



Minutes
Meeting of the Corporation
Wednesday 13 December 2017 at 4.30pm
GT2, General Teaching Building

PART 1

Present:

Pippa Goodwin (<i>Chair</i>)	Neil Prior
Neil Dew-Gosling	Janet Robertson
Gillian May (<i>Principal</i>)	Daniela Shanly (<i>from 5.35pm</i>)
Gareth Osborn	Dave Snowden
John Petitt	Ian Thomson
Frank Pitkin	

Apologies: Andrew Try
 Student Governors

In attendance:

Anne Entwistle	<i>VP Student Services & Safeguarding</i>
Richard Munday	<i>Finance Director</i>
Tracy Reeve	<i>Clerk to the Corporation</i>
Kevin Scott	<i>Kevin Scott Consultancy Ltd</i> <i>(planning and development)</i>

142/17 Chair's welcome

The Chair (PG) welcomed Kevin Scott to the meeting and informed Governors that the Part 2 agenda around the Care Village Planning Inquiry would be considered first to enable this important decision item to be given sufficient time.

143/17 Planning Inquiry Update

The meeting noted a presentation from Kevin Scott who was now acting as the College's planning advisor with regard to the Care Village development. Governors discussed this important issue at length; full minutes of this discussion are recorded in the Part 2 confidential minutes of the meeting, (see minute 168/17 on page 17).

144/17 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Andrew Try. The Clerk informed the meeting that the two student governors had now been appointed and would be joining the Corporation for the next meeting in February 2018. It was noted that Daniela Shanly had sent apologies for the first hour of the meeting.

145/17 Notification of any other business

The Clerk that she had a paper to bring before the meeting in relation to Search Committee recommendations and membership of the Corporation.

There was no other business notified.

146/17 Notification of Members interests

There were no interests notified.

147/17 Minutes of the meetings held on 20 September 2017, 4 October 2017 and 1 November 2017

The three sets of minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

148/17 Matters Arising

- **Presentation from Health and Safety Manager** (*minute 101/17*)

The Principal (GM) confirmed that the Health Safety and Well-being Manager would attend the Corporation meeting in spring 2018 to provide a mid-year update for Governors.

NOTED

- **Insurance Claim for Water Damage to heritage assets** (*minute 112/17*)

The meeting noted that the insurance claim following the water ingress during the June 2017 storm was still ongoing. An independent insurance assessor had now been appointed to consider the claims for the Mansion and Clock Cottage.

NOTED

There were no other matters arising that were not already included on the agenda.

ITEMS FOR DECISION/ APPROVAL

149/17 Residential Overseas Learning Visits

The meeting considered four separate proposals for overseas learning visits: Business students visiting Disneyland Paris in February 2018; Business and Travel students visiting Iceland in March 2018; Travel students visiting Barcelona in March 2018; and Animal Management students visiting the Shamwari Game Reserve in South Africa in February 2018.

The Vice Principal Student Services and Safeguarding confirmed that all the requisite risk assessments were in place and that staffing levels accompanying the trips would meet all safeguarding guidelines. Governors were given assurance that all of these proposed learning visits were relevant to the course of study and were fully self-funded by the learners. They were also assured that photos and blogs from the trips would be included in future College promotional literature.

The meeting APPROVED the proposals for learning visits to: Paris (February 2018); Iceland (March 2018); Barcelona (March 2018); and South Africa (February 2018) as presented.

150/17 Annual Report of the Audit Committee

The meeting noted a paper which outlined the work of the Audit Committee for the Financial Year to 31 July 2017 and included an assessment of both sets of auditors' performance against key performance indicators for 2016/17. The Clerk confirmed that this report would be sent to the SFA with the Financial Statements for 2016/17. Governors from the Audit Committee and the FD confirmed the ongoing value of ICCA as internal auditors and RSM as external auditors; their work had added value during the year and contributed to the process of BCA's continuous improvement. The meeting agreed that the Audit Committee had provided a high level of challenge for the Executive team at BCA during the year; as evidenced by the audit committee minutes.

The Audit Committee annual report 2016/17 was RECEIVED.

