

THE SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE CORPORATION

Minutes of meeting held at 5.45 pm on Thursday 1 March 2012 in the Committee Room

Present: Andrew Turner (Chairman), Stephenie Linham (Vice Chair), Tim Bennett, Gwen Blackett, Graham Fice, Ian Child, John Manterfield (Acting Principal), Donna Munday, Laxmi Neave, Caroline Strevens, James Warner, Tony Welch, Sam Wilkinson

Apologies: Peter Rhodes, Patricia Thompson

In Attendance: Susan Grantham, Temporary Clerk to the Corporation
Andrea Wingfield, Acting Head of Finance
Richard Barlow, Quality Manager (Item 3)

The Chairman welcomed Andrea Wingfield and Richard Barlow

938. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2011 were AGREED whereupon the Chairman SIGNED the minutes.

939. Matters Arising

(i) Minute 929 (ii) – Audit Committee - Vacancy

Donna Munday reported that Ian Child had expressed an interest and was attending the next Audit Committee (8 March) as a 'try before you buy' observer.

(ii) Minute 934 – Havant Academy

The Acting Principal reminded members that Michael Oakes had tendered his resignation as a Director of the Havant Academy Trust and as Chairman of the Havant Academy. The process for the transfer of the sponsorship from South Downs College to the Kemnal Academies Trust was ongoing and scheduled for completion by the end of March which is their end of financial year. On the instigation of Michael Oakes, with a view to protecting the interests of the College, Blake Laphorn had been working on the transfer to ensure that any liabilities will be transferred to Kemnal Academies Trust. Brian Pope, Area Director Children's Services Department Havant Local Office, had today delivered a considerable amount of documentation for the Chairman to sign in his capacity as a director of Havant Academy Trust. The process was now virtually completed and documentation has been signed by the headteacher.

The update was RECEIVED.

940. Operational Targets

(Doc.C12/01 was circulated with the agenda)

- (i) The Acting Principal noted targets are produced annually for both cross-college and curriculum areas. Targets are drawn from the action plan for each curriculum area based on their self-assessment reports (SAR). The cross-college targets had been agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and based on issues from the curriculum SARs and emerging in the College SAR which will be considered by the Corporation on 29 March. This year he had introduced Key Targets for Success to focus on success rates for 16-18 long courses from Entry/Level 1 through to Level 3, and for 19+ long courses. Richard Barlow's presentation will demonstrate the importance of the targets and indicate the excellent progress being made to date. Our success rates (retention x achievement) have remained stable for the last two years and whereas they were outstanding, other colleges have improved significantly so our performance relative to national averages was no longer outstanding. It was retention that had led to our success rates not increasing. The targets

had been established in consultation and agreement with Lyn Surgeon and at the end of January there was a review meeting of curriculum and cross-college targets.

Donna Munday noted that some targets had a delivery date of February half-term. The Acting Principal explained the SAR was in respect of 2010/2011 and some operational targets for 2012 will be implemented earlier in the year whilst we will not know the outcome of others until the results in the summer.

- (ii) Richard Barlow's presentation (attached to the minutes) outlined progress firstly on Key Targets for Success followed by Level 3 Performance Comparisons. His graphs indicated that overall success rates over the last two years had not improved. They were good but dipped to slightly below the average. In order to compare ourselves with other colleges, he introduced into the graph the success rates of Nelson and Colne College and Highbury College, where both success rates and improvement are greater. 94% of our provision was noted to be long courses and whilst the success rate for long courses was above the national average it was flat whereas the other two colleges were above and on trajectory for improvement. The retention and achievement table clearly showed that retention was the issue, achievement figures are only below (at 89%) for one category for Long Level 2 Courses for 16-18 learners. If students remain on course many achieve high grades but too many are not completing. Targets are set by level and age. Progress as at 20 February was then outlined and he noted that traditionally this is the low part of the year for any college. 16-18 Long Entry/Level 1 showed a big improvement from 88.35% to 93.82%; 19+ 87.26% to 88.31%; 16-18 Level 2 91.46% to 92.94%; 19+ Level 2 84.82% to 87.33%; 16-18 Long Level 3 93.87% from 90.06%; 19+ Long level 3 80.68% to 82.80%. 16-18 Level 3 is made up of 7,490 starts. Overall all figures were heading in the right direction. For some 14,000 starts there was an approx 3% increase – lots more students staying on the course compared with last year. The improvements had been brought about by much work from staff starting at course confirmation in September with more structured rules for staff to follow regarding course admissions criteria, improved systems for tutors to refer concerns, coaching and coaxing students and helping them with catch-up work. Retention reports were being monitored on a weekly basis and much hard work was producing a very positive picture.

