



Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of the Corporation

held in the Conference Room of the
College on 28th January 2014 at
5.30pm.

Present:

Mr T Edwards (Chairman)

Mr A Croney, Mr G Marshall, Mr G Gibson , Mr J Davies, Mr K Temperley, Mrs G Granath, Mrs S Nicholson.

Student Observers: Ms N Dixon, Mr J Kershaw.

Apologies:

Mr D Waugh, Mr D Temperley, Mr J Lyle.

In attendance:

Mr P Polowyj Interim Director of Finance and Resources,

Mrs K Redhead Director of Curriculum and Quality

Mrs S Errington Director of Business Development

Mr M Sowerby, (Clerk to the Corporation).

1. Introduction

1.1. The Chairman welcomed everyone present and introduced Natalie Dixon and Josh Kershaw who were attending the meeting as Student Observers. The Chairman welcomed Natalie and Josh and commented that he hoped that they would find the experience rewarding.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1. There were no declarations of interest.

3. Report from the Principal and Chief Executive Selection Panel

3.1. The Chairman informed Members that the Selection Panel had met yesterday and interviewed three candidates for the position. The Panel were delighted to propose that Ms Karen Redhead be appointed to the post. The Members present, who were allowed to vote, unanimously agreed the proposed appointment.

3.2. The Chairman thanked the Members for their involvement in the Selection Panel and welcomed Ms Redhead as the new Principal and Chief Executive.

4. Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Corporation held on Tuesday 17th December 2013.

Matters arising:

4.1. Item 1.5. Candidate selection process. The Chairman informed Members that the shortlisting exercise did not take place. Three applications for the post had been received and all three applicants were interviewed.

4.2. Item 8.3. Langley Park update. The Chairman informed Members that the Principal will be providing a further update in his report later in the meeting.

Agreed:

4.3. **THAT the Board receive the minutes as a true record.**

5. Chairman's verbal report

5.1. The Chairman advised Members that his report consisted of two items, student Board membership and the next Board lunch.

5.2. The Chairman informed Members that he and the Clerk had interviewed four students, who had expressed an interest in finding out more about Board membership. Two of the students are attending the meeting tonight and unfortunately the third student was unable to attend due to a family illness.

5.3. Following a question regarding increasing the number of Student Members back to two, the Chairman informed Members that before this is considered a debriefing session with the students will be arranged following this meeting.

5.4. The Chairman informed Members that before he retires the Principal is to hold a lunch for Members on Tuesday 25th February 2014.

Agreed:

5.5. **THAT the Board receive the Chairman's report.**

6. Principal's report

6.1. The Principal presented his report which included the following:

- 2013/14 College and Partners Contract Values and recruitment performance to 14/01/2014
- Langley Park update

6.2. College and Partnership Contract values 2013/14

6.2.1. The Principal informed Members that due to the Christmas holidays there was not a lot of change in the figures reported at the December meeting. However

performance in January has been good and the Principal predicted that the position for February and March should show a significant increase.

6.2.2. Following a question the Principal confirmed that the £4m additional funding from the SFA was held in the bank, but the money had to be earned or it would be taken back. The Principal stated that he was confident that the increased funding would be spent.

Agreed:

6.2.3. THAT the Board note the current situation.

6.3. Langley Park update

6.3.1. The Principal informed Members that the new prospective purchaser was now asking for a new condition to be part of the sale agreement. The Principal advised Members that the new condition, a change of use to a mini market, would not be allowed by the County Council. In order to look for a way forward the Principal had today met with the Ward Councillor and an officer from the County Council.

6.3.2. The County Council have now stated that the existing covenant could be waived if we were prepared to pay £30k. Members were informed that if the existing covenant was removed, outline planning permission to build houses on the site, could be applied for. This would then make the site more attractive to prospective purchasers and increase the value of the site.

6.3.3. Following questions it was confirmed that outline planning permission would last for three years, the housing market is improving and local estate agents are being consulted regarding the type and cost implications of a development proposal. The Principal also confirmed that the site had been on the market for approximately eight years.

