

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

held on Wednesday 24 February 2016

Present Ian Jewkes (*Vice Chair*), Keith Bate (*Principal*), Jane Chan, Karen Cocker, Geoffrey Elliott, Andrew Hanson, Mark Johnson, Helene Jones, Allison Matthews, Alison Perks

In attendance Jacquie Carman (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*)
Joanne Williams (*Director of Learning and Teaching*)
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)
Julie Edwards (*Faculty Director, Business and Professional Services*)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Leslie Williams, Peter Mitchell and Rianna Soley.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Corporation Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the Corporation Meeting – 25 November 2015

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held 25 November were approved as a correct record.

3.2 Minutes of the Corporation Meeting – 9 January 2016

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held 9 January 2016 were approved as a correct record.

3.3 Matters Arising

The Clerk reviewed actions listed from previous meetings.

It was agreed that agenda item 7.3 Faculty Director: Business and Professional Services be taken as the first substantive item.

7.3 Faculty Director: Business and Professional Services

The presentation addressed performance across the current year including progress made on courses 'under notice' in the previous year.

Key points included curriculum and qualification changes, progression opportunities, specialist staff needs and a proactive approach to addressing Functional Skills, English and Maths. Additionally catering practice had been revised with modernised areas and methods.

Alison Perks asked about students who had left courses. Julie Edwards explained how in one example a drop in retention appeared significant, with loss of three out of ten students on the course. However, these students had left the course to take up employment or an Apprenticeship in course related work areas.

Under the current Faculty Operational Review, student behaviour was a strength and use of ILT and stretch and challenge were areas for further improvement.

New course developments and rebranding were discussed, particularly the ethos behind the planned football pathway. Ian Jewkes asked about the football pathway and employability. Julie Edwards explained that this approach enabled students to combine their sporting passion alongside a sports qualification to support retention and motivation.

Development of bespoke business courses and pre Apprenticeships were also noted.

Karen Cocker asked about recruitment in Level 1 Hospitality, and Julie Edwards explained that course numbers varied due to student achievement. Students who may have gained higher or lower than expected grades on entry would have their courses adjusted appropriately.

The report was received.

4 Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee held 9 February 2016

The minutes were received. Keith Bate explained that Shakespeare Martineau had been appointed as College solicitors and would be invited to attend the March 2016 meeting of the Corporation.

4.1 Corporation Appointments

The Clerk outlined the basis of the recommendations from the Search and Governance Committee for Corporation appointments in relation to skill and experience.

The Corporation resolved, subject to meeting set eligibility criteria that:

- **Harvey Owen be appointed as a co-opted member of Halesowen College Corporation for one year commencing March 2016.**
- **Helene Jones be appointed as a member of Halesowen College Corporation for a term of three years commencing 1 August 2016.**

4.2 Corporation Success Measures

The Clerk explained that the third monitoring review and recent strategic review at Corporation Residential had prompted revision of the Corporation's success measures, particularly in relation to the performance management framework. The Chair had agreed to undertake this for May 2016 with subsequent annual reviews brought forward to February.

Karen Cocker noted potential for wider recruitment regarding the skills base of members and Geoffrey Elliott expressed that the Corporation had the capacity to be more representative. Ian Jewkes highlighted that the Search and Governance Committee were promoting use of additional resources such as the School Governor One Stop Shop.

4.3 Succession Planning

Chair of Corporation

Following previous discussion the Corporation had requested that the Search and Governance Committee reconsider proposals regarding succession planning for the Chair/Vice Chair roles.

The Search and Governance Committee had considered this within the wider context of Corporation roles and Committee membership and proposed the adoption of a set of principles which would consolidate and enhance current practice. This included earlier discussion with members regarding key roles and aspirations.

The Corporation resolved to endorse the principles of Corporation process and approach to appointments to office and membership of Committees as provided in the Succession Planning report dated February 2016.

4.4 Governance Developments

Advanced scrutiny roles in relation to key reports and additional roles were provided for member approval. The allocated roles were agreed.

5 Strategic Overview

Keith Bate highlighted key points from the Strategic Overview.

5.1 External Review

5.1.1 Higher Education Review

A good outcome from the Higher Education Review had been achieved as reflected in a very strong report, where the College was rated as a strong Further Education College, delivering in Higher Education. The quality mark was important in providing further credibility with university partners.

Geoffrey Elliott noted that it was commendable that the report recognised the College strategic approach to Higher Education course offer, which addressed pathways for its students.

5.1.2 Operational Review

The final annual Operational Review was being undertaken. The review outcomes illustrated that the College was moving in a positive direction.

Alison Perks asked about Maths and English staff performance, and Keith Bate responded that this had already improved and currently remained at the same level. Recruiting additional good GCSE maths teachers remained challenging, however, the recruitment of trainees was positive.

5.1.3 Corporation Planning and Assurance

Independent governance support was being pursued in the form of an Ofsted Registered Inspector. The Corporation focus remained on providing the best level of challenge.

5.2 Area Based Review

5.2.1 Birmingham Area Based Review

Halesowen College had not been directly involved in the review, however it was invited to contribute to plans following receipt of responses from Birmingham Colleges.

Members discussed the key areas proposed including collaborative working and shared service development.

5.2.2 Black Country Area Review

The Chair and Principal continued to meet with other Black Country Colleges and there remained a clear wish to retain organisational independence, while working collaboratively. Keith Bate outlined key development areas on which Principals were taking a lead. A pragmatic approach was being adopted focusing on public benefit.

5.3 Safeguarding Policy and Nursery Safeguarding Policy

A separate Nursery Safeguarding Policy had been provided recognising the Nursery as a separate part of the College with distinct user needs. In addition, an updated College Safeguarding Policy was provided with specific reference to safeguarding and radicalisation.

