



Board of the Corporation

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Corporation

held in the Albert Croney Suite on Tuesday 12th May at 5.30pm.

Present:

Mr T Edwards (Chairman), Ms K Redhead, Mr G Marshall, Mr J Davies, Mr G Gibson, Mrs G Granath, Mr M Short, Mrs S Nicholson, Ms A Form.

Apologies:

Mr D Temperley, Mrs C Richards.

In attendance:

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

1. Introduction

1.1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1. There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Corporation held on Tuesday 24th March 2015

Matters arising:

3.1. Item 5.2.2. Selby College. The Chairman informed Members that he had sent an email to the Chairman of Selby College but he has not as yet received a response.

3.2. Item 6.4.1. Ofsted Regional Conference. Following a question from the Chairman the Principal informed Members that there had been no further word about the conference.

3.3. Item 13. The report from the Remuneration Committee. The Chairman informed Members that a copy of the report is held in the Confidential File.

Agreed:

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

4. Chairman's verbal report

The Chairman's report consisted of the following items:

4.1. Student Member Recruitment

4.1.1. The Chairman informed Members that he and the Clerk had met with two students, who had expressed an interest in becoming Student Members of the Board. Following a description of the role of a Board Member by the Chairman, both students felt that the position was not for them and they decided not to proceed any further.

4.1.2. The Chairman advised Members that the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality was looking at the possibility of setting up a Student Union or Student Forum. The Chairman suggested that if a group was formed, then the student leader of the group could become the student representative on the Board.

4.2. Meeting regarding the level of reserves.

4.2.1. The Chairman informed Members that he had met with the Principal and Director of Finance and Resources to look at the level of the reserves and how the reserves had been built up. The Chairman was pleased to advise Members that the reserves have been accrued solely through recent activity and were not inflated by the Shepherd's settlement money. This money had long since been absorbed into approved projects.

4.2.2. The Chairman advised Members that at the meeting he had been made aware of the proposed capital project to develop the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) which features in a later report. Prior to the start of the Board Meeting the Chairman and Vice Chair visited the LRC with the Principal and Director of Finance and Resources.

4.3. AoC Regional Meeting

4.3.1. The Chairman informed Members that he, the Principal and the Clerk attended a regional meeting of the AoC entitled "What is outstanding Governance". The session, which had been presented by Jo Matthews, had been similar to the session the Chairman had attended at the AoC Conference a few weeks earlier. The session had been interesting and the Chairman advised Members that he and the Clerk intend to review the session information to determine if there are any issues which will benefit Members of the Board.

4.4. The presentation by Gillian Miller.

4.4.1. Prior to the last informal lunch, Members received a presentation from Gillian Miller, Regional Director of the AoC. The presentation looked at the possible future of Further Education (FE) and this College. The Chairman informed Members that he had found the presentation very interesting but slightly alarming and had requested that this item be put on the agenda so that Members can fully discuss the presentation information.

4.4.2. The Chairman outlined a number of possible outcomes from the presentation and then reminded members of the background to the policy regarding merger previously adopted by the Board. The Chairman then invited comments from the Members.

4.4.3. The Principal informed Members that the College is working hard to diversify the income streams and achieve a £13 - £14m income. The College is also doing well in relation to employer focus and quality. The College is relatively small but successful. We are not a target for takeover and we have no thoughts of taking over another college. The Senior Management Team has talked about taking over a training provider, in the past, but the benefits in doing so would have to be carefully considered. There are no plans to do this at present.

4.4.4. The Director of Finance and Resources informed Members that the College is in a strong financial position and as long as we continue as we are, we will not get into a takeover situation. Funding cuts over the next few years will make things much tougher. The Director of Business Development and Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality confirmed that as long as the College remained focussed on finance and quality the College will have a positive future.

4.4.5. Members made the following comments:

- We are flexible and can move in whatever direction the government wants:
- Outside pressure for example from Regional Government will probably have an effect on us:
- The Principal informed Members that 16-18 provision and apprenticeships are protected from the cuts and we have received strong support from the Northeast Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) recently:
- It is not necessarily what we are doing but what is happening in the wider world. It has not been unknown for colleges to be incentivised to take over another failing college:
- There is strength in our size and we give a good quality service.

4.4.6. The Chairman thanked everyone for the opportunity to discuss the issues and their contributions.

Agreed:

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

5. *Principal's report*

5.1 The Principal presented her report which included the following:

- 2014/15 Performance against funding targets:
- General Election.

5.2 2014/2015 Performance against targets – Confidential item.

5.2.1. The Principal advised Members that as at the 30th April we are 76% through the academic year. Forecasts are being fine-tuned and targets are being reallocated across partners in line with their performance. The Principal then outlined the position in relation to each funding category.

