

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING

HELD ON 25th JANUARY 2017 AT 6.00 P.M.

MEETING 16/03

Present: Jane Alderton, Robert Bridges, Ayas Fallon-Khan, Jane Farrell, Philip Harland, Lucy MacDonald, Cathy McDonnell, Nasr Muflahi, Janice Robinson, Richard Seager

In Attendance: Jill Arnold, Peter Bailey, Elaine French, Janine Hatcher (acting clerk)
Aldona Wheeler

Apologies Received: Louise Pennington, Randall Anderson, Simon Lindfield,
Cathy McDonnell, Anton Pruden, Melissa Turpin, Katharine Travis

In the Chair: Janice Robinson

1. Welcomes and Apologies for Absence

Apologies – as recorded above.

Welcomes - Robert Bridges and Jane Farrell, both parent governors, were welcomed to their first meeting. Aldona Wheeler was invited as considering joining as support staff governor. Thank you to Janine Hatcher for offering to take the minutes in Louise Pennington's absence.

2. Membership Matters

None.

3. Declaration of Interests

None.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th December 2016 Part I

The minutes were approved and the Chair authorised to sign them. Jane Farrell asked what SAR meant, being unfamiliar with this acronym. Jill Arnold clarified that it meant Self Assessment Report.

5. Matters Arising – Action Points and Significant Risks

The contents of the action points schedule were noted and governors were advised which actions had been completed. The following was mentioned:

- Item 7c (6/7/16) - Jill Arnold informed the governors that we are now part of the Surrey and Sussex Group of Sixth Form Colleges (S7). They offer many Staff Development & Networking opportunities and consist of 10 colleges Janice Robinson asked governors to express any training opportunities they may wish to consider.
- Item 7 (8/12/16) – Phil Harland reported that the teachers national pay award had been implemented. Support staff pay has been agreed but not yet implemented.

- Item 10 (8/12/96) – Phil Harland reported that the Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) bid announcement would be after 31 March. He has received two queries from Education Funding Agency (EFA) on the bid.
- Still on item 10, Elaine French reported that the financial plan had been re-submitted to the EFA.
- Item 11 (8/12/96) – Jill Arnold reported that the SAR was sent to Ofsted at the end of last term.

The action schedule will be revised accordingly for the next meeting. **Action: Janine Hatcher**

6. Chair's Report

Janice Robinson gave her report to the Corporation and the following points were recorded:

a) Governor Links' Visits

Governors attended the Links' half day on 9th January and covered a broad range of subject areas both academic and vocational (including Adult education) and some support areas e.g. HR, Additional Support. Six governors attended the day and received a good welcome and positive feedback. Thanks were given to all governors and to the staff and students involved. Governors were impressed with the students over lunchtime, by their behaviour, passion, being articulate. It had been very encouraging to see the working day. The atmosphere was lovely and the day was well organised. Ayas Fallon Khan asked about what happens to the feedback that governors complete, in particular, e.g. social and science space. Janice Robinson replied that the Chair and Principal discuss the feedback initially and we try to achieve and improve the situations that arise. Further discussion about development of the estate will take place on our strategy day in March.

b) Confidential Business – refer to separate Part II Minutes

7. Principal's Report

Phil Harland reported on the following:

a) Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA) AGM

The SFCA proposed a change to their Articles of Association extending membership to all institutions with a sixth form (rather than just sixth form colleges). The vote was 47 votes cast in favour of the motion; 3 votes were cast against the motion and no call for abstentions. Phil Harland queried the process about abstentions and is awaiting feedback.

b) International Students

Phil Harland reported an issue that had been identified with one International Student's visa requirements and this will be resolved by the end of the week. As a result of this, Phil Harland will become the Authorising Officer and the final arbitrator and the International Students Manager will become the key contact and Level 1 user.

c) Staff Changes

We continue to make staff changes as staff move on or retire and continue to explore staffing options in Careers and Additional Support whilst maintaining and improving our quality of service to students and opportunities to make cost savings.

d) Early Intervention

The financial forecasts submitted for Area Based Review did not meet the EBITDA requirements. The EBITDA are **Earnings Before Interest Tax Depreciation and Amortization**. The surplus before tax plus depreciation minus capital grants should be more than 4% of combined income. Phil Harland recently received a telephone call from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) advising that they had introduced a new performance indicator and that we had failed to meet the new criterion set, and were therefore in line for an 'early intervention'. This will require a visit from the funding agency to identify what we will do to bring our finances in line with the new requirements.

