



Board of the Corporation

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Corporation

held in the Albert Croney Suite on Tuesday 7th October at 5.30pm.

Present:

Mr T Edwards (Chairman)

Mrs K Redhead, Mr G Marshall, Mr J Davies, Mrs G Granath, Mr D Temperley, Mr G Gibson, Ms N Dixon, Mrs C Richards and Ms A Form (Observer).

Apologies:

Mrs S Nicholson.

In attendance:

Mr C Todd Director of Finance and Resources,
Mr C Todd Director of Curriculum,
Mrs S Errington Director of Business Development,
Mr M Sowerby (Clerk to the Corporation).

1. Introduction

1.1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular Ms Form who was attending the meeting as an Observer.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1. There were no declarations of interest relating to any of the agenda items.

3. Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Corporation held on Tuesday 22nd July 2014

Matters arising:

3.1. In relation to item 5.9, the Evening Chronicle article on the Labour Party's future devolution plans. The Principal informed Members that she had been unable to locate the article but since the Scottish Referendum, devolvement of power to the regions was much more relevant. Mr Davies was asked to inform the Clerk if he finds out any more about the subject.

3.2. In relation to item 6.5.3, the Beacon Award. No word had been received from the AoC regarding the application from the College. It was therefore highly unlikely that the College application was under consideration.

Agreed:

3.3. THAT the Board receive the minutes as a true record.

4. *Draft Minutes of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on Monday 7th July 2014*

4.1. The Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that although the minutes had not been approved by the Audit Committee they were an accurate representation of the meeting. The Clerk distributed copies of the Baker Tilly Benchmarking Report referred to in the minutes.

4.2. In relation to item 8.3 the Chairman asked for clarification regarding the triviality amount. The Director of Finance stated that in his experience this amount is normally referred to as the materiality amount. Members were then given further explanation regarding the materiality amount.

Agreed:

4.3. THAT the Board note the minutes.

5. *Chairman's verbal report*

5.1. The Chairman informed Members that his report consisted of the following items:

- Meetings with the Principal.
- Members Personal Review.
- Webinars.
- Meetings with the AoC.
- The title of Governor.
- The Awards Event.

5.1.1. Meetings with the Principal.

5.1.2. Members were informed that several meetings between the Chairman and the Principal had taken place. A meeting took place to discuss difficulties with the colour and shading of the new College logo. In order to progress the matter the Chairman used his delegated authority to approve the final colour/ shading design.

5.1.3. A further meeting took place to discuss a very serious Quality Management staffing issue. Members were informed that this matter will feature in the Principals report later in the meeting.

5.1.4. The Chairman also met with the Principal and conducted an end of probationary period review. Members were informed that a very positive discussion took place following which the Chairman had proposed the permanent appointment of the Principal. All of the Members confirmed the permanent appointment of the Principal.

5.2. Members Personal Review.

5.2.1. The Chairman thanked everyone for taking part in the review process and informed Members that he would summaries some of the outcomes in this report. There had been some very positive responses to the questions. Most Members had agreed about the issues that had given them a lot of satisfaction. These included the success of the College and students and how difficult situations had been managed. The value of the informal lunches and presentations had also been raised.

5.2.2. Members had commented about the lack of student representation, difficulties recruiting new Members and especially recruiting from stakeholders. Succession planning was discussed and the Chairman confirmed that positive action was going to have to commence soon.

5.2.3. Members were informed that a formal report on the Members Personal Review will be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

5.3. Webinars.

5.3.1. Two AoC webinars had now taken place and although the concept had great potential both webinars had major quality issues. The webinars will need to improve considerably if they are to be effective.

5.4. Meetings with the AoC.

5.4.1. The Chairman informed Members that he and the Principal and Clerk are to meet with the AoC Director of Governance and the AoC Regional Director on the morning of the 15th October. One of the items to be discussed will be the webinars. Details of the meeting will be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

5.4.2. An AoC regional meeting is to take place on the afternoon of the 15th October. The meeting, a workshop, is to look at the values and principles of the Governance Code. Details of the meeting will be reported to the next meeting of the Board. Members were asked to contact the Clerk if they were interested in attending.

5.5. The title of Governor.

5.5.1. The Chairman informed Members that in his opinion the title of Governor gave people the wrong perception of the role. The Clerk had been asked to clarify the legal position with the AoC and it would appear that there is no legal requirement to retain the title.

5.5.2. The Chairman stated that he would like a debate on the subject of what Members would like to be called. Some suggestions were made during the Personal reviews these included, Trustee and Non- Executive Director. The Chairman asked Members to reflect on the issue and the matter will be discussed at the next meeting of the Board.