151/17 External Audit Report

• Draft Audited Accounts and Report Year-End 31 July 2017

Members considered the final paperwork for the Annual Audit of Accounts provided by RSM UK Audit LLP; the Report and Accounts to 31 July 2017 and the Final Audit Findings Report. The FD informed members that these accounts had been presented to the Audit Committee on 6th December 2017. The final out-turn in the statutory accounts was an operating deficit of £390,000 after depreciation, disposal of assets and pension charge. This was noted as being in line with all management account forecasts presented to Governors during 2016/17 (the forecast surplus of £129,000 shown in the management accounts had been reduced by the FRS17 pensions charge). Total income for the year had increased to £12.957m compared with £12.694m in 2015/16; EFA and SFA grant funding had increased to £10.632m (an increase on the prior year figure of £10.326m). The meeting noted that there had been a growth in student numbers and expenditure had increased by £94,000 in the year to £13.347m. This was attributed to: a decrease in other operating costs of £322,000; offset by an increase in staff costs of £492,000. The net pension liability at £8.512m (compared with £9.01m at 31 July 2016), was noted and also the fact that this was an element of the accounts over which BCA had no control. However, members were reminded that the FD had worked with actuaries to minimise this liability. Members were reminded that at present FRS17 was simply a book entry and was excluded when assessing financial health by both the SFA and the banks. Governors commended the clear and accurate financial reporting that the Finance Director (RM) had brought to the College; the final outturn for the year was exactly as forecast when setting the budget for 2016/17.

The meeting noted a paper from the Finance Director (RM) which outlined a technical issue around the 'going concern' statement in the Financial Statements. RM clarified the position as follows: BCA's accounts for 2016-17 would be signed in mid-December 2017; a three-year loan that the College took out in November 2015 was scheduled for repayment 11 months after the likely signing date of the 2016/17 accounts. As this was within a year of the accounts signing, RSM, the College's external auditors, were required to include a note to say that there was material uncertainty associated with going concern. The meeting was informed that Lloyds bank offered to move the repayment date to January 2018 to avoid the requirement for a modification but RSM believed this to be 'artificial' and that the identified risk around going concern would still exist. Members commended this ongoing positive support from Lloyds. The meeting was assured that this would not amount to a qualification of the accounts; RSM would instead issue a modified opinion. The FD assured the Corporation that this matter had been discussed at Audit Committee on 6th December, with the Audit Partner from RSM in attendance. The Audit Committee members recognised the need for a material uncertainty note and the partner at RSM had subsequently outlined the actions required. The meeting noted that the College had needed to demonstrate the following to RSM in order that their opinion should be modified and not qualified:

- Details as to the circumstances that lead to uncertainty i.e. when the loan falls due and how much will be payable on that date.
- The College plans to deal with the loan repayment.
- Why BCA was a going concern; what can happen over the next 12 months.
- What the material uncertainty was in relation to the above.

The meeting noted the detail of the FD's submission to the external auditors in order to justify the modification. This included: the revised Area Review recommendation and Transaction Unit support; the likelihood of Restructuring Funds being available

to BCA; and the possible land disposal.

The meeting noted that in response to this evidence RSM would: amend their note in the accounts; change the wording in their Audit Findings Report; and amend the Letter of Representation that would be signed by the Chair and Principal (as College Accounting Officer). It was also noted that BCA would amend the wording in the accounting policies section of the accounts to read as follows:

'Whilst the Corporation, after making appropriate enquiries, is confident that the College has adequate working capital to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, it nevertheless recognises that a three-year loan taken out in November 2015 is due to be repaid in November 2018. After due consideration of the likelihood of adequate funding becoming available either via the ESFA (via a Restructuring Facility) or from the sale of land within the next twelve months in order to allow the loan to be settled, Corporation acknowledges that it is appropriate for the auditors to include a material uncertainty note relating to going concern within their report in these financial statements.'

- **Audit Findings Report 2016/17**

Members considered the Final Audit Findings Report for the year-end 31 July 2017 which had been drafted for Governors by the external auditors RSM and noted the unqualified audit opinion. Members noted the low level of adjustments made on the balance sheet (£22,000) and the positive Final Audit Findings Report with no management recommendations. The Audit Committee members recommended this report to the meeting; it was a clean audit report with no material impact. The meeting commended the smooth running of the external audit 2016/17 – as in the previous two years - and thanked the Finance Director and his staff for their considerable input to the process.

- **Regularity Audit**

The meeting was reminded that the Regularity Audit report from RSM had been considered within the Audit Findings Report and the unqualified regularity opinion was noted. This item had also been considered in detail by the Audit Committee on 6 December 2017.

- **Letters of Representation**

The draft letters of representation (one for the financial statements and one covering the integral regularity audit) were considered and approved as presented. Members noted that these were in the standard format required by the Audit Code of Practice. The meeting was reminded that a reference to the modified opinion around going concern would be included in the final version of the Letters of Representation.

- **Letter of Engagement**

The meeting considered and approved an updated letter of engagement with RSM LLP. The FD informed the meeting that the Audit Committee (06/12/17) had also reviewed the detailed Terms and Conditions to accompany this letter of engagement.

