

**Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation  
Held at the College at 5pm on Tuesday 06 December 2016**

**Present:** Ms N Youern (Chair), Ms L Burt, Ms F Calderbank, Dr L Carter, Mr M Craft, Mr P Daneshvar, Mrs S Mbubaegbu, Mr A Minter, Ms D Moody, Mr J Rees-Evans, Mr D Roberts, Ms S Ward, Mr R Tonge and Mr J Snow

**Apologies:** Mr H Slidel, Mr M Lawther and Mr L Davies

**In Attendance:** Ms H Brennan - Managing Director, Student Central  
Mr G Carter - Head of Higher Education  
Mr J Cox - Group Finance Director  
Ms L Kopinska - Executive Assistant to the Principal

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## **M i n u t e s**

### **Part 1 – Standing Items**

**2556 Apologies for Absence**

Mr H Slidel, Mr Lawther and Mr L Davies sent their apologies.

**2557 Membership**

The Chair welcomed Mr J Snow, Student Governor and Mr Richard Tonge, new Governor, to their first Corporation meeting.

The Chair left the meeting. The Vice-Chair noted that Mrs Youern had agreed to continue as Chair of Corporation for the next two years. This motion was proposed by Mr Rees-Evans and seconded by Mr Minter. It was **Agreed** that Mrs Youern would continue as Chair of Corporation from 06 December 2016 to 05 December 2018.

The Chair returned to the meeting.

The Chair proposed that Ms D Moody should continue as Vice Chair of Corporation for a further two years. It was **Agreed** that Ms Moody continue as Vice-Chair of Governors for the next two years from 06 December 2016 to 05 December 2018.

Governors were informed that Mr Tonge had recently attended Search Committee who considered his appointment to Corporation. Mr Tonge was a former student at Highbury College and it was felt he would be an excellent ambassador for the College. It was **Agreed** that Mr Richard Tonge be appointed to Corporation under the general category 2(1)(a) of Highbury College's Instrument of Government for a term of four years from 06 December 2016 to 05 December 2020, and that he join Audit

Committee.

**2558 Declaration of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2559 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 04 October 2016 were **Agreed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**2560 Matters Arising**

**CRSG:** The Chair confirmed that Corporation and Finance Committee have reviewed the options available to them in order to recover the debt from CRSG. The decision was to appoint a Legal Firm to represent the College who would initially produce a Merit Review of the likelihood of recovering the debt from CRSG. It was further agreed that, in consultation with the Chair of Finance and the Chair of Corporation, the Management would pursue this matter.

**JEDDAH College, KSA:** Governors were informed that the banks are taking legal advice as to whether Colleges have counter indemnities to provide a bond. It is hoped to receive a position statement by Friday 9 December 2016. After this time, it should be a simple process to achieve the bond.

The Principal confirmed that NESOT have been informed that the contract for the Jeddah College Principal has been renewed.

**Part 2 – Items for Decision**

**2561 Final Report on Strategic Plan 2014-2016 and approval of Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020 including vision, Mission & Educational Character**

The Principal presented Paper 2228/16/C which sets out the Final Report on the College's Vision Plan 2014 – 2016 "*Greater by Design*". The paper also presents for approval the College's Educational Character 2017, the Priority Themes for Vision Plan 2017 – 2020 and the College Value Statement.

The Principal noted that Governors attended two Planning days in July and October 2016 and the outcomes of these meetings have been incorporated into the Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020. In addition, there has been consultation with major stakeholders including staff, students and community groups. The Plan has also been informed by a thorough review of performance against the 2016 Operational Targets.

The Principal outlined the proposed Priority Themes to Governors:

- Student Success, Resilience and Employability
- Innovation for Growth and Sustainability
- Amazing College, Amazing Staff
- Partnerships and Collaboration
- Passion for Portsmouth

- Digital Transformation
- Commerciality

Within these priorities, the Plan identifies themed objectives, with policies relating to the theme. Section four of the plan, Headline Outcomes, outlines the measures and how we would know if we were successful. The Plan will be completed in January 2017.

Governors reviewed the Highbury College Value Statement and, with two small amendments, the Highbury College Value Statement was **Agreed**.

Governors then reviewed the Educational Character 2017. The Highbury College Educational Character 2017 was **Agreed**.

## **2562 Financial Accounts 2015/16**

Jonathan Cox, Group Finance Director presented Paper 2229/16/C providing an overview of the College's Financial position as at the end of July 2016.

