



## MINUTES OF THE TRC CORPORATION MEETING

MONDAY 14 MARCH 2016

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### PART I

#### PRESENT

Mr P Jagger MBE (Chair); Ms M Allen; Ms J Collier (Vice Chair); Mr R Gray; Mr T Grice; Miss S Sibanda; Ms A Todd; Mr S Kirk; Dr P R Williams;

#### In Attendance:

Mrs S Martin, Clerk; Mr M Patterson, Vice Principal Finance & Resources; Mr T Dowling, Vice Principal Teaching & Learning

#### APOLOGIES

16.01 Apologies were received from Mr J Ellis

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

16.02 Members were reminded of the need to declare any interests and reserved the right to declare an interest at any stage of the meeting. There were no declarations made.

#### MINUTES

16.03 The Minutes of the Meeting (Part I) held on 14 December 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

#### MATTERS ARISING

16.04 The Corporation received a list of actions arising from previous meetings. It was noted that items were either complete or ongoing.

#### MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

16.04 The January 2016 management accounts were presented to members. The VP F&R referred to the increased spend on temporary agency staff. It was explained this increase is a result of additional staffing requirements due to increased student numbers along with the need for some maternity leave cover.

Members raised concern that staffing levels may be inadequate due to the increased use of agency staff. The Principal and VP F&R reassured members that permanent staffing is provided to the necessary level and that it was not financially practical to build in permanent surplus staffing to cover for all eventualities. Agency staff are only used where necessary and only for short-term periods.

The VP F&R also drew attention to the surplus figures, confirming that the current position is close to the budgeted figure but this may change due to potential voluntary redundancy payments which bring savings next year but additional expenditure in this one.

**The management accounts were noted.**

#### **AUDIT COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

##### **Annual Internal Audit Report 2015-16**

16.05 The Audit Committee had not met prior to the Corporation meeting as the recent Internal Audit report concluded that the College has strong systems and procedures appropriate to its operations in the areas tested. No recommendations were made. The Corporation expressed their congratulations to all involved.

**The Internal Audit report was noted**

##### **Risk Management Monitoring Report 2015-16**

16.06 The VP F&R referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting, commenting on the updated items highlighted in the report. Updates mainly referred to items to be covered elsewhere on the agenda, but attention was drawn to the positive number of student applications that are currently only 9 less than at the same point last year – and this is linked to even higher retention than last year of larger student numbers than were on roll in 2014-15.

**The report was noted**

##### **Audit Committee membership**

16.07 The Clerk informed the Corporation that there are currently three members on the Audit Committee. The terms of reference for the Audit Committee recommend that there should be four to six members.

Members discussed the options available, taking into consideration the skills and experience of those members not already a part of the Audit Committee. The general consensus was that, with his audit background, Tony Grice would be the obvious choice. Tony Grice, however, expressed his concern that there would be a conflict of interest due to his declared interest in Allotts who currently provide internal audit services at TRC. It was acknowledged that this would be a significant conflict of interest, but currently there are a lack of available members due to the number of corporation vacancies. Further discussion ensued and it was agreed that Tony Grice should join the Audit Committee on a temporary basis, until there are new members of the Corporation, but should not be involved in any discussion or decision relating to TRC's contract with Allotts.

**RESOLVED 16.07 that Tony Grice should become a member of the Audit Committee, withdrawing from any discussion or decision relating to TRC's contract with Allotts.**

##### **Audit Committee terms of reference**

16.08 The terms of reference for the Audit Committee had been issued with the agenda for review. The Chair confirmed there were no amendments since the previous year and requested any comments from members.

**RESOLVED 16.08 to approve the terms of reference for the Audit Committee.**

#### **INSTRUMENT & ARTICLES OF GOVERNMENT / STANDING ORDERS**

16.09 The Instrument and Articles of Government, along with the Standing Orders had been issued with the agenda for review. The Clerk confirmed there were no amendments other than to

remove all references, as agreed, to 'nomination and election' in relation to staff members on page 3 of the Instrument of Government. The chair requested any comments from members.

**RESOLVED 16.09** to approve the Instrument and Articles of Government and the Standing Orders.

#### **REMUNERATION COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

##### **Remuneration Committee terms of reference**

16.10 The terms of reference for the Remuneration Committee had been issued with the agenda for review. The Chair confirmed there were no amendments since the previous year and requested any comments from members.

**RESOLVED 16.10** to approve the terms of reference for the Remuneration Committee.

#### **GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

##### **Governor Recruitment**

16.11 Having been circulated with the agenda, the Clerk presented a paper on governor recruitment that considered a variety of recruitment methods, the introduction of a governor recruitment policy and an updated application process including a job description and person specification. The report also provided details of the current membership and vacancies of the Corporation. A number of recommendations were made for the Corporation to consider.

