
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2014

Present Governors:

Joanna Bailey (Principal), Mitchell Agar, Marilyn Collins, Diane Griffiths, Margaret Hirst (Chair), Samantha Hockney, Alan Holborn, John Monkhouse, Rachel Pearson, Sue Reay, Michael Smith and Amanda Wright.

Number of members present 12 – the meeting was quorate throughout.

Also Present:

Rachel Angus (Vice Principal), Sarah Langstaff (Finance Manager), Ashwin Bose (Maths & English Strategy Coordinator), Julie Liddell (Progress Leader) and Vicki Barber (Clerk)

The meeting was held at Stockton Sixth Form College in the LRC and started at 17:30

The Chair welcomed new governors Michael Smith (Parent Governor), Rachel Pearson (Student Governor) and Amanda Wright (Independent Governor and Chair of the Audit Committee). Also welcomed to the meeting was Sarah Langstaff, (new Finance Manager), Ashwin Bose (Maths & English Strategy Coordinator) and Julie Liddell (Progress Leader).

134.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from John Carson and Catherine Marshall

134.2 MATHS & ENGLISH STRATEGY TRAINING

The Maths & English Strategy Coordinator presented the college's Maths & English Strategy to members.

In response to a question regarding the possibility of SSFC working with Stockton on Tees Teacher Training Partnership, in supporting students finding it difficult gaining their Level 2 Maths and English qualification, the Maths & English Coordinator advised he would be happy to support these students.

The Principal advised she would discuss this further with the Vice Principal to consider possible interventions with these students.

The Corporation thanked the Maths & English Strategy Coordinator for the presentation.

Ashwin Bose left the meeting at 17:45

134.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded that they should declare any interests relevant to the business on the agenda as and when necessary.

A declaration of interest was made under item 134.15, whereby a member declared she was an employee of Stockton Borough Council.

134.4 MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2014

The minutes of the last meeting held on 10 November 2014 was approved as a true and correct record, and was signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising:

Collaborative Partnership; a meeting had been scheduled for 9 December 2014 but was cancelled; a further meeting would be scheduled in the new year.

RESOLVED to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2014.

POLICY/PROCEDURE REVIEWS

134.5 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY, PROCEDURES AND SAFEGUARDING TRAINING CYCLE

Statutory guidance from the Department of Education was published in April 2014, replacing Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (Dec 2006). This document contains information on what schools and colleges should do and sets out their legal duties.

The Corporation was asked to approve the Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Training Cycle and to consider the actions being taken.

In response to a question relating to how often the safeguarding policy was invoked the Progress Leader advised regularly, however at different levels. The Child Protection Policy was discussed in detail and it was requested that an amendment under Governing Bodies Role & Responsibilities, bullet point 2, to advise Link Governor not Chair, be made to the policy.

In response to a query regarding safeguarding around recruitment, members were advised the Vice Principal had completed training on safeguarding and recruitment.

RESOLVED;

- to amend the Child Protection Policy under Governing Bodies Role & Responsibilities and **approve** the policy,
- to **approve** the Safeguarding Training Cycle,
- that all members would sign to confirm they had read the KCSIE.

Julie Liddell left the meeting 17:56

134.6 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY AND REVIEW 2012/13

The Health and Safety Policy and Review for 2012/13 had been distributed to governors.

A question was raised about the summary of incidents and one relating to 'zombie', the Principal advised this was an event held in College during year 10 taster days.

RESOLVED to **approve** the Health & Safety Policy and note the 2012/13 review.

134.7 STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Stress Management Policy had been reviewed and amended in line with college procedure.

Members reviewed highlighted changes to the policy and no questions were raised.

RESOLVED to **approve** the Stress Management Policy

134.8 COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) had been written at the end of the academic year following results, to evaluate the performance of the college. The subject areas were assessed and reports were written by Deputy Progress Leaders. The review was based on Ofsted criteria. This year the college was reviewed in sector subject areas upon which the structure is based.

Upon completion of the SAR it went to Senior Management for review and following this a validation event was held, three governors were present (x2 independent, x1 staff), the Senior Management Team, Deputy Progress Leaders and a Vice Principal from another college. The report was closely scrutinised and discussed and the judgements tested and validated.

Following the validation event the report was modified prior to it being presented at Corporation.

In response to a question regarding how grade 4 subjects were being monitored, the Vice Principal advised members that any subjects red rated or graded a 4 would be subjected to a mock internal inspection, teaching would be monitored and students would be monitored through two weekly assessments.

With regard to Geography the Vice Principal advised positive action had taken place, there had been close supervision and action plans for teachers, which had seen significant improvements in this subject area. Next term further monitoring and interventions would take place in this subject area.