In terms of 2010-11 Level 3 Performance comparisons, each January the DfE publishes performance tables which focus on Key Stage 5 performance for colleges (AS/A Levels and level 3 vocational equivalents). The numbers involved 16-18 – Havant College and Portsmouth College have Level 3 provision but are smaller colleges compared to SDC. There are two ways of producing the data: the differing scoring system – 'average point score per student' advantages colleges which make their students do a large number of qualifications e.g. general studies which we don't offer as it is perceived to be of little benefit to students. We use 'average point score per entry' which is a more accurate judgement on students' grades. We are above the average of all Hampshire institutions and above the state-funded institutions in England. There are only 3 local colleges above us – Peter Symonds, Alton (which show a dramatic improvement) and Farnborough College of Technology. The league table shows South Downs at the top.

In respect of quality of outcomes for all Level 3 learners (70%) we are doing extremely well compared with local colleges. We are working on further improvements and wish to do much more proactive work with other colleges and share good practice.

The Acting Principal noted the other dimension of value added. There are areas where we have done very well and others we need to work on. The percentage of pupils at schools in Hampshire achieving 5 GCSE results including English and Maths is 60%; but for schools that feed South Downs there are a dozen at 50% or below.

- (i) The Operational Targets 2012 were RECEIVED.
- (ii) The Chairman thanked Richard Barlow for his presentation which was RECEIVED.

[Richard Barlow left the meeting at 6.15.]

941. Corporation Vacancy

The Clerk confirmed that, as agreed at the last meeting, the College had written to Hampshire County Council and received a response that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services had nominated Councillor Ray Bolton to replace the late Councillor Freddie Allgood. The Chair and Vice-Chair had been copied the information and with their agreement she had arranged for Cllr Bolton to meet with the Acting Principal on Monday 5 March.

The update was RECEIVED and it was AGREED to call a meeting of the Search Committee on Thursday 29 March 2012 at 5.15 pm to formally consider the appointment of Cllr Bolton with a view to him attending the Corporation meeting that same evening at 5.45 pm.

942. Academic Board

(Doc.C12/02 was circulated with the agenda)

The Acting Principal highlighted the events that had taken place to promote equality and diversity with many students involved. The College had featured last evening on BBC TV South Today and in the Portsmouth News in respect of the promotion of blind cricket. Teaching and support staff inductions had taken place earlier in the term and the Staff Development Committee was planning for Staff Development Day on Tuesday 6 March with Open Evening in the evening. Some 30 plus employers had attended the College's Employers Event on 7 February to promote National Apprenticeship week. The College's Nursery had received an unannounced two-day Ofsted inspection in January and graded Outstanding and governors were thanked for their messages of congratulations which had been passed on to the Nursery Manager. Details of many new courses were attached to the Academic Board minutes.

In response to Donna Munday, the Acting Principal confirmed that interest had been shown in apprenticeships at the Employers Event. Some leads had already been followed up and there were also offers of work experience placements. The College was also making employers aware of the additional part-time courses being offered between now and July. Caroline Strevens noted the facilities of the University of Portsmouth's Open Door Business School if this should be of any interest to staff, or to motivate students. The Acting Principal reported that 845 College students progressed into higher education last year with many studying at the University of Portsmouth. The College was actively promoting key messages for success to ensure staff celebrate success and know where improvements are required.

The minutes of the Academic Board held on 25 January 2012 were RECEIVED.

943. Financial Monitoring and Revised Budget 2011-2012.

(Doc.C12/02 was circulated on 24 February 2012)

The Acting Principal introduced Andrea Wingfield, Acting Head of Finance, following Julius Mach's retirement in January. Andrea had worked closely with him and Julius to prepare the revised budget and report. Members were referred to key aspects: Page 2 (College Revenues to 31 January) the total income of £34.8 million against expenditure of £34.37 million; page 12 the proposed revised budget of £34.48 million. The revised budget was based on achieving £3.07 million of Skills Funding Agency funding compared with £3.60 million as the College has under-recruited on adults. Factors included reduced weightings from 1.2 to 1.0 for Skills for Life provision, so we would need to enrol 20% more students to earn same funding cash as last year; adults experiencing the effects of recession; the move away from NVQs delivered in College to apprenticeships delivered in the workplace. The loss of funding was partly matched by the reduction in teaching expenditure (£500,000). The College was working hard on recruitment events to achieve £3.07 million (making more of part-time adult enrolments at the full-time Open Evening; an Advice and Guidance event on 27 March and new provision starting after Easter). YPLA funding was £29.9 million for 16-18 students. Retention had improved but the reduction of the Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMA) had impacted slightly on enrolments. Last year nearly half the College's students were on EMAs, over 1090 second and third year students had continued to be in receipt of EMAs at £20 per week whereas some were getting £30 previously. A few learners (62) had received the government's new 16-19 Bursary of £1,200 and the rest (over 900) have been supported through the College's newly introduced Education Support Grant

