

**Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation
Held at the College at 5.30pm on Tuesday 03 October 2017**

Present: Ms L Burt, Mr M Craft, Mr P Daneshvar, Mrs S Mbubaegbu, Mr A Minter, Ms D Moody, Mr H Slidel, Mr R Tonge, Ms S Ward and Ms N Youern.

Apologies: Ms F Calderbank, Mr T McCaffery and Mr J Rees-Evans.

In Attendance: Ms L Berry - Head of Human Resources (Min. 2614)
Ms H Brennan - Managing Director, Student Central (Min. 2615)
Ms L Davies - Quality & Standards Manager (Min 2612)
Ms Z Martin - Business Intelligence & Achievements Manager (Min. 2613)
Ms P Schweitzer - Clerk to the Corporation

M i n u t e s

Part 1 – Standing Items

2606 Apologies for Absence

Ms Calderbank, Mr McCaffery and Mr Rees-Evans sent their apologies.

2607 Membership

In his absence the Chair welcomed Mr McCaffery to Corporation and it was **Agreed** that he join Audit Committee. It was also **Agreed** that Ms Calderbank step down from Finance and join Audit Committee.

The Chair thanked members who came to the Governors' Planning Day the week before, stating that it had been interesting and informative.

2608 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2609 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 04 July 2017 were **Agreed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2610 Matters Arising

Minute 2594 / 2584: Quality Report: Ms Ward confirmed that this action had been completed with the exception of one piece of information. She had spoken with the Principal about including it in future reports.

Minute 2599: Principal's Report: The Chair had spoken with the Clerk about meeting Mr Jones from Activate and noted that Activate's activity was impressive, particularly as it was responsible for a number of colleges and yet had a small governing body. This action would be pursued through Search Committee.

Part 2 –Items for Decision

2611 Review of Standing Orders

The Clerk presented Paper 2307/17/C setting out the annual review of Corporation's Standing Orders.

Clerk explained that three amendments were proposed:

- Amending Corporation membership from 20 to 19 in line with Corporation's previous decision;
- Enabling the chair to determine the agenda order to ensure the flow of business at meetings;
- Ensuring consistency between Standing Orders and the College's Financial Regulations with regards to urgent action.

These amendments had been discussed by Search Committee at its last meeting and were recommended to Corporation for approval. The Clerk reminded members that the College's Financial Regulations were reviewed annually by Finance Committee and subsequently agreed by Corporation so this final amendment was not introducing anything new.

In response to a question the Clerk stated that Standing Orders set out a quorum for Corporation whilst the committee quorums were set out in their Terms of Reference. The Clerk **Agreed** to send Audit Committee Terms of Reference to the Audit Committee chair.

Corporation **Agreed** the revised Standing Orders with these amendments.

2612 Assurance Statement from Governing Bodies as Part of the New Operating Model for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

The Quality & Standards Manager joined the meeting and presented Paper 2308/17/C setting out the Assurance Statement from Governing Bodies as Part of the New Operating Model for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (HE).

In March 2016 the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) published a new operating model for quality assessment for HE providers, requiring governing bodies to provide an annual assurance statement about the quality of HE provision. The assurance statement for 2016/17 was intended to confirm that the governing body received reports providing them with assurances about the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and of student outcomes and the reliability of degree standards. This report outlined the quality assurance processes in place throughout 2016/17 so that the College could submit a full assurance to HEFCE by the 01 December 2017 deadline.

The Quality & Standards Manager outlined the quality review processes in place within the College which provided qualitative and quantitative data relating to the student academic experience and student outcomes. These included termly meetings of the National Student Survey Outcomes, HE Board of Studies and Academic Policy and Standards Committee, the HE complaints process, student focus groups and annual Self-Evaluation Documents and associated Quality Improvement Plans.

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was introduced to encourage excellent teaching in universities and colleges and to help students choose where to study by providing clear information about teaching provision and student outcomes. The College applied for a TEF rating and in June 2017 was awarded a Bronze Award. There was some discussion about the awards and how they were viewed by the sector. The Quality & Standards Manager stated that it was the first year the College had been graded so it was pleasing to be awarded bronze. She stated that over time the College hoped to improve its rating (judgements were made on the basis of four years' data). The Principal noted that there were colleges who chose not to apply for a rating and others who did apply but were not successful. She stated that the College's small numbers of HE students meant that assessment wasn't possible in all areas. The University of Portsmouth member stated that whilst the university had been pleased to receive a gold rating, there was little evidence that prospective students took any notice of it.

With regards to HE complaints, the Quality & Standards Manager stated that students in some curriculum areas reported the same concerns as in previous years and as a result subject teams had been tasked with taking action. Concerns included late return of marked assignments and inconsistent use of Canvas in some areas. The Quality & Standards Manager also identified a need for staff development to ensure compliance with Programme Quality Reviews in some areas.

