

South Downs College Corporation
Board of Governors
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION
HELD ON MONDAY 31st OCTOBER 2016
AT SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE

Present:

Mrs S Linham (Chair)	Mr R Pearce
Mr R Crank (Vice-Chair)	Mr R Showan
Ms C Bowles	Mr D Todman
Mr M Cripps	Mr T Whitlock
Ms L Flannery	Mrs L Wells
Mr M Gaston (Principal)	
Mr T Horwood	

In attendance:

Dr S Claridge	Vice-Chair, Havant College
Mr R Barlow	Vice Principal
Mrs D Smith	Assistant Principal, Student Services & Support
Mrs A Whitworth	Interim Director of Finance
Ms R Abrey	Assistant Principal, HR and OD
Ms P Robertson	Clerk to the Corporation

Total Membership	16
Total vacancies	2
Total possible attendance	14
Quorum:	7
Total Present:	12 - meeting quorate

Meeting started at 5.45 pm.

Prior to the start of the formal agenda, Lois Sellwood, Director of Curriculum for Inclusive Learning and Skills for Life, gave short talk on her areas of responsibility and the key issues and challenges. She explained that her areas of work included all age groups, including a developing provision for 14-16 year olds, in partnership with local schools. SEND provision was very strong and there was a good breadth of provision, including partnerships with external organisations such as Ambitious about Autism. The most challenging areas were in Functional Skills, particularly English and Maths and ESOL, where the results had been inadequate and the College wished to see significant improvements. Lois stated that she was delighted that she had the support of the Board and welcomed the recent decision to have a named Governor Champion for SEND. David Todman had taken up this role and she looked forward to working with him.

The following issues were raised by Governors:

- (i) **Working with Schools** - Lois explained it was vital to continue to develop robust relationship with the schools in order to understand their position and also to build up 14-16 programmes on the basis of what the schools, as customers, required. She believed that there were thriving relationships and some 78% of the students accessing the 14-16 programmes chose South Downs for their post-16 study. However, the College could make a very broad range of curriculum available and she had been disappointed that

some schools had not been responsive to this. However there were many positive aspects on which to build.

- (ii) **Poor performance in Maths and English** – Lois felt very confident that the team had the motivation, the drive and the skills to get to address these issues. A new unitised curriculum had been introduced for adult learners and a radically different assessment process so she was very confident that outcomes for the adult learners could be improved. The younger age group was a bigger challenge as it often involved dealing with a very demotivated group. The College had also experienced some timetabling issues at the start of term although these were now resolved. It was now imperative that problems were addressed quickly and effective action was taken. Tracking and monitoring was taking place and regular assessment panels were now planned to address this.
- (iii) **Employment Opportunities for SEND students** – Lois explained that this was a challenge because of the lack of genuine progression and employment options for SEND learners. Progress had been made on this in the last year to provide a bridge to employment via “supported internships”. This had started with with 2 learners with complex needs, but 11 were now being supported, some with national employers, with the entire purpose being a bridge to paid employment. Although the sample was small, she was very proud of the progress being made and felt that the College was now in a far stronger position.

At the conclusion, the Chair thanked Lois for attending and providing a very valuable insight. Lois stated that she would be very happy to provide future updates for Governors.

PART ONE MINUTES

Minute Number	Minute	Action
28/16	<p><u>Apologies for Absence & Welcome</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Michael Cripps, Lucy Flannery and Simon Claridge from Havant College. She invited all present to participate freely in meetings. There were general introductions of all present.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Mike Bateman, Gary Medlow, Martin Brunner, Clive Dobbin and Anne Whitworth.</p> <p>The Chair also advised that Julia Vincent had very recently resigned as a Governor and Julia was thanked for her service.</p>	
29/16	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>No Member declared any conflict of interest with any item on the Agenda which had not previously been declared.</p>	