The Group Finance Director (GFD) noted that the Auditors had requested that the Financial Accounts included provision for the debt from the CRSG of £1.4m. Also included is 400K Pension Adjustments to the accounts. Excluding the effects of the year end pension adjustments, which do not form part of the management accounts, and the provision for the CRSG Debt, the Group return a deficit of (£1.451m). The GFD noted that the current assets ratio is 1.3m.

The College exceeded two of the eight target financial objectives and taken in isolation the results for the financial year 2014/15 would place the College, using the SFA model and classification in the "Satisfactory" category for financial health. Governors noted that this is the second year where there has been a large deficit, which poses risks to the budget and is challenging.

The GFD noted that the SFA are monitoring the situation and the GFD is also meeting with the Bank Managers to review the situation. The GFD stated that, following submission of the ILR on that very day, the College would know the funding position in two weeks' time. CLT will then discuss the measures to take.

Corporation **Agreed** to hold a Special Finance Committee meeting in January to review the proposed measures.

Corporation **Approved** the 2015/16 Financial Accounts.

## **2563 Audit Committee Annual Report to the Corporation**

The Group Finance Director presented the Audit Committee Annual Report 2015/16 which was discussed at Audit Committee. The Principal raised concern relating to a statement about Overseas Travel and noted that not all Overseas Travel results in direct income generation. The Principal explained the process and approval procedure for Overseas Travel within the College to Corporation.

Corporation **Noted** the Audit Committee Annual Report 2015/16.

#### **2564 Strategic Internal Audit Plan & Annual Internal Audit Plan**

Jonathan Cox, Group Finance Director presented Paper 2231/16/C which presents the Southern Internal Audit Partnership's Outline Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2016-2019 and Annual Internal Audit Plan 2016/17. The report reviews the College's audit needs and recommends the strategic audit plan covering the three final years 2016/17 to 2018/19.

The Audit Committee received the report on 22 November and recommended the report for approval by the Corporation.

Corporation **Approved** the Strategic internal audit plan 2016-2019 and annual internal audit plan 2016-17.

#### **2565 Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2015-16**

Tess Cole, Managing Director, Education & Skills presented Paper 2232/16/C which informs the Corporation of the College's self-assessment of key strengths and areas for improvement for 2015/16 and the progress made since the 2014/15 SAR. Governors noted that the liaison scheme has links to key aspects of the SAR.

The Managing Director Education & Skills (MD E&S) highlighted the areas of development to Corporation:

- Development of a new staff induction programme
- Implementation of a Reward and Recognition process for staff
- Intensive development of English and maths provision to improve achievement rates
- Further strategies to be implemented to improve and support student attendance
- Further development of the recording of progress made by students
- Development of processes to record, monitor and assess work experience
- Develop strategies to improve communication with parents and employers
- Further embedding of British values into curriculum

Governors considered the key strengths and weaknesses identified for 2015/16 and the progress made since the 2014/15 SAR. The Chair asked the SU President's opinion on student attendance. The SU President felt that harsher penalties should be imposed. There was some discussion around how attendance is monitored and how we involve parents. The MD (E & S) noted that there is a 100% attendance reward scheme and also free breakfasts for good attendance. It was highlighted that staff can view student attendance on the dashboard. The Management team work together to share good practice on how to improve attendance. One Governor asked if there was a way of monitoring attendance from when the student logs in. One Governor asked whether attendance at the schools in Portsmouth had improved. The MD, Student Central noted that school attendance is below 85% in

years 10 and 11. One Governor disagreed with this percentage. The MD Student Central pointed out that if a student is entitled to financial support, attendance is key. It was noted that Pastoral care is also key.

The Principal highlighted that one of the key areas for improvement is achievement rates for 16 – 18 year old students, which are decreasing in the majority of areas. The Principal noted that the areas for development will be the key focus for the College. Governors were informed that the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and the Operational Targets will be put on the Portal for Governors to view.

One Governor felt that information on the size of the Sectors would be useful. Another Governor asked about Recruitment. It was clarified that there are areas for concern, for example the step from Level 1 to Level 2 can be a challenge for some students. The MD Student Central explained the “swap not drop” two week event which is about giving the students a second chance to change their programme.

Tess Cole noted that a much more robust enrolment system has been introduced this year to ensure students are on the correct course. One Governor asked what has changed in terms of Retention. Dee John, Managing Director, Education & Skills explained the issues in her area which she said could be traced back to staff changes.