The content of the report was discussed at length, with members agreeing that the current number of vacancies is of concern and should be addressed taking into consideration any identified skills gap identified as a result of a skills analysis exercise.

All vacancies were considered with actions suggested to fill the vacancies. Staff members discussed a possible parent who may be interested in a parent governor role and it was agreed that the Principal would follow this up. Other options to target parents were also discussed, with agreement that there should, at least, be a presence at college parent events to speak directly to parents.

**RESOLVED 16.11**

- a) to undertake a skills analysis and corporation self-assessment exercise;**
- b) to produce a governor recruitment policy;**
- c) to produce standard application documents for governor recruitment;**
- d) that the Principal/Chair should make contact with the Local Authority regarding the possibility of securing an external governor;**
- e) that the Principal should follow up on a lead regarding a potential parent governor;**
- f) that the Clerk should attend future parent events to speak directly to parents about the role of parent governor;**
- g) that Jane Collier and Tony Grice approach the foundation to request nomination for a foundation governor;**
- h) that a date be set for the next Governance and Search**

**Committee to meet to discuss the outcomes and make the necessary recommendations to the Corporation.**

**Governance & Search Committee terms of reference**

16.12 The terms of reference for the Governance & Search Committee had been issued with the agenda for review. The Chair confirmed there were no amendments since the previous year and requested any comments from members.

**RESOLVED 16.12 to approve the terms of reference for the Governance & Search Committee.**

**Governance & Search Committee membership**

16.13 The Clerk informed the corporation that there are currently four members on the Governance and Search Committee. The terms of reference for the committee specify a minimum of five members.

Tony Grice and Russell Gray both volunteered to become members of the Governance and Search Committee.

**RESOLVED 16.13 that Tony Grice and Russell Gray become members of the Governance and Search Committee.**

**HEALTH & SAFETY AUDIT REPORT**

16.14 The VPF&R presented a report including a Health and Safety Action Plan based on the findings of the January 2016 Health and Safety Audit. This was undertaken by the insurance company, UMAL, as part of their standard two yearly audit cycle.

TRC achieves mainly full compliance scores, with some general compliance scores and no serious issues. This enables TRC to generate average scores that are higher than the UMAL national average scores. General compliance scores mean that TRC comply with legal health and safety requirements, but due to the size of the college it is difficult to achieve full compliance in all areas as it is not possible to employ health and safety specialists. Members discussed the findings and the action plan with no concerns raised.

**The Health and Safety Report, and action plan were noted.**

**MAT / ABR UPDATE**

16.15 The Principal presented an update on the current option favoured by the Corporation to investigate joining a Multi-Academy Trust with local schools, explaining that the relevant meetings with schools have now taken place. The outcome of the meetings was discussed, and detailed information was provided regarding the DFE guidance for Sixth Form Colleges to become an academy, along with a copy of the application form.

To ensure that TRC comply with procedures, the Principal confirmed to members that the Area Based Review team have been formally informed that TRC are interested in the MAT option. The Principal explained further that this does not commit TRC to joining a MAT at this stage; it simply allows for this option which may or may not be taken. The Principal's report provided the draft timescales and processes required to progress the MAT option.

Members queried the potential governance structure and ring-fencing of funds if TRC were to form part of a MAT. Usual practice witnessed elsewhere was discussed, with the Principal

confirming that it should be possible to discuss the finer details at the next Corporation meeting as, by that point, significant progress should have been made.

Members of the Corporation raised concern about the impact that joining a MAT would have on students and staff. The Principal and VP F&R provided reassurance that there should be no impact on students and teaching staff, other than TUPE arrangements, but possibly some impact on support staffing. It is, however, likely that this impact would be at management level in the relevant areas and may well already be accommodated by the impending voluntary changes within the management of these areas.

The report recommended that TRC continue to explore the MAT option as the favoured option and that other options remain on hold. Furthermore, the Chair recommended that members of the Corporation be selected to act as a 'shadow' board to support SMT through the process.

**RESOLVED: 16.15 a) that TRC continue to pursue the MAT option;  
b) that Paul Jagger, Jane Collier, Russell Gray and Jonathan Ellis form the 'shadow' support group for the MAT process.**

#### **DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE 2015-16**

16.16 The Principal presented the update to the rolling College Development Plan that has been in operation and updated since May 2013. Additions to the plan included the following: -

- Over 1600 students were enrolled in September 2015; 1600 remains the target for September 2016
- 89% success rate was achieved; target to increase to 90%
- A-level value-added was narrowly missed at 0.06, and the 0.08 target has been maintained
- 95% target maintained for positive student destinations
- University placement target has been increased from 64% to 65%
- Russell Group placements target has been increased from 14% to 16% based on cohort.

