Minutes of a Corporation Meeting held on

Wednesday 21st June 2017 at 5.00pm

Held in the Boardroom, South Building

Present:  
Ms Amanda Annan  
Mr Stuart Brand  
Ms Di Crookes  
Mr Stewart Fergusson  
Ms Maggie Galliers (Chair)  
Ms Kirsti Lord (Acting Principal)  
Dr Russell Moseley  
Mr Carl Pearson  
Ms Sandra Smith

In Attendance:  
Mr Jim Edwards, Clerk to the Corporation  
Ms Clare Hatton, Assistant Principal Business Transformation  
Ms Sue Hopewell, Head of Quality and Development  
Ms Jo Lawrence, Assistant Principal Student and Staff Services  
Mr Mark Payne, Director of Finance and Resources  
Ms Lisa Cleaver, Director of Faculty for Employability Skills

C69/17  Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Vic Bellanti, Ms Charlotte Bosworth, Mr Chris Cooper, Mr Stuart Rolt, Mr Martin Sparrow, and Mr Steve Stewart

C70/17  Congratulations

The Chair informed the meeting that Ms Kirsti Lord had been appointed as Deputy Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges, and would be taking up her new post in August 2017. Governors congratulated her on her achievement.

C71/17  Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

C72/17  Minutes of the meeting held on 24th May 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th May 2017 were approved as a true record.
Matters Arising from the Minutes

i) Under C28/17 (iv), Report of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team, it was noted that a report on the STEM Digital Project would be presented later at the meeting.

ii) Under C58/17 (i), Matters Arising from the Minutes, it was reported that Russell Moseley and the Chair had met the Acting Principal to pick up on the themes identified at an earlier quality meeting in May 2017. PSV provision is showing good progress, albeit from a low base, although the staffing resource position is fragile. This area will continue to be closely monitored.

Compliance with MarkBook is much better, with most staff seeing the benefit of the system. More work, however, needs to be undertaken in ensuring full compliance among staff.

In terms of the 2016-17 achievement rates, it is predicted that they will be closer to the latest national average rates.

iii) Under C59/17, Report of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team, it was reported that the Merger Project Manager had forwarded details of the merger communications’ plan as requested.

iv) Under C62/17 (ii), Construction Action Plan, it was confirmed that an action plan would be presented at the Corporation meeting on 12th July 2017.

Report of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team

1. The Principal and Senior Leadership Team presented a report which updated Governors on elements of the merger with Henley College; the Joint Venture Company for Apprenticeships; overall performance in 2016-17; national policy changes; and staff and student activities.

Merger

2. Merger arrangements continue to progress satisfactorily, and the implementation date of 1st August 2017 is still projected. Formal consultation on the proposed restructure of the Senior Leadership Team has commenced and will be concluded ahead of merger.

3. A fuller update will be provided under the specific merger update item later in the meeting.

Joint Venture Company

3. An external consultant has been commissioned by Warwickshire College, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, Henley College, and City College Coventry to complete a business plan for the Joint Venture Company. This work is being funded by the grant secured shortly after the conclusion of the Area Review.

4. The business plan will be reviewed by the Principals of the aforementioned colleges to ascertain its viability. If necessary, recommendations will be brought to the next meeting of the Corporation on 12th July 2017.
Overall Performance in 2016-17

6. A more detailed KPI report will be considered later in the meeting, but, in summary, it was reported that student attendance, retention, and achievement in 2016-17 are projected to improve on 2015-16 figures.

Positioning for Policy Change

7. The outcome of the General Election was discussed, and it was noted that Justine Greening has been re-appointed as Secretary of State for Education. This provides continuity and stability for, among other things, the implementation of the Technical Education Bill and T Levels. Robert Halfon has been replaced as Apprenticeships and Skills Minister by Anne Milton.

8. The College’s business case to the ESFA, seeking to increase its 16-18 funding allocation in 2017-18 has been rejected, although written confirmation is still awaited.

9. The College’s funding allocation from ESFA for non-levy apprenticeships will be known by the end of June 2017, and this will be reported at the Corporation meeting on 12th July 2017.

10. The final Support and Challenge visit from Ofsted is imminent, and progress in English and maths; stretch and challenge; work experience; Prevent, and promoting British Values will be reviewed.

11. The Assistant Principal Business Transformation presented a report on the STEM Digital Project, the capital element of which had been part-funded by the LEP under its growth deal. An Innovation Hub was established, with funding support and guidance from Fujitsu and other employers, to be a centre for developing learning strategies, and for delivering the College’s wider digital strategy. This is now well-established, and is an excellent example of effective employer engagement.

12. The agreed milestones and outputs of the project were considered, and Governors asked for clarification over the financial penalties that might be incurred should these not be achieved.

Staff Restructuring

13. Because of the lagged funding impact in 2017-18, there is a requirement to achieve significant pay savings. Since February 2017, the College has saved c£300,000 through vacancy management and departmental reorganisation, but a redundancy consultation process has now commenced to achieve the remaining savings. Governors were informed of the curriculum areas affected.

Staff and Student Activities

14. On 14th July 2017, a staff awards ceremony in being held at the Rugby Club in Coventry, to which all Governors are invited.