It was AGREED that:

- i) The Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2017 be APPROVED and signed by the Chair on behalf of the Corporation, and the Principal as Chief Accounting Officer of BCA.***
- ii) The Final Audit Findings Report and Regularity Audit Report from RSM should be RECEIVED.***

- iii) That the Letters of Representation be APPROVED and signed by the Chair on behalf of the Corporation, and the Principal as Chief Accounting Officer of BCA.**
- iv) The Letter of Engagement was APPROVED and RECEIVED.**

152/17 College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2016/17

The meeting considered the final whole college Self-Assessment Report 2016/17 and the resulting Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2017/18 that had been drafted to take forward the findings of the SAR. Members considered the overall effectiveness grade for each of the subject sector areas and were reminded that the individual curriculum areas' versions of the SAR had been considered in detail at the recent Quality Review Boards which had been attended by Link Governors. There was only 1 curriculum area showing as grade 4: functional skills English and maths. VP Students and Safeguarding (AE) informed the meeting that this grade largely reflected a number of Foundation Students who had been entered for but not sat the Functional Skills exams. The meeting went on to discuss BCA's detailed action plan to improve the results in maths during 2016/17 and Governors were assured that they would continue to be updated on the progress made in the delivery of all functional skills and GCSE maths during 2017/18. Governors discussed the barriers to engagement which existed and the struggle to motivate learners to progress. The meeting commended the in-year progress measures which had been put in place in order to demonstrate progress for learners who could not yet achieve A*-C maths. Governors (FP) confirmed that the HoDs had been rigorously challenged on their delivery of English and maths during the recent QRB process; he had seen examples of good practice which were being shared across College. The Chair of Audit Committee (GO) informed the meeting that the December Audit Committee meeting had considered the recent ICCA review of English and maths delivery at BCA and would be monitoring the progress against the recommendations and resulting action plan for improvement. The meeting noted the self-assessed grade 1 areas: Business and Enterprise, Equestrian and Public Services, all of which had secured improvement from grade 2 in the prior year. The meeting noted and discussed at length the College overall summary judgement, based on the CIF key questions; all elements were now assessed at grade 2 'good' including Apprenticeships which had been graded at '3' during the March 2017 Ofsted inspection. Governors challenged this grade but were given assurance that the action plan put in place since the Ofsted Inspection had enabled an upturn in the quality of apprenticeship outcomes and management. AE also informed the meeting that circa 75% of learners across College had met or exceeded their target grade in 2016/17 and that there were no discernible achievement gaps. There was a gap at level 3 in relation to progress between males and females but the male learners had a better high grades profile. The dip in performance for 19+ was noted and it was largely attributed to the impact of maths and English; attendance was not compulsory for 19+ learners. Governors (DS) sought clarification on why BCA did not deliver a large 14-16 programme as had been the case a few years ago. This was noted as being due to the schools refusing to pay for the provision and a reticence to release learners due to a recent change which meant that any schools learners' participation in FE provision could no longer be included in schools' league tables. It was noted that the final version of the SAR would be uploaded to the SFA Gateway before the Christmas break.

Quality Improvement Plan 2017/18: The key strengths and areas for improvement identified in the SAR were noted; these had formed the basis of the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2017/18 and would be monitored in detail on an ongoing

basis at Corporation level. Governors were assured that the QIP was a working document for College management and was considered at each of the fortnightly College Leadership Team (CLT) meetings. The overall key areas for improvement during 2017/18 were noted as:

- Improve rapidly the quality of TLA in GCSE maths to ensure the number of students improving by at least one grade in their GCSE maths rose to 40%.
- Ensure apprenticeship provision continued to focus on challenging individual skills development which was appropriate for the workplace through close collaboration between college and employers.
- Continue to improve progress of all students as evidenced through the percentage of learners meeting or exceeding target grade through high expectations and early intervention.
- Maintain and continue to develop the clear processes in place to support students with SEN across college ensuring compliance with the SEND Code of Practice.
- Focus and maintain ownership across the college to ensure that all students are aware of the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism.

The detailed strengths and weaknesses by each aspect of the Common Inspection Framework were noted i.e. Leadership and Management, Quality of TL&A, Personal Behaviour Development and Welfare; and, Outcomes for Learners (including destination data). The detail with regard to Adult Learning programmes, Apprenticeship Provision and High Needs Learners provision was also considered. Governors were pleased to note that there had been no significant achievement gaps during 2016/17; retention for Looked After Children (LAC) was at 100% with 91.3% achievement. Governors sought additional clarity on the increased number of high needs learners which was now at 165 during 2016/17. The VP Students and Safeguarding informed the meeting that this increase was largely due to word of mouth and BCA's great success with this type of learner. It was noted that ***the QIP 2017/18 would be presented to each meeting of the Corporation as a two page RAG rated document to enable the Corporation meeting to monitor progress. The final SAR 2016/17 and QIP 2017/18 were APPROVED as presented.***

153/17 Fees and Charges 2018/19

The Finance Director presented a paper outlining proposed course fees and charges for 2018/19 for the following areas of provision: Higher Education (HE) Tuition Fees; Student Transport; Accommodation; Financial Support thresholds; Facilities Charge; FE Adult Learner Responsive (ALR) tuition fees (where co-funded; Awarding Body Fees; Full fee paying students; and arrangement fees for instalment plans.

The following changes were noted:

- HE tuition fees: it was noted that no increases were currently foreseen. Fees for the Equine and Animal Foundation degrees with the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) would remain at £5,400 and £6,000 respectively. Fees for the Veterinary Physiotherapy degree (accredited by the RAU) would also remain at £6,000. Fees for the degree in Child Development (Reading University) would be confirmed in June 2018; these were currently at £4,625 but might increase to £4,750. The Higher Diploma in Floristry would remain at £2,200 per annum. The meeting was reminded that HE fees were set in consultation with HE partners to ensure a common approach across the partnership; BCA would produce an HE Tuition Fees leaflet detailing fees and available bursaries and identifying sources of financial assistance.

- Student Transport: the two-tier banding system based on distance travelled which was introduced for 2015/16 would continue. The proposed price increases for termly rates would rise by 1.9% (Band A) and 1.6% (Band B) for terms 1 and 2, and 2.8% or 2.5% for term 3. The cost of an annual bus ticket would rise by 1.6% to £640 for Band A (currently £630) and 2.0% to £765 for Band B (£750 in current year). Governors were reminded that this area was now no longer subsidised and the increases were based on the likely level of fuel price increases that would be passed on by the coach companies. The meeting was reminded that students who qualified for financial support would only be asked to make a one-off payment of £65 (band A) or £80 (band B) before they were issued with a bus pass (this represented no increase compared with the current charge).
- Student Accommodation: after careful consideration by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) it was recommended that the fees for Residential Student Accommodation Charges should be increased slightly to £4,500 for students who used their room 5 nights a week (currently £4,320) and £5,220 for students who were on site all week (currently £5,040). Governors were given reassurance around the additional help available to learners through the Discretionary Learner Support Fund and noted that the household minimum income threshold would remain at £25,000 (same as the current year). Students who qualified for financial support would be asked to pay 15% of the accommodation fee themselves; this was the same rate as used during 2017/18.
- Facilities Charge: SLT recommended that the annual Facilities Charge (payable by all learners) should remain at £95. Governors were given additional clarification on what was included in this charge: printing/ copying credit of £30; free car parking; an overall College subsidy on the canteen provision; and free use of the on-site gym. The meeting was also reminded that this money was always spent on facilities and services for the learners, e.g. a complete refit of North Café.
- FE (ALR) Tuition Fees (co-funded): the annual fee would increase to £2,300 for 2018/19 (currently £2,200). This would ensure that the College remained in line with the other Colleges in the Thames Valley. Governors were reminded that the number of co-funded learners was very low at BCA.
- Awarding Body Fee: if a learner was required to remit awarding body fees the fees would increase by an amount within the range of 2.9% to 3.9% for Level 1 to Level 4 diplomas and subsidiary diplomas.
- Full fee paying students: this would be available in the Course Cost List which would be finalised in May/ June 2018.
- Arrangement Fee for instalment plans: this fee – applicable to accommodation charges and course fees only – would remain at £100. Governors were reminded that the College was not able to charge interest on outstanding balances as it was not registered with the Financial Conduct Authority.

The meeting was given assurance that the Fees and Charges Policy was issued to all applicants and also made very clear at enrolment; the reasons for any price increases were also made clear to returning students.

The proposal for BCA Fees and Charges 2018/19 was APPROVED as presented.

154/17 Higher Education (HE) Quality Assurance 2016/17

The Principal reminded Governors about the new operating model for HE quality assessment introduced by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in March 2016. This now included a requirement for the governing body of a provider to submit - on an annual basis - assurances about: the continuous

improvement of the student academic experience and of student outcomes. All HEFCE-funded providers were required to provide these assurances to HEFCE by noon on 1 December 2017, (via submission of an online template). The meeting noted the process that had been followed at BCA to comply with the new HE quality assurance framework and the sign off that had been approved under Chairs Action. The meeting noted a copy of the annual HE quality assurance template 2016/17 that had been signed by the Principal as Chief Accounting officer and submitted to HEFCE to meet the deadline of 1st December 2017.