The update informed the Corporation that NORVIC (North East SFC Federation) TRC's value-added at A-Level in 2015 of 0.06 placed it 5<sup>th</sup> out of 15 colleges. The vocational progress score of 0.50 was 4<sup>th</sup> of 11 colleges with over 100 entries. Within Rotherham the A-Level progress score was joint 2<sup>nd</sup> of 9 providers and 2<sup>nd</sup> of 7 providers with over 50 vocational entries.

**The development plan update was noted.**

#### **TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY UPDATE**

16.17 The VP T&L informed members that the current Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is due for review, with new two year priorities to be implemented from September 2016. The VP T&L referred members to the RAG rating for the actions taken linked to the priorities and explained that whilst progress has generally been achieved, there is currently least definite success in the areas relating to utilising ICT as a learning tool, and the development of independent skills. With regard to ICT, members were informed that the Digital Learning Group have recently completed their work in this area and are due to present the findings ready for implementation next year.

The VP T&L explained further that progress towards the development of independent skills continues to be a challenge for TRC, and this has been made even more pressing by the return to a linear programme of study for A-level. This is predominantly due to the expectation placed on students being far greater than the skills they bring from their Key Stage 4 studies. At present, teaching staff are in a process of transition with having to manage the steep change in standards.

*Tony Grice left the meeting (7pm)*

#### **RETENTION AND GRADEBOOK UPDATE 2015-16**

16.18 The Principal gave an update on student retention. The figures show that the drop-out rate from the census date to 1<sup>st</sup> March is the lowest since 2005-6. It represents an improvement on last year's strong figures with all cohort groups, or in the case of the Upper Sixth, an equal figure.

The Gradebook data was provided verbally. The Principal updated that success rates are currently in line with targets, with high grades above statistical expectations. Value-added is positive at A-Level, neutral at BTEC level but this is in line with the stepping-stone nature of those courses and corresponds with the situation at this point last year, when of course the final outcome was exceptionally strong BTEC value-added.

#### **LEARNING WALK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

16.19 The Corporation were provided with a verbal update from the VP T&L who confirmed that 220 learning walk assessments had been undertaken since September 2015. This is less than planned, as the Area-Based Review has prevented the Principal's involvement alongside other commitments, but sufficient to build-up a good picture, and the process has produced useful findings that would have been missed under the previous teaching assessment process. The learning walk programme has now been mostly accepted by teaching staff, despite some initial misgivings.

The Chair commented that the involvement of corporation members in the learning walk programme had reduced, and suggested that the Clerk liaise with the VP T&L to find out and feedback to members how they can be involved, and provide the upcoming dates.

**RESOLVED: 16.19 that the Clerk liaise with the VP T&L to find out and feedback to members the process for becoming involved with the learning walks**

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

16.20 Although there was no agenda item for any other business, it was requested that the following items be added for discussion / approval

- Financial returns 2014/15
- 2016/17 Pay scales

#### **FINANCIAL RETURNS 2014/15**

16.20 The Corporation were issued with a copy of the letter received from the Education Funding Agency in response to the 2014/15 financial returns. This included the EFA's financial health grade for TRC for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015 which was concluded as satisfactory. This is in line with TRC's self-assessed grade.

**The letter was noted.**

## 2016/17 PAYSCALES

16.21 The Principal informed members that the new SFCA pay scales for teaching staff (based on the schoolteachers' scales) are to be implemented nationally, subject to their adoption by individual Corporations, from September 2016 and that, in line with the schoolteachers' system, incremental progression up the pay scale is to be linked to performance, assessed via the appraisal process, rather than, under the current SFCA system, by default on the main scale and application on post-threshold and management scales.

Where movement from an old scale point to the equivalent new one brought a pay rise, colleges had been advised by the Joint Consultative Committee of SFCA employers and teaching unions to implement the rise in one year. The TRC management had consulted unions about having a phased 2-year rise for the large number of staff on or about to move to the equivalent of the current P3 grade. The unions had not been in favour of this. On consideration of the figures involved the Corporation agreed and approved that the transition for these staff would be made in one year as part of a wholesale transition to the new scales.

**RESOLVED 16.21 That staff be awarded their transition pay rise in one year.**

## DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

16.22 The next meeting would be held on Monday 25 April 2016 at 5.30 pm.

*The meeting remained quorate*

*End of Part I*

Signed



Date \_\_\_\_\_ 25.04.16 \_\_\_\_\_