In response to the issue raised at a student focus group concerning access to the library after 6pm, the Quality & Standards Manager stated that the College was exploring how books could be accessed after hours. One member suggested that students could be paid to run the library, as was the case at the University of Portsmouth.

In summary the Quality & Standards Manager stated that the College used a number of methods to identify, listen to and address concerns and to assure the quality of HE programmes. The inconsistencies identified in the use of these methods were being addressed, as were issues identified by students at focus groups. Student feedback showed that satisfaction ratings for HE students had increased in the majority of areas. The Quality & Standards Manager suggested that in future the Quality Report (considered by Corporation three times a year) include a section on HE provision so that members receive assurance throughout the year.

Corporation **Agreed** that a full annual assurance statement on HE provision at the College be submitted to HEFCE by 01 December 2017, and that HE information be integrated into Quality Reports.

Part 3 – Items for Discussion

2613 Enrolment Update

The Business Intelligence & Achievements Manager joined the meeting and presented Paper 2309/17/C setting out an enrolment update. She stated that College staff had worked well to ensure enrolment days ran smoothly and the process had been well received by staff and students.

The Business Intelligence & Achievements Manager outlined enrolment figures as at 15 September (figures in brackets refer to 2016/17):

- 1,266 16-18 students had been recruited against (+12). The College was processing new applications as well as contacting individuals who had applied but did not enrol. It was likely that a further group of students would be recruited to a January start.
- 1,285 19+ year students had been recruited (-13). These enrolments continued all year round.
- There were currently 668 apprentices on programme including apprentices from the previous year(s) and 30 new starts. Although this was 71 fewer than at the same time the previous year, this gap was closing with a further 56 apprentices on the system at the time of the meeting and more in the pipeline.

One member asked if there was a change in where students were coming from and another asked about the impact of demographic changes. The Principal stated that detailed information wasn't yet available as data analysis was still being undertaken. The College had expected a drop in engineering due to the opening of the UTC but in fact there had been growth (as there had also been with computing). The impact of the Havant & South Downs merger was not clear at this point. The Business & Intelligence Manager stated that the 16-18 demographic low point was anticipated in 2018/19. One member noted the importance of the enrolment figures in the context of the budget and that this would be considered at the next Finance Committee meeting.

The Enrolments Update report was **Noted**. The Chair thanked the Business Intelligence & Achievements Manager for her report and she left the meeting.

2614 Staffing Report

The Head of Human Resources (HR) joined the meeting and presented Paper 2310/17/C providing an overview of key statistical information relating to staffing at the College over the last two academic years. The Chair thanked the Head of HR, noting that members were keen for an update following the last report in December 2016.

The current College headcount was 430, a reduction of 2.5% from 2015/16 (this reduction included 22 redundancies of which six were management staff). During 2016/17 a total of 85 vacancies across all job types were advertised (29% reduction from the previous year), 49% of these posts were for business support, 18% for academic support and 27% for lecturing roles. Despite this reduction in advertised vacancies,

the cost of advertising increased by 48% compared to 2015/16 (£24,398) due mainly to difficult vacancies needing filling. The HR team were investigating more cost effective mechanisms for advertising vacancies.

A breakdown of the time taken to recruit showed that the College fell below the average recruitment timescales according to the AoC. The Chair sought clarification and the Head of HR stated that on average it took the College nine weeks from advertising a lecturing post to issuing an offer letter (this did not include notice periods, typically two or three months for lecturers, and it was not possible to benchmark this timescale). The Chair expressed the view that this timescale and as a result costs, could be further reduced and the Head of HR stated that the HR team were working to this end. In response to a question the Head of HR clarified that agency staff were employed (usually for no longer than four weeks) where temporary cover could not be provided by existing staff.

One member stated that the most important thing was staff turnover and he welcomed the reduction from 45% in 2015/16 to 36% in 2016/17, given that high turnover was disruptive. However, he stated it was difficult to get a picture of why staff were leaving and members needed a clearer picture of who was leaving and what action was being taken. The Chair noted that her research indicated average staff turnover for a GFE college was 12% and asked whether the College had a problem with staff turnover. Another member stated he would expect staff turnover between 15-20%. There was discussion about what was meant by the various terms used and one member asked how the College captured leavers' feedback and what actions were then taken. The Head of HR stated that a new exit interview process was in place and the College was more proactive in capturing data. She stated that people left for a variety of reasons with the most common being family commitments but also work life balance, promotion and noted that quite a few people moved out of the sector. Money was less of an issue than one might expect. The HR team were working more closely with the College's learning development team to provide training and development opportunities. In addition, new performance review paperwork had a stronger focus on career aspirations meaning that individuals could identify how they wanted to progress within the organisation and appropriate support could then be provided. One member agreed, stating that if there wasn't much upward mobility within the organisation, there would be greater attrition levels lower down. The Head of HR stated that the College was traditionally good at developing its members of staff and more recently, apprentices. The Principal concurred, stating that this had been the College's approach for a long period of time. She noted that it was difficult to recruit in FE, particularly teaching roles, as lecturing staff were professionally qualified and then trained by the College to teach. One member asked why 40% of staff left within the first year and the Head of HR stated that it was a combination of factors including the recruitment process and induction. Changes had been made including reducing the induction programme from five to three days with a staff passport clearly identifying College wide and sector specific components. Day 1 feedback had also been introduced as well as 1, 3 and 6 month feedback enabling changes to be made more quickly.

The Chair of Finance Committee noted the financial issues confronting the College and members' concerns about staffing, stating that the report

was useful and had generated a lot of questions. He believed the governing body needed a more measured and comprehensive review of staffing, in particular to explore the issue of staff turnover. The Chair asked members for their views and they concurred. It was therefore **Agreed** that a small working group be convened comprising Mr Minter, Mr Daneshvar, Mr Craft, Mr Slidel and Ms Ward. All members would be invited to feed in their questions and concerns by email to the Clerk who would take this forward.

The Chair thanked the Head of HR for the informative report and reiterated that the purpose of the working group was for members to understand the issues more fully and to provide constructive support to the College. The Head of HR left the meeting.

2615 Student Voice Annual Report 2016/17

This item was taken first on the Agenda.

The Managing Director, Student Central presented Paper 2311/17/C setting out the Student Voice Annual Report 2016/17, highlighting developments during the year as well as plans for 2017/18.

The Managing Director, Student Central stated that involvement in Student Voice meetings and other Student Voice mechanisms were important in enabling students to participate in decisions and to give feedback about matters affecting their learning. However it had become clear in 2016/17 that Student Voice needed to be supplemented by other mechanisms and these were being developed.

Student Voice activities in 2016/17 included student focus groups as part of the Sector Review process with issues raised incorporated into the Sector Review action plans. One finding was that some students did not understand the term safeguarding so the College organised a Safeguarding Week during which a cross College safeguarding tutorial was delivered. Students were also consulted on the 2017–2020 Strategic Plan and feedback that they wanted more opportunities to work with the community and employers and to have more industry specific qualifications. These ideas were incorporated into the plan under Priority Theme Student Success, Resilience & Employability.

The 2016/17 Autumn Survey showed 96% of students were happy with their programme and the College (as was the case with the Sector Review focus groups findings), however this dropped to 81% in the On Programme and Exit Surveys. Plans for improvement were therefore drawn up and the survey questions made clearer. In addition, immediate feedback about students' College experience was being sought via weekly texted questions enabling immediate action where appropriate. The Principal stated that there had never been such a disparity between surveys and that the Exit Survey was terribly disappointing. As a result the College had looked carefully at the questions and incorporated members' views from the discussion at the last meeting.

In response to a question about how students were represented on the Sector Review focus groups, the Managing Director, Student Central

stated that students were self-selecting and members noted that this could explain the discrepancy in results. Members were encouraged that students wanted to offer their services to the local community and the Managing Director, Student Central stated that they saw this as good thing for them but also good for the College's reputation. The Principal stated that volunteering was part of the Leadership Academy and it was pleasing to see students wanted to do more. Opportunities for students and staff were being developed through the charity, Second Chances.

The Student Voice Annual Report 2016/17 was **Noted**. The Chair thanked the Managing Director, Student Central and she left the meeting.

2616 Principal's Report

The Principal presented Paper 2312/17/C setting out the Principal's Report updating members on developments at the College, the Portsmouth area and nationally as well as FE related policy and other issues impacting on the College's Priority Themes.

The Principal welcomed governors to the new academic year and stated that it was good to see the College buzzing with new and returning students. She had engaged with many staff over the last few months about how the College would continue to enable all its students to succeed around the Priority Theme Amazing College, Amazing Staff.

The Principal showed photos and a short video clip from the recent graduation ceremony at the International Technical Female College in Jeddah, stating that it was good to see so many women achieve excellent results in IT networking, graphic design and business. The graduation was preceded by a thank you party for all staff for their hard work in ensuring successful student outcomes and the fact that the college was the top performing College of Excellence College. Tina Upstell had been seconded as the Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Tutoring & Quality Assurance as part of the college's succession planning. Whilst in Jeddah the Principal had met with one of the College's business partners with the intention of formally signing a contract but this hadn't been possible due to the fact that the registration process for the new consortium company (Highbury Burton Saudi Arabia) had not been finalised (she noted that this registration was now complete).

Priority Theme 1: Student Success, Resilience & Employability: Four students had been shortlisted for the WorldSkills national finals in November. A former apprentice had launched a hairdressing and barbering salon and an engineering student who was completing a Level 3 Electrical / Electronic Engineering Diploma whilst working for National Air Traffic Services had been awarded The Institute of Engineering and Technology Solent Network Prize for Student Excellence 2017.

The Principal drew attention to changes in Technical Education, 16-19 funding, transport and FE and HE, apprenticeship procurement and the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Chief Executive.

Priority Theme 2: Amazing College, Amazing Staff: Highbury Staff of the Month from March to July 2017 attended afternoon tea with the new

Lord Mayor in the Guildhall.

Priority Theme 3: Passion for Portsmouth, Commitment to Global Britain: A fun day was held in July and raised £3,502 for Jenson's Trust and Cystic Fibrosis. The College supported Victorious Festival over the August bank holiday weekend and raised the College's profile.

Priority Theme 4: Alliances, Partnerships & Collaboration: The College had been shortlisted for the *Community Contribution of the Year* Award. The Principal delivered a presentation at the 6th Future Managers International North South TVET ICT Conference in South Africa and whilst there met with the Principal of the College of Cape Town where a Statement of Intent to continue partnership working between the two colleges was agreed. The £16.2m retail development in North Harbour, due to open in February 2018, would benefit students from many areas of the College including those from Groundworks and Built Environment.

Priority Theme 5: Innovation for Growth and Sustainability: The Entrepreneurial Spark boot camp event came to the Highbury City of Portsmouth Centre recently and welcomed over 100 entrepreneurs, pre-start up and young business ventures who benefitted from expert support. The Highbury College Saturday Art Club featured in the National Saturday Club Yearbook. This club, hosted by a network of colleges including Highbury, was aimed at school children to learn new techniques, handle new materials and develop new skills. There were many benefits to this including progression onto College programmes.

Priority Theme 6: Digital Transformation: The College would continue with the process of digitisation of the Learning and Development programme started in 2016/17 to meet the demands of increasingly digital savvy students and the expansion of the College's computing curriculum. Students could access Canvas, the College's Virtual Learning Environment, on their smartphones and any other internet-enabled device and this had contributed to improvements in GCSE maths results. Canvas would be developed further for tasters in local schools as well as a marketing tool for inbound international students.

Priority Theme 7: Commerciality: As of 01 September the College was no longer a New Horizons franchise but would continue to run Highbury Apprenticeships and offer training room hire. In October, the first cohort of AAT apprentices would start in Birmingham. The College's employment services team had assisted the customisation of the new recruitment CRM solution for the College which would go live in early October. There was a full complement of Account Executives and development plans were being refined to ensure growth targets were met. The extension of the Jeddah contract for one year was contingent on the College providing a performance bond and the College was exploring options with UK Export Finance and several banks. The Principal stated that Jeddah College was successful and that it was vital the College continued with this lucrative contract. The issue would be considered at Finance Committee.

The Chair noted the breadth of successful activity set out in the Principal's Report and thanked the Principal.

2617 Use of Common Seal of the Board

The Clerk presented Paper 2314/17/C setting out use of the Seal, stating that it had been used five times since Corporation last met.

Members **Noted** the use of the Common Seal of the Board.

2618 Minutes of Committees (for information)

The minutes of the **Search Committee Meeting** held on 26 September 2017 were **Noted**.

2619 Governor Liaison Visits

The Principal stated that it was challenging to find a meaningful way of shaping the liaison programme due to the shortage of members but that information would be sent out in the next few days. Members **Noted** that Governor Liaison links would be allocated shortly. It was agreed that Mr Slidel would meet with the international team as a catch up for the visits he missed due to ill health in 2016/17.

Part 4 – Matters of Confidentiality

Minute 2620 was confidential.

Self-Assessment of Meeting

Five evaluation forms were returned to the Clerk. Members agreed that papers arrived in time and were clear and concise, and all but two members agreed that the papers contained sufficient information upon which to make decisions (one of these members referred to the staffing report). Members felt able to contribute to the debate and decision-making process and all but one member felt that Corporation challenged and questioned reports sufficiently. Members were satisfied that the decisions arrived at were sound and that the impact of decisions on students and the College was clear. Members felt that the Chair provided effective leadership and ensured that there was enough time for debate and that all Governors were able and encouraged to participate in discussions. Members agreed that the meeting was clerked effectively. One member noted that the presentations were excellent.

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 05 December 2017 @ 5pm.

The meeting ended at 7.10 p.m.