The HE quality assurance return for 2016/17 was NOTED and RATIFIED.

155/17 Risk Register/ Board Assurance Framework

The meeting considered the Board Assurance Framework which clearly detailed the key strategic risks against the four strategic priorities for BCA. This item was now a standing item for consideration at each Corporation meeting. Governors noted that this document had been updated since last presented to the Corporation in September 2017. The Principal assured the meeting that the risk associated with the impending General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), which would come into effect on 25th May 2018, had been added to the Risk Register. It was noted that the wrong copy of the Risk Register had been circulated in hard copy and this new risk was omitted; the correct version would be circulated by e-mail after the meeting. It was confirmed that Audit Committee had approved the updated version of the Risk Register and the new GDPR Risk on 6th December 2017.

The meeting discussed the following key risks which were currently rated as 'red' and the ongoing mitigation that was being provided against their crystallisation:

Risk 1 'Failure to Retain independent Status' (Risk score of 20 'red' after mitigation): The Principal asserted the need to keep this risk as 'red' due to the ongoing uncertainty about the planning application which necessitated a high risk score around possible 'forced' merger.

Risk 2 'LGPS deficit expected to be significant' (Risk score of 20 'red' after mitigation): The meeting was reminded that this risk was essentially outside the control of the College but governors were given assurance that College management were doing all possible to mitigate the increases and any future demands for 'top-up' payments. As previously advised the FD was continuing to work with other local FE College Finance Directors to challenge the actuarial assumptions and to minimise any actual short-term financial impact on the College.

Risk 7 'Insufficient capital investment in the listed assets, specifically the mansion house' (Risk score of 20 'red' after mitigation): The meeting was reminded that the issue of securing the requisite funding for the future maintenance of the heritage assets was still very uncertain following the call-in of the planning application for the care village at BCA by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Risk 9 'Insufficiently developed succession planning/ staff retention strategies (Risk score of 20 'red' after mitigation): The meeting noted recent CPD and management training programmes which had been run in-house to ensure that staff succession planning and the opportunity for internal promotion was catered for. However Governors were reminded of the more limited opportunities for internal promotion within a small College like BCA; there were actually only 9 senior management roles.

The FD reminded the meeting of all the recent initiatives put in place by the HR team which did not cost a great deal of money but provided benefits for staff.

Risk 16 'Failure to comply with GDPR requirements from May 2018 (Risk score of 20 'red' after mitigation): The meeting noted that the College internal auditors had presented an action plan to the recent Audit Committee meeting (06/12/17) to aid the College's compliance with this new directive.

The Board Assurance Framework/ Risk Register was RECEIVED.

The December 2017 Updated Risk Register to be circulated by e-mail post-meeting.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

156/17 Finance Report

- **Finance Director's Report**

The meeting took the Finance Director's Report as read. This provided additional narrative around the following: 2016/17 outturn; 2017/18 and 2018/19 budgets; ESFA funding, 16-18 and 19+; cash flow; internal audit activity; LGPS pension deficit; and the work with the Transaction Unit.

- **College Management Accounts: October 2017**

The FD presented the Management Accounts to 31 October 2017. The meeting was given confirmation that the College was forecast to make a surplus of £195,000 for the 2017/18 but the FD was currently undertaking a re-forecast as part of the work for the Transactions Unit. The year-to-date operating surplus was at £606,000 against a budget of £607,000. Income was £46,000 higher than budget at £3.819m year-to-date. High Needs income was £58,000 above the budget of £239,000; and, HE fees were £17,000 above the budget of £63,000. Governors noted that pay costs were £40,000 above budget at £2.07m but this was largely due the College taking on staff to support the higher numbers of 'high needs' learners (the expenditure was offset by the higher income). This level of pay expenditure would represent 54.5% of income, which was below the full year forecast and reflected front-loading of income. Non-Pay costs were noted as £1.15m year-to-date which was £7,000 above budget. The meeting noted the dashboard of financial key performance indicators and the Human Resources data dashboard which accompanied the management accounts on a monthly basis and a detailed cash-flow forecast.

The FD reminded the meeting that he was currently preparing a financial re-forecast for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 years which would be presented to the next timetabled Corporation meeting in February 2018. The meeting was given assurance that the SFA Financial Health rating for 2017/18 would remain at 'Satisfactory'. Governors noted that the November 2017 management accounts would be distributed to all Corporation members by e-mail week commencing 18th December.