15. An end-of-year party for students is being held on 29th June 2017, and members of Henley College’s Student Council are also being invited.

Applications

12. The latest applications’ numbers for the 2017-18 academic year were presented for Governors’ consideration.

13. There is still a shortfall of new applicants compared with the June 2016 figures. However, there are considerable expressions of interest from current students wishing to progress into 2017-18.
14. No management information from HCC on student applications has been made available, so the merged college position is unclear currently.

Conclusions

15. Governors resolved:
   i) to note the positive report of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team;
   ii) to request that the Assistant Principal Business Transformation and the Clerk to the Corporation ascertain whether financial penalties will be incurred if the agreed milestones and outputs of the STEM Digital Project are not achieved;
   iii) to note the applications’ position for 2017-18, and to request that every effort be made to secure the recruitment of new and progressing students.

C74/17 Merger

1. The Clerk and Chair of Shadow Board provided a summary of progress being made in implementing the merger with Henley College Coventry (HCC).

2. The Shadow Board held its penultimate meeting before merger on 13th June 2017, and reviewed progress towards the implementation of merger by 1st August 2017.

Finance

3. The combined financial out-turn of the two colleges in 2016-17 is projected to be an operating surplus of £112k, after restructuring and merger costs, against an original estimated deficit of c£1m. This positive variance is primarily as a result of lower-than-expected merger and restructuring costs during the year, although it is expected that 2017-18 will see some of the costs materialising. Therefore, some budget provision has been set aside to cover this eventuality.

4. The Shadow Board approved the merged college draft budget for 2017-18, and Governors were informed that the key constituent parts were broadly in line with the original merger business case. The final budget is now being formulated, and the Shadow Board endorsed the management approach of ensuring that income targets are realistic; that staffing costs are maintained at an efficient level; and that merger and restructuring costs are factored in.

5. The bank facility is nearing finalisation, following a constructive and positive meeting with Barclays bank on 14th June 2017. The legal documentation is currently being drawn up in readiness for formal agreement ahead of merger.

Governance

6. The Shadow Board approved the Corporation structure at merger, and agreed that four Independent Governors from CCC will be appointed to the new Board. All Independent Governors on the new Board will have an initial term of office of one year.

7. The Shadow Board also agreed that there will be two Staff Governors. Ideally, there would be one such governor from CCC, and one from HCC. However, since the meeting, technical advice had been received that both current HCC Staff Governors had the right to continue on the Board, which would mean that there would be no staff membership from CCC. This issue is being considered further, as it is felt that Staff Governors from both existing colleges should be on the Board initially at merger for the sake of parity.
8. The outcomes of the public consultation into merger have been published by the required date. As previously reported, the overall responses were in favour of the merger with particular support from external stakeholders.

9. The formal request to the Secretary of State to change the name of the merged college to ‘Coventry College’ has been submitted by the deadline.

10. An outstanding issue, associated with a charge by the Homes and Communities Agency over part of CCC’s site, is now expected to be concluded satisfactorily, with the assignment being transferred to HCC by 29th June 2017.

11. A letter has been received from HCC, providing assurance on a number of outstanding issues raised during the legal due diligence process. This letter was tabled for Governors’ information.

   TUPE

12. The TUPE process continues satisfactorily, and the consultation with staff and unions is positive. There continue to be no issues of concern in terms of the proper legal process being followed.

13. Governors resolved:-

   i) to note the positive progress towards achieving merger by 1st August 2017;

   ii) to confirm the satisfactory outcomes of the legal due diligence, the financial due diligence, the public consultation, and the TUPE process;

   iii) to approve formally the dissolution of City College Coventry, and the transfer of its activities, assets and liabilities to Henley College Coventry at merger.

C75/17 Key Performance Indicators

1. The Acting Principal presented Governors with the latest key performance indicator (KPI) data for 2016-17.

2. 16-18 numbers are still projected to out-turn at 1,674 against the funding target of 1,888, as reported at previous Corporation meetings.

3. The lagged funding position in 2017-18 remains at £697,000 as a result of more learners being enrolled onto programmes in a higher funding band. However, to confirm, as reported earlier in the meeting, the College’s business case seeking to reduce this amount has been rejected by ESFA.

4. Adult classroom-based income is now showing a projected shortfall of £77k at year-end, which is a slightly worse position against the estimated shortfall of £81k reported at the last Corporation meeting on 24th May 2017. The College continues to attempt to address this under-achievement through additional classroom-based and commercial delivery during June and July. However, it may now be the case that the target is not met.

5. Student attendance in May 2017 slipped to 83.6%, which, although 2.6% higher than the figure in May 2016, is below the 2016-17 target of 85%.

6. Retention for 16-18 and adult provision is 3.2% and 0.9% respectively higher than in May 2016. It is still projected that the 16-18 and 19+ targets of 91% will be met.
7. The predicted achievements by Faculty and curriculum areas show that the majority of areas are still expected to exceed their out-turns for 2015-16. In most cases, these figures continue to be at or ahead of the latest national averages.