The financial forecasts submitted to the ABR were approved by the EFA and ABR but did not pass the EBITDA condition for 2015-16 and 2016-17. Forecasts for 2015-16 anticipated the outturn to 2.37% of income e.g. below threshold therefore in range for an early intervention. PH assured governors that the College would not go into financial difficulties. Our income per student for (2015/16) £4073; (2016-17) £4100 and (2017-18) £4133. Our planned surplus for 2016-17 is £261k and 2017-18 £287k.

Surplus before tax for 2016-17 would be about £111k, currently £190k and predicting ahead for 2017-18 in the financial forecasts £221k and £247k in 2018-19. All other income streams are as indicated in the forecasts. We remain reliant on Adult Education and more importantly International students.

Jane Alderton asked whether this intervention was part of the ABR and inquired whether might move to a formal invention. Phil Harland reported that the SFA are keeping an eye on the colleges and Elaine French is monitoring our ratios in our financial forecasts.

8. Student Governor's Report

Nasr Muflahi gave a verbal report to Governors:

- a) The sports department have now introduced more opportunities for girls to be included in sports e.g. rugby training, football, netball, tennis. Lloyd Hooper is supportive and keen to give extra fitness sessions in the gym. The gym is now open to students every lunchtime. Students want to publicize more extra enrichment programmes and offer more curriculum activities within college e.g. badminton, basketball. Governors encouraged this.
- b) The link governor day went well.
- c) Our Christmas "Open mic" event was successful and raised over £150 for the Chestnut Tree Hospice.
- d) Leavers' party in May is another big event where money will be raised for Breaking Boundaries.

Ayas Fallon Khan asked whether he knew of students, wanting to do sports at Varndean but who went elsewhere because of our facilities. Nasr Muflahi replied that students are aware that we need more sporting resources, but football is very popular here with Groups A and B plus a social football club. We probably have about 50-70 students here.

Jill Arnold reported that she meets students regularly discuss general issues e.g. social space but since new staffing within the Sports area, this has created more drive and enthusiasm for staff and students including the Russell Martin Academy. In addition, we have reinstated the Duke of Edinburgh award.

9. Curriculum and Standards: Student Outcomes

Philip Harland presented the various reports to Corporation, the contents of which were noted. The following comments were:

a) Projected Student Numbers

1512 students last year. This year, student applications have shifted upwards and the College will have an estimated 1560 students next year. We believe, this may be underestimated because of the new A level linears and Year 1 numbers going into Year 2 may be higher. This year our numbers increased by 35-40 from Haywards Heath College closure but counter-balanced with the loss of 40 students from Varndean School and Dorothy Stringer.

Jane Alderton asked about apprenticeships, as the Government seem to be pushing this. Phil Harland voiced a view that despite the government, A levels are still seen as the route into university and until apprenticeships provide a route to professional studies, they will not have the same importance. Employers and students are not taking this on-board yet.

b) Student Destinations 2016

Jill Arnold apologized for some missing data after the summary page but the pattern is similar to that in previous years. The main report shows the destinations of all leavers from Varndean College in 2015-16 for last year, showing destinations by year of study as well as the overall summary for 2015-16.

This year we have 10 students going to Oxford or Cambridge. Better, Success Rates in applicants this year and in proportion is not dissimilar to that of BHASVIC.

The percentage of students either going to university or planning to go the following year remain broadly similar over the last 3 years at around 40% for all leavers and 50% for year 2 leavers. In addition, most of the students doing Art Foundation (6% of all and 9% of Year 2 leavers) will also go to university.

Jane Alderton noted that we still have 34 NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training), and although not many, still a concern on an individual basis. Jill Arnold reported that most of these students are known through our safeguarding report and

usually known to the College (with a few exceptions).