Agreed:

6.3.4. THAT the Board note the current situation.

6.4. The Principal informed Members that this was his last Board meeting and thanked Members for the support that he had received over the years. He was leaving the College in a much better position than when he took over the role, which was very pleasing. Without the support of the Board and in particular the Chairman he would not have been able to achieve half of what he has. He has enjoyed a good relationship with the Chairman and the Clerk and has had the support of an excellent Senior Management Team. The success of the College has not been down to one person but to a very successful and unselfish team.

6.5. The Principal ended by saying that this was the culmination of his life's work and although he was leaving with a tinge of sadness he knew the College will go onto great things.

6.6. The Chairman, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Principal for his dedication and commitment to the College over the years.

7. Finance and Resources Reports

7.1. Finance Report for the period to 31 December 2013

7.1.1. The Interim Director of Finances and Resources presented the report and highlighted several aspects. Members were informed that the accounts reflect the revision to the budget due to the increase in the SFA contract of £4.4m. The full year surplus is estimated at £715,000. Members were assured that the College will achieve the income targets as action plans have been put in place. Staff costs to December were slightly behind profile but there will be an increase in the number of assessors employed by the College from January onwards.

7.1.2. Following a question from the Chairman the Interim Director of Finances and Resources and the Principal explained the current situation at the SFA. This included the data software issues, reorganisation, the merging of the North East and North West regions and Gillian Miller leaving the SFA. The SFA are due to unveil their new structure next week. Members were also advised that the College is unable to progress approximately 100 learner places until a Parliamentary announcement is made.

7.1.3. The Interim Director of Finances and Resources then provided Members with details of Cash Flow and Key Performance Indicators. Members were advised that based on current performance, the three financial health ratios used by the SFA would result in the College being assessed as “Good” but if there were a slight improvement in any of the ratios over the remainder of the year the College could receive an “Outstanding” assessment.

7.1.4. Following a question from the Chairman the Interim Director of Finances and Resources confirmed that the College mortgage is £1.8m and early redemption of the mortgage could be considered in the future but not at present.

7.1.5. Finally the Interim Director of Finances and Resources informed Members that following the takeover of RSM Tenon by Baker Tilly, a decision about re-tendering one or both of the audit services will have to be decided at the Audit Committee in March.

Agreed:

7.1.6. THAT the Board note the report.

7.2. Risk Register

7.2.1 The Interim Director of Finances and Resources presented the report and outlined the current position with the Funding Council software, the detailed in-year review which was carried out in January and items to be considered in 2014/15 budget setting process.

7.2.2. A Member commented that in her opinion the report format was now excellent.

Agreed:

7.2.3. THAT the Board note the report.

7.3. Health and Safety Policy Review

7.3.1. The Interim Director of Finances and Resources presented the report and explained the review process. Members were informed that following the annual review one item, learners with medication needs had been added to the Health and Safety policy. Members were further informed that the policy mirrors the guidance from the AoC.

7.3.2. Following a question from the Chairman regarding Board representation on the Health and Safety Committee, Mr Marshall agreed to serve on the Committee.

Agreed:

7.3.3. THAT the Board note the report.

The Principal informed the Board that this would be the last meeting for Mr Polowyj. The Principal expressed his thanks to Mr Polowyj for doing a brilliant job for the College. The Chairman congratulated Mr Polowyj on the quality of his work and reports and on behalf of the Board thanked him and wished him well for the future.

8. Curriculum and Quality Reports

8.1. Learner Destinations Report 2012-13

8.1.1. The Director of Curriculum and Quality informed Members that there are three measures used to capture the destination of learners information. The internal data collection method used by the College is comprehensive and timely and enables like for like comparison over a number of years. The two external collection measures are from FE Choices and the Department for Education. Information from all three data collection measures was contained within the report.

