



Board of the Corporation

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Corporation

held in the Albert Croney Suite on Tuesday 22nd March at 5.30pm.

Present:

Mr T Edwards (Chairman)
Mrs K Redhead, Mr G Marshall, Mr M Short, Mr J Davies, Mr G Gibson, Mrs C Richards and Ms A Form.

Apologies:

Mrs G Granath, Mrs S Nicholson.

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),
Ms K Mellett, Curriculum Manager.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed Members that there were a number of very significant items for Members to consider on this evenings agenda.

2. Presentation

2.1 The Clerk distributed a copy of the Prevent Duty Risk Assessment and Action Plan to all of the Members. Ms Mellett, Curriculum Manager, then provided Members with background information relating to the Prevent Agenda and details of the development of Prevent Action Plan.

2.2. Ms Mellett then outlined the thirteen key points in the Action Plan and provided further detail in relation to the ongoing training and awareness that is taking place with subcontractors, staff and students. The monitoring arrangements that have been put in place were also outlined.

2.3. Following questions from the Chairman, Ms Mellett and the Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality confirmed that unacceptable speakers or presenters would be reported to Durham Constabulary who would then carry out an investigation, there is a legal duty and an Ofsted expectation that colleges will fully comply with the Prevent Agenda. Ofsted do however recognise that confidence building needs to be developed with everyone involved.

2.4. The Chairman, on behalf of the Board thanked Ms Mellett for her very interesting presentation.

3. *Declarations of Interest*

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

4. *Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Corporation held on Tuesday 9th February 2016*

Matters arising:

4.1. In relation to item 3.1. The Student representative. The Chairman informed Members that he and the Clerk had discussed the feasibility of asking the student to attend another meeting as an observer but decided that it was not appropriate.

4.2. In relation to item 3.2. Reappointment of Members. The Clerk explained that normally the Search Committee would consider requests from Members to extend their term of office. The committee would then make a recommendation to the Board. In this case there had not been sufficient time to organise a Search Committee meeting, but Members of the committee were all present at this meeting. The Chairman proposed that Mr Gibson and Mrs Granath were reappointed for a further 4 year term of office. The Board unanimously agreed the proposal.

4.3. In relation to item 3.3. Member recruitment. The Clerk informed Members that he had met with a prospective candidate who was very interested in the position. The Clerk provided Members with some details of the candidate's employment situation. The Clerk informed Members that he is currently waiting to hear if the candidate has his employer's approval to become a Member of the Board.

4.4. In relation to item 3.6. Curriculum visits. The Chairman informed Members that he had considered an excellent paper produced by the Vice-Principal and the Clerk which looked at a range of options for curriculum visits by Members. The Chairman advised Members that one option, Learning Walks, seemed to fit Members requirements. The option is to be developed further and hopefully put in place before the next meeting of the Board in May. The Clerk will notify Members when details have been finalised.

4.5. In relation to item 9.2. Members Register of Interests. The Clerk informed the Board that he had received all of the Register of Interest forms.

4.6. In relation to item 9.3.2. Funding and Finance event. The Vice Chair provided Members with details of the event which took place at Newcastle City Library on the 18th March. The Vice Chair informed Members that in his opinion the event had been worthwhile and the pre meeting papers had been very good. The papers are to be forwarded to the Clerk for distribution to all Members.

Agreed:

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

5. *Draft Minutes of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on Monday 7th March 2016*

5.1. 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.

5.2. The Chair of the Audit Committee informed Members that the Additional Controls Assurance team had looked at Curriculum Planning and Employer Engagement and the findings had been very good.

5.3. The Chair of the Audit Committee then provided Members with details of the new Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Sub Contractor Assurance Certification requirement. The Additional Controls Assurance team undertaking this audit had found several areas of really good practice and because this is a new area of work, intend to use this College as a bench mark for future Sub Contractor Assurance Certification audits.

Agreed:

5.4. THAT the Board note the draft minutes.

6. *Chairman's verbal report*

6.1. The Chairman informed Members that his report consisted of only one item, Local Area Reviews. The Chairman informed Members that his views about the process and in particular the possible outcomes for the College had changed completely over the last few weeks. The Local Area Review could have serious implications for the College and every Member of the Board needs to be fully aware of what will be taking place.

6.2. The Chairman informed Members that the dates of the Area Review Steering Group meetings have now been determined, although these may change if delays occur, and provided Members with details of the first meeting which is to be held on the 15th April 2016.

6.3. Preparation work prior to the first Steering Group meeting and the College visit is essential so a Task Group has been set up. Members were given details of the Task Group aims, objectives and membership. The Chairman asked the Members to confirm their agreement and support for the Task Group, which they did.

6.4. The Chairman informed Members that along with the Local Area Review there are so many uncertainties about the future, including the impact of changes to Apprenticeship funding and devolution. As a consequence of these uncertainties the Task Group decided that the starting position for the College, in the review process will be that a campus must remain on this site and closure of the College will not be

an acceptable option. Members were informed that colleges will have to be fully justify their non-acceptance of any proposals which come out of the review.

Agreed:

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

7. *Principal's report*

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

- 2015/16 Performance against funding targets
- Area Reviews
- Staff Survey update

7.2 2015/16 Performance against funding targets- Confidential item

7.3. Area Reviews

7.3.1. The Principal provided Members with details of the North East Area Review, which included the timetable of the review, all of the colleges in the North East LEP area and the Steering Group meeting dates. Members were also advised that a visit to the College by a member of the FE Commissioner's team will take place before the 22nd April 2016.

