



Board of the Corporation

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Corporation

held in the Albert Croney Suite on Tuesday 21st July at 5.30pm.

Present:

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

Apologies:

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 present. The Chairman then reminded Members that this was a significant meeting as the Board would be approving the Budget and the outcome of the Strategic Review.

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 13th May 2015.

Matters arising:

3.1. In relation to item 3.1. Selby College. Following a question the Chairman confirmed that he had still not received any word from the Chairman of Selby College.

3.2. In relation to item 4.1.2. The Student Forum. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality informed Members that a Student Involvement Strategy was currently being developed but it was unlikely that a Student Forum could be formed before Christmas.

3.3. In relation to item 6.1.5. The Construction Facility. The Director of Finance and Resources reported that the project was going well and should be finished on

time. Negotiations have taken place with the contractor to provide an external hard standing area. This area would be used as an external training area for trades such as paving.

3.4. In relation to item 6.2.6. The LRC refurbishment. The Director of Finance and Resources informed Members that the estimate for the refurbishment had come in higher than the indicative costs provided by the architect and quantity surveyor. A lot of work has been done to try to reduce the costs but the scheme may have to be revised. Members requested further clarification about the costs and work involved. The Director of Finance and Resources and Principal provided further explanation about the scheme and the costs. Work has not commenced and the project is being reviewed with the aim of identifying what type of scheme can be achieved for the money available.

3.5. The Chairman expressed his concern about the situation and requested that the Board is made aware of the options available. The Director of Finance and Resources and Principal advised Members that they are still looking at what options are available. It was agreed that a consultative paper, clearly identifying the options and costs, is presented to the next meeting of the Board. However as the next meeting is not until October this would prevent any work taking place over the summer. It was agreed that if a suitable option could be found the Chairman and Vice Chair would consider it and if acceptable approve the revised scheme on behalf of the Board.

Agreed:

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

4. *Draft Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on Monday 6th July 2015.*

4.1. The Chairman of the Audit Committee informed the Board that the draft minutes were a true representation of the meeting. The reports of rigorous internal and external audits were all good and the Audit Committee had considered and approved the Audit Plans for the coming year.

Agreed:

4.2. THAT the Board receive the minutes for information.

5. *Chairman's verbal report*

5.1. The Chairman's report consisted of the following items:

- The Regional AoC event presentation:
- Board Member Personal reviews:

5.2. The Regional AoC event. The Chairman informed Members that he along with the Principal, Vice Principal, Clerk and two Members (named) had attended the Governance Development event at New College Durham. One of the presenters had been Paul Joyce HMI Deputy Director who talked about the new Ofsted Inspection Framework. The presentation had been very enlightening.

5.3. The Chairman then presented the key areas of the Ofsted presentation which included the following:

- Changes to the Ofsted inspection process:
- Short Inspections:
- Increased emphasis in certain areas:
- Key Judgements:
- Areas to be inspected.

5.4. The Chairman then outlined the areas of business that the Board need to effectively demonstrate knowledge of and active involvement in.

5.5. Following the presentation Members raised the following comments:

- The presentation had been very thought provoking:
- Members questioned the amount of knowledge about all aspects of the College they individually possessed, but felt more confident about what they knew collectively and where they could access information from:
- There had been examples nationally of “noddy” Boards agreeing to everything without question and as a result these Colleges were failing:
- Leadership is a partnership with the Board and the Senior Management Team (SMT) effectively challenging and supporting each other:
- For every decision the Board has to make, Members need to be sure they have the full story:
- The Board receive very good quality reports that are well presented:
- The Principal, through the Clerk, will provide Members with the latest version of the Ofsted Inspection Handbook, which outlines the criteria we would be judged against and identifies good practice:
- The Principal and the Clerk have worked the Ofsted framework into the Board schedule of business:
- We are a unique College in many ways, we deal with issues extremely well but cannot be complacent:
- The SMT need the support of the Board as well as the challenge, an effective balance is required:
- Being a Member is not just about sitting in a Board room, Members need to gain more College experience. Curriculum visits are available and the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality is to give a talk to Members about Study Programmes before the next informal lunch.

5.6. Board Member Personal reviews. The Chairman informed Members that the Clerk will be trying to arrange the Personal Review meetings over the next few weeks. This year the review has been reworked to include aspects from the new Code of Governance. Members will need an understanding of the Code prior to the meeting. Members will be asked about their individual training requirements so that training plans, involving internal and external training, can be developed.

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:

- 2014/15 Performance against funding targets
- The Budget
- Strategic Review
- World Skills.
- FE and Skills Reform Programme (tabled report)
- Staff Survey

6.2. 2013/14 Performance against recruitment targets – Confidential item

6.2.1. The Principal informed Members that at the time of writing the report we were 95% through the academic year. Members were then provided with an update on each of the four separate funding strands.