#### **2566 Risk Management Policy**

Anna Selway, Digital Futures Manager, presented Paper 2233/16/C outlining the updates to the Risk Management Policy. The Policy was amended in November 2016 to reflect a number of changes which are identified at 2.2 of the paper.

Corporation **Approved** the Risk Management Policy.

#### **2567 Action Plan as part of new Operating Model for Quality Assessment in Higher Education**

Liz Davies, Quality & Standards Manager presented Paper 2234/16/C which outlines in the Action Plan the steps being taken during 2016/17 to further improve the academic experience and outcomes of students on Higher Education (HE) programmes in 2016/17.

At the October 2016 meeting, the Corporation were presented with a report outlining the quality assurance processes currently in place. The Corporation requested that the report was streamlined and an Action Plan was brought back to Corporation to review in order for Corporation to consider and confirm that HEFCE can be provided with full assurance about the continuous improvement of the student academic experience.

Corporation **Endorsed** the actions planned for 2016/17, and confirmed that HEFCE can now be provided with full assurance about the continuous improvement of the student academic experience, student outcomes and the reliability of degree standards on the College’s HE programmes.

## **2568 Committee Terms of Reference**

The Corporation reviewed Appendix A of Paper 2236/16/C which sets out the Audit, Finance, Remuneration, Search and Special Committee's Terms of Reference.

Corporation **Approved** the Audit, Finance, Remuneration, Search and Special Committee's Terms of Reference.

## **2569 Governance Improvement Plan**

The Corporation reviewed Paper 2237/16/C and considered the Governance Improvement Plan 2016/17 (Appendix A).

The Chair outlined the background to the Governance Improvement Plan. The report draws on the findings of the external Auditor's investigation, Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire and Evaluation of Committee meetings. The recommendations are listed at 3.3 of the paper. One of the recommendations was that Papers to Corporation are streamlined, clear and focused. Future papers will be shorter, using the draft template shown at Appendix A of the paper.

The Corporation **Approved** the Governance Improvement Plan and the Cover Report Template.

## **Part 3 – Items for Decision**

### **2569 Child Protection / Safeguarding Annual Report 2016**

Helen Brennan, Managing Director, Student Central presented Paper 2239/16/C which updates the Corporation about how the College safeguards and promotes the welfare of students in its care. As a result of the publication "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016", amendments outlined in 6.1 of the paper, have been made to the Highbury College Safeguarding Adults and Child and Young People Protection Policy.

The College has continued to ensure all staff have undertaken a criminal record check (DBS). Prior to the DBS check being received, a robust risk assessment is put in place, this requires a check against list 99 and ensures that the member of staff is not left in a 1:1 situation with students. List 99 is provided by the Department of Education and includes all those people who are barred from working with children.

The Corporation **Approved** the Highbury College Safeguarding Adults and Child and Young People Protection Policy 2016/17.

### **2570 Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2016**

Helen Brennan, Managing Director, Student Central presented Paper 2040/14/C which provides an overview for Corporation on the progress in relation to the College's Equality Policy.

The Strategic Objectives for Equality and Diversity are identified at 1.2 of

the Report. The report details the progress and what we have done to achieve the targets set.

As well as embedding equality and diversity within the curriculum, the College provides a wide range of targeted programmes for disadvantaged groups including; the “Engage” programme, “Choices Pathways” and the “Connect Programme. The College has grown its High Needs provision and continues to support the recovery of students with mental health issues through the “Solent Recovery” initiative.

The College has an outstanding track record in relation to high success/achievement rates for all students. The overall success/achievement rate for 2015/16 is 85.3% which is below that of 14/15 (87.3%) but is above the Provider Group average of 83.2%.

In 2015/16 there was a gap of 2% between the success/achievement rates of female students aged 16-18 (78.6%) and male students aged 16-18 (76.6%). In 2014/15 16-18 males outperformed 16-18 females with success rates of 84.5 (males) and 81.8% (females).

The College continues to work on increasing progression rates for young people to higher education through its University Academy.

Equality and Diversity is well embedded in enrichment activities and the College environment and the annual College Diversity Festival, held in March 2016 was very successful.

The College is looking at increasing the number of non-traditional applications for example Girls in Automotive.

The Corporation **Endorsed** the Annual Equality and Diversity Report.

## **2571 Quality Report**

Liz Davies, Quality & Standards Manager introduced Paper 2241/16/C which provides a review for the Corporation on quality assurance at the College for 2015/16 to date.

