



## Minutes of the Special Corporation Meeting

held 16 January 2010  
Wood Norton Hall, Evesham

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Present: Pam Thomas (*Chair*), Phil Osborne (*Vice Chair*), Keith Bate (*Principal*), Duncan Bryson, Andy Comyn, Corinne Crannage, Andrew Hanson, Neil Hobson, Liane Purnell, Alison Perks, Alison Shipway, Claire Smith, Gloria Smith, Alan Taylor, Daniel Willetts, Leslie Williams

In attendance: Paul Bridgewater (*Director of Teaching and Learning*)  
Mary Higgins (*Director of Planning and Development*)  
Jacquie Carman (*Director of Finance and Administration*)  
Di McCathie (*Director of Student Services*)  
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk*)

### 1 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Paul Downing.

### 2 Declarations of Interest

Liane Purnell and Gloria Smith declared standing interests in relation to partnership working arrangements between the College and their respective employers Newman University College and Prospects Services Limited.

### 3 Strategic Planning

Keith Bate outlined the focus on both the current position and what the future holds for Halesowen College, including market position, campus development and transformational projects.

Members worked in two groups to identify the College success factors. Both groups identified similar lists including:

- Breadth of curriculum offer with good performance recognised in inspection results
- Exceptional staff who are dedicated
- Fun learning environment
- Effective use of sites and resources which suits students
- Class sizes/avoidance of big classroom groups
- Listening to the learner voice
- Pastoral support which is less formal than school
- Four day week with study day
- Geographical location
- Good estate with investment and promotion
- Geographical location
- Bus Service
- Strong financial management, strong leadership and management including risk management

- Good strategic planning for change with responsiveness
- Strong partnerships
- Open Day
- Size

Members then considered factors which would enable the College to continue success, including:

- Working to strengths and addressing weaknesses
- Meeting the demands of students
- Understanding and responding to changing environment with changing success factors
- Remaining true to core values and good teaching
- Meeting wider responsibilities such as safeguarding

Keith Bate expanded on the need to keep moving the College forward preparing and adjusting to change before reviewing current areas of development affecting the College including:

- Machinery of government changes; funding split between 16-18 and 19+ and the increase in the participation age
- Competition from development of new 6<sup>th</sup> Forms and new developments in other local providers
- Demographic changes with a reduction in school leavers
- Pressures on Higher Education funding
- Curriculum and Qualification changes
- Technology and flexible course delivery

Broader changes were also considered including:

- Safeguarding demands
- The effects of increased globalisation in hand with networking capacity and more localised working and learning opportunities
- Political uncertainty and public sector funding cuts
- Economic wellbeing, tax increases and increased burden on individuals to pay for courses.

Keith Bate indicated the current strong base from which the College could continue having exceeded contracts, improved success rates and maintained a very strong workforce with outstanding range of provision. Members noted that in preparing for future challenges the College needed to improve effectiveness, efficiency and economy without compromising quality and performance.

Mary Higgins further reported on the external factors facing the College in particular:

- Commitment to existing participation targets plus new ambition such as 75% Participation in HE or advanced apprenticeships by 2030
- New pathways for apprenticeships with UCAS points for Level 3
- Introduction of Technical Colleges lined with schools and universities
- Skills for growth to make the UK globally competitive
- Employer driven qualifications through Sector Skills Councils with funding only for qualifications included in the framework
- Learner passports to access modular learning across institutions
- New measures within a national scorecard approach
- Skills Investment Strategy from BIS
- Regional planning with West Midlands Skills Action Plans and involvement of RDA and AWM in directing funding.
- Priority sectors

- Changes to Access to HE and Key/Functional Skills funding
- Skills for learning/learner choice and Higher ambitions

Mary Higgins reported that the Black Country performed below all national indicators then outlined the target rates for participation, progression and attainment by 16 and 17 year olds for 2010.

Alison Perks asked about community provision and the Learning Revolution scheme. Mary Higgins responded that some providers had received some funding for provision such as IT.

Phil Osborne asked about the range of employee representation on the Sector Skills Councils. Mary Higgins explained that there was variability across the Sector Skills Councils with proposals for some rationalisation.

Mary Higgins outlined the four pillars of the 14-19 strategy noting that there was concern over provision for students with learning difficulties where all qualifications must relate to employment. A further report had been published to encourage employment of young people with learning disabilities.

Paul Bridgewater reported on consultation with students, staff and managers on the proposed overarching Learning and Teaching Strategy to inform the future direction for learning and teaching in the College. Key areas included:

- A statement of what the organisation stands for
- Key features of outstanding teaching and learning
- Benchmarking for standards
- Staff development needs

Nine key themes were identified ranging from a learner centred approach, active and constantly developing learning, motivation, support and reward, employability, community engagement, technology, equality and diversity, access and safeguarding.

Paul Bridgewater outlined the aims of the strategy including achievement of student satisfaction and high levels of achievement. Implications included increased demand for resources such as technology, implementing balanced delivery mechanisms and changes requiring support such as staff training.

Jacque Carman profiled future finance and funding including:

- The national perspective relating to the economy, public expenditure and tax increases
- The financial landscape for the College regarding funding streams and costs including capital developments, indirect pay costs, taxation and inflation, utilities and environmental issues and capital developments
- The current outstanding financial health within the context of uncertainty about the future relating to changes in funding arrangements
- Current funding for 16-18 and 19+ and HE funding

Keith Bate further reported on five possible transformational projects supporting the above outputs for 2010/11:

- Improving curriculum leadership
- Implementing the learning and teaching strategy
- Enhancing learning resources, information and support
- Implementing individual learning pathways
- Tracking learner progress and performance

Keith Bate explained the 16-18 commissioning arrangements including a reduction in school leavers corresponding to overall reduced government funding. Members recognised that growth must be addressed within the consolidated baseline. Alongside this members learned that the number of qualifications offered and the course hours to deliver them were being reduced under government funding methodology.

Keith Bate reported on student admission information for 2009/10. Alison Shipway asked if there were any disproportionate rates of students withdrawing from courses. Di McCathie responded that this had not been the case with main reasons for leaving cited as employment.

Andy Comyn asked for clarification on funding students from outside the borough and Leslie Williams asked if funding would operate within borough boundaries through local authority administration. Keith Bate explained that the funding methodology was based on resources following the learner but the future was uncertain. Members further discussed funding and commissioning roles.

Keith Bate reported on trends for 2010/2011 and members discussed application levels, inbuilt progression and organisational capacity.

Jacque Carman reported on capital developments, in particular potential savings achievable in the construction of Block 9. Members recognised that the full implications of any savings would be explored to ensure there would be no compromise on quality.

In response to a question from Neil Hobson members were provided with examples of proposed innovative savings.

#### **4 College Self Assessment Report 2008/2009**

Keith Bate presented the Halesowen College Summary Self Assessment Report 2008/2009 based on the previous model with a summary of curriculum grades and the overall assessment for the College of Grade 2. Members were also drawn to outcomes for learners and the newly included section for Safeguarding covering a range of considerations to meet obligations to young people. It was noted that the College had strong links with other organisations and the Safeguarding Board and was putting in place training arrangements to meet the requirement for Level 2 training provision for all staff.

The Corporation received the report and resolved to approve the Halesowen College Summary Self Assessment Report 2008/2009.
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#### **5 Corporation Self Assessment**

Due to time constraints the meeting agreed to postpone the Self Assessment exercise until 28 January 2010.

#### **6 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for the Corporation Annual General Meeting on 30 January 2010.

Closed:12.25pm