5.6. The Awards Event.

5.6.1. The Chairman informed Members that Awards Event is again to take place at the College on the 27th November 2014. The Chairman stated that in the past Members had been very generous in their support of the event and he hoped that this would continue. Members were asked to donate a minimum of £10 per person toward the Student of the Year award.

Agreed:

5.7. THAT the Board receive the Chairman's report.

6. *Principal's report*

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

- 2013/14 Performance against funding targets
- 2014/15 Recruitment to date
- Strategy and re-branding
- Construction proposal
- External visitors
- Ofsted meeting
- Confidential update – sub-contractor
- Sale of Langley Park
- Confidential update – staffing issue
- Public value statement

6.2 2013/14 Performance against funding targets – Confidential Item

6.3. 2014/15 Recruitment to date

6.3.1. The Principal informed Members that the recruitment profile is very similar to last year across all ages although 16-18 year olds is slightly lower. It is hoped that this shortfall will be made up during the year starting with the launch of new College Traineeships in October. Following a question from the Chairman, the Principal and Director of Business provided further detail regarding the traineeships. Members were also informed that unlike some colleges Derwentside College has been very successful because they work with good employers. Ms Form confirmed the good work that the College does.

Agreed:

6.3.2. THAT the Board note the current situation

6.4. Strategy and rebranding

6.4.1. The Principal updated Members on the progress made since the last meeting. This included:

- Finalising the Development Plan, copies were available for Members:

- A presentation of the strategic values was made to all staff and the new logo was unveiled in August. Further staff meetings are being planned:
- The design and installation of two new photograph boards.
- Plans to showcase the Mission, Vision and Core Values throughout the campus are currently being rolled out.

6.4.2. Following a question from the Chairman, the Staff Member confirmed that the staff were much more aware and positive of the changes and future meetings would be very good.

Agreed:

6.4.3. THAT the Board note the current situation.

6.5. Other Matters

6.5.1. Construction Proposal – Confidential Item.

6.5.2. External Visitors. The Principal informed Members that Pat Glass the MP for North West Durham visited the College and discussed with a group of young people, their experiences of Impartial Advice and Guidance (IAG). Ms Glass is a member of the Education Select Committee who is currently carrying out an investigation into IAG.

The Principal also informed Members that an Assistant Director within the Vocational Education Directorate at the Department of Business Innovation and Science (BIS) has asked to visit the College. This is part of a BIS initiative to support senior civil servants to increase their awareness of what colleges do and the challenges they face.

Members were finally informed that Mr Andrew Hodgson, Chief Executive of SMD and Vice Chair of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had agreed to be the guest of honour at the College Awards Event. The Principal provided Members with a summary of Mr Hodgson’s background and achievements.

6.5.3. Ofsted meeting. The Principal provided Members with the details of a meeting she had recently attended with the Regional Ofsted Team. The meeting was part of an on-going consultation exercise to look at how Ofsted can best work with colleges graded as “Good”. Members were advised that colleges in this group are the ones most at risk of deteriorating between Ofsted inspections.

6.5.4. Sub-contractor issue update –Confidential Item.

6.5.5. Sale of Langley Park update – Confidential Item.

6.5.6. Staffing issue. The Principal provided Members with details of a staffing issue which had arisen. Although the matter did not require Board knowledge or approval, the Principal wanted to make Members aware of the situation. The recruitment process to replace the member of staff has begun.

6.5.7. Public Value Statement. The Principal explained the background of the Public Value Statement and advised Members that she and the Clerk had worked on the

draft statement presented. Members made several positive comments including, making a reference to employment, putting the charity statement to the end of the document and the inclusion of equality and equity. All of the Members comments will be included in the final statement.

Agreed:

6.5.8. THAT the Board note the contents of the report and approve the amended Public Value Statement.

7. *Finance and Resources Reports*

7.1. Finance Report. – Confidential Report

7.2. Construction Development Business Case – Confidential Report

7.3. Health and Safety Annual Report

7.3.1. The Director of Finance and Resources presented the report and provided further details on the reported College and Partner incidents. Members were advised that of the 29 College incidents, 24 related to learners. This was an increase on the previous year. None of the incidents were Riddor reportable. Partner incidents totalled 41, none of which were Riddor reportable. This was also an increase on the previous year.

7.3.2. Members were given full details relating to the reports of incidents of violence relating to one of the College partners. One of the two learners involved in the incidents is no longer at the facility and increased monitoring and additional controls have been introduced to mitigate against future occurrences.

