

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation held on Monday 14th December 2015,
The Conference Room, Prior Pursglove College**

Present: Dr Gavens (Chair), Ms K Avery, Mrs U Betterton, Mr B Bird, Mrs J Burton, Mrs N Crombie, Mr S Dauncey, Dr D Dodds, Mr C Groves, Mr J Kay, Ms S Khabbass, Mr M Loftus

In Attendance: Mrs E Grove (Clerk), Ms A Shaffi (Vice Principal), Mr J Zoryk (Assistant Principal), Mrs S Langstaff (Finance Manager)

Meeting quorate

80% attendance

1) **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr P Spencer

2) **Minutes of the Meeting of Monday 7th December 2015**

The minutes of the meeting including the confidential minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

3) **Matters Arising and Progress of Outstanding Action Points**

Progress was considered. Mr Kay and Mr Groves provided brief feedback on discussions which had taken place within their respective link faculties about employer engagement.

The paper sent with the agenda setting out class sizes by course level and subject sector areas was discussed. It was noted that the trend for AS class sizes was moving in the right direction. The view of governors was that the relatively flat profile for A2 classes needed to be addressed. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) confirmed that this would be addressed through more effective timetabling. In response to a question asked, Governors were advised that the specialist requirements of some subjects were not limiting factors on class size.

4) **Health and Safety/Safeguarding** (Standing item)

4.1) **Health and Safety:** There was nothing of urgency to bring to the attention of Governors.

4.2) **Safeguarding:** The report sent with the agenda was considered. Ms Shaffi briefed governors on safeguarding and prevent cases, how they were being addressed and the level of contact with external agencies. The colour coded Safeguarding and Prevent action plans including areas requiring further development were discussed. It was proposed that the new Safeguarding link governors should meet immediately before a Corporation meeting. **Action VP/Clerk**

5) **Student Union Report**

Ms Khabbass was invited to speak to the report sent with the agenda. Ms Avery extended an invitation to the Student Union to meet with members of Teesside University SU. The invitation was accepted. **Action Student Governors**

6) **Principal's Report**

6.1) **Data Dashboard, Post Inspection Action Plan including Key Assessment**

Grade (KAG) 2 report: The reports were discussed. The improvement in value added and progress from KAG 1 to KAG 2 was particularly noted. Benchmarks were discussed. Actions being taken to assure the setting of questions and accuracy of marking were outlined and discussed. The rationale for the removal of KAG 3 was outlined. Governors accepted this move which correlated with the comments made at the teaching staff governor focus group meeting. Governors sought assurance that a balance had been struck between the number of KAGs and the ability to provide in year

checks on progress. This was given. An outline of the KAG 4 process was given. It was confirmed that the data will be made available to parents in time for the Spring Term parents consultations.

6.2) **Quality Audit Reports:** The Faculty Learner Focus Group and Learning Walk Reports were considered with particular reference to action plans.

6.3) **Student Settling in Survey:** The findings were discussed. In response to a question asked, Ms Khabbass, advised that it would be helpful to have the information on the support available to students, reinforced throughout the year rather than just at induction. **Action SLT**

6.4) **Strategic Plan Review of progress:** Progress of actions was considered. It was noted that this was the final year of the current plan and work needed to start as a matter of urgency on a new plan. **Action Principal**

In response to questioning, Governors were advised that the employer engagement strategy was in place and Faculties had been set targets for student involvement in work experience/placements.

6.5) **Staff Survey Follow Up:** Dr Dodds gave a report on the discussions which had taken place at the staff/governor focus groups. It was clear that staff had moved on from the summer term survey and concerns were now focussed on workload and the external pressures of funding and area reviews. Governors were informed that it had been agreed to meet with the focus groups again in January. Dr Gavens and Mrs Burton gave an update on progress with this, advising that it was envisaged having a session for all staff and that it would not be feasible to schedule this on either of the January Professional Development Days. Governors were reminded that Dr Gavens and Mrs Burton had spoken with staff on the outcome of the merger consultation. Governors asked SLT to come back with a proposed schedule for meetings with staff to take place as early as possible in the New Year. **Action SLT**

7) **College Self-Assessment Report**

The significant level of governor and student involvement in the validation days was outlined. The gradings were discussed with particular reference to Apprenticeships. Governors considered that although the proportion of Apprenticeships was low it was important for them to feature within the report gradings. The report was approved.

8) **Committee Chairs' Reports**

8.1) **Resources Committee, Thursday 19th November 2015:** Mr Loftus spoke to the report sent with the agenda.

8.1.1) Monthly Report to 31st October 2015: The report was accepted.

8.1.2) Fraud, Bribery and Whistleblowing Policy: The proposed amendments were approved.