The Quality & Standards Manager drew attention to Table 1 on page 2 of the paper and highlighted that the highest increase in achievement rate by Sector is Education & Training. Graph 1 on page 3 shows a breakdown of achievement rates by SSA and age. Achievement for students aged 19+ show an increase to 92% in 2015/16.

Achievement rates for Level 2 and Level 3 programmes have decreased significantly and are a cause for concern. This is being carefully monitored through the Study Programme meetings.

The College identified in its Self- Assessment Report that attendance rates remain too low at around 85% and the College continues to develop new strategies to address poor attendance. The College target is 90%.

The feedback from employers who took part in the annual Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Employer View survey was disappointing as the

satisfaction rating of the 112 employers who took part in the survey was 38%. A taskforce has been set up to secure improvements in communication to employers.

It was highlighted that data shows that in many areas, students who were retained in 2015/16, did not necessarily achieve their qualification. This was unusual.

Corporation **Noted** the Quality Report.

## **2572 Staffing Report**

Keith Hayward (KH), Head of Human Resources presented Paper 2242/16/C which gives members of the Corporation an overview of the key statistical information and any underlying trends over the last two academic years.

KH highlighted that there has been a steady reduction in staff headcount since the last staffing report to the Quality Committee in 2011. The headcount has reduced by 16%. KH noted that the College produces resource plans for each curriculum area. All changes to the staff establishment are required to be approved by the Principal after an initial review of the request by the Staffing Control Panel.

KH reported that the actual turnover of core staff is 47%. Further analysis shows that 22% of the total staff employed by the College resigned during the course of the year. The question was asked if we know the reason for this. KH noted that we do conduct exit interviews and comments are recorded. KH is focusing on those who have left after a short space of time. Some of this turnover is due to staff who are new to teaching.

One Governor asked why sickness absence has increased. KH noted that we have seen an increase in mental health issues, although this was not reported as work related stress. KH informed Corporation that the HR Business Partners conduct a “return to work” interview with the Manager.

One member asked if this was related to the new Learning Company structure. The Principal noted that we have increased the Managers from 8 (Heads of Department) to 18 (Sector Leads) giving staff more opportunity to rise into Management positions. Some members of staff could not make that step. Sector Leads do not now have budgeting or staffing responsibilities.

Members noted their concern relating to the Staffing Report. KH highlighted some of the actions that are taking place to improve the situation:

- The introduction of a more robust Induction Process
- Setting up a Reward and Recognition system
- In recognition of the hard work and commitment staff have shown, the Principal will close the College from 20 December to 3 January giving staff an extra four days annual leave over the Christmas period
- HR Business Partners have been developed to work in partnership with LC MDs to develop strategic as well as operational plans to staff the areas with quality teaching and assessing staff.



The Corporation **Noted** the Staffing Report 2015/16.

### **2573 Principal's Report**

The Principal commenced her report by highlighting how proud we are of our students who entered this year's WorldSkills UK regional competitions. A total of six students have made it through to the WorldSkills National Finals at the Skills Show held in Birmingham. The report went on to cover news under the headings of the Priority Themes of the College Vision Plan.

The focus of the first Priority Theme covered student successes at WorldSkills, the Princes' Trust Team, Public Services students, Catering students and an IT Apprentice.

Priority Theme 2 highlighted the success of some of our enterprising alumni who studied at Highbury College.

Priority Theme 3 covered some of the opportunities for growth. The Principal and Tom Bewick, Managing Director, New Work Training have been in discussion with the Children's Guild in Baltimore to discuss potential partnering to run online international apprenticeships.

The Corporation **Noted** the Principal's Report.

### **2574 Governor Liaison Visits**

Members **Noted** arrangements for Governor liaison as set out in the Agenda.

### **2575 Minutes of Committees (for information)**

Members **Noted** the Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 22 November 2016. One Governor noted that the External Audit Report was referred back to CLT for comment and then this would be brought back to the Audit Committee.

The Chair of Corporation **Agreed** to speak to the Chair of Audit Committee to take the matter of the External Audit Report forward.

Members **Noted** the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 8 November 2016 and the Search Committee held on 24 November 2016.

## **Part 4 – Matters of Confidentiality**

### **2576 Confidential Minutes of Committees**

Members **Noted** the Confidential Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on 4 October 2016, the Finance Committee Meeting held on 8 November 2016.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 21 March 2017 @ 5 pm