5.2.2. Following a question from the Chairman, the Principal confirmed that the employment vacancies mentioned in the report related to apprentice employment. Following a comment regarding more people will be looking for training because of the cuts in benefits, the Principal advised Members that although the College has good links with Job Centre Plus, this is a category of funding that the government are cutting.

5.2.3. The Principal informed Members that a petition in relation to the funding cuts now has 350,000 signatures and there is to be a planned lobby at Westminster on the 16th June.

Agreed:

5.2.4. THAT the Board note the College Performance position as at 30th April 2015.

5.3. General Election

5.3.1. The Principal outlined the two key messages that the AoC are intending to focus on when talks commence with the new Government and new Minister.

Agreed:

5.3.2. THAT the Board note the current situation.

6. Finance and Resources Reports

6.1. Finance Report – Confidential item

6.1.1. The Director of Finance and Resources presented the report and advised Members that overall performance is in-line with expectations. Members were informed that apprenticeship targets had been set high at the beginning of the year, but protection had been provided within the budget to manage the risks associated with a potential under delivery. A different approach will be taken in the establishment of the 2015/16 budget. The Director of Finance and Resources then outlined the situation in relation to the other budget categories.

6.1.2. Following a question from the Chairman the Director of Finance and Resources gave further explanation regarding Examination expenditure. On completion of an ongoing analysis of costs a report on this expenditure will be presented to the next Board meeting.

6.1.3. The Director of Finance and Resources then highlighted the cash flow situation. Members were informed that the cash flow balance will be reduced due to

the under delivery on apprenticeship provision. The Principal advised Members that although the College has grown apprenticeship provision this year the allocation was never going to be achievable.

6.1.4. Members were then informed that the financial health grade of the College remained as “Good”. Members were advised that the SFA scoring methodology is to be changed in December but with careful management of the key performance indicators our financial health should remain as “Good”.

6.1.5. The Director of Finance and Resources then provided Members with an update in relation to:

- The Construction Facility development. The contractor should commence work in early June, teaching staff have been appointed, 16 learners have been recruited on a pre-construction 6 week course, recruitment is continuing and there is a possibility that there will be two groups of learners to start in September:
- The new Finance System. Implementation of the new Agreso system is progressing well and the system will go live in September.

Agreed:

6.1.6. THAT the Board note the financial position to the end of period 8.

6.2 Capital Investment Proposal – Learning Resource Centre Refurbishment (LRC)

6.2.1. The Director of Finance and Resources provided Members with the background to the report and an overview of the proposal. The Director of Finance and Resources then provided Members with a breakdown of the costs and outlined the business case for the project. Members were advised that the current LRC provides an uninspiring learning experience and falls short of learner expectations. Members were given details of learner expectations and the many benefits that the new LRC would provide. Current students have been involved in the project and are very supportive of the proposal.

6.2.2. The Director of Finance and Resources then outlined the provisional project implementation plan and Members were advised that the timescale to complete the project by the start of the next academic year is very tight and the completion date may have to change. Progress updates will be provided to the Board.

6.2.3. Members commented very positively about the proposal and the benefits for students. The Chairman suggested that the closing time of the LRC, currently 7.00pm, should be reviewed so that use of the new facility can be maximised.

6.2.4. Following a question the Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that disruption for learners and staff will be kept to a minimum. Members of staff are already being relocated and use of the LRC diminishes from June onwards. Any remaining learners will be accommodated elsewhere.

6.2.5. Members were informed that the computers in the LRC have past their life expectancy and are to be renewed. Most of the furniture is to be re-used in other

parts of the College and any redundant furniture will be offered to anyone who is prepared to take it away.

Agreed:

6.2.6. THAT the Board unanimously approve the proposed refurbishment of the Learning Resource Centre and the release of ring fenced reserves to finance the project.

7. Curriculum and Quality Reports

7.1. Teaching, Learning and Assessment report

7.1.1. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality explained the background to the report and the observation process. Members were advised that at present the grade profile is lower than in previous years. This is because staff considered to be in greater need of support, have been assessed first so that ongoing support could be put in place sooner. As further observations are carried out the profile will improve. The overall grade profile was then outlined.

7.1.2. Members were informed that a lot of staff development has been carried out and were provided with details of further staff development to come.

7.1.3. Following questions the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality advised Members that:

- learners are not asked to provide written feedback about lessons but are consulted during the observation:
- The observation process is the same for lecturers and assessors:
- Due to the shortage of Curriculum Managers support may not have been as good as it should have been. Curriculum Manager recruitment has taken place and the situation should be improved by August.

Agreed:

7.1.4. THAT the Board note the current situation.

7.2. Outcomes for Learners report

7.2.1. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality presented the report and advised Members that the report was an in-year analysis of predicted success rates. Predicted success rates will become more accurate as the academic year progresses.

7.2.2. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality then highlighted the key findings of the report. Members were advised that overall apprenticeship success rates look likely to improve on last year. However, although there will be a considerable improvement in Level 2 apprenticeship success rates there will be a decrease in Level 3 success rates. Members were advised that the decline is entirely due to College apprenticeships as Partners are predicting a significant improvement.

