and the impact this was having on day to day College operations, in particular there appeared to be discrepancy between issues raised and issues closed but not fixed. The Caretaker Principal stated that a single action plan to address these issues was now in place. Members asked that the Head of Estates join the meeting in December to provide an update.

**Mr Minter** had a useful meeting with the MD Highbury Foundations LC.

**Mr Pembleton** had met with the Commercial Manager (UK & International) and would support the College's new apprenticeship work.

The MD Highbury Technical Professional was on sick leave so had been unable to meet with **Mr Royston-Ford**.

## **8 – Required Approvals**

#### **2895 Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy & Annual Report**

Paper 2533/19/C concerned the College's safeguarding and child protection policy and annual report. It was taken as red and questions invited.

The governor safeguarding lead expressed concern about access to the College premises, stating that he believed the front reception to be vulnerable. The MD Student Central iterated security arrangements which included visitors being informed of the College's safeguarding and prevent policies. Members asked that staff explore combining the electronic car parking system with signing in and that the hour between the building opening and reception staff starting work be addressed. The MD Student Central LC stated that there were frequent CLT discussions on how to maintain an open College and mitigate risks and this had resulted in all buildings having a single point of access. Members **Agreed** to discuss this further at their next meeting.

In response to a question, the MD Student Central stated that she met once every half term with outside organisations (including counter terrorism police, NHS and other colleges) with regards to the prevent strategy; attended termly SE Region Prevent co-ordination meetings; and met regularly with Portsmouth City Council through the Orpheus project. There was a hotline for students and staff to report any concerns, but they tended to go directly to the safeguarding team.

The Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Annual Report was **Agreed**.

## 2896 Office for Students (OfS): Compliance with regulatory deadlines

Paper 2547/19/C concerned compliance with OfS regulatory deadlines.

The College had missed the payment of fees to the Designated Quality Body (the QAA) and Corporation was therefore required to record the reasons why the deadline was missed and what actions would be taken to ensure compliance with future deadlines. The paper clarified that payment had been made seven days after the deadline (the invoice was received from QAA on 18 July 2019 and approved on the financial system on 23 July 2019. The invoice missed the payment run dated 20 July 2019 and was paid on the next payment run dated 08 August 2019) and that in order to avoid non-compliance on future OfS deadlines, the College would identify all invoices relating to OfS and QAA as priority suppliers to ensure they were paid in a timely manner.

The GFD stated he was not aware of this issue. The Chair noted that OfS fines were large and asked if the HE income to the College was worth the regulatory burden.

Members **Agreed** the steps taken to prevent a recurrence.

## 9 – Next Meeting: 17 December 2019

2897 The draft Agenda for 17 December 2019 Corporation was **Noted**.

## 10 – Self-Evaluation

**2898** The Chair evaluated the meeting against a number of criteria using the grades Satisfactory, Requires Improvement or Unsatisfactory or yes / no.

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
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 meeting ended at 6.20pm.