

# LONGLEY PARK SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

## MINUTES of the meeting of the CORPORATION

held on **12 APRIL 2016** at 4.30pm  
at the College, Horninglow Road, Sheffield

Present: Cath Orange (Chair)  
Margaret Ferris (Vice-Chair)  
Jonathan Hall (Vice-Chair)  
Fran Henshaw - from Minute 8  
Rebecca Hodgson - from Minute 5  
Chris Hunt  
Alan Law  
Peter Leppard  
Mo Nisbet (Principal)  
Isabelle Sherriff  
Tina Sherriff  
Karen Squires  
Paul White  
Josh Wilson

Advisor: David Carter (National Leader of Governance)

In attendance: Dominic Harrex (Associate Principal (Resources))  
Donald McLean (Vice-Principal (Student Engagement))  
Alison Megahy (Vice-Principal (Curriculum & Quality))  
Sharon West (Clerk to the Corporation)

Apologies for absence were received from Jodie Beck, Joelle Haywood and Steve Roberts.

**Action by**  
**Who      When**

### 1      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2      **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2015**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

### 3      **MATTERS ARISING**

#### **(a) Matters arising: Annual Governance Report (Minute 4(d))**

The Principal confirmed that she would present a list of potential areas for inclusion in a data dashboard for Governors to consider to the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> May.

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## **(b) Annual Report and Financial Statements (Minute 7(c))**

The Audit Committee had reviewed the situation and confirmed that there had been no conflict of interest.

## **(c) Safeguarding Update (Minute 11)**

The Prevent Update would be scheduled in for either 10<sup>th</sup> May or 7<sup>th</sup> June.

## **4 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE/QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE**

The Principal presented the update and talked Governors through grade collection 5, courses that were considered to be underperforming and the action being taken to address this. Governors queried the accuracy of predictions. The Vice-Principal (Student Engagement) explained that the accuracy of predictions was higher than nationally.

Governors were pleased to see the continued focus on attendance and punctuality.

A question was raised about why the percentage of Level 3 A2 courses above minimum target grade (MTG) was so low. The Principal explained that students should be exceeding MTG and courses therefore need to be more stretching.

Governors highlighted the predicted success rate for A2 Sociology which was below target. The Principal accepted that a tough target had been set and the predicted success rate was being affected by one or two students who were underperforming.

The Chair of the Curriculum & Quality Committee confirmed that the Committee reviewed progress against the strategic priorities and quality improvement plan in detail at each of its meetings.

Governors thanked the Principal for a generally positive report.

## **5 E-GOVERNANCE**

The Vice-Chair outlined the process that had been adopted and presented the recommendation from the E-Governance Working Group, which would deliver efficient and effective meeting management, as well cost and time savings. Support would be provided for Governors in moving to the new system.

Governors noted the substantial discount that had been negotiated but sought assurance that the system was affordable. The Associate Principal (Resources) confirmed that

it was. He added that the College would be able to supply on loan an electronic device for Governors to access the system. A brief survey had been conducted and the majority of Governors had indicated that they would be happy to use their own electronic devices.

The Corporation **approved** the purchase and implementation of the BoardPad meeting and documentation management system.

## **6 REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

### **(a) Curriculum & Quality Committee**

The Chair of the Committee reported on the business covered at the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016. He confirmed that there were no matters of concern that the Committee wished to draw to the attention of the Corporation.

### **(b) Audit Committee**

The Chair of the Committee summarised the business covered at the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016. Action was being taken to address the issues identified in the final audit findings report, but this was still a work in progress. The auditors were clear that the situation that had been identified was solely a matter of people and processes and not an issue of probity.

### **(c) Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee**

The Chair presented the report of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and highlighted the recommendation to freeze the current vacancy for an Independent Governor.

The Corporation **approved** that the current Independent Governor vacancy be frozen.

### **(d) Resources Committee**

The Chair of the Committee talked Governors through the business covered at the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016, drawing their attention to the lack of management accounts which was an ongoing issue.

Governors received a copy of the briefing note that would be issued to cross-College staff the following day. The Associate Principal (Resources) provided an update on the voluntary redundancy scheme which had resulted in some changes to the proposals for the restructuring of cross-College services. The Chair sought assurance that College procedures were being followed. The Associate Principal (Resources) confirmed that the scheme was in line with the College's Redundancy

Policy.

## **7 OVERDRAFT FACILITY**

It was reported to the meeting that arrangements had been made for the College to borrow the sum of £150,000 from The Co-operative Bank Plc to be taken by way of overdraft upon the terms as to interest and repayment already notified in writing by The Co-operative Bank Plc to the College.

The Corporation Members present at the meeting declared their interests in the matter to be discussed at the meeting and such declaration was taken as sufficient for the purposes of the College's Instrument of Government and otherwise.