The October 2017 management accounts were RECEIVED.

- **SFA Dashboard: BCA Financial Health**

The meeting noted the dashboard from the SFA which confirmed their assessment of the College's financial health after their review of the financial plan 2017/18 to 2018/19. Governors were reminded that the SFA had assessed BCA's financial health as Inadequate for 2016/17, Satisfactory for 2017/18 and Satisfactory for 2018/19 (last two based on the financial plan). This useful dashboard of KPIs was commended.

The SFA Finance Dashboard for BCA at November 2017 was NOTED

- **Enrolment 2017/18: R04 Funding Claim Report**

The meeting noted the R04 funding submission for 2017/18 which indicated an increase of £377,000 compared with the prior year submission of £7.678m. After adjustment for the re-classification of 19+ learners (£139,000) this indicated growth on the prior year contract of £188,000; to be received as lagged funding in 2018/19. Governors commended this growth which had been achieved despite the current demographic dip in learner numbers. The Principal asked for a minute to be recorded commending the MIS Team for their accurate and clean data which enabled funding to be maximised.

The Report was NOTED

- **ESFA Performance Update**

The meeting noted a summary of performance against the ESFA contract at 30th November 2017.

The Report was NOTED

ITEMS TAKEN AS READ

157/17 Academic Report

- **Higher Education (HE) Report**

Quality Review Visit, October 2017

The Principal presented the HE Report to the meeting. Governors noted that the QAA Quality Review Visit (QRV) had taken place on Tuesday 10th and Wednesday 11th October 2017, its overall aim being to provide HEFCE with an expert judgement about the readiness of a provider to enter, or continue to operate within, the higher education sector. Governors were reminded that the QRV was designed to: ensure that the student interest was protected; provide expert advice to ensure that the reputation of the UK higher education system was protected, including the protection of degree standards; and identify development areas that would help a provider to progress to being considered 'established'.

During the QRV, the inspectors had considered BCA's arrangements for HE against baseline regulatory requirements, in particular: the reliability of degree standards and their reasonable comparability with standards set and achieved by other providers; and the quality of the student academic experience, including student outcomes. Governors were reminded that the size of the HE provision and any financial limitations were not therefore not taken into account; the same inspection process and standards were expected whether a Russell Group University or a small HE provider (as BCA was with only 63 HE learners).

In summary, the final visit report (as previously circulated to Governors) had shown that the QAA review team had confidence that academic standards at BCA were reliable and comparable with standards in other UK providers. However, there was limited confidence that the quality of the student academic experience fully met baseline regulatory requirements. In order to address the issues that have resulted in limited confidence, six areas for improvement were specified in connection with policies and process. In order to further enhance quality and comparability of academic standards, six areas for development have been specified in connection with governance and collective oversight, student feedback, developmental support for HE staff and the provision of academic resources. As a result, BCA was now required to develop an action plan to address these specified improvements and areas for development.

The meeting noted management's response to the draft report (received on 27th October) and the Principal assured the meeting that the production of an Action Plan was now complete; this action plan had actually been drafted before the QRV by BCA management and the inspectors had not identified any additional aspects that needed to be added. The post QRV Action Plan was considered in some detail by the meeting. Governors noted that BCA's validating partners, the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) and the University of Reading (UoR) had also received a copy of the draft report. The RAU responded by offering its support to BCA (the Governors noted a letter summarising this support). It was also noted that HEFCE, would also support the College in completing the action plan, monitoring the agreed actions in order to gain full confidence that the quality of the student academic experience at BCA fully met baseline regulatory requirements. The meeting sought, and was given, clarity and assurances on where the QRV Report was published and to what extent it might present a reputational threat for the College.

Governors considered and approved two HE policy documents which had been identified as necessary during the recent QRV: the HE Quality Management and Enhancement Policy; and Terms of Reference for a newly constituted HE Quality Review Board (HEQRB). The formal constitution of a HEQRB, as outlined in the pre QRV submission, would enable broader oversight through the inclusion of the Principal, HE Link Governor, Head of HE and programme managers as members, and through its termly reports to the Corporation. It would also address one of the six areas for development included in the post QRV Action Plan. The meeting noted that the Chair of Governors would be the Link Governor in attendance at the HEQRB on a termly basis. Governors commended the quick action to remedy the weaknesses identified and the fact that the College had accurately self-assessed these areas for improvement in advance of the QRV.