7.2.3. Following questions from the Chairman, the Principal confirmed that she was not happy about the Level 3 situation and an in-depth analysis is taking place to find out why there has been a decline.

7.2.4. The Chairman stressed the importance of success rates and requested that an update on the Level 3 apprenticeship analysis is reported to the next meeting of the Board.

Agreed:

7.2.5. THAT the Board note the current situation.

7.3. Destinations report

7.3.1. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality provided Members with the background to the report and outlined the findings contained within the table in the report. The Principal informed Members that the College is really good at progressing learners from responsive programmes into apprenticeships.

7.3.2. The Chairman raised several issues relating to the table including, the relevance of data which is three to four years old, the date in the table description and the percentage total only adding up to 95%.

7.3.3. The Principal advised Members that it is very frustrating that destinations data takes so long to be published and that each government agency takes a different approach to data collection. Members were also advised that the SFA survey is conducted by telephone and not many people like to participate in telephone surveys. Internal data capture is currently being looked at so the Board can receive more up to date information.

7.3.4. Members commented about how destinations are changing and how well the College had performed in relation to other colleges in the region.

Agreed:

7.3.5. THAT the Board note the current situation.

7.4. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

7.4.1. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality briefly explained the background to the report and provided Members with a termly update. Members were informed that 97% of the 28 planned actions have been completed on time. Members were then provided with details of the actions not completed and details of the effectiveness of the actions completed.

7.4.2. Members were informed that a new quality process has been introduced. Curriculum Managers now complete a Quality Performance Review Document along with their QIP for each Sector Subject Area (SSA). Together these documents record and monitor actions to address required improvements at departmental and course

level. Any cross college areas for improvement can then be identified and added to the main College QIP.

Agreed:

7.4.3. THAT the Board note the current situation.

8 *Director of Business Development reports*

8.1. Partnership report (Spring Term)- Confidential item

8.1.1. The Director of Business Development presented the report and outlined the current position in relation to the 11 sub-contractor partners for the 2014/15 spring term. Members were provided with details of the partnership monitoring process, the RAG ratings for each partner and where the ratings had changed from the autumn term an explanation was provided.

8.1.2. Following a question from the Chairman the Director of Business Development confirmed that the partners are not asked to rate the College in the same way, but we do seek feedback on the quality of our service. Following further questions the Director of Business Development informed Members that one of the partners could not progress from an amber rating because although they provide a good learner experience they do not have a satisfactory infrastructure in place and as a result requests for information always have to be chased up and returns are always late.

8.1.3. Following a comment from the Chairman the Director of Business Development confirmed that the reference to the slow- down in the automotive sector in this instance only applied to Nissan and Toyota.

8.1.4. Following a question regarding novated contracts, the Director of Business Development and Principal reminded Members of the background to novated contracts and confirmed that the SFA had not issued any further information on the matter.

Agreed:

8.1.5. THAT the Board note the current situation.

9. *Board Matters*

9.1. Appointment of Chairman

9.1.1. The Clerk informed Members that the two year term of office of the Chairman expires this month. The Chairman had stated he would be prepared to stand for a further final term of office on the proviso that a review of the succession process takes place after 12 months. The Clerk asked if there were any other candidates for the position and there were none.

9.1.2. The re-appointment of the Chairman was then proposed and seconded. The Chairman thanked Members for their support but confirmed that he could not stay in

post forever and it was now time to look for a successor who may bring something new to the role.

Agreed:

9.1.3. THAT the Board re-appoint Mr Edwards for a further two year term of office.

9.2. Training and Effectiveness

9.3.1. The Clerk had previously distributed details of forthcoming regional AoC events and asked Members to contact him if they were interested in attending any of the sessions.

9.3.2. The Clerk also circulated details of the next three webinars and asked Members to contact him if they wanted to come to the College to view the webinars.

9.3.3. The Clerk had previously distributed AoC Governance Briefing 04/15 and encouraged all Members to regularly visit the AoC website as the briefings were very informative. Members who had not as yet been able to gain access to the website were asked to contact the Clerk.

9.3.4. The Clerk reminded Members of the Strategic Planning Day on Thursday 18th June 2015.

10. *Next meeting Agenda*

10.1. Items for the next meeting include:

- Declarations of Interest
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Draft minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 6th July 2015
- Chairman's verbal report
- Principal's report
- Strategic Review and Development Plan update
- Finance report and Management accounts.
- 2015/2016 Budget, three year financial forecasts report and Risk management report
- Fees and Charges Policy
- Staff Annual Pay Settlement
- Staff survey 2014/15
- Quality Improvement Plan termly update report
- Outcome for Learners, Level 3 Apprenticeship update
- Employer Feedback report

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 21st July at 5.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm