

**Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation
Held at the College at 5pm on Tuesday 05 July 2016**

Present: Dr L Carter, Mr M Craft, Mr P Daneshvar, Mr M Lawther, Mrs S Mbubaegbu, Mr A Minter, Mr J Rees-Evans and Ms N Youern.

Apologies: Ms L Burt, Ms F Calderbank, Mr L Davies, Ms N Kanram, Mr A Lorabi & Ms D Moody

In Attendance: Ms H Brennan - Managing Director for Student Central
Ms L Davies - Quality & Standards Manager
Ms P Schweitzer - Clerk to the Corporation

M i n u t e s

Part 1 – Standing Items

2525 Apologies for Absence

Ms L Burt, Ms F Calderbank, Mr L Davies, Ms N Kanram, Mr A Lorabi and Ms D Moody sent their apologies.

2526 Membership

It was **Agreed** that Ms Burt be appointed to the Corporation as Staff Governor (Support) for a four year period commencing 05 July 2016 and that she join Audit Committee.

It was also **Agreed** that:

- Mr Craft chair Finance Committee
- Mr Lawther chair Audit Committee
- Ms Moody chair Remuneration Committee
- Mr Minter join Remuneration Committee.

In line with the recent Search Committee recommendation, the Chair had spoken to Mr J Rees-Evans and he had agreed to join Search Committee. This was **Agreed** by Corporation.

2527 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2528 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2016 were **Agreed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2529 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Part 2 –Items for Decision

2530 Review of Financial Regulations

The Group Finance Director presented Paper 2178/16/C setting out the review of the Financial Regulations.

He noted that there hadn't been any fundamental changes to the Regulations from the previous year and that Finance Committee had discussed them at their recent meeting and recommended their approval.

Corporation **Approved** the updated Financial Regulations.

2531 Calendar of Meetings & Schedules of Business

The Clerk presented paper 2179/16/C setting out the Calendar of Meetings for 2017 and 2018 and the Schedules of Business for 2017.

The Clerk stated that the Planning Day scheduled for 27 September 2016 would need to be rescheduled (see later in the meeting).

Corporation **Approved** the 2017 and 2018 Calendar of Meetings and the 2017 Schedules of Business.

Part 3 – Items for Discussion

2532 Prevent / High Needs Briefing

This item was taken first on the Agenda.

The Managing Director for Student Central gave a presentation on SEND Reforms and High Needs Students and the Prevent Duty, stating that these two separate pieces of legislation impacted on the College.

With regards to **SEND reforms and high needs students**, the 2014 Children and Families Act joined up support across education, health and care for individuals from 0 to 25 years to ensure high quality provision and successful preparation for adulthood. Local authorities had to publish a local offer of services (including College provision) and Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) replaced statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments. FE colleges had a duty to co-operate with local authorities (a reciprocal duty) and to admit a young person when the college was named on the EHCP. Governors needed to have regard to the SEND Code of Practice, oversee the implementation of the reforms and provide strategic support to the senior leadership team. The Managing Director Student Central stated that she hoped her presentation would reassure Governors that the College was implementing these reforms.

The College received plans on which it was named (and contributed to

their review in schools) and had to ensure EHCP support and teaching and learning strategies were implemented, that students with EHCPs were tracked, that EHCPs were reviewed in collaboration with other agencies and that it negotiated with local authorities (Portsmouth City and Hampshire County Councils) for funding. The College had responded to the changes by creating an SEN team to deliver specialist support (previously this was bought in) as well as contributing to the local offer, training teaching staff to ensure the EHCP strategies were delivered and liaising with local authorities to secure funding. The College had commissioned a mock Ofsted inspection to review this area and the feedback was broadly positive, with processes found to be robust.

There was a discussion about the impact of the reforms within the College. The Managing Director clarified that 'high needs' encompassed a wide variety of needs (learning difficulties, hearing impairments, autism etc), with the local authority deciding whether or not a student was high need. Funding was dependent on the EHCP's requirements. She stated that there was now better communication between schools and the College at the pre-16 stage. In response to a question, the Managing Director stated that the College anticipated approximately 60 high needs students with plans in 2016/17 although not all would require additional funding. Whilst some students were accessing discreet provision, the majority were on mainstream programmes including apprenticeships. The Principal stressed that the College had always provided support to students with disabilities and learning difficulties (these were identified prior to starting) irrespective of the level of need or whether they had a plan. In response to a question, the Managing Director stated that the College was not the college of choice for students with profound needs but was, following a partnership with Portsmouth City Council to build the Arundel Centre, for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Managing Director didn't believe that the SEND Code of Practice required a lead Governor but agreed to check. It was also agreed that the Chair would speak to the Principal concerning a recently awarded contract from Portsmouth City Council to deliver a contract.