The meeting APPROVED the following BCA specific documents as presented:

- ***Post-QRV HE Action Plan***
- ***HE Quality Management and Enhancement Policy***
- ***Terms of Reference for a newly constituted HE Quality Review Board (QRB) at BCA.***

It was also AGREED that a specific risk in relation to HE should be added to the College Risk Register.

September 2017 HE Enrolment

The meeting noted the detailed enrolment by course for 2017/18 compared with the prior year data. A total of 76 HE students had enrolled on four courses of study in September 2017 compared with 52 students enrolled on four courses in September 2016. To date, there had been one withdrawal due to ill-health, one deferral to return 2018-19 and one withdrawal/switch to a university. The remaining students had settled in well and at this stage all appeared to be committed to their studies.

2018/19 HE Applications

The meeting noted that to date BCA had received four applications for the BSc (Hons) Veterinary Physiotherapy and two for the FdSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare. This was well in advance of the initial UCAS January deadline and was seen as encouraging in terms of HE student recruitment for next year.

- **Apprenticeships**

Success Rates 2016/17: The meeting noted the final apprenticeship success rates for 2016/17 compared with the three prior years; this clearly demonstrated the distance travelled and improvement secured in this important area of provision.

Governors were pleased to note that the year end position indicated a significant performance improvement on the prior year. The 'overall' success rate was at 80% and 'timely' at 82%; this was noted as being significantly ahead of national average (NA) rates. The meeting noted that this performance data was now published alongside the College's employer satisfaction survey score (96.7%) on the government website when searching for an apprenticeship provider. The full data (showing percentage success rates) was noted as follows:

Apprenticeships Hybrid Year-End % Success Rate					NA % 2016/17
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	
Overall Success	88.9	65.0	62.7	80.0	67
Overall 16 - 18	-	76.2	65.6	78.0	70
Overall 19+	85.7	55.6	61.0	85.7	68
Timely success	72.7	56.5	38.8	82.0	59
Timely 16 - 18	-	55.6	32.8	80.6	62
Timely 19+	66.7	47.4	53.0	85.7	60.8

Apprenticeship enrolments and Targets: The meeting noted the data for apprenticeship enrolments and known pipeline for 2017/18 by curriculum area. It was noted that BCA now had 130 apprentices on programme; 54 new apprentices and 76 existing or continuing. The meeting noted that recent changes in apprenticeship funding requirements had led to some enrolment delays, especially with levy employers. The College was now working with ten levy paying employers: ISS, Merlin (Legoland), Reading Football Club, Reading Blue Coats School, Serco (Bisham Abbey), Daylesford, BCA, Longacres Garden Centre, and ISS.

The meeting noted that the College's first Arboriculture forum had been held in November; employers had provided their suggestions and key skills requirements to inform BCA's planned delivery of Arboriculture apprenticeships. The curriculum team were now integrating these requirements into their 'schemes of work'. Governors were assured that employer feedback remained a key driver in the development of all aspects of BCA's apprenticeship portfolio and course content. Governors noted that a Horticulture Forum breakfast had taken place on Tuesday 5th December at BCA.

Strategic update - Apprenticeship Marketing Strategy: The meeting considered the marketing strategy for land based and engineering apprenticeships at BCA which focused on the championing of land-based and engineering as a professional and progressive career. Governors noted that this would be achieved through:

- Maximise digital and flexible learning opportunities (securing 20% off the job learning); including exploring Virtual learning classrooms.
- The creation of a careers information portal and registration scheme, linked to existing employer forum members.
- Through the collaborative partnership with East Berkshire College, explore joint marketing and event initiatives.
- Collaboration with sector bodies to create careers frameworks and joint promotional tools.
- The endorsement and showcasing of high quality training through the calendar of events and participation at external forums and shows: National Apprenticeship week; Royal County of Berkshire Show; Henley Show; Thame Show; South Bucks Show; Maidenhead Goes to Town.
- The development of a suite of land based qualifications (entry to level 4),

including CPD programmes, to meet employer needs.

- Liaise closely with the Institute of Apprenticeship and Landex, to steer qualifications development.
 - Invite member of Employer Board to BCA to support ongoing lobbying programme.
- Ensure employers are fully engaged through the College's Employer Forums and industry skills groups.
- Develop blended learning solutions for the delivery of higher level skills, maximise the use of innovative digital technologies, including those of relevant awarding bodies
- Plan ways of raising the profile of the college's provision within the North-West of the region.
- Develop the Apprenticeship website: Marketing to provide cost for improved 'flow' and profile on main webpage
- Human Resources: recruit at least two Business Development Managers, one with a focus on arboriculture. Provide some level of administrative support to the Business Development Team.

The Principal confirmed that this specific marketing strategy for apprenticeship provision had been drafted to sit within the detailed implementation plan that was being submitted to the Transaction Unit. The detailed impact plan, accountabilities and timelines for the specific actions were noted.

The Apprenticeship marketing plan was NOTED and APPROVED.

158/17 Principal's Report

The report was taken as read as it had been circulated by e-mail earlier in the month.

159/17 Report from Committees

• Audit Committee - 23 November 2016

The Clerk informed the meeting that the minutes would be circulated once they had been finalised and approved by the chair of the Audit Committee.

NOTED

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

160/17 Any Other Business

• Governance Issues

➤ Membership of the Corporation:

The clerk informed the meeting that Sylwester Rzeminski who was appointed as a Staff Governor on 20 October 2016 had resigned his position as Staff Governor as he would be leaving BCA in January 2018.

Noted

➤ Re-appointment of Frank Pitkin:

Following previous discussions about Frank Pitkin's ongoing contribution and commitment to BCA it was recommended by the Search Committee that he exceptionally be appointed for a third term of office of 4 years. Members agreed that with the imminent retirement of John Petitt this would also provide some long-service continuity to the Governing Body at BCA.

The meeting AGREED to re-appoint Frank Pitkin as a member of the Corporation at BCA for a 4 year term of office to run until 8 December 2021.

➤ Determined number of the Corporation:

The Clerk asked the meeting to consider varying the determined number of the Corporation which was currently set at 16 down to 14. Members were reminded that there were currently 2 vacancies on the Corporation: one external governor and one staff governor. There would also be one additional vacancy after John Petitt retired from the governing body in December 2017. TR suggested that the variation should be achieved with the loss of 1 staff governor position and 1 external governor position. She reminded the meeting that the previous rationale for increasing the Staff Governors to 3 (October 2016) was to ensure that staff were fully involved during any merger process which was implemented post-Area Review. As this was now less likely as an option and the Corporation already had 2 committed Staff Governors in post there was deemed to be less of a need for a third Staff Governor. The Clerk also highlighted that the balance of the Corporation would be wrong with 3 Staff Governors out of a total of 14 members. TR reminded the meeting that the determined number of the Corporation could be varied upward at any time with Corporation approval.

The meeting AGREED that the Corporation at BCA should:

- **Reduce the determined number of the Corporation to 14 with immediate effect to include 2 staff governors and 2 student governors.**
- **Advertise/ recruit for a new 'external' governor with a strong educationalist background in early 2018.**

➤ Variation to BCA Standing Orders

The Clerk asked the meeting to consider an amendment to paragraph 1.5 of the current Standing Orders of BCA in relation to the 'Appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair'. It was agreed that the current requirement to appoint the Chair on an annual basis be removed; in future Chair and Vice-Chair to be appointed for a period of 3 years.

It was AGREED that:

- **The Clerk should amend the BCA Standing Orders and delete the first bullet 1.5.1 as it contradicted bullet 1.5.3.**
- **When a Chair or Vice-Chair is elected the Corporation will in future specify the length of the term of office in accordance with bullet 1.5.3 (the default term to be considered as 3 years).**

- **Retirement of John Petitt**

The Chair (PG) reminded the meeting that this had been John Petitt's (JP) last meeting and that he would be retiring from the Corporation after 12 years' service. His attention to detail and rigorous challenge during that time had been invaluable as had his service as Chair of Teaching & Learning Committee and subsequently as a member of Audit Committee. PG also thanked JP for his support as Vice-Chair of the Corporation during the last 4 years; his input had been instrumental in BCA's recent financial recovery and ongoing quality improvement. The meeting agreed that JP would be sorely missed and that he would be welcomed back for any College events including the 70th Birthday celebrations in 2019.

There was no other business.

DECISION ITEM

161/17 Election of the Vice-Chair of the Corporation

The Clerk informed members that only one nomination for Vice-Chair had been received. In the absence of any further nominations, Pippa Goodwin proposed Neil

Dew-Gosling as Vice-Chair of the Corporation. This was seconded by Frank Pitkin and agreed by the meeting.

It was AGREED that:

- i) Mr Neil Dew-Gosling be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Corporation for a three year term of office (until December 2020).***
- ii) In light of the amendment to the Standing Orders the meeting ratified that Pippa Goodwin's appointment as Chair of the Corporation should be defined as running until December 2019 (3 years from her initial appointment).***

162/17 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be on Wednesday 7th February 2018 at 4.30pm.