which pays parental contribution for travel, essential visits, essential uniforms/equipment. As a result the average student spend in the refectories was down. Discretionary Support Funds (Page 2) had been received and are paid out on a weekly basis. There will be an overspend at the end of the year but it was important ensure the needs of students are met and last year we received a top-up from the underspends of other colleges. The College Travel Scheme was vital and the previous support from Portsmouth and Hampshire had been stopped and the budget adjusted. The final SFA funding clawback for last year was less than allowed for in the accounts and there was a prior year adjustment of £137,843 in our favour.

Overall there was an increased in-year surplus of £136k compared with £108k and a retained surplus carry forward of £1012k rather than £984k. Para 10 noted that for 2012/13 YPLA 16-18 funding will be reduced by £756k (some 3%). This was expected and manageable and the College was carefully planning for a reduction in expenditure and an increase in income.

In response to Tony Welch on funds for the building programme, the Acting Principal confirmed all buildings had been paid for from funds set aside last year together with the SFA Renewal Grant. Ian Child asked about the timescale for work to achieve efficiencies in respect of reduced YPLA funding. The Acting Principal stated he had been liaising closely with Lyn Surgeon and set up three working parties looking at opportunities to reduce costs for teacher remission; overall teaching; and support functions to include savings in postage by communicating with students by email/text which students like.

On the proposal of the Chairman the financial report was RECEIVED and the revised budget APPROVED.

944. Tuition Fee Framework for 2012-2013
(Doc C12/04 was circulated on 24 February 2012)

[Ian Child declared a potential conflict of interest in his role as Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Chichester.]

The Acting Principal noted that tuition fees, just under £1 million a year, represented a small but important part of the income. The report sets out the framework within which fees are agreed. Para 2 noted the different strands of funding for higher education; adult funding (determined by SFA) split between fully funded and co-funded; 16-18 fully funded (YPLA); courses free to students under 25 that undertake a first full Level 2 or Level 3 qualification; part-time courses for 14-16 year olds who take taster type provision for the full year in a vocational area. The College was adjusting its fees to what schools were willing to pay in order to encourage business which was part of the feeder system. Appendix A contained the policy framework for adults set by BIS, and proposals for 2012/13 for HNC/HND were set out in Appendix B. The report had been discussed with Lyn Surgeon who was in agreement with its recommendations. He confirmed that from 2013/14 young people will have to remain in education until the age of 17.

Donna Munday confirmed that school funding per pupil this year has not dropped.

On the proposal of Tony Welch seconded by Gwen Blackett, the framework of tuition fees as set out in Doc.C12/04 was AGREED, and that the Acting Principal/Principal be authorised to determine fees for individual courses in line with this broad framework.

945. Standing Orders
(Doc.C12/05 was circulated with the agenda)

The Temporary Clerk noted that the Corporation last reviewed its Standing Orders in June 2010 and it was best practice to review them periodically. The Standing Orders (Appendix A) set out the format relating to agenda, documents, conduct at meetings. Para 13 states that the Standing Orders may be reviewed, altered or amended by the Corporation at any time.

The report was RECEIVED and it was AGREED to make no changes.

946. Building and Accommodation Update
(Doc.C12/06 was circulated with the agenda)

The Acting Principal noted there were two aspects to the report.

SFA Renewal Grant - the work was very much on schedule and by 31 March 2012 over £100,000 would have been used to refurbish the Theatre Foyer Entrance, and upgrades to lighting, glazing and ventilation.

Football Field – Havant Borough Council Development Control Committee agreed the planning application on 8 December but additional conditions were imposed – that a management group be set up to include local residents and this was tied in with a Section 106 agreement between the Council, the College and the landowner. Broad agreement had been reached between Havant's solicitors and the College's solicitors and we were awaiting confirmation from HCC that they are happy as well. HCC have agreed a 40 year lease be granted to HBC through the surrender and regrant of Havant's existing lease and for the Borough Council to grant an under-lease to the College. Five valid tenders had been received and all below the pretender estimate. The lowest tender was from A P Thompson, who have worked with the County on similar facilities. One other additional planning condition was the installation of an acoustic barrier at a cost of some £18,000. The College had upgraded the original specification for the turf which had increased the cost but the tender was still below the other tenders received. The final tender report had been received earlier in the afternoon at a revised overall price of £483,282 + VAT compared with the pre-tender estimate of £540,000 plus VAT. The total expenditure for the project, including fees and legal costs, was therefore some £645,000 compared with provision in the budget of £662,000. A condition of planning related to the archaeological investigation and Hampshire had drawn up a grant to give the College access to the site prior to the under-lease being finalised and confirmation was awaited from Hampshire.