6.2.2. Following questions the Principal informed Members that:

- Although the LEP have set a target to double the number of youth apprenticeships, the LEP has no funding to support this:
- We are good at creating and sustaining apprenticeships but other providers are catching up. We have developed good employer relationships and every effort is made to ensure that they do not want to move to any another provider:
- Apprenticeships are a key Government initiative, the public sector are to be mandated to recruit apprentices

Agreed:

6.2.3. THAT the Board receive the Recruitment Performance update.

6.3. The Budget

6.3.1. The Principal outlined the four key points of Government policy and strategy that affects colleges:

- A slight change on departmental spending with big cuts but over a longer four year period:
- A training levy to be paid by large employers to fund apprenticeships:
- A decision to replace higher education student maintenance grants with loans:
- A promise of further devolution covering metropolitan areas and also towns and counties.

6.3.2. The Principal then outlined the funding cuts. Members were informed that the Department for Education (DfE) have assured colleges that they will not revisit allocations that have already been confirmed for 2015/16. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) however have announced a further 3.9% cut

on top of the existing cut for 2015/16. A further cut next year could be even more than 24%.

6.3.3. Following questions the Principal confirmed that:

- Replacing Student grants with loans may possibly stave off further cuts in the sector.
- No definition of what constitutes a large employer has been published as yet:

6.3.4. The Director of Finance and Resources informed members that as the 3.9% additional cut has been announced post budget the deadline for submitting college budgets has been extended to September 2015.

Agreed:

6.3.5. THAT the Board note the report.

6.4. Strategic Review

6.4.1 The Principal informed Members that the Strategic Review had been well attended and there had been a good debate regarding the strategic options presented. The review meeting culminated in the agreement of the strategic priorities outlined in the report, for the three year period 2015/16 to 2018/19. Presentation material from the Strategic Review had been distributed to all Members prior to the meeting.

6.4.2. The Principal informed Member that the three year plan is currently being drafted and it will be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

Agreed:

6.4.3. THAT the Board note the Strategic Review report.

6.5. World Skills Event

6.5.1. The Principal showed a short video about the World Skills Event and provided details of our representative, Reece Taylor. Reece is the only team member representing the UK in the skills area of welding. Press release information was distributed to the Members.

6.5.2. Following a question the Principal confirmed that the event is always held in the city which is to host the Olympic Games, this year Sao Paulo, Brazil. Members wished Reece every success.

6.6. FE and Skills Reform Programme

6.6.1. The Principal tabled a report about the Government's intention to review the post 16 education and training sector. Members were provided with details of the scope of the area based reviews and the likely membership of Area Review Steering

Groups. It is currently proposed that Chairs of FE Colleges will be included in the Steering Group membership. The Area Reviews are to take place from September 2015 to March 2017. The Government is to issue guidance on carrying out area based reviews prior to September

6.6.2. The Chairman commented that the area review could be potentially very significant for the College in the long term, providing both challenges and opportunities. Following further comments the Principal advised Members that the size of the areas will vary, our area will probably be the North East LEP area. The driving force behind these reviews is the financial state of a lot of colleges and their financial position following further funding cuts.

Agreed:

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

6.7. Staff Survey 2014/2015

6.7.1. The Principal presented the report on behalf of the Personnel Manager. Members were informed that the target response rate of 70% had been achieved. The less positive responses, from last year's report, and the actions taken were then outlined.

6.7.2. Members were given further details about the percentage changes between 2013/14 and 2014/15, in the various question areas and the proposed actions to be taken this year. Members were informed that the questionnaire will be augmented by the Staff Forum and Focus Groups which are to be established.

6.7.3. Following questions the Principal informed Members that:

- The College is well maintained, however the Construction Facility has necessitated the relocation of a number of staff. Staff dissatisfaction with the move has been reflected in their answers to this question.
- The College is a good place to work and if all the other question areas improved the response to this question would improve. A number of changes have taken place and the effects of these will be explored with the Staff Forum.

6.7.4. Several Members commented that the results of the survey were excellent and the proposed actions could only improve things further.

Agreed:

6.7.5. THAT the Board note the Staff Survey report.

7. Finance and Resources Reports

7.1. Annual Budget 2015-2016. – Confidential item

7.1.1 The Director of Finance and Resources presented the Budget Report and the Financial Plan.

7.1.2. The Director of Finance and Resources then outlined the income and expenditure summary contained within the report. Members were informed that the anticipated surplus was in line with the budget agreed by the Board last year. Due to further Government austerity measures however a cost improvement plan is to be developed to ensure positive operating surpluses continue into 2016/17. The plan will help support business growth and control and reduce expenditure where possible.

7.1.3. The Director of Finance and Resources then outlined each section of the report including:

- Main Funding Body Income analysis:
- Pay Expenditure:
- Non Pay Expenditure:
- Departmental income and expenditure analysis:
- Capital Budget:
- Financial Health:

7.1.4. The Chairman thanked the Director of Finance and Resources for a very clear report and reminded everyone present of the commercial sensitivity of the reports and enclosures.

Agreed:

7.1.5. THAT the Board approve:

- **The Annual Budget for 2015/16:**
- **The SFA Financial Plan covering the period from 2014/15 to 2016/17:**
- **The Capital Budget for 2015/16 of £225k:**

7.2. Risk Management Report

7.2.1. The Director of Finance and Resources presented the report which had previously been approved by the Audit Committee. The Director of Finance and Resources then provided details of the four Strategic Risks which had been identified as being outside the College's acceptable risk appetite.