In Chemistry a slightly different situation; one existing staff member's performance requires further monitoring but another (new) teacher is making significant changes which have been well-received and marked improvement is expected. Feedback from students was positive in terms of comparing their experience last year to this year. A lot of work was being completed around resilience, independence and confidence with science students and this work was also being undertaken across the college.

Teaching staff were completing more work across college on timed assessments. A2 students had reported an increased level of challenge and rigor.

In response to a query regarding students who do well at AS, the Vice Principal advised successful students at AS would not necessarily be successful at A2.

In response to a question with regard to the large amount of changes in college over the past 12 months and whether this was having a positive or negative impact on staff, the Principal advised there was evidence that the new system of internal inspections on red rated subjects had provided a positive experience and evidence that staff members wanted to put this right.

The Principal informed governors teaching staff did feel overstretched at times, with larger class sizes and the two weekly student assessments increasing the marking load for teachers.

The Principal informed members that the Deputy Progress Leaders received no remitted time for completing the subject SAR reports, so this work had to be completed on top of their teaching load. The Corporation requested that their thanks be expressed to Deputy Progress Leaders for an excellent report.

RESOLVED to approve the College Self-Assessment Report.

134.9 CROSS COLLEGE OPERATING STATEMENT

The Cross College Operating Statement was presented to Corporation at the last meeting of each term, and provided members with evidence to review and consider progress made against strategic objectives.

In response to a question regarding the college working with other providers to ensure staff understand what high grade work looked like, the Vice Principal advised Eggescliffe school had welcomed this approach and work to do reciprocal marking would take place.

In response to a query concerning the Careers Crowd event, the Principal confirmed the event had taken place and students had produced raps about career paths and choices, which had raised student awareness on destinations and what they needed to study to make it happen.

In response to a query regarding 'purple' teaching, the Principal informed governors that teaching staff who had achieved significantly above the national average which would take the college to 'outstanding' had received a purple pin badge in recognition of their work.

In response to a question the Principal advised the badges had been received well and some teachers wore them with pride.

In response to a query regarding how support staff performance was measured and awarded, the Principal advised this was something that was not currently considered however, it would be good to have alternative criteria in order to consider support staff performance and confirmed this would be deliberated.

RESOLVED to note the report.

134.10 BOARD KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Corporation had set 6 Key Performance Indicators and the report outlined the current position in college with regard to measurable data that reflected the college's progress towards hitting the performance indicator.

Members considered the report and no questions were raised.

RESOLVED to note the report.

134.11 SSFC CURRICULUM PLAN FOR SEPTEMBER 2015

The Corporation had received a report highlighting the curriculum plan for September 2015 and proposed routes for the college to take.

The Vice Principal advised the college's curriculum plan under the major reform of subjects, to commence September 2015 had been discussed by members at the Strategic Planning event in February 2014.

The proposal was discussed in detail and in response to a query regarding students being allowed to take up an AS the first year then switch to the vocational route after the first year, the Vice Principal advised it would depend on individual circumstances. The Principal confirmed that it would be regrettable if this happened as the student's first year would be a wasted year and the college would also take a funding hit.

The Principal discussed the college's offer in comparison to that of others in the area. And advised under a Labour government AS and A Level qualifications would not be decoupled, as they would be under this reform.

The Chair advised the Corporation the importance of this discussion and the decision made.

Governors were advised that this had been planned early in the academic year and students had accepted these changes at application stage.

In response to a query members were advised that the transition event for year 11 students provided a week's trial at introduction week, whereby students chose four subjects and received 5 lessons in each subject, this allowed them to gain a thorough understanding of the subjects they had chosen.

In response to a question regarding when did students get career guidance the Marketing Manager advised this was partly the responsibility of the school in year 11, however the college does become involved with interventions; it is the first question at interview stage, it is discussed at Open Evening and students are guided to university courses and consider A Level's required to study that course.

Members were advised with the streaming of subjects under linearity it would mean students would be more aware of what they were getting from subjects.

RESOLVED to **approve** the curriculum plan for 2015.

FINANCIAL HEALTH

134.12 REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2014

The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2014 had been distributed to members. They were advised that the Audit Committee had considered the statements at their meeting held on 26 November 2014 and no concerns were raised.

RESOLVED to **approve** the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2014

134.13 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2014

The new Finance Manager apologised that the report had been tabled and presented the report to members.

In response to a question the Finance Manager advised Block B would be rented from Easter 2015 which would show an income.

The Finance Manager reported that the 85K for HMRC was for tax and national insurance expenditure.

In response to a query regarding variance the Finance Manager advised this was due to timing and would be rephrased.

The board thanked the Finance Manager for her report and confirmed that they were happy that the accounts as at 31 October 2014 was in line with the budget.