The Managing Director then outlined key issues under the **Prevent Duty** which came into place in July 2015. This duty required the College to have '*due regard to the need to prevent people from being radicalised and being drawn into terrorism.*' It was embedded with the Ofsted Common Inspection framework and formed part of the College's safeguarding duty. The Prevent Guidance 2015 required that Governors and leaders ensured that staff implemented the Prevent duty effectively, with Governors expected to scrutinise the practice in the institution including a Preventing Extremism risk assessment. Governors were required to ensure that policies and procedures were in place and followed.

The College had embedded the Prevent duty within safeguarding policies and practices (including the annual paper to Corporation) and a risk assessment and action plan were in place identifying risk factors such as mental health issues. All staff were required to carry out online training and this was included in the new staff induction. There was support for staff to embed the issue within the curriculum and to facilitate and manage discussion. The College worked in partnership with the various relevant agencies (the Managing Director represented the FE sector on

the Portsmouth Prevent and Safeguarding Board). The College was raising student awareness, including of British values and actively encouraging student involvement in their local community (students who were engaged with their local community were less likely to be drawn into terrorism). The College was also raising awareness of online safety and had an improved Firewall in place. The recent mock inspection was satisfied with the College's assessment and action plan.

The Managing Director stated that Portsmouth had a problem with the far right and, in response to a question, outlined a few instances the College had experienced in recent years and the action that had been taken. She stated that there might be situations where students made racist remarks for example, and these would be managed in house. She stressed that external advice was sought whenever necessary.

Members thanked the Managing Director Student Central for her presentation and she left the meeting.

2533 Quality Report

The Quality & Standards Manager presented Paper 2180/16/C reviewing quality assurance at the College for 2015/16 to date, stating that the new format reflected the revised framework. The Chair stated that there had been a discussion at Search Committee about giving quality issues the weight they were due and this paper was an integral part of that.

The College's Operational Targets for Quality for 2016 build on the College's practice and focused on achieving nine objectives.

Objective 1: High achievement rates in all subject areas, at all levels and for all types of provision. There had been an increase in retention at all levels compared to June 2015 and the final retention rate in 2014/15 and this was particularly marked with Level 4 programmes. This was due to a general improvement in communication by the College and addressing issues more quickly and would be further improved in the coming year by initiatives such as 'Swop not Drop' week where students who were in danger of dropping a course would be offered a different one. The retention rate at June 2016 by Sector Subject area was up compared to the final 2014/15 retention rate. One Member noted that retention in June 2016 for some areas including Science and Mathematics was lower than other areas (one member noted that these areas had been identified by the LEP as important subjects) and the Quality & Standards Manager stated that there had been an issue with specialist teacher recruitment and student satisfaction. The latter had been largely addressed by communicating more directly with students as well as employers to ensure the curriculum was meeting their needs. In response to a question the Quality & Standards Manager agreed to benchmark data with other colleges in future. The College had embedded processes for liaising with parents of students under 18 years concerning attendance and from next year only parents would be able to report absence for 16-18 year olds (at present students could report their absence).

Objective 2: Students make exceptional progress. Attendance rates to date in 2015/16 had decreased to 83.63% compared to 84.5% in

2014/15 and the College would continue to reward good attendance in a sustained effort to secure improvement. There had been 155 UCAS applications of which 111 students had accepted conditional offers, nine had accepted unconditional offers, 14 universities were waiting for replies from students and five students were awaiting replies from universities.

Objective 3: Teachers plan and deliver programmes of study that consolidate learning, deepen understanding and develop skills and prepare learners very well for their next steps. The College had reviewed its observation process by carrying out a Learning Walk each month between October and May for each teacher. The first wave of graded observations had been completed and showed a grade profile of 70% good or better teaching. Data from the second wave indicated that the percentage of good or better grades had significantly improved.

Objective 4: Assessment is very effective in enabling students to learn and progress. Assessment remained good. In the 2015 induction survey, 95% of students reported they knew how they would be assessed compared to 93% in 2014/15. Although good in many areas, reporting to parents, carers and employers required improvement in some areas.

Objective 5: Feedback from stakeholders confirms that students are happy with their course and college and achieve their qualifications. The College set targets to ensure that stakeholders were happy with the choice of course and college and in the autumn 2015 Student Survey 95% confirmed that they were happy (the same as 2014). In the 2016 survey, 83% of parents / guardians confirmed they were happy with their child's choice of college (81% in 2015). One Member asked why parents might not be happy with the college and the Quality & Standards Manager cited issues such as timetabling, stating that communication lay at the heart of improving satisfaction but noted that engagement with parents of 16-18 year olds was difficult as some were not engaged at all. One Member noted that this was a problem across the city. One Member suggested communicating with parents by text or mobile app.

Objective 6: Timely compliance by staff with key quality processes to ensure the College runs effectively and efficiently. Measures were put in place concerning the completion of Student Progress Board, Programme Quality Reviews & Self-Assessment Reports. The target was not met in the autumn but training had been put in place and along with closer monitoring, improvements were expected during the summer term.

Objective 7: Outstanding academic and pastoral support. Academic support was good, with students receiving regular reviews of their progress through academic tutorials and in lessons. Pastoral support was also very good, with a common tutorial programme and resources focusing on the five themes of Every Child Matters.

Objective 8: All Departments and Business Support Groups are judged to be outstanding. The 2014/15 SAR grades for Curriculum and Business Support had been validated; five areas had maintained their grade 1, three areas improved by one grade, five areas stayed at the same grade and three areas dropped by at least one grade (Arts, Media & Publishing, Computing and Engineering). No areas were judged as

inadequate. All Business Support areas remained the same as the previous year with Learning and Development improving by one grade.

Objective 9: Self-assessment and quality assurance structures secure continuous improvement, positive outcomes and high satisfaction rates. 27 formal complaints from students, parents and employers had been received to date (compared to 45 in 2014/15), with the majority around course organisation. A summary of On Programme and Exit Survey results would be provided in the autumn term.

In response to a question, the Principal confirmed that this data meant the College would be assessed as Good according to Ofsted. The Chair asked whether, given the financial pressures and staff changes, it would be possible to reach Outstanding and the Principal stated that this was the aim. It was possible that the College would be inspected next year, but only if standards fell. However if there was no progress from 2014/15 in terms of achievement rates, the College would still be in the top 5% of colleges nationwide. The real issue for the College was apprenticeships and a great deal of work had been done to support that as it was a key growth area. One Member remarked that the report showed a noticeable improvement from last year and that it was welcome news to see the figures going in the right direction.

Corporation **Noted** the progress made with respect to the 2016 Operational Targets for Quality.

The Chair thanked the Quality and Standards Manager and she left the meeting.

2534 Principal's Report

The Principal presented Paper 2181/16/C, apologising for its late circulation which, following discussion at the last Corporation meeting, had a revised format reporting against the College's strategic priorities.

The Principal congratulated the Chair for her organisation, The You Trust, winning the prestigious national Charity award.

Priority Theme 1: Student Success, Resilience and Employability: Whitely Retail Park was taken over by Highbury students on 21 April 2016, with students gaining valuable work experience by being involved in all aspects of running the complex for the day. The College had entered students into this year's WorldSkills UK regional competitions in a number of areas and would be showcasing its Web Design expertise at the Skills Sow at Birmingham NEC in November. A 12 year old student (a year 8 student at Fareham Academy) at the College was the youngest person in the world to pass a City and Guilds qualification. From September 2016 construction students would undertake classroom based learning at the Highbury Campus and attend Highbury Northharbour for workshop skills training. This was aimed at improving the construction students' experience through access to the wider range of facilities and support services at the campus. This also meant an opportunity to reimagine the use of Highbury Northharbour as an industry hub and training facility. In response to a question, the Principal clarified that these students would

not need to travel between the two College sites. With regard to policy and other developments impacting on priority theme 1, the Principal outlined the Higher Education White Paper, the Prison Education review (noting that the College had withdrawn from prison education some years ago) and the Functional Skills Reform consultation.

Priority Theme 2: Growth: The Solent Marine Academy, housed in Boathouse 4 at Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard, was officially unveiled on 26 March 2016 and from September 2016 students would be able to study for a Level 3 apprenticeship in Marine Engineering. The official opening of the College's Sussex Campus, Sussex County Cricket Ground and home of the College subsidiary and joint venture New Work Training (NWT Ltd) was to take place mid-July. Following the success of the award winning initiative with The News, the College was partnering with Southampton Echo to set up a one year classroom in the newsroom. With regard to policy and other developments impacting on priority theme 2, the College cited Lord Sugar's designation as the government's new enterprise tsar and his role in promoting apprenticeships.

The Principal also stated that the 2015 general election in Nigeria, resulting in a new political party taking over the Government, and the drop in oil prices had slowed down the economy in Nigeria and these developments had affected the College's CRSG contract. In June the Rector at the Institute of Technology & Management (ITM) was informed verbally by the Deputy Governor that an Acting Rector, paid in the local currency, had been appointed because they could no longer afford the current contract with the college. The College was being supported by the UKTI and the British High Commissioner to Nigeria to recover the outstanding invoices and the Principal assured Members that all diplomatic channels were being explored. The Principal also stated that late last week the College had heard that the Governor had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian government to support primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Priority Theme 3: Innovation and Enterprise: The Principal would be standing down as Chair of the Gazelle Colleges Group after four years, with Cathy Walsh OBE, former Principal / CEO at Barking & Dagenham College taking up the position of Executive Chair of Gazelle in Transition.

Priority Theme 4: Reputation: The College won the award for 'outstanding use of technology for improving teaching and learning' at the annual TES FE awards in April 2016 and was once again the Regional Headline Sponsor for the TeenTech Solent event this year supporting the STEM agenda.

Priority Theme 5: Leadership: As a result of the Principal's participation in the American Association Community Colleges convention, a co-presenter of the '*Leveraging Business Incubation and Entrepreneurship to Enhance Student Learning Opportunities*' workshop would work with Gazelle colleges individually and collectively to scale up and leverage entrepreneurial activity. The termly Business Leaders' Planning Day focused on giving staff the opportunity to understand the College's finances, to evaluate progress against the change management journey from July 2015 and further develop plans for 2016/17. The change

management results would be brought to Corporation in the autumn term. The committee structure of the College's Academic Framework was circulated, with the Principal providing an update on their work. With regard to policies and developments impacting on priority theme 5, the Principal cited the Association of Colleges' change of CEO.

Priority Theme 6: Financial Health: The College's financial health would be categorised as satisfactory by the SFA using their financial indicator. The reasons for this disappointing drop were detailed in the Financial Monitoring Report and the 5 year financial forecast commentary and focused strategies and actions were being implemented for financial recovery. The Principal stated that the College had always been lean, but this was on a different level. The College was addressing the financial situation in a structured and measured level, with fundamental changes in a number of areas. The result of the changes would be evident in 2016/17. In response to a question, the Principal confirmed that it would be possible to measure the impact of change from a year ago because although posts had been taken out, the structure remained unchanged.

There followed a discussion concerning the process of drafting and agreeing the College's Vision Plan for 2017-2020. If a normal planning process had been followed, Governors would have given a steer on the plan in January / February with the plan going through a number of iterations with staff and students etc before coming back to Corporation for agreement in December. Members hadn't had an opportunity to give this steer and some things had now been set, for example financial forecasts and specific targets such as moving financial health from satisfactory to good. The Principal therefore asked Members how they wished to proceed. A number of Members stated that the College's financial position constrained what it could do and it was therefore important to stick to core business and define the College's market position within the context of the 5 year plan. The Chair asked whether the College should consider the City Council's devolution proposal. It was **Agreed** that a short planning session be organised in July for Corporation to discuss these issues, as well as international activity and the impact of Brexit on the College. The Principal stated that Brexit was creating uncertainty both for EU staff and students at the College and could lead to a rise in hate crime locally but that the College didn't expect to see too much change immediately. Of more concern was the College's plan to grow the EU market, staff recruitment and access to ESF funding which was used to support the unemployed and hard to reach in the city. The Principal stated that the College had undertaken various measures to ensure that all students stayed safe over the summer period.

2535 Minutes of Committees

3.4.1 Audit Committee Meeting— held on 24 May 2016
The Minutes were **Noted**.

3.4.2 Finance Committee Meeting – held on 26 April & 14 June 2016
The Minutes were **Noted**.

3.4.3 Search Committee Meeting – held on 20 June 2016
The Minutes were **Noted**.

2536 Governor Liaison Visits

Governors' summer term liaison visits were **Noted**.

Part 4 – Matters of Confidentiality

Minutes 2537 – 2540 were 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, containing sufficient information upon which to make decisions. One member stated that 'most' of the papers arrive in plenty of time and another Member stated that not all the papers eg risk were clear and concise. Members felt able to contribute to the debate and decision-making process and all members 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. Three additional comments / suggestions were made:

- *'All reports should be prefaced with a one page summary eg Quality'*
- *'Meeting took longer than planned. Agenda needs to be time-boxed.'*
- *'This was a demanding meeting in the best sense of the word but I consider that the Corporation exercised its governance function well in addressing key issues before it.'*

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 06 October 2016 @ 5pm.

The meeting ended at 8 p.m.