Minute Number	Minute	Action
	All members were aware of the potential conflict of interest/duty for Michael Cripps, Lucy Flannery and Mike Gaston as a result of their roles at Havant College.	
30/16	<p><u>Part One Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 29th September 2016</u></p> <p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 29th September 2016, having been previously circulated to Members, were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
31/16	<p><u>Matters arising from the Corporation meeting held on 29th September 2016</u></p> <p>The action schedule had been circulated. This included a draft Policy on Disclosure and Management of Conflicts of Interest and/or Duty, for the Board's consideration. This was reviewed. The term "connected person" was used in this Policy and it was noted that it was defined in section 2.2 as follows:</p> <p><i>"The Charities Act 2011 defines a "connected person" which, in broad terms, means family, relatives or business partners of a trustee, as well as businesses in which a trustee has an interest through ownership or influence. The term includes a trustee's spouse or unmarried or civil partner, children, siblings, grandchildren and grandparents, as well as businesses where a trustee or family member holds at least one-fifth of the shareholding or voting rights."</i></p> <p>The Board approved the Disclosure and Management of Conflicts of Interests/Duty Policy.</p>	
32/16	<p><u>Board Business Matters</u></p> <p>(i) <u>Board Membership</u></p> <p>The Board formally approved the following appointments to the Board:</p> <p>a) The appointment of Ms Lucy Flannery as an External Governor for a 4-year term of office from 31st October 2016 until 30th October 2020.</p> <p>b) The appointment of Mr Michael Cripps as an External Governor for a 4-year term of office from 31st October 2016 until 30th October 2020.</p>	

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	<p>It was noted that a nomination for a Student Governor to serve until 31st July 2016 would come forward to the next meeting.</p> <p>(ii) <u>Update to the Scheme of Delegation</u></p> <p>An updated Scheme of Delegation for the Board and its committees had been circulated. This was approved by the Board.</p> <p>In addition, the Board formally delegated formal review and approval of the Annual HE Report to the Standards & Quality Committee, to enable the College to comply with the HEFCE deadline of 1st December 2016.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Merger Update</u></p> <p>The Board had received an update on the progress with the Area Based Review (ABR) process and the merger project and It was noted that the final sentence of the report should read: "...<i>joint Colleges' Search Committee to progress related issues.</i>"</p> <p>The Principal outlined the key issues. It was noted that phase 1 due diligence was now completed and, although the College was awaiting the final financial report from KPMG, the legal report from Eversheds was available on the portal. No issues had been identified as major risks of which the Colleges were not already aware and were addressing. It was suggested that there might be some benefit in committees reviewing, where relevant, the Due Diligence reports and the Clerk was asked to take the necessary action.</p> <p>Work was still proceeding on the financial forecasts for the Business Plan and there were still challenges to be addressed. The current plan was that the Advisory Board would review the Forecasts at the end of November/beginning of December to enable KPMG to undertake the second stage of Due Diligence on the Business Plan with a view to completion by the end of January 2017. The target date the merger was still 1st August 2017, with the intention that the Boards would meet in February to consider the Business Plan, with a view to passing resolutions to merge at that stage.</p> <p>Overall, the position was noted.</p>	<p>Action: Clerk</p>

Minute Number	Minute	Action
33/16	<p data-bbox="316 271 815 304"><u>College Strategy and Performance</u></p> <p data-bbox="316 342 991 376">i) <u>Progress towards Destination 2020 Measures</u></p> <p data-bbox="316 414 1139 913">A Report by the Principal had been circulated on progress in 2015/16 and the implications. The Board was aware that, at the beginning of 2015/16, the College had introduced a clear strategic plan entitled <i>Destination 2020</i>, with a vision to be a leading provider for professional and technical excellence. The plan was based on seven objectives as the key foundations to progressing towards excellence, supported by measures which acted as key performance indicators to monitor progress. The measures were interdependent. Each member of SLT was responsible for leading on one or more objectives and for measuring and informing the College Management Group on progress and for updating the relevant risk register.</p> <p data-bbox="316 952 1139 1413">The Principal explained that a review of the 2015/16 year had been undertaken and he felt that it was disappointing to note that a number of end-year targets had not been achieved. There had been progress on some measures but others, although clearly being identified as priorities, had failed to deliver the necessary improvements. It was recognised that 2015/16 was a difficult year with considerable change due to curriculum and business restructure, a pay dispute with UCU and progression towards merger. However, it was particularly disappointing to note a 3-year downward trend in student outcomes which had already been discussed in depth by the Board.</p> <p data-bbox="316 1451 1139 2018">There was a general discussion about the position. The Board agreed that it was essential that there was consistency across the College and that performance was managed effectively by managers who had the capacity and skills. The Principal reminded the Board that considerable investment in Directors in 15/16 was now having an impact, but it remained a priority to upskill Learning Managers and Team Leaders so that they understood their responsibilities and had the skills to engage staff about performance issues. It was agreed that Performance Management was becoming more robust, but, as reported at the last meeting, the return rate and apparent compliance with the system, was very low. The introduction of BlueSky was seen as a positive step forward but the Board reiterated its view that there had to be compliance with the system, a significantly</p>	