RESOLVED to note the report.

134.14 ANNUAL REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Financial Regulations are reviewed annually and proposed amendments made to the Financial Regulations were discussed in detail.

The Principal highlighted point 16.7, advising members that one of Ofsted's findings was that the college needed to support teachers to increase their use of information and learning technology, to enhance and reinforce students' learning in lessons. The college therefore proposed to introduce an interest free loan to staff members in order for them to purchase a piece of equipment to support their teaching.

No questions were raised.

RESOLVED to **approve** the Financial Regulations.

134.15 NURSERY PROJECT

The Principal advised governors that the main issue of the sale of college land was ensuring the safeguarding of the college's assets and that the Board had taken the necessary steps to ensure value for money had been obtained from the sale of land.

At the strategic planning event in February 2014, the sale of land for a nursery to be built on site had been discussed in detail and the Principal had been charged by the Board to take the nursery project forward and receive a valuation for the land sale.

The Principal had now received a valuation from Browns Chartered Surveyors and Property Consultants of a minimum value £100k and a maximum value of £150k.

The developer had made an offer below market valuation of £80k.

A long discussion ensued regarding parking issues once the college rented Block B and sold the proposed piece of land.

With regard to a question about parking the Principal advised the college had not considered a plan for new parking and did not think car parking should prevent the board considering the sale of the land.

The Principal advised funds from the sale of the land would be used for capital investments into other areas of the estate and would probably be more likely to be spent on external areas of the college site.

The board were unanimous in deciding that the sale of land should go ahead, however 9 members voted against the 80k offer and 2 members for. It was agreed that the minimum offer to be considered was £100k.

The board were required to consider including a clause offering the college first refusal to buy back the property, at the market rate, should the project go on the open market. This was discussed in detail and it was agreed that the Principal should take advice from the college's solicitors.

The Board concluded that it was happy for the sale of the land to proceed and it was agreed that the Principal would hand negotiations over to the college's solicitors. Should a further offer be made the board would consider further.

RESOLVED to proceed with the sale of the land at the recommended market value.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

134.16 AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2014

The minutes from the Audit Committee meeting held on 26 November 2014 had been distributed to governors and no questions were raised.

The Chair of Audit Committee advised members of the following recommendations;

ITEM [65.8] Management Representation Letters Regularity and Audit

The Corporation is recommended to approve the Management Representation Letters for Regularity and Audit.

Management Representation Letter – Regularity to be signed by the Accounting Officer

Management Representation Letter – Audit to be signed by the Chair of Corporation

- ITEM [65.9] Regularity Audit – Self Assessment Questionnaire

This self-assessment questionnaire is for college corporations and accounting officers to support the Statement on Regularity, Propriety and Compliance with the Terms and Conditions of Funding.

The Audit Committee has reviewed the college's responses to the Regularity Self-Assessment and recommends Corporation's approval.

The Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire is to be signed by the Accounting Officer and Chair of Corporation.

- ITEM [65.10] Audit Committee's Annual Report to Corporation 2013-14

A requirement of the Audit Committee is to produce an annual report for the Corporation, the report must summarise its activities relating to the financial year under review. A copy of the audit committee's annual report must be submitted to the Education Funding Agency with the annual accounts.

The Corporation is recommended to approve the Audit Committee's Annual Report, to be signed by the Chair of Audit Committee.

- ITEM [65.14] Appointment of Internal Auditors (TIAA)

The Audit Committee recommends to Corporation the appointment of TIAA as Stockton Sixth Form College's Internal Auditors for 2014/15, at a fee rate of £350.00 per day.

RESOLVED to;

- **Approve** the Management Representation Letters
- **Approve** the Regularity Audit Self-Assessment Management Responses
- **Approve** the Audit Committee's Report to Corporation
- **Approve** the Appointment of Internal Auditors for 2014/15

GOVERNANCE

134.17 APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

There were no new appointments to be considered and the Chair advised members that the Clerk had received Umair Hammid's resignation which was tendered due to him relocating to Leeds with his job.

Change of Accounts Signatories

The board approve Sarah Langstaff as an additional bank signatory and the Principal and Chair signed the change of accounts signatories form.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Clerk confirmed that the next meeting the Corporation will be held on Monday, 2 February 2015 at 17:30.

What had been the impact of the meeting on students and learning at Stockton Sixth Form College?

Approval of the Child Protection Policy to safeguard students; training received on the college's Maths & English Strategy, approval of the Curriculum Strategy for September 2015.

Any comments on the reports?

The reports had been clear, detailed and easy to read.

It was highlighted that it would be easier for governors if they received the agenda as a separate PDF document with page numbers stated next to each agenda item.

Approved by the Corporation:

----- Margaret Hirst, Chair of the Corporation

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