

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation held on Wednesday 11th November 2015, 6.00pm
The Conference Room, Prior Pursglove College

Present: Dr P Gavens (Chair), 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, Mr A Smith

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

Meeting quorate

87% attendance

1) **Apologies for Absence**

Ms K Avery, Cllr P Spencer

2) **Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday 15th October 2015**

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record following a correction to the date of the Cross College Self-assessment Validation Day.

3) **Matters Arising and outstanding action points**

Matters arising and outstanding action points were considered. It was noted that the training session on Safeguarding had been postponed until the 7th December additional meeting.

The date of the Staff and Governor Focus Group meeting had been fixed for 19th November.

Campus safety had been promoted via the student bulletin.

4) **Health and Safety/Safeguarding**

4.1) **Safeguarding Update:** The report sent with the agenda was discussed. In response to a question asked, Ms Shaffi advised that the number of cases coming through from schools had increased and outlined the work being done to support students. Student Governors were invited to comment and they suggested that there should be more promotion of where a student should go for help with any bullying or safety concerns. It was further suggested that reminders should go out to parents.

4.2) **Health and Safety:** There was nothing to report.

5) **Principal's Report**

5.1) **Data Dashboard and Key Assessment Grade (KAG) 1 Report:** Ms Shaffi spoke to the papers sent with the agenda. The improvement in Average Levels of Performance (ALPs) scores was welcomed. Governors questioned her on the reasons for some underperformance and the actions and support being put in place for students and subject areas.

Mrs Crombie arrived at 6.20 pm.

5.2) **Class Sizes:** The paper sent with the agenda was discussed. It was noted that it was an interim report and further data validation was planned. The lower level of class size against national benchmarks was discussed and it was recognised that this needed to be an area for improvement. In response to a question raised governors were informed that comparable data was not yet available through the Area Review process. Governors asked to receive it as soon as it became available. **Action Principal.**

The spread of larger classes across Faculties was queried and outlined. The support being given to teachers of larger groups was also outlined.

In response to a question raised, it was agreed that it would be of greater benefit to governors to receive data on class sizes by subject sector areas rather than by faculties. Governors also asked to see a frequency histogram. **Action Assistant Principal**

5.3) **Student Numbers:** A verbal update was given on levels of recruitment. The need to reduce costs to match any under recruitment identified by the December census date was stressed.

5.4) **Draft Self-Assessment Report (SAR) Subject Sector Areas:** Governors were thanked for their input and challenge at the validation day. They were reminded that the cross college validation day would take place on Friday 20th November. The score for Social Sciences was queried and a discussion followed. Ms Shaffi offered to recheck the notes of the validation exercise for this area prior to the 20th. It was noted that final draft report would be brought to the 14th December Corporation meeting.

6) **Area Reviews**

Mrs Burton and Dr Gavens updated Governors on activities to date. Mrs Burton advised that she would receive feedback from the site visit on 13th November. The area review process and the expectations for receiving cross Tees Valley data were discussed. Indications were that colleges would need to demonstrate financial sustainability over a five year period as well a minimum 10% funding cut. The timing of the Comprehensive Spending Review and information being made available was discussed in the context of Governing bodies needing to make well informed decisions in the spring term. Ms Langstaff was asked to provide updated financial forecasts for the college and a merged college for the 7th December meeting. **Action Finance Manager.** Dr Gavens briefed Governors on the meetings and discussions he had had with other Chairs. A Chair's meeting had been called for 24th November. Ways of keeping Governors fully briefed between meetings was raised. It was agreed that regular updates would be provided at Corporation meetings. The proposal to establish a working group to support the Chair and Principal was accepted. It was agreed that membership of that group should be the Chair, Vice Chair, Principal and Chairs of the Audit and Resources Committees. Dr Dodds had expressed an interest in joining the group and this offer was taken up.

7) **Merger Consultation**

7.1) **Interim Report on responses to date:** Mrs Burton was invited to speak to the paper sent in advance of the meeting. In response to a question raised she confirmed that no new issues had been raised since the report had been drafted. The concerns of staff, parent and the local community were discussed. It was considered that these could be addressed in the final 'outcome of consultation' report. Governors asked that the report being drawn up for the 7th December meeting should show the split of responses by each college. **Action Principal.** The potential impact of the Area Reviews on the consultation and the final decision was raised and discussed.

Ms Khabbass left the meeting at 7.35pm.

7.2) **Financial Due Diligence:** It was noted that the reports will be taken to the 19th November meeting of the Resources Committee for discussion and report back to the Corporation. Dr Dodds queried the lack of reference to a lease arrangement with a football club on the Stockton site and a Solar energy source on the roof of the science area. Governors asked Ms Langstaff to investigate the matters. **Action Finance Manager.**

After further discussion, Governors asked Mr Zoryk to investigate building condition issues and report back to the 7th December meeting: **Action Assistant Principal.**

Ms Langstaff was asked to investigate the impact of the different accounting bases and cost implications of merger including software training and bring figures to the next meeting. **Action Finance Manager**

7.3) **Legal Due Diligence:** It was noted that the reports will be taken to the 19th November meeting of the Resources Committee for discussion and report back to the Corporation. The risks around transfer of land and assets were discussed in the context of delay to a merger. It was noted that contact had already been made with The Foundation. It was also anticipated that the transfer of land and assets vested in the current Corporation to the new Corporation would be addressed as part of the Secretary of State approval process.

The need for timelines to be drawn up to address issues in the due diligence reports was raised. **Action Senior Leadership Team and Clerk**

7.4) **Documentation for Key Sections of the Merger Report:** The key sections were noted. Assurance was given that all sections would be addressed in the 'Outcome to consultation' Report.

7.5) **Shadow Board Terms of Reference (TOR) and Appointment of Members:**

Mrs Grove spoke to the paper sent with the agenda. It was noted that the TOR had been drawn up with the assistance of Eversheds. The number of governors to be appointed to the shadow board was discussed in the context of indications from Stockton Sixth Form College's (SSFC) Chair and Principal that eight was too many. Governors considered that having the right skills mix was crucial in ensuring that the board could meet its responsibilities. The definition of 'independent' governor was queried and it was confirmed that this applied to current independent members and Foundation nominees. Governors considered that a Foundation nominee should be a member of the shadow board. Discussion moved on to the benefits of having a totally independent Chair ie one from outside both current boards. It was agreed that this should be reported to SSFC and potential individuals identified. **Action Clerk.** After further discussion the terms of reference were approved. A question was raised as to how governors would be appointed to the shadow board and it was agreed that this needed to be determined. It was suggested that any governors wishing to join should express an interest in advance of the 7th December meeting.

A question was raised about curriculum planning and student perceptions of the current model of blended learning. A discussion took place and Governors asked for clarification to be provided at the next meeting on the level of blended learning assumed for a new college and timescales for introduction. **Action Principal**

8) **Dates and Times of Next Meetings**

These were confirmed as Monday 7th December, Monday 14th December and Thursday 11th February all starting at 6.00pm.

9) **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

10) **Publication of Documents**

It was agreed to publish the minutes, matters arising and area review papers.

Mr Smith, Mr Dauncey, Ms Shaffi, Mr Zoryk and Ms Langstaff left the meeting at 8.06pm. Mrs Burton was asked to stay for Part B of the meeting.

Part B Confidential Agenda

11) **Confidential Minutes of Part B Agenda 15th October 2015**

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

12) **Appointment of Interim Principal**

A discussion took place on the need to fill the vacancy created by Mrs Burton's retirement and how this might be achieved.