8.2) **Audit Committee, Thursday 3rd December 2015:** The Audit Committee report was tabled and Mr Kay took Governors through it outlining the purpose and findings of each of the following documents.

8.2.1) Self-Assessment of Compliance with Regularity and Propriety requirements: The questionnaire responses were approved for signature by the Chair of Governors and Principal.

8.2.2) Audit Committee's Annual Report 2014-15 to the Corporation: The report was considered and accepted.

8.2.3) Financial Statements and Regularity Audit Management Letter 2014-15: The letter and management responses were considered and accepted.

8.2.4) Internal Auditors Annual Report 2014-15: The report was considered and accepted.

8.2.5) Internal Auditors Engagement Letter 2015-16: The engagement letter from Wylie & Bisset LLP was considered and accepted.

8.2.6) Financial Statements and Regularity Auditors Engagement Letter 2014-15: The engagement letter from Anderson Barrowcliff was considered and accepted.

8.2.7) Re-appointment of Anderson Barrowcliff as Financial Statements and Regularity Auditors for 2015-16: The period of appointment and the possibility of costs being reduced if merger should go ahead to the proposed timescale were raised. After discussion, it was agreed to appoint Anderson Barrowcliff.

9) **Annual Report to 31st July 2015**

9.1) **Annual Report including the Governance and Financial Statements**: The recommendations of the Audit and Resources Committees to accept the Annual Report were agreed.

9.2) **Management Representations Letter**: The letter was accepted.

10) **Area Reviews Progress Report**

Dr Gavens recapped the discussions which had taken place at the 7th December meeting for the benefit of those governors who had been unable to attend. A report was given on a meeting which had taken place with the ten college Chairs at which a number of options for rationalisation had been proposed.

Dr Gavens reported on meetings which he and the Principal had had with Chairs and Principals of other colleges.

The lack of involvement in the process of schools with sixth forms was discussed.

Student numbers studying A levels in SFCs, schools and FE Colleges were discussed. In response to a question asked, it was confirmed that the options were being analysed centrally. The data provided was that for 2013-14 and not 2014-15. The very tight timetable was discussed and it was considered unlikely that sufficient analysis would be undertaken prior to the 11th January meeting. Dr Gavens advised that he would raise this concern with the FE and SFC Commissioners.

Governors queried whether anyone was looking at quality issues or whether it was a cost saving exercise. A discussion followed. It was considered that the AR process was finance and rationalisation driven and that colleges had to work within those parameters and they had to manage quality and identity.

Discussion moved on to the involvement and stance of the Local Enterprise Partnership. Governors were advised that the AR working group had met and would meet again before the 11th January AR meeting.

11) **Merger Progress Report**

Governors were reminded that they had received the draft report on the outcome of consultation at the last meeting. Governors were asked to consider the report and the minutes of the 7th December meeting and feed in any comments to Dr Gavens by email. The final draft would then be made available for further comment prior to publication.

Action Governors.

Discussion moved on to the application to the Secretary of State. It was proposed that a meeting of the Corporation should be called for early January to sign off the final application. **Action Clerk**

Ms Khabbass left the meeting at 7.48pm.

Discussion moved to the appointment of members to the Shadow Board. It was noted that a number of the SSFC governors had financial skills/expertise. After consideration it was agreed to appoint Dr Gavens, Mr Groves, Dr Dodds and Mr Kay. A meeting will be called for early January. **Action Clerk**

The appointment of new members to the shadow board was discussed and it was agreed that someone independent of both Corporations could be of benefit. A number of suggestions were put forward and it was agreed that Dr Gavens should liaise with SSFC Chair and options be pursued. It was agreed that a final decision should be made by the shadow board.

12) **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The date and time of the next scheduled meeting was confirmed as 11th February 2016, 6.00pm. Governors will be contacted with dates for a January meeting.

13) **Any Other Business**

There was no other business to be considered.

14) **Publication of Documents**

14.1) Review of 2014-15 confidential papers: The proposals on publication as set out in the document sent with the agenda were accepted.

14.2) Publication of meeting documents: It was agreed to publish the Part A minutes , student union report, finalised fraud, bribery and whistleblowing policy, and audit papers. The Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31st July 2015 will be published when signed off by the auditors. The monthly reports will automatically be published alongside the audited accounts.

Dr Gavens reminded everyone that this was Mrs Burton's last meeting and that she would be retiring as Principal at the end of December. He thanked her on behalf of governors for her remarkable leadership over a difficult time. He wished her well in her retirement and presented her with a picture from the Governors.

Mrs Burton thanked governors for her present. She also thanked Governors for the trust and confidence they had shown her.

The meeting closed at 8.04pm.