7.3.2. The Principal then provided Members with details of the Task Group meetings to date and the staff briefings, drop-in discussion sessions and meetings with union representatives that have taken place at the College.

7.3.3. The Principal informed Members that she felt quite upbeat about the review, preparations are going well and we will be going into the review in a good position. Members were advised that this will not be the case for some colleges who are in financial difficulty. There are three colleges in difficulty in the Tees Valley review. The Chairman informed Members that the government have stated that there will be no financial bail-out for colleges after the review.

Agreed:

7.3.4. THAT the Board note the current situation

7.4. Staff Survey update

7.4.1. The Principal informed Members that this report would normally be presented by the HR Manager but he has recently left the College. Due to the Area Review, the position will not be filled but is to be kept open and a temporary manager has been appointed to work two days per week.

7.4.2. The Principal provided Members with the background to the report and highlighted each of the actions identified in the 2014/15 staff survey report. Members were then advised of the progress made in each of the following action areas:

- The Staff Forum:
- The Extranet:
- All staff strategic priorities presentations:
- Focus Group work done around Leadership and Management.

7.4.3. The Principal informed Members that unfortunately, due to the amount of work involved with the Area Reviews, some items may have to go on hold.

Agreed:

7.4.4. THAT the Board note the report and progress made since the last report.

8. Finance and Resources Reports

8.1. Finance Report and Management Accounts – Confidential Report

8.2. Health and Safety Policy Report

8.2.1. The Director of Finance and Resources presented the report and informed Members that there had been no changes made to the policy, only administrative amendments had been made.

Agreed:

8.2.2. THAT the Board note the report.

8.3. Health and Safety Half Yearly Report

8.3.1. The Director of Finance and Resources presented the report and provided Members with an update to the end of December 2015. Members were provided with details of the number and type of College and partner incidents over the period. Members were informed that the low number of reported incidents from the partners has been challenged but confirmed as correct. Regular monitoring checks with the partners are to take place in future.

8.3.2. Following a question from the Chairman the Director of Finance and Resources provided further detail in relation to a fire evacuation incident.

8.3.3. The Director of Finance and Resources informed Members that in time the Health and Safety Committee minutes will be accessible to view on the extranet.

Agreed:

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

8.4. Business Continuity Plan Review

8.4.1. The Director of Finance and Resources presented the report and informed Members that a series of recommendations had been made following a review of the College's Business Continuity Plan, by the internal auditors in 2014/15. Since the audit significant progress towards completing the recommendations has been made.

A formal Business Impact Analysis is now in place, the Business Continuity Plan has been completely redrafted and an IT Disaster Recovery Plan is currently being drafted.

8.4.2. The Director of Finance and Resources then outlined several key points within the Plan. Members were informed that behind each item in the Plan there are detailed reinstatement plans and procedures.

8.4.3. Following a comment from Chairman that the previous plan included a reference to the Chairman being notified in the event of the College having to close, the Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that this would be added into the new Plan.

Agreed:

8.4.4. THAT the Board approve the Business Continuity Plan and note the progress made towards the internal audit identified recommendations.

9. Curriculum and Quality Reports

9.1 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) – termly update

9.1.1. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality provided Members with a brief background to the report and then updated Members on the progress made to date.

9.1.2. Members were advised that a total of 50 planned actions have been completed on time and there are only 6 actions left to complete. Members were informed that the QIP is a live document and new actions may be added where further improvements are identified or previous actions have not resulted in the desired outcome.

9.1.3. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality informed Members that it was important to measure the effectiveness of the actions, in particular the impact on learners. The Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality then highlighted several aspects of the impact on learners contained within Appendix A of the report.

9.1.4. Following questions it was confirmed that staff CPD is well funded but the budget is strained at present. Further expenditure will have to be closely monitored over the next few months. In view of the expenditure this year the CPD budget for next year will be reviewed.

9.1.5. The Chairman commented that the report was very good.

Agreed:

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

10. Board Matters

10.1. Meeting Schedule

10.1.1. The Clerk asked Members to consider the meeting schedule for 2016/17 which had been distributed with the Board papers. Following a discussion the proposed dates were agreed.

10.1.2. The Chairman informed Members that due to a planned holiday, he would not be available to attend the February 2017 meeting.

10.2. Training and Effectiveness

10.2.1. The Clerk informed Members that he was not aware of any regional events taking place before the next meeting of the Board.

10.2.2. The Clerk informed Members that he had been made aware by the Principal, of a publication, FE Week, which the College subscribed to. The publication, which is the only FE specific newspaper, gives good coverage of news items and has a Governor Advise column. Members were asked to inform the Clerk if they wanted to receive electronic or hard copies of the publication. Following a brief discussion the Director of Finance and Resources agreed to add the publication to the Governance portal for Members to access.

11. Next meeting Agenda

11.1. Items for the next meeting include:

- Declarations of Interest
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Chairman's verbal report
- Principals report
- Finance report and Management Accounts
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment report (Spring Term)
- Outcomes for Learners report (Spring Term)
- Partnership report (Spring Term)

12. *Any other business*

12.1. There were no items of other business.

13. *Date of next meeting*

13.1. The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 10th May 2016 at 5.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm