



**Board of the Corporation**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Corporation**

held in the Albert Croney Suite on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March at 5.30pm.

***Present:***

Mr T Edwards (Chairman)  
Mrs K Redhead, Mr G Marshall, Mrs S Nicholson, Mr D Temperley, Mr G Gibson,  
Mrs C Richards and Ms A Form.

***Apologies:***

Mrs G Granath, Mr M Short, Mr J Davies.

***In attendance:***

Mr C Todd Director of Finance and Resources,  
Mr N Lister Vice Principal 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 to the meeting and in particular Mr Lister who was attending the meeting for the first time. Members then introduced themselves to Mr Lister.

***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 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015***

***Matters arising:***

3.1. In relation to item 3.2, the safeguarding flowchart. The Principal informed Members that a draft flowchart had been developed but had not been finalised. The flowchart will be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

3.2. In relation to item 3.5, the recruitment of a Student Member. The Clerk and the Director of Business Development provided Members with an update. Three possible candidates have been identified, two of which appear to be very enthusiastic. The Clerk and the Chairman will arrange to meet the candidates informally after the Easter break. Following a question the Chairman confirmed that

the amended Instrument and Articles enable the Board to appoint up to a maximum of two Student Members.

3.3. In relation to item 5.2.2, LEP youth apprenticeship target. The Principal explained that the LEP have no funding at present but have set a strategic target to double the number of youth apprenticeships. The College needs to align its targets with those of the LEP.

3.4. In relation to item 6.1.3, capital reserves. The Chairman asked the Director of Finance and Resources if he could identify how much of the current capital reserves were from the Shepherd settlement. The Chairman provided Members with the background to the settlement. The Director of Finance and Resources will examine the reserves and report back to the next meeting.

3.5. In relation to item 6.1.5, the Ministerial visit. The Principal advised Members that no further word about a visit has been received. A visit by Civil Servants, to look at traineeships, had been arranged but they subsequently cancelled the visit.

3.6. In relation to item 7.1.3, partner progress update. The Clerk informed Members of an amendment to the wording. Members agreed the revised wording.

**Agreed:**

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

**4. *Draft Minutes of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015***

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.

4.2. The Chair of the Audit Committee provided details of the new risk in the Risk Register. The Principal informed Members that the government have changed their views on employer funding of apprenticeships and it is likely that funding will now be through an E voucher scheme. Under the scheme, employers registered with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), will receive a voucher which they can then pass onto a training provider of their choice. The training provider would then reclaim the value of the voucher from the SFA. Following a question, the Principal advised Members that the new Minister, Nick Boles, appeared to have listened to the overwhelming feedback against the original proposal.

4.3. The Chair of the Audit Committee highlighted the Skills Funding Agency Assurance Review and informed Members that the issues identified in the review had been agreed by management and most of the actions required have been implemented. The Principal explained how the College had been selected for the review and requested that item 5.4 of the draft minutes is amended to read "Baker Tilly had a different approach and their accompanying narrative was less detailed".

## **Agreed:**

### **4.4. THAT the Board note the draft minutes.**

## **5. Chairman's verbal report**

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

- The AoC Governance Summit.
- Webinars.

5.2. The AoC Governance Summit

5.2.1. A report by the Chairman about his attendance at the Summit had been previously distributed to Members. The Chairman outlined several aspects of the report including the following:

- Funding issues faced by Colleges. In comparison to many colleges, Derwentside College is working well within the current funding restrictions.
- Common themes throughout the Summit included, austerity measures, Maths and English qualifications, devolution of funding to the regions ie. Manchester Group.
- Sustainable Governance. The Chairman informed Members other colleges have changed the name from Governor to Member. Some colleges had reported improved Member recruitment following the name change.
- Key issues from an Ofsted perspective. The Chairman advised Members that they needed to consider and retain the check list of Ofsted issues contained within the report.
- Governance Code. There appeared to be a lot of resistance to the amount of detail contained within the draft Code. Ofsted confirmed that the Code would not form part of the inspection process.

5.2.2. The Chairman informed Members that although there had been some aspects of the Summit which he had not been impressed with, overall it had been a good experience and had provided positive networking opportunities. The Chairman informed Members that he had met the Chair of Selby College, a similar size college to Derwentside and they had shared a number of similar views. Following the Summit the Chairman had received copies of member appraisal documents used by Selby College. Hopefully the relationship and the sharing of information can be developed further.

5.3. **Webinars.**

5.3.1. The Chairman informed Members that he thought there had been some improvement in the last webinar but there was still a lack of visuals and the significance of the information had not been stressed. The webinar seemed to miss the point. The Clerk advised Members that the second webinar, being shown tonight, may have greater relevance to Members. The webinar should be available from the AoC archive, for Members to view, next week.

***Agreed:***

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

**6. *Principal's report – Confidential report***

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

- 2014/15 Performance against funding targets
- Funding cuts 2015/16
- Ofsted visit
- Quality Task Group

**6.2 2014/15 Performance against funding targets – Confidential Item**

**6.3. Funding Cuts 2015/16**

6.3.1. The Principal provided Members with the background to the cuts and the anticipated cut in allocation that the College will receive. Members were informed that this College is better off than many colleges, apprenticeships are protected from the cuts, financially we are strong, other colleges are not and if it becomes necessary we can consider reducing some of the less important partner provision. The Chairman informed Members that there were 45 to 50 colleges known to have inadequate financial health, as reported at the recent AoC Governance Conference.

6.3.2. The Principal informed Members that the North East Colleges and the AoC are to issue press releases, about the cuts, tomorrow and the UCU have launched a petition. It is unlikely that these actions will have any effect on the 2015/16 allocations.

6.3.3. The Principal informed Members that as well as the SFA allocation cut, the EFA allocation is to be cut. With pension and national insurance increases the College will have £1m less in 2015/16 which will equate to a £3-400k reduction on the bottom line.

6.3.4. Following comments the Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that the College is still in a strong financial position and a lot of really good work on the budget has been carried out. Details will be presented at the Strategic Review. The Principal informed Members that 2016/17 will be just as tough financially and the SMT are looking at measures now which may have to be put in place. The Chairman commented that it seems unlikely that there will be much change regardless of the outcome of the forthcoming General Election.

***Agreed:***

**6.3.5. THAT the Board note the current situation**

**6.4. Ofsted visit**

6.4.1. The Principal explained the background to the visit which had taken place on the 6<sup>th</sup> March. The visit had been very positive and the Ofsted inspectors had recognised a number of our strengths including flexibility and responsiveness and good practise in embedding employability into vocational areas. Members were informed that Ofsted intend to hold a regional conference later in the year, to showcase the best practise they have identified.

***Agreed:***

**6.4.2. THAT the Board note the report**

**6.5. Quality Task Group**

6.5.1. The Principal provided Members with details of the first meeting of the Quality Task Group which took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February. Two Members of the Group and the Principal also attended an AoC conference entitled “Teaching Learning and Assessment – Developing the role of Governors in monitoring quality”.

6.5.2. The Group is to explore the use of technology for sharing files and holding virtual meetings because of availability limitations. It is planned that in future all quality related Board papers will be shared with the Group before being presented to the Board. The Chairman requested that the Group consider the impact on Members, teachers and students if Members are to be involved in monitoring lessons. The Principal advised members that the Group are to consider how best monitoring by Members can be achieved.

***Agreed:***

**6.5.3. THAT the Board note the report**

6.6. Following a question by a Member regarding the Construction Facility progress, the Director of Finance and Resources informed Members that the architects have now firmed up design details, the Construction Facility work is out to tender, work should take place in June, July and August and be completed for September. Interviews for lecturers has taken place today, initial provision will depend on lecturer recruitment but the Director of Business Development’s team are pushing hard with student recruitment.

6.7 The Director of Business Development informed Members that the College is working well with Job Centre Plus in Consett and Stanley and they are very keen and supportive of the venture. A six week basic building awareness programme will commence on the 27<sup>th</sup> April. The College have also been working with schools and have had excellent feedback from Consett Academy where the College have been working with Year 10 students. Ms Nicholson reported that the Academy had promoted the College really well and had provided excellent feedback. Members congratulated staff for the work done.

**7. *Finance and Resources Reports***

**7.1. Finance Report. – Confidential Report**

## **7.2. Health and Safety Half Yearly Report**

7.2.1. The Director of Finance and Resources presented the report and provided Members with an update to the end of December 2014. Members were provided with the number and type of College and partner incidents over the period.

7.2.2. Following a question from the Chairman the Director of Finance and Resources outlined the partner reporting process and confirmed that in a recent audit no reporting issues were identified.

### ***Agreed:***

**7.2.3. THAT the Board note the content of the report.**

## **7.3. Health and Safety Policy Report**

7.3.1. The Director of Finance and Resources presented the report and informed Member that there had been no changes made to the policy, the policy had just been updated into the new policy format.

### ***Agreed:***

**7.3.2. THAT the Board note the report.**

## **8. Curriculum and Quality Reports**

### **8.1 Self-Assessment Report (SAR)**

8.1.1 The Principal informed Members that there was no longer a requirement to submit a SAR to external organisations, but colleges were still expected to undertake a self-assessment. There is no prescribed format for the SAR but the report has been structured around the current Ofsted framework. The Principal advised Members that due to the vacant post in the SMT there had been a delay in drafting the SAR and reporting it to the Board. However there has been no delay in progressing the actions identified in the report.

8.1.2. The Principal then outlined the areas where grades had improved or declined. The Chairman made a number of comments about the SAR including:

- The addition of a foot note on page 10 to explain that learners do a cluster of qualifications across a number of SSA areas:
- The title Governor should be changed to Member:
- The addition of the following wording “ at an awards ceremony celebrating the success of our students” in item 6.3 (page 19):
- Also in item 6.3 reference should be made to the Board informal lunches and presentations:
- The addition of the following wording “policies being rigorously imposed on our partners” in item 6.7 (page 20):
- The addition of the word “speedy” to the 9th bullet point on page 12.

### ***Agreed:***

**8.1.3. THAT the Board note the content of the report.**

## **8.2 Staff Survey**

8.2.1. The Principal provided Members with the background to the report and highlighted each of the actions identified in the 2013/14 staff survey report. Members were then advised of the progress made in each of the action areas.

8.2.2. The Staff Member (Teaching) confirmed that communications had improved, information was being received on a regular basis and staff now felt more involved.

8.2.3. Following questions the Chairman advised Members that the role of the Board was to ensure that the actions identified were implemented. The Principal informed Members that previously the survey response rate had been less than 70%, the target response rate for this year is 70% but we could do a lot better and staff will be encouraged to participate.

### ***Agreed:***

**8.2.4. THAT the Board note the report and progress made since the last report.**

## **8.3 Outcomes for Learners Report**

8.3.1. The Principal informed Members that previously Outcomes for Learners was reported annually to the Board. This report however is the first of several interim reports and covers the first term. The Principal then outlined the key findings in relation to Classroom Learning Provision and explained the difference between overall success and timely success. Members were informed that there had been a delay in getting the information relating to GCSE Maths and English but the information should be available for the next report.

8.3.2. The Principal then outlined the Employer Responsive Provision – Apprenticeships. Members were advised that the predicted success rates for one of the partners appeared to be a lot higher than the others. The performance of this partner is being closely monitored and the predictions may need some downward moderation. The overall predicted timely success rate had significantly improved on the previous year and was now higher than the national average.

8.3.3. Following questions the Principal informed Members that in relation to Maths and English a new Curriculum Manager had been appointed in January and a major review is being carried out. Functional Skills include a Maths and English provision. The College must provide GCSE Maths and English for learners who have just missed qualifying. There is a lot of focus on Maths and English at present and provision at a higher level (A level) for career progression is to be looked at. The Principal confirmed that the success rate percentiles used in the past are not currently available but when they are accessed, performance monitoring will be improved.

## **Agreed:**

### **8.3.4. THAT the Board note the contents of the report**

## **9. Board Matters**

### **9.1. Meeting Schedule**

9.1.1. The Clerk asked Members to consider the meeting schedule for 2015/16 which had been distributed with the Board papers. Following a discussion it was agreed that the January 2016 meeting should be moved to the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016 meeting should be moved to the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016. It was also agreed that the Strategic Review would take place on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

9.1.2. The Clerk will distribute a revised meeting schedule to all Members.

### **9.2. Training and Effectiveness**

9.2.1. The Clerk reminded Members that the second Labour Market Intelligence webinar was taking place at the same time as the Board meeting. The webinar should be available to Members, from the AoC archive, from next week.

9.2.2. The Clerk informed Members of an AoC meeting entitled “What is Outstanding Governance” on the 27<sup>th</sup> April at New College. To date the Chair, the Principal and Clerk are attending but there was a spare place should any other Member wish to attend. Ms Form volunteered to attend.

9.2.3. The Clerk circulated a list of future AoC regional events and asked Members to let him know if they were interested in attending any of the events.

9.2.4. Finally the Clerk informed Members that the Principal had discussed with Gillian Miller, AoC Northern Regional Director the possibility of giving a talk to Members. Ms Miller had agreed and the Clerk proposed that the talk could take place prior to the next Board informal lunch. Following a discussion it was agreed that the talk and the lunch would, subject to Ms Miller’s availability, take place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

## **10. Next meeting Agenda**

10.1. Items for the next meeting include:

- Declarations of Interest
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Appointment of Chairman
- Chairman’s verbal report
- Principals report, including Safeguarding Flowchart
- Finance report and Management Accounts
- Business Continuity Plan review



- Teaching, Learning and Assessment report (Spring Term)
- Outcomes for Learners report (Spring Term)
- Destinations report
- Quality Improvement Plan (termly update)
- Partnership report (Spring Term)

**11. Any other business**

11.1. There were no items of other business.

**12. Date of next meeting**

12.1. The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 5.30pm.

At this point Officers and Staff Members left the meeting.

**13. Report from the Remuneration Task Group – Confidential Item**

The meeting closed at 8.10pm