The Acting Principal was now asking the Corporation to accept the tender in order to progress the archaeological work and site preparation works.

The Chairman expressed his concerns in respect of the tardiness of finalising the lease and wished the Corporation to be aware of the position, particularly if the Section 106 agreement had not been signed. The Acting Principal confirmed over £160,000 of the grant needs to be spent by 31 March. Design costs of £50,000 had already been paid. Laxmi Neave considered the Football facilities would be of great benefit to the College and should be progressed. Gwen Blackett emphasised the field was desperately required, the leader of Havant had agreed the project would go ahead and we must press both legal departments. The planning committee had agreed there should be the Section 106 agreement and Gwen Blackett will chase Havant officers up. The Acting Principal proposed the tender be broken down to allow some of the archaeological work, site set-up and enabling works to go ahead while we continue to press Hampshire. We have a proposal for licences to carry out the work which needs to be done now because the money has to be spent by 31 March.

- (i) The report was RECEIVED.
- (ii) On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Tony Welch, it was agreed nem con that the Corporation authorises the Acting Principal to accept the tender but only in respect of site set-up and enabling works, including the archaeological investigation, up to £160,000. The second part of the Corporation's acceptance of the tender will not take effect until either we have the sublease and Section 106 agreement as detailed in the planning permission or the Corporation have met.

947. Health and Safety Report
(Doc.C12/07 was circulated with the agenda)

The Acting Principal noted the report should be seen in the wider context of Safeguarding students (Doc C11/35, 10 November 2011). Health and Safety was reviewed by Ofsted inspectors and the College wants staff and students to be healthy and safe. He reported a slight increase in the number of incidents (3.2%) which compared well with a 3% increase in full-time

students. There were no serious injuries or incidents to staff or students. Details of injuries and hospital visits were shown on pages 3 -7. The College had received the British Safety Award for 18 consecutive years and had just submitted an application for the year 2011. The College continues its positive safety culture with risk assessments and programme of annual safety inspections.

The Health and Safety Report 2010-2011 was RECEIVED.

948. Education Act 2011

(Doc.C12/08 was circulated with the agenda)

The Acting Principal noted the Education Act 2011 received royal assent in November and there were four things that impact on colleges: the power to search students; the abolition of the YPLA on 31 March, 2012 when it becomes the Education Funding Agency (EFA); technical details about apprenticeships; and mostly changes in the powers of Corporations to change Corporations themselves. Evershed's summary was attached as Appendix A and the key words were freedoms, reducing bureaucracy and giving colleges freedom to operate. The subtext was the Office of National Statistics and if colleges are part of the state then they will need to comply with government financial reporting for accounting purposes and be required to submit accounts to 31 March as well as to the end of July. Any debts would be part of the national debt but he emphasised the College had no debt.

The report was RECEIVED.

Instrument and Articles of Government

(Doc.C12/10, laid around the table)

The Acting Principal further reported that late yesterday afternoon the College had received a consultation paper from the Department of Business, Innovation & Skills requesting comments from College Corporations by 29 March. He noted some obvious errors in the proposals on the modification of Instrument and Articles of Government. e.g. to omit the clause relating to maintaining a Register of Interests.

On the proposal of the Chairman, Doc.C12/10 was RECEIVED, and it was AGREED that the Acting Principal should prepare some notes for a draft response and members should forward any comments on the consultation to Susan Grantham by 16 March.

Letter from Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning

(Doc.C12/09 was circulated on 24 February 2012)

The Chairman had requested the letter received on 22 February be circulated to the Corporation. It very much reflected the need for Corporations to work collaboratively and Lyn Surgeon was keen on that concept. He requested Members to read both documents Baroness Sharp's report 'A dynamic Nucleus' which emphasises colleges need to be at the centre of their communities, and New Challenges, New Chances, which contains the broader picture of Skills Funding. Our existing Instrument and Articles of Government would have to be changed to include details of mechanisms for dissolving corporation. The Acting Principal noted there is a requirement for us to publish arrangements for consulting with staff and students on the mission and educational character of the College.

The letter was RECEIVED.

949. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was CONFIRMED as Thursday 29 March 2012 at 5.45 pm.

[The meeting was declared closed at 7.28 pm]