8.1.2. The Director of Curriculum and Quality then highlighted the findings of each measure:

- The findings from the internal data collection measure showed that the number of learners returning to College had consistently increased over the last three years:
- The findings from the FE Choices data had been affected by the large number of learners who had opted out of the survey but still showed that 71% of Derwentside learners continued in learning or improved their job prospects. This was considered reasonable given the relatively high unemployment and lower skills levels in the North East.
- The Director of Curriculum and Quality finally highlighted a number of very positive statistics from the Department of Education destination measure which compared learners from Derwentside College with other colleges in the region. Members were informed that the findings are to be used in internal and external publicity for the College.

8.1.3. The Chairman conveyed his thanks to everyone involved in achieving these very positive results.

Agreed:

8.1.4. THAT the Board note the report.

8.2. Safeguarding Report and Policy Review 2012-13

8.2.1 The Director of Curriculum and Quality outlined the legislative background to the report and informed Members that the role of the Board is to ensure that statutory duties are fulfilled by ensuring that the College has appropriate and effective policies and procedures in place.

8.2.2. The Director of Curriculum and Quality then outlined how the College had discharged its duties in relation to safeguarding and the safeguarding disclosures reported during 2012-13. Members were also advised that following a recent Safeguarding audit no recommendations had been made.

8.2.3. Following a questions from the Chairman the Director of Curriculum and Quality provided further details of the Safeguarding Officers, Learner Mentors, anti-social behaviour monitoring and bullying. The Chairman asked the Student Observers about their knowledge and experience of safeguarding and bullying within the College.

8.2.4. A Member requested that figures from the previous year are included in future reports so that comparisons can be made. Another Member commented that this is an essential report as it shows that safeguarding is working in the College.

8.2.5. The Director of Curriculum and Quality then informed Members that guidance from Ofsted confirms that DBS, formerly CRB checks are not required for Governors.

8.2.6. The Director of Curriculum and Quality then outlined the changes made to the policy and procedure and explained how the information is disseminated throughout the College.

Agreed:

8.2.7. THAT the Board note the report and approve the revised Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy and procedure.

8.3. Staff Development Report

8.3.1 The Director of Curriculum and Quality presented the report and outlined the four themes under which staff development is recorded and the staff development strategic targets. The key findings of the report and the planned action were then explained.

8.3.2. Following a question the Director of Curriculum and Quality provided further details of the College's virtual learning environment.

Agreed:

8.3.3. THAT the Board note the report.

9. *Board Matters*

9.1. *Performance Report*

9.1.1. The Clerk informed Members that the report consisted of two sections. The first section contained the agreed Board Member performance targets and the second section attempted to show how the Board had complied with the legal responsibilities as set out in the Articles of Government.

9.1.2. The Clerk highlighted the performance indicators that had improved and those which had not been achieved.

9.2. *Members Register of Interests*

9.2.1. The Clerk informed Members that on an annual basis Members must disclose any interests that they, or their close families may have, which could be perceived as a conflict of interest. A copy of the Register of Interest questionnaire and Code of Conduct declaration had been distributed to Members prior to the meeting.

9.2.2. Members were asked to complete and return the Register of Interest questionnaire and Code of Conduct declaration to the Clerk as soon as possible.

9.3. *Training and Effectiveness*

9.3.1. The Clerk informed Members that the AoC are to hold a Governor Induction evening at New College on the 20th March. Members interested in the event were asked to contact the Clerk who would provide further details.

10. *Next meeting Agenda*

10.1. Items for the next meeting include:

- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Draft Minutes of the Audit Committee to be held on the 10th March 2014
- Chairs verbal report
- Principal's report
- Finance report.
- Equality and Diversity Report
- Quality Improvement Plan update
- Annual Meeting Schedule
- Confidential Items Review

11. *Any other business*

11.1. The Chairman suggested that a room within the College, perhaps the Committee Room could be named after the Principal and asked Members to contact

the Clerk or himself with any views comments or thoughts they may have regarding the suggestion.

11.2. The Chairman, on behalf of the Board, wished the Principal and the Interim Director of Finances and Resources every success, health and happiness for the future.

12. *Date of next meeting*

12.1. The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 25th March 2014 at 5.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.