- c) **Equality Duty Annual Data Report** (incl. success rates and details for previous year by age, ethnicity, disability and gender) PH highlighted the key points:

Students:

- In 2015/16 male success rates was maintained at 80% having been at 83% in 2013/14. Improving male success rate was a key equality indicator.
- Male success rate increased at 19+ by 14% and therefore it is now higher than that achieved in 2013/14. This key equality objective has been achieved.
- The success rate of female students with LDD (learning difficulty or disability) which fell by 1% in 2015/15 has fallen a further 2% and is now 6% below that of females without LDD.
- The male student with LDD success rate, which fell by 9% in 2014/15, has risen by 9% and the gap reduced from 11% to 0%. The success rate of both female and male students with LDD were key objectives last year - achieved.
- Marginally decrease with females achieving Success Rates. 9% males achieving success but the gap between f without disability and staying static at 6%.
- 19+ increase females 71, males. Some issues to address.
- The report now includes information on deprivation and success rate; there is a clear correlation between the success of 16-18 female students and deprivation.
- The proportion of BME staff has decreased.
- SLT colleagues have suggested we need more detailed DLG and free College meals as a new target that will be a better indicator than postcodes.

Staff:

- We are an ageing population compared to the sector. The proportion of staff from BME is down but the College has a long-term aspiration to increase this and it will remain a key priority. This will be difficult to achieve as we aim to in-fill vacancies within our existing staffing to make savings.
- We are not very good at collecting sexual orientation data and ask staff every 4 years but receive a very limited response. Jane Farrell reported that we need to understand differences between e local regions and that Brighton is likely to be different compared to other places in the country.

- d) **Student Performance against Target Grades Student Performance Autumn Term Data Dashboard** (incl. Performance Against Target Grades, Attendance & Retention)

Phil Harland reported that we produce this three times a year. A1 is the first year of a two-year Linear A level and staff are measuring their current level against that which they should achieve in August 2018. Janice Robinson reminded everyone that we agreed a few years ago, to report student progression regularly so that we know students are kept on track and further support could be given if required.

Jill Arnold reported that all the information is drawn from the report cards, which is an assessment from the tutors.

On the vocational programmes, performance appears to be below that at the same time last year; however, we know that these predictions were overly optimistic. Jill Arnold said that those students on Level 2 programmes are likely to be a risk and most of those students are on mixed programmes. Jane Alderton ask if governors could help but Jill Arnold replied that this was a national issue and we continue to work to resolve this.

Nasr left the meeting at 7.41pm

Phil Harland went on to say that attendance in 2016/17 seems to be at an all-time high and retention has improved from a drop back last year. Unauthorised absence has gone down and authorised absences remained static.

10. Financial Update

a) Dashboard 2016-17 and MA Executive Summary

Elaine French reported on period four figures. Our income is front loaded from Funding Agencies in months 1-3 and 9-11. Figures have remained broadly the same since December. The overall projected surplus for the year-end is £116k and our performance ratio is coming out at £365k, which puts us in the top end of 4%. Our current ratio and cash flow are healthy.

b) Property Matters

Elaine French reported that we are currently seeking quotes from contractors for modular buildings for replacement laboratories, if our current CIP bid isn't successful. We desperately need more space within our Science area and are looking into two options (a) one single modular building to consist of one teaching lab and one office to replace the existing lab (room 46) or (b) double lab space two teaching labs and office. Jane Alderton raised concerns about technicians' space, lab prep and storage, Jill Arnold reassured her that the current availability was sufficient and we needed to give teaching space a priority.

Elaine French also reassured governors that our Health & Safety Officer is involved at the planning stage to ensure that we are compliant with health and safety regulations.

11. Policies:

- a) Annual Report from Principal on Changes to Policies/New Policies processed via SLT

Summary of all policies noted and endorsed.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 22nd March 2017 at 6.00 p.m.

13. Any Other Business

- a) Janice Robinson reminded everyone that about the strategic planning afternoon on March 15th starting with lunch. Further details will be circulated nearer the time.
- b) Janice Robinson congratulated Lucy MacDonald on the birth of her son, and welcomed her back to the meetings.

Meeting finished at 8pm.

14. Confidential Business

Refer to separate Part II Minutes

Chair.....

Date.....

Janine Hatcher 30/01/17