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	<p>improved return rate and evidence of high quality reviews. A manager's approach to this would be one of the measures against which his/her own performance was judged.</p> <p>The Board considered the <i>Destination 2020</i> measures and whether any adjustment was required to ensure that they were now realistic, yet challenging. The Principal stated that he felt that the College had established an effective system for recording risk and forecasting its impact of that risk but, currently, it was less effective at taking the right individual direct actions to ensure progress.</p> <p>The Board felt that the measures provided a very good overview but accepted that some of them might need to be modified, particularly where the targets had not been reached and it was therefore unlikely that the targets set for subsequent years could be achieved. It was agreed that there should be a clear distinction between qualitative and quantitative measures but they needed to be SMART and, wherever, possible, linked to key milestones throughout the year so that there were no surprises. Objectives and targets had to be realistic, although it was accepted that there was a balance to be achieved with setting aspirational targets which demonstrated ambition. It was felt that the overall move to what was defined for 2020 was largely unchanged but in-year targets should be reviewed and possibly adjusted or refined, for consideration by the Board.</p> <p>The Board was aware that, despite some disappointments, there was also some excellent work to be celebrated and many success stories. The Principal reported on two examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College had recently won a high value contract with Carnival Cruises as the preferred provider for their Leadership training. This was a significant proportion of their Apprenticeship levy and the College had had fierce competition from other providers, such as Eastleigh College. • Following on from last year's work with Working Knowledge, the College was hosting a Business Breakfast on 18th November 2016 which Alan Mak MP, would be attending. <p>At the conclusion of the discussion, it was agreed that the SLT would review current measures to ensure that they were fit for purpose and SMART and would propose</p>	<p>Action: Principal</p>

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	<p>revised targets in the light of the 2015/16 outcomes, for consideration and approval by the Board, before January 2017.</p> <p>ii) <u>Current College Performance</u></p> <p>Linked to the discussion about College performance measures under Destination 2020, the Vice-Principal (RB) demonstrated the current dashboards which were available for Governors to review via the portal. As an example, he outlined the information contained within the Student Attendance dashboard. Attendance rates currently stood at 88.4% against a College target of 91%. It was noted that there was no agreed national rate but Ofsted often used 85%. The Board reviewed the ways in which the data could be viewed, including by individual tutor group and the detailed breakdown which indicated that a key area for concern was Functional Skills.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the data and the implications. The Board welcomed the information and the level of detail available as it was agreed that access to up-to-date and accurate data was critical for effective intervention. RB explained that, last year, there appeared to have been some ambiguity about responsibilities for monitoring student attendance which had led, in some cases, to ineffective responses. Staff were now very clear that this had been defined as part of the Tutor's role. The Student Governor (CB) suggested that tutors should share the attendance data with their tutees. RB stated that he would expect students to be aware of their own attendance. The College had trialled an automatic text system to parents to address absence which had had some problems but would be reinstated. Consideration was also given to whether all of the student data, including marks, should be shared routinely with parents too. CB pointed out that this was potentially problematic as parents might not understand the context.</p> <p>The Board then discussed other improvements this year. RB explained that it had been identified that, last year, the College had failed to retain learners or they had not succeeded as they were on an inappropriate study programme. This had probably arisen because there was a tension with retaining students for funding and a perception that there was a need to keep learners through the census date. It was now much clearer this</p>	

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	<p>year that students needed to be enrolled on a programme which met their personal needs. The Chair pointed out that the College had previously prided itself on an early assessment of students' progress. RB stated that the rigour of that had slipped, but staff were now much more alert to the notion of transferring students between programmes. The College had also reviewed ways of redesigning the curriculum e.g. in common with Havant, students would not be sitting 1st year linear exams and adult learning provision which had not been successful was being remodelled, potentially via a distance learning model. There was a greater focus on improved student monitoring on an individual basis, as well as improvements to self-assessment and the Quality Improvement Plan. As part of that quality cycle, review of plans would be at a lower level with a focus on students and outcomes.</p> <p>The Chair stated that, in the SAR meetings which she had attended, she felt that this strong message was being delivered. Other Governors who had also attended stated that they had found the meetings very useful and positive and staff had been candid in their analysis and receptive to feedback. RB stated that the input from Governors had been valued. It was suggested that, as part of the Governors' Link scheme, Governors might wish to attend occasional team meetings/management meeting and ask pertinent questions to triangulate. It was agreed that the meetings calendar would be circulated.</p>	Action: Clerk
34/16	<p><u>Dates of the Next Meeting</u> 12th December 2016 at 1745</p>	

Meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Signed:.....Date:.....