All approaches would be adopted to build best safeguarding practice throughout the organisation. In addition to traditional training the College was looking to include online training and to build a resource base.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Safeguarding Policy and Nursery Safeguarding Policy dated 24 February 2016.

5.4 Single Equality Scheme

The Single Equality Scheme illustrated the overall Equality and Diversity ethos of the College, with commitment throughout the organisation. The key priorities for development across 2015/2016 were highlighted.

Alison Perks asked about student consultation. Joanne Williams explained that Equality Ambassadors attended the Equality and Diversity Consultative Forum, and that there was a Student Board and activity through student tutorials.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Single Equality Scheme and objectives and priorities for 2015/16.

5.5 Multi Academy Trust

5.5.1 Ridgewood High School

Keith Bate provided an update for members on the College work in relation to the King Edward VI Academy Trust.

5.5.2 Academy Sponsorship Proposal

Keith Bate explained the current position with regards to sponsorship and collaborative working regarding a Multi Academy Trust.

The Corporation noted the Multi Academy Trust developments and authorised the Principal and Chair to proceed with initiatives.

5.6 Development Plan 2016

The College Development Plan consolidated the areas for development as previously reported and discussed. The actions confirmed the work in moving the College forward.

The Corporation resolved to approve the College Development Plan 2016.

5.7 50 Year Celebrations

Keith Bate invited members to attend the launch of the 50 Year Celebrations on 19 March 2016. Every curriculum area would be undertaking a 1960s related activity and the College was engaging further with the community.

6 Monthly Performance Information

The overarching report with its RAG rated system illustrated the monitoring and performance of the College.

6.1 Finance

Both the financial position and the student application profiles remained strong.

6.2 Students, Teaching and Learning

The College continued to focus on English and Maths provision with much performance monitoring for students particularly regarding mock exams. Diagnostic tests helped to target revision needs. The College developed and celebrated an ethos of achievement, to illustrate the correlation between attendance and achievement.

Sharing best practice across colleges was planned. The College also wished to learn from schools about early experiences of the new GCSEs.

6.3 Staffing and Accommodation

Absence rates for 2015/2016 continued to remain lower than the previous year.

Regarding accommodation, Block 13 was on schedule, however, the new Animal Care Compound remained behind schedule, but would be completed in the near future.

The report was received.

7 Students, Teaching, Learning and Assessment

7.1 Department for Education League Tables

Keith Bate contextualised the College performance tables as extracted from the information provided by the Department for Education. There had been a slight dip in value added scores for A Levels. Vocational provision had improved.

The report was received.

7.2 Safeguarding and Health and Safety Annual Report

Joanne Williams reported that the policy had been reviewed and that the College was providing ongoing training, including work done with students in the tutorial programme. Recent safeguarding issues involving social media moved very quickly, however, the College responded directly through senior tutors and tutorials. Students were also undertaking an e-safety qualification through tutorials. Prevent work had also been undertaken, however, this needed to be continually addressed.

Jacque Carman outlined that the Health and Safety Annual Report was strong and that there were good and improving systems in place. Occupational Health and Wellbeing were incorporated into the report. The 2015/2016 Action Plan had been discharged with the exception of the British Safety Council 5* audit which was scheduled for April 2016. The report also provided the planned actions for 2016/2017.

The report was received.

8 Finance Reports

8.1 Finance Policy Review

Jacque Carman highlighted the key areas revised including reference to public benefit, updates to accountancy practice and introduction of contactless and cashback systems.

Members noted that a further review of policy would be provided prior to the implementation of the new College finance system.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Finance Policy for 2016/2017.

8.2 Tuition Fees Policy

Members noted changes where students aged 19+ may not be eligible for agency funding at Level 3 or 4 provision and would therefore require learning loans.

Ian Jewkes asked if this increased the potential for bad student debt. Jacque Carman responded that there remained some 19-23 year old academic entitlement on some courses. There would be an increase in student loans. The College had introduced increased rigour and bad debt had declined.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Tuition Fees Policy for 2016/2017.

By resolution under Standing Order 8 Proceedings at Meetings, staff governors withdrew from the discussion of agenda item 9.

9 Confidential Minute of the Search and Governance Committee, 9 February 2016 - Succession Planning

As per confidential minute.

10 Any Other Business

The Clerk highlighted potential dates for the 2017 Corporation Strategic Planning residential on which members would be consulted.

11 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 23 March 2016 at 6pm.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

Actions from meetings			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Date/item for review	Reported by
Corporation Meeting 25 November 2015			
4.2	Recommendations from the Search and Governance Committee		
a)	In response to further questions it was noted that a retired HMI would be suitable to address such external review and if agreed Search and Governance Committee be asked to progress this.	March 2016	LWi
6.1	College Self-Assessment Report and Development Plan		
	It was agreed that revised reporting should more clearly illustrate movement in performance, to be addressed within the Faculty Director reports provided within the annual cycle of business.	July 2016	KDB
Corporation Meeting 9 January 2016			
4	Implementing the Strategic Plan and Priorities for the Corporation 2016–2017		KDB
	Strategic Priorities for the Year Ahead		
4b	It was agreed that the senior management team would address the strategic review outcomes in light of the Area Based Review and return a report to the Corporation.	Summer 2016	KDB
4c	Inspection: It was agreed that a group of governors would make preparations.	March 2016	JWi
4d	Reflection on development, contraction and working differently: Joanne Williams to prepare a report for Corporation on analysis of areas regarding opportunities, problems and viability.	March 2016	JWi