8. Maths and English continues to give some cause for concern in terms of its impact on overall achievement rate. However, student attendance at recent exams was relatively high, and therefore the College is hopeful that there will be a corresponding increase in pass rates. However, until the GCSE results are known in late August, the success rates will appear very low. It was suggested therefore that the GCSE figures should be disaggregated from the overall success rate figure, so as not to give a false impression.

9. The National Achievement Rate Tables for 2015-16 have just been released, and the College’s predicted performance against these latest benchmarks will be provided at the next Corporation meeting on 12th July 2017 to identify any issues and areas of concern.

10. Sickness absence represents a significant improvement on the May 2016 figure, and the target for 2016-17 will be achieved.

11. Work experience participation currently sits at 82%, a significant improvement on the position reported at the meetings on 24th May 2017, and it is hoped that the target will be achieved.

12. Governors resolved:
   i) to note the current KPI data for 2016-17;
   ii) to note the continued positive predictions for classroom-based achievement rates;
   iii) to request that learner performance data be updated in the light of the recent National Achievement Rate Tables for 2015-16, and reported to the Corporation at its next meeting on 12th July 2017.

C76/17 Report on English and Maths

1. The Director of Faculty for Employability Skills presented a report on English and Maths, highlighting, in particular, student attendance at lessons and examinations, and their predicted pass rates.

2. The new examination structure for GCSEs was explained to Governors in respect of the 1-9 marking methodology and the removal of all controlled assessments in GCSE English.

3. Lesson attendance has improved compared with 2015-16 and is currently:
   - GCSE English – 73%
   - GCSE Maths – 75%
   - Functional Skills English – 78%
   - Functional Skills Maths – 79%

4. Attendance at examinations has also improved as a direct result of key intervention strategies implemented during the second half of the academic year, and it is hoped that there will be a corresponding improvement in student pass rates.
5. Predicted pass rates show an improvement against 2015-16 performance as follows:

   GCSE English – 78.2%
   GCSE Maths – 74.2%
   Functional Skills English – 72.9%
   Functional Skills Maths – 77%

6. The overall pass rate, therefore, is 75.9% compared with 62.2% in 2015-16.

7. The intervention strategies that were put in place in 2016-17 were informed to Governors; namely, the integration of English and maths staff with vocational curriculum areas; improved monitoring and oversight of English and maths attendance by Curriculum Managers; SMS communication with students; and running a Breakfast Club ahead of each GCSE examination.

8. For 2017-18, a joint campaign with Henley College Coventry entitled “What’s the Point” will be launched at enrolment and then throughout the year.

9. It was suggested that support for ESOL students in Functional Skills maths should be a requirement in the future, because of the use of some relatively complex English terms used in the subject.

10. Governors resolved:

    i) to thank the Director of Faculty for Employability Skills for her comprehensive and thorough report;
    ii) note the positive progress made in respect of English and maths performance, particularly in respect of attendance at lessons and examinations, and the improved predicted success rates;
    iii) to note, however, that significant improvements were still required in order to assess English and maths provision as Good.
    iv) the positive impact of the intervention strategies implemented during the 2016-17 academic year.

C77/17

HE Report

1. The Head of Quality and Development presented Governors with a report on the College’s Higher Education provision, focusing on quality, standards and the students experience.

2. For students due to complete in June 2017, the predicted overall achievement rate is 61%; namely, retention of 65% and a pass rate of 94%. The predicted rate for each course was explained to Governors.

3. Significant improvements have been made during the academic year in respect of the quality assurance process with Warwick University, with whom the College runs its 2+2 provision. The HE Committee has been re-established and is working effectively.
4. Of the 23 students who completed their course in 2015-16, 12 of the 13 respondents reported positive destinations. However, there are unknown destinations for 10 students, which is not satisfactory. Processes are in place to address this in the current year.

5. Employer engagement and involvement has improved, but it is recognised that there are opportunities for further developments to enhance the student experience in 2017-18 and beyond.

6. The College conducted its own survey in March 2017, using the questions in the Ipsos Mori national student survey. There was a 42% response rate out of 55 active HE students, and the outcomes are generally positive. However, there are a number of areas for improvement and development, and these will be addressed as part of an action plan in 2017-18.

7. The survey was conducted online, and the low response rate of 42% was queried. Governors were informed that the methodology for seeking student views would be reviewed for 2017-18.

8. Governors resolved:
   i) to note the HE report for 2016-17;
   ii) to note the low HE numbers, and therefore the vulnerability of this provision;
   iii) to endorse the actions in place for 2017-18 and beyond with the aim of delivering improvements.

C78/17 Any Other Business

i) The Director of Finance and Resources reported that, in order to improve security and to control the flow of members of public through the site, the pedestrian route was now gated, and would be closed off at appropriate times.

   Governors thanked the College for addressing this safeguarding issue that had been raised previously.

C79/17 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed for Wednesday 12th July 2017, 5pm.

C80/17 Publication of Documents

The publication of papers was approved without exception, although sections of the Report of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team (Document 3) would be redacted because of sensitive and personal information contained within it.

Meeting opened 5.00pm

Meeting closed 6.25pm

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