Agreed:

7.2.2. THAT the Board note the content of the report and the actions identified to reduce the impact and likelihood of each risk.

7.3. Fees Policy 2015/2016

7.3.1. The Director of Finance and Resources explained the background to the report and outlined each section of the report and the various fee categories.

7.3.2. Following a comment from the Chairman the Director of Finance and Resources agreed to clearly identify where changes are made to the policy in future reports.

Agreed:

7.3.2. THAT the Board approve the 2015/2016 Fees Policy

7.4. Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy

7.4.1. The Director of Finance and Resources informed Members that this policy applies to all College staff involved in sub-contracting activity as well as the College's sub-contracting partners. The Director of Finance and Resources then outlined various aspects of the policy.

7.4.2. Following a question regarding the variation in the management fee for services provided to sub-contractor partners, the Director of Finance and Resources explained that the fee depends upon the level of support that each sub-contracting partner requires. The SMT always approve the level of support and the fees.

Agreed:

7.4.3. THAT the Board approve the Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy

8. *Director of Curriculum and Quality Reports*

8.1 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Update

8.2.1. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality presented the report and provided Members with the background and objectives of the report. Members were informed that the QIP is structured in line with the current Ofsted Common Inspection Framework and is divided into three areas;

- Outcomes for Learners;
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment;
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management.

8.2.2. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality informed Members that all of the 65 planned actions identified in the report which was presented to the Board in March 2015 have now been completed. The effectiveness of these actions, particularly with regard to their impact on learners, have been measured. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality then outlined each action and its effectiveness.

8.2.3. Following a question the Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality informed Members that the actions taken in class room based provision and Apprenticeship success rates have been the most effective. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality then outlined the actions that had been taken in these two areas.

Agreed:

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

8.3. Advanced Apprenticeship Report – Confidential item

8.3.1. The Principal provided Members with the background to the report.

8.3.2. Members were informed that further analysis has shown that the decline in the College success rates was largely attributed to the termination of a contract with one of the partners. Further details were provided.

8.3.3. Members were also informed that further scrutiny of another sub-contracting partner has confirmed doubts about the credibility of their predicted success rates and these have now been modified down. The Principal then outlined further actions that the College is to carry out to improve success rates.

8.3.4. The Chairman commented that this is an area that the Board need to be aware of and involved with. A Staff Member commented that a positive outcome following the termination of the contract has been that the College has become involved with a lot of new employers in the areas of Health and Social Care and Business Administration. These new employers have stated that they are very impressed with the College.

Agreed:

8.3.5. THAT the Board note the progress update report and the on-going actions to improve apprenticeship success rate performance.

8.4. The Prevent Duty

8.4.1. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality provided Members with the background to the report. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality then outlined each section of the report which included the responsibilities of the Board, the Ofsted inspection process and the actions that the College has taken.

8.4.2. Following questions the Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality informed Members that he will be the Prevent Officer, although the Prevent Duty is a subset of Safeguarding a separate policy is required, sub-contractor partners have also had training, Board training is to be arranged, an online training package is being developed.

Agreed:

8.4.3. THAT the Board note the content of this report and will consider the College's Prevent Policy at the next meeting of the Board.

9. Board Matters

9.1. The Code of Governance

9.1.1. The Clerk distributed copies of the new Code of Governance and provided Members with the background to the development of the Code. Members were informed that the Code is a voluntary initiative but Boards are encouraged to adopt the spirit of the Code.

9.1.2. The Clerk informed Members that over the next few months he, the Chairman and the Principal will be reviewing all aspects of the Code to see how the principles can be built into our governance procedures and processes.

9.2. Personal Review Meetings

9.2.1. The Clerk informed Members that Personal Review meetings will take place during August. The Clerk reminded Members that the reviews will also look at aspects of the Code of Governance and Members were encouraged to read the Code prior to the review meetings. A pre-review questionnaire will be sent out to Members as usual.

9.3. Training and Effectiveness. The Clerk informed Members that there were no regional or national Governor training sessions taking place over the summer months. The Clerk distributed copies of the forthcoming AoC regional events which commence in September.

10. Next meeting Agenda

10.1. The items for the next meeting include:

- Declarations of Interest
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Chairs verbal report
- Principal's report
- Finance report and Management Accounts.
- Health and Safety (whole year) Report.
- Business Continuity Plan.
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment (whole year) Report
- Outcome for Learners Report
- Learner Feedback Report
- Safeguarding Report.
- The Prevent Policy
- Partnership Report
- Employer Feedback Report
- Member Personal Review report
- Governance Document Review
- Appointment of the Vice Chair.

11. Any other business

11.1. Following a question from the Chairman the Principal confirmed that the Quality Task Group had met only once but meetings between individual Members of the Group and The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality have taken place.

12. Date of next meeting

12.1. The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 6th October at 5.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.