

Minutes of the Corporation meeting held at the Watford Campus at 1800hrs on 13 February 2019

Present	Phil Berry	Lavinia Chelaru	Richard Lewis
	Matt Luheshi	Mathew Messenger	Ben Stapleton
	Phil Thompson (Chair)	Joan Viall (Vice-Chair)	Gill Worgan (Principal)
	David York		
In Attendance	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)	Gary Dixon (Interim DP)	Cath Gunn (Principal, Barnfield)
	Sarah Knowles (DP (P&D))	Eamonn McCarrol (DoF)	Tammy Nuthall (Dir (Curr))
	Chris Pearson (Dir (Strat & Corp Affairs))		
Apologies	Guy Ainsley	Richard Patmore	Graham Wood

PART ONE

The meeting was preceded by an excellent electronic presentation by Susan Lomas, the Head of Additional Learning Support (ALS) explaining the organisation and work of the 50 strong ALS team, which supported some 672 students with a wide and diverse range of needs, throughout the College. The content included descriptions of their priorities, the team structure and tabulated data and concluded with a lively question and answer session. The Chair thanked Susan for her presentation and asked that the Corporation appreciation of the team's work should be passed on.

46/18 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- a. The apologies were accepted. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there had been no interests declared.
- b. It was agreed to consider an item of urgent business re Together Training (TT).

47/18 STANDING ITEMS

- a. The Minutes (Part 1 & 2) from the meeting held on 12 December 2018 were confirmed for electronic signature; the Clerk to Action. **(Action 1)**
- b. Outstanding Actions. All actions from the last meeting had been implemented or were in progress.
- c. Matters arising. There were no matters arising from the minutes.
- d. Merger Steering Group (MSG) (15.01.19). The unconfirmed minutes of the last MSG meeting be circulated to members.
 - a. **The information was received and noted.**
 - b. **Actions had been identified. (Table 54/18 below)**

48/18 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principals report covered detail outside the scope of the agenda, it had been circulated in advance and was received; there were no items for approval. In discussion several points were considered further:

- a. Performance Dashboard. Details on the Dashboard were noted.
- b. Hemel Hempstead (HH). Plot B sale had completed on 15 January 2019 and Bellway was proceeding with planning permission, a Computer Generated Image (CGI) of the completed site was welcomed. Farrans (appointed as contractors) had started work on 14 January, there would be no disruption to the student experience. The Capital Project Steering Group (CPSG) would monitor progress and performance through regular meetings.
- c. Insolvency Regime. The Insolvency Regime for FE College came into force on 31 January 2019; the Association of Colleges (AoC) Guide on the matter was attached at Annex and had been circulated to all members. Background to the introduction was detailed in the paper and was discussed. The Department for Education (DfE) would be publishing full detail shortly. This was an important area and it was noted that a local college had recently received emergency funding.
- d. FE Funding. The recent Parliamentary debate in response to a 100,000 signature petition had been well attended and speakers were clearly well briefed, hopefully the proceedings would influence future Governmental spending plans.

The information was noted and received

BUSINESS ITEMS

49/18 QUALITY OF PROVISION (Barnfield)

The quality of provision at both campuses of Barnfield College was considered and discussed, informed by a clear and comprehensive report. The provision had been externally reviewed by Ofsted in a full inspection in January 2018 (Requires Improvement (RI)) and in a monitoring visit in September 2018 (2/4 areas insufficient progress), these findings led to the merger with WHC and the associated change in leadership. A subsequent full Self-Assessment exercise conducted by WHC found that outcomes had further declined in particular areas and one immediate action was to bid for a Strategic College Improvement Fund (SCIF) grant of £118k, which was successful and facilitated several initiatives to start the recovery programme. The funds were vital to the work and, whilst more would be welcomed, much had already been planned, prioritised and established and were described in the paper. The impact of the strategies on the quality throughout the college were detailed by area in the document and each was discussed and noted. Standards had been in a 3-year decline and that had been arrested. In general discussion it was confirmed that staff input was welcomed and encouraged and lively exchanges forums had developed. There were 1191 students on roll and it was hoped that could be increased to c2000, the college had accommodated 3000 in the not too distant past. The question of whether to harvest recent merger experience was discussed and it was decided that the unique elements of the present situation probably precluded all but some isolated cases but it would not be fully discounted. There were sufficient skills and resources within the two cohorts and more surfaced as the work proceeded, but thus far challenges had and continued to emerge but no "Show Stoppers" had been identified. The detail in the Report was welcomed and had informed a lively discussion, the co-operation and hard work evidenced the commitment of the Barnfield staff to the partnership. The next Corporation meeting would be held at Barnfield. **(Action 2)**

- a. **The information was received and noted.**
- b. **Actions had been identified. (Table 54/18 below)**

50/18 MERGER

- a. Update. The integration of the colleges, particularly administrative and teaching systems was well underway, staff morale remained high and there had been no disruption at either college. Particularly sensitive systems such as payroll had been thoroughly prepared and rehearsed; the detailed preparation by all involved and monitored by the MSG had paid

dividends. For information it was explained that the revised pension arrangements, a sensitive area, would be achieved seamlessly over several months. The full and comprehensive RAG rated and tabulated Post Merger Integration Plan (PMIP) was attached to the document and would be regularly updated for ready monitoring of progress; particular “milestone” events would be highlighted. General discussion regarding the progress enquired whether additional staff were necessary, but assurance was given that planning had been thorough, it had been progressing (speculatively) over 2 years and was being delivered by capable teams. Managers were however not complacent and close focus on this area was maintained. Staff from both colleges were clearly enjoying the associated processes of meeting and working with each other and facing shared challenges. The work involved all elements of the organisation, including the Corporation which was actively widening capability appropriately. Notwithstanding the reassuring progress there were priority issues, the state of the Barnfield Estate and associated Health and Safety (HAS) concerns remained a clear and constant focus for attention, reassurance was given that there were no immediate safety issues. The estate was in a generally dilapidated condition and it would be necessary to prioritise completion of some work whilst the student population remained at the present relatively low level.

- b. Barnfield Estate. Improvement of the estate, briefly mentioned above, was a key priority; pre-merger due diligence by Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) had considered the situation and had made suggestions:
 - (i) the New Bedford Road site had best potential for a new college and an enabling residential development;
 - (ii) the Enterprise Way site had potential for residential redevelopment; and
 - (iii) the Bute Street car park was available for disposal.

Considerations of these options were actively in progress with the relevant agencies; they were detailed in the accompanying paper and were discussed, including some wider but associated elements, it was accepted that more detailed information was essential to inform full consideration planned for the May Corporation meeting. It was agreed that it was necessary to:

- (iv) develop a detailed masterplan for the New Bedford Road site;
- (v) complete a high level costing of a new college building; and
- (vi) engage initial high-level planning consultancy.

Accordingly, a budget of up to £100k was approved to facilitate that process. **(Action 3)**

- c. Merged Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan for the merged college had been considered and staffed by the MSG, details were included in the paper, and the Plan had been recommended to the Corporation for approval. That Plan, “Foundations for Growth (2018-21)” was attached and discussed. It was unanimously agreed to accept the recommendation and the Plan was approved. **(Action 4)**

- a. **The information was received and noted.**
- b. **Actions had been identified. (Table 54/18 below)**

51/18 MEMBERS

- a. Visits. The exchange visit of the Corporation and Staff to the Barnfield site held a fortnight ago had been enjoyable and informative and was an excellent start to the partnership.
- b. Safeguarding. The nominated Safeguarding and Prevent Member (Matt Luheshi) updated members on his associated activities since taking up post. He explained the training courses that he had attended and had led to understanding of associated processes and the interaction between agencies that, amongst other outcomes, facilitated identification of potential threats. He explained particularly how the agencies had apprehended the perpetrator of the hoax bomb threat to the College recently; the detail of that process had

been illuminating. He proposed that the Corporation should receive regular briefing on Safeguarding and Prevent, that was agreed and, after consideration, it was decided that a termly presentation on general issues would be an appropriate way to reassure Members that their responsibilities were being discharged. **(Action 5)**

The Chair encouraged all members to take part in these mutually rewarding activities.

The information was received and noted.

52/18 URGENT BUSINESS.

The end of term retirement of Stephen Herman had left a vacancy for a Corporation member of the Together Training (TT) Board. Phil Berry had volunteered for the post and that was unanimously approved. **(Action 6)**

53/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held at Barnfield College at 1700 on 13 March 2019.

54/18 ACTION TABLE

Action 1	47/18. Last minutes (12.12.18) confirmed for signature.	Clerk	asap
Action 2	49/18. Next meeting (13.03.18) tbn at Barnfield College.	all	13.03.19
Action 3	50/18b. Up to £100k allocated for estate investigation work.	GW	wie
Action 4	50/18c. Combined Strategic Plan approved.		
Action 5	51/18. Termly safeguarding update to Corporation.	ML	asap
Action 6	52/18. PB to replace SH on TT Board.	Clerk	wie

Ralph Devereux (Clerk) for Phil Thompson (Chair)

Ralph Devereux (Clerk) for Phil Thompson (Chair) (Mar 18, 2019)

CorpMins13.02.19 PT1

Final Audit Report

2019-03-18

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