It was **resolved** that any one member of the Corporation be authorised and instructed to accept and execute the Facility Letter.

It was **resolved** that the execution of the Facility Letter and/or any notice, communication or other document referred to above by any person authorised to execute the same shall be conclusive evidence of the due authorisation by the Corporation of the execution thereof.

## **8 OPTION APPRAISAL EXERCISE/AREA REVIEW/PLANNING FOR 2016-17**

David Carter explained the National Leadership of Governance programme. He outlined his background and plans for the session.

David asked Governors to share with him the College's vision. He asked them to define what an outstanding sixth form education was. Governors explained that this related to (i) excellent teaching; (ii) the provision of opportunities for personal development at a crucial stage for young people; (iii) locality; (iv) inclusivity; and (v) the challenge to provide excellent facilities. They agreed that the words were more important to the College than its external audience.

In terms of the area review process David stressed that Governors needed to be clear about what and where they wanted the College to be. He asked them to consider in small groups the pros and cons of academisation.

Governors fed back the outcome of their discussions. They agreed that it would depend on what sort of academy/trust arrangement the College entered into. They felt that local partners had advantages. However there were risks associated with conversion and risks associated to not converting.

Some issues could fall between to two, e.g. staff turnover, change in identity, longer term uncertainty and shift in financial focus.

### Pros

- Financial - savings, shared services, VAT
- Less risk
- Closer links with schools/partners
- Stability of student numbers
- Progression
- Government agenda (favoured by Government)
- CPD for staff
- Stabilised recruitment (staff/students)
- Sharing leadership and management

### Cons

- Government agenda
- Negativity about academies/academy chains
- Student/staff relationship
- Big system
- Losing local identity
- Guinea pig
- Irreversible decision
- Reduced autonomy
- Terms & conditions of employment/non-qualified teaching staff
- Cost of conversion (time/money)

Governors recognised that conversion would bring sixth form colleges under mainstream education policy, whereas they were currently overlooked. However, there was a danger that they could be swallowed up. Colleges could be exchanging one set of problems for another and they did not know what the problems were on the other side.

Governors agreed that the nub for identifying a partner would be that there was a good fit in terms of ethos, values and locality. They agreed that any partner should meet the following criteria:

- Have a track record of delivering secondary and/or post-16 education in an area of social and educational disadvantage;
- Have a demonstrable commitment to inclusivity, including access to post-16 for students of all abilities;
- Have experience of working with diverse communities.

Governors acknowledged that a lot of the pros and cons would also apply to other options. The College was different and could offer a niche. However, could it remain viable? Uncertainty undermines and remaining a standalone organisation could be too big a risk.

Governors agreed that they were comfortable with the pros and cons of conversion.

The Chair and Principal reported on a meeting that had taken

place with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) on 21<sup>st</sup> March. They wanted to continue to develop a proposal and seek local backing/support. The RSC had indicated that the proposal might need strengthening. It was agreed that they should write to the RSC thanking her for meeting with them and seeking clarification on the potential inclusion of an outstanding partner in a trust arrangement and the perceived role of that partner.

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Governors agreed that the College should continue with its previously agreed strategy to further explore a partnership arrangement based upon an educational case.

In small groups Governors discussed the list of options provided by David and the scoring system. Two of the three groups identified a merger with another sixth form college as their preferred option and the third group placed the Multi Academy Trust option highest. It was agreed that this would be a useful exercise to demonstrate that Governors had been robust in reviewing the options. David suggested that additional criteria could be included or some criteria might be weighted. The Chair, Vice-Chair (Chair of the Futures Working Group), Principal and Clerk were asked to complete the formal scoring exercise and circulate the outcome to Governors for confirmation.

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Governors talked about matching cultures and how that could be achieved. They acknowledged that there would be synergy if working with a partner that worked with them same young people.

David explained the approach adopted by Kidderminster College in producing a prospectus for potential partners outlining its criteria and context. Governors felt that there could be some benefit in a 'beauty contest' as the College could add a great deal to an academy trust in terms of quality. David offered to provide the Principal with contact details for the Principal at Kidderminster College.

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The discussion moved on to merging cultures. David said that the RNN Group was working on it. In his experience, this initially began with staff visits and combined governor meetings. He added that it was essential to develop an implementation plan.

In terms of the area review process, policy was being developed 'on the hoof'. Governors were best placed to identify the option that was most appropriate for the College.

## **9 EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING AND IMPACT**

Governors considered the effectiveness of the meeting. They

agreed that it had been useful in that it had made them take a step back and ensure that they had an objective look at all of the options.

**10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at 5.00pm.

The meeting ended at 7.05pm.

Signed: ..... (Chair)

Date: .....