7.3.3. Following a question the Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that future reports will specify where volume change from the previous year has taken place in each incident category. Following a question from the Chairman the Principal provided further detail on the training that the staff have received. Members were also informed that the facility is linked with Villa Real School.

7.3.4. The Director of Finance and Resources finally highlighted the Risk Assessment section of the report and informed Members that there were still some issues in the Engineering Department. An audit of this area is to take place later this month and the outcome will be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

Agreed:

7.3.5. THAT the Board note the content of the report.

8. *Curriculum and Quality Reports*

8.1 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Report 2013/14 – Confidential Item

8.2 Learner Feedback Report

8.2.1. The Principal informed Members that she had also written this report and would be presenting it to the Board. The Principal then explained the background to the Learner Satisfaction Survey.

8.2.2. Members were informed that the SFA survey had received 1,247 responses from learners, including 580 from apprentices. The overall score had declined from 9.1/10 last year to 8.8/10 this year. The most and least positive responses were then highlighted.

8.2.3. The Principal outlined the action to be taken as a result of the survey and advised Members that due to the limitations of just using an external survey, in addition to the SFA survey, the College will be re-instating its own internal Learner Survey in 2014/15.

Agreed:

8.2.4. THAT the Board note the report and the planned actions.

8.3 Safeguarding Report

8.3.1. The Director of Curriculum explained the background to the report and outlined how the College had discharged it's duties in relation to safeguarding during 2013/14.

8.3.2. Members were informed that during 2013/14, 8 safeguarding disclosures had been reported and on each occasion the College policy and procedure had been complied with. Following a question from the Chairman the Director of Curriculum confirmed that there were no common links between any of the disclosures and no direct correlation with the length of time that the individuals had been at the College.

8.3.3. Following further questions the Director of Curriculum and the Principal explained that students with learning difficulties do not have individual mentors but they are aware that they need to speak to members of staff if they have any problems. The online reporting facility is to be promoted more during this year as it had not been used during 2013/14.

8.3.4. The Director of Curriculum informed Members that the policy and procedure document was in a new format and all of the contact details had been updated. The Chairman thanked the Director of Curriculum for a very comprehensive report but expressed concern about the flow chart included with the procedure. The Chairman requested that the flow chart be suitably amended and reported back to the Board. It was agreed however that the policy and procedure could be approved without the inclusion of the flow chart.

Agreed:

8.3.5. THAT the Board receive the report and approve the amended Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

9. *Director of Business Development Reports*

9.1. Partnership report 2013/2014 – Confidential Report

10. Board Matters

10.1 Annual Review of Governance Documents

10.1.1. The Clerk informed Members that he had reviewed the following documents:

- The Instrument and Articles of Government
- The Standing Orders
- The Members Code of Conduct
- The Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee, Search Committee and the Remuneration Committee

10.1.2. The Clerk informed Members that no changes are necessary to any of the documents at this time. However the Code of Governance is currently being reviewed by the AoC and once the review is complete changes may be necessary.

10.2. Training and Effectiveness

10.2.1. The Clerk reminded Members that there is an AoC meeting on the 15th October at New College. To date the Chair, Vice Chair, Mr Temperley, the Principal and Clerk are attending. The aim of the meeting is to develop the values and principles of the new Code of Governance.

10.2.2. The Clerk informed Members that the next webinar, entitled Equality and Good Practice for Governors, is scheduled to take place this month but as yet no date has been released.

10.2.3. The Clerk circulated registration details for the AoC Governance briefing papers. Members were encouraged to register to receive these regular briefings.

10.2.4. The Clerk reminded Members of the Principals proposal to set up a Quality Forum which would meet 2-3 times per year. Any Member interested in joining the group was asked to contact the Principal or Clerk after the meeting.

10.2.5. Finally the Clerk asked that Members provide him or the Director of Business Development with their contribution to the Student of the Year award as soon as possible.

11. Next meeting Agenda

11.1. Items for the next meeting include:

- Declarations of Interest
- Minutes of the previous meeting

- Approved Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 7 July 2014 and draft minutes of the Audit Committee held on 10 November 2014
- Chairs verbal report
- Principal's report
- Finance report.
- Annual Report and Accounts to 31 July
- Audit Findings Report
- Annual Internal Audit report
- Audit Committee letter to the Principal and Board
- Outcomes for Learners Report (2013 -2014)
- SAR and Quality Improvement Plan
- Equality and Diversity Report (2013 – 2014)

11. *Any other business*

12. *Date of next meeting*

12.1. The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 16th December 2014 at 5.30pm.

12.2. The meeting closed at 8.15pm