



MINUTES OF THE TRC CORPORATION MEETING

MONDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2016

Part I

PRESENT

Mr P Jagger MBE (Chair); Ms J Collier (Vice Chair); Ms M Allen; Mr M Chaudhary; Mr R Gray; Mr T Grice; Mr S Kirk; Dr P R Williams; Mr J Ellis; Mrs A Todd; Mr T Mulroy; Cllr D Roche

In Attendance:

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

APOLOGIES

16.79 There were no apologies.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

16.80 Members were reminded of the need to declare any interests and reserved the right to declare an interest at any stage of the meeting.

MINUTES

16.81 Subject to the following amendments the minutes of the Meeting held on 4 July 2016 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

- Minute 16.51 should say 'Mr Timothy Mulroy and Cllr David Roche be approved as foundation member and external member respectively'.
- Upon the suggestion of Mrs J Collier, members agreed that Resolution 16.51.1 could be amended to read 'to accept Mr Timothy Mulroy as a foundation member of the Corporation' rather than 'to approve'.

MATTERS ARISING

16.82 The Corporation received a list of actions arising from previous meetings.

It was agreed that, due to the current circumstances, item 14.174 – negotiations with RCAT and SHU on the development of a sports course – should be put on hold with no deadline for completion. This will be revisited at a suitable time in the future.

In relation to item 16.47.3 – vote on joining the MAT - it was agreed that, following recent developments, the Principal would provide an update after agenda item 11.

Members noted that all other items were either complete, ongoing or scheduled for a decision at a future meeting.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

16.83 The July 2016 management accounts were presented to members with the VP F&R stating that there was nothing of concern to be highlighted. Brief discussions were held regarding staff holiday accruals, the £2,500 savings from the NUT strike and the salary savings offsetting the costs incurred by the use of temporary agency staff. No concerns were raised by the auditors to-date and members agreed with Mrs J Collier who commended the accounts and stated that such financial health puts the college in a strong position for potential negotiation with other institutions and also in the event of an OfSted inspection.

The management accounts were noted.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

16.84 Following on from resolution 16.62 passed at the meeting held on 4th July 2016, members noted the amendments made to the recruitment and selection policy. The policy now includes the requirement of references for all potential parent and external governors, except in cases where there has been a nomination.

In addition to the above, the Clerk presented further amendments within the section of the policy that sets out procedure for the nomination and selection of foundation members.

The first draft policy stated that in the event of a foundation member vacancy, the clerk would oversee the arrangements for the appointment of a new member. This was agreed due to the lack of clarity regarding the legal status of the foundation and how members should be appointed.

Subsequently, further information was discovered resulting from research undertaken by the previous Clerk to the Corporation during 2013. Having been circulated with the agenda, the information was presented to members with the gist being that the Corporation is the 'appointing authority' for all its members with a Governance and Search Committee to recruit and select all governors with the exception of elected members. As a result, the draft policy was updated to include a nomination and selection procedure for foundation members in line with the procedure for other members.

As foundation members, Mrs J Collier and Mr T Grice responded to the suggested amendments explaining that they believe this procedure would breach the democratic rights of the foundation trust and that they have a statutory right to appoint foundation members to the TRC Corporation.

Discussion followed with numerous points being made including the fact that, in practice, the procedure stated in the latest draft policy has been the one followed when recruiting foundation members and there is no objection to continuing that process informally. Mr T Grice explained that the foundation are reassured that good governance arrangements are in place at TRC and emphasised the desire to maintain strong working relationships but made it clear there is some discomfort with this procedure being documented in policy.

The Chair agreed that it is important to maintain strong working relationships and in the past the outcome for the recruitment of foundation members has always been positive. The suggestion from the Chair was that, at this point, the paper should be noted but not approved until a conclusion is reached regarding the legal status of the foundation.

The Recruitment and Selection Policy was noted, with agreement that, in the meantime, the documented procedure would be followed in principle for all categories of governor when recruiting to vacancies.

SPH / CLERK APPRAISAL

16.85 It was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair would form the appraisal panel for the Principal and the Clerk with dates to be arranged to ensure that the appraisal process is completed in a timely manner.

RESOLVED: 16.85 that the Chair and Vice-Chair will form the appraisal panel for the Principal and the Clerk.

CORPORATION VOTING RIGHTS

16.86 Having been circulated with the agenda, members were referred to the information provided on the proceedings of meetings in relation to voting on decisions. Members noted that any decision taken is by majority vote and in the case of an equal division of votes, the Chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

Discussion followed regarding the potential use of electronic communication given that the Instruments and Articles do not allow for by proxy or postal voting. There were mixed views on this, with the general consensus being that it would not be a suitable alternative to regular attendance at meetings but could be a method used in a single issue meeting in which a particularly important decision is being made.

GOVERNOR EXPENSES 2015/16

16.87 The Financial regulations require that a written annual report should be prepared by the Clerk to the Corporation covering all significant expenses incurred by senior post holders and Corporation members in the previous 12 months, unless no significant (£850) expenses had occurred.

The Clerk confirmed that no significant expenses had occurred during the previous 12 months.

EXAM RESULTS

16.88 The Principal presented members with an updated report to replace the one that had been circulated with the agenda. The key points from the report were as follows:

- The success rate at A level was in line with cohort expectations and the Sixth Form College average.
- High grades at A level were below cohort expectations overall.
- Results on vocational courses compared with national averages at levels 2 and 3.
- Success rates and high grades were above cohort expectations on level 3 BTEC courses.
- GCSE results remained significantly above SFC averages.

It was acknowledged that there were strengths in the results, with discussion then focused on the high grades at A level being below cohort expectations, which was a disappointment after the positive showing on high grades against expectations last year. The Principal and VP T&L explained that it is difficult to establish an over-arching reason for this overall outcome but that meetings have already taken place with heads of department, with further plans to undertake detailed analysis and consider the possible reasons and solutions. It was

noted that a large number of maternity leaves had meant that staffing in certain subjects was different from previous years, though suitably qualified temporary staff had been in place.

Mr S Kirk suggested that it may be worthwhile contacting a cross-section of recently left students themselves as they may well offer some insight.

Members requested that a paper be presented at a future board meeting providing more detail, including the trends in subject areas.

RESOLVED: 16.88 that the principal shall produce an interim report to present to the Corporation at the meeting to be held in November 2016, prior to the full College self-assessment and Quality Improvement Plan at November's meeting.

SEPTEMBER ENROLMENTS AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

16.89 The VP F&R presented the report on student enrolments which confirmed that the college has had a successful enrolment period during September 2016 with the overall initial enrolment target being achieved, although subsequent drop-outs have been higher than planned, so the overall number at the census date in late October will be less than planned. The enrolments mean that the approved financial plans for the next two years are likely to need some amendments to adjust for the fall in numbers, although it was noted that we would continue to achieve improve cash reserves, which will provide a bigger cash buffer during the final two years of demographic downturn.

The report was noted.

Mr T Grice left the meeting at 6.15pm

AREA BASED REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE

16.90 The Principal provided the Corporation with an update on the current position following the decision to explore the option of forming a MAT with local schools.

The Corporation has a meeting scheduled for 14th November 2016 in order to make an 'in principle' decision on whether to join the MAT or pursue an alternative option.

Meetings have taken place with primary schools and the feoffees in addition to ongoing meetings with the secondary heads

The Corporation agreed with the Principal and the Vice Principal F&R that the following must be established through these discussions before the November Corporation meeting:

- Clarification of the cost of a central MAT structure
- Clarification of the nature of post-16 provision in a MAT
- An informal diligence procedure being carried out

Without these it will be impossible to make a decision to join a MAT. Possible alternatives could include:

- Single Academy Trust (SAT)
- Merger / MAT with another sixth form college

- Remain an independent Incorporated Sixth Form college collaborating with other colleges

RESOLVED: 16.90 that no decision will be made regarding whether to pursue the MAT option until the informal due-diligence process is complete and the costs of the MAT and nature of post-16 provision in it established.

LEARNER SURVEY

16.91 Following on from the information provided during the Corporation meeting held on 4th July 2016, the Principal issued members with the completed hard copy document, providing a brief explanation of the points within it. There were no areas for concern.

The document was received and noted.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY 2016/17 – 2018/19

16.92 Having been circulated with the agenda, members were referred to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Improvement Strategy 2016-18. The VP T&L provided an overview of the content and explained that from this year the Quality Improvement Plans within each department include the TLA priorities to ensure there is a link throughout college. Following a question raised by Mrs J Collier it was confirmed that the priorities also inform performance management targets.

Members commended the TLA strategy and thanked the VP F&R for the work undertaken.

STRATEGIC AWAY DAY

16.93 Members were reminded that the strategic away day is due to take place on Monday 23rd January and the agenda was open for suggestion.

Initial suggestions included the following:

- Review of TRC's current position
- Review of the current governance structure
- Training (time permitting)

It was agreed that the Chair, Principal and Clerk would meet to prepare the agenda.

GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

16.94 Having been raised at the previous meeting, the Clerk confirmed that a draft training programme has been developed for consideration at the next Governance and Search Committee meeting. The update was noted.

At this point, the Chair took the opportunity to inform members that he will be arranging 1-to-1 sessions with all members, and will be in contact to arrange dates.

Mrs J Collier queried the Procedure for governor DBS checks and whether these should be reviewed every three years. The Clerk agreed to look into the matter and report back at a future meeting.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

16.95 The next meeting, a special Corporation meeting, is to be held on Monday 14TH November 2016 at 5.30 pm.

At this point the Principal requested a part II meeting for one personnel item relating to a senior post holder. Staff members withdrew at this point.

Part I of the meeting ended at 6:55pm – the meeting remained quorate

Signed _____ Mr P Jagger _____

Date _____ 14th November 2016 _____