

# CORPORATE BOARD

## NORTH WEST KENT COLLEGE

### Minutes of a meeting of the CORPORATE BOARD

held at 5.30pm on Tuesday, 26 January 2010, at Dering Way, Gravesend

**Present:** Mr E Anderson (Chairman)  
Ms E Birchenough  
Dr R Finney  
Mr B Newell  
Mrs S Adams  
Mrs P Jones  
Mr O Oguns  
Mr R M Bell  
Mr G Moody  
Mr N Butterfield

**In attendance:** Mr D Holland (Clerk to the Corporation)  
Mr T Knight (Vice Principal)  
Mr G Parrett (Director of Finance and Systems)  
Mr D Gleed (Principal, Bexley College)  
Mrs C Hopkins (minuting secretary)

#### **P-1 APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Mr J Parkes.

Mr Gleed, the Principal designate, was welcomed as an observer at the Board meeting.

#### **P-2 MINUTES**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2009 were approved and signed as a correct record.

#### **2.2 Matters Arising**

##### **(D-1) Principal's Report**

The Principal confirmed that Mrs Adams and Mr Newell would visit the SusCon Project on 3 March 2010.

#### **Action**

The Principal reported that the lighting issue had been resolved and additional lighting, linked to the main car park, had been installed.

**(I-4.2) Finance and General Purposes Committee**

The Chairman confirmed that he had discussed the terms of the deposit of £5m with the Director of Finance and Systems and had been satisfied with the evidence provided to him that the best rate had been achieved in the circumstances. Members were advised that the deposit had been made with Lloyds TSB.

**(I-9) Appointment of Ms Birchenough as Chairman of Estates Committee**

Members noted Ms Birchenough's appointment as Chairman of the Estates Committee [as noted in the Minutes previously agreed]. The Chairman advised that the form of her address, in this capacity, may be considered during review of the Committee structure.

**R-1 STANDING ORDERS**

Members received and noted the Standing Orders (Paper No CB/26.01.10/R-1). The Clerk advised that no amendments had been made to the document. As proposed by Mr Moody and seconded by Mr Newell, it was

**RESOLVED** *to re-endorse the Standing Orders as set out in Paper No CB/26.01.10/R-1.*

**R-2 CODE OF CONDUCT**

Members received and noted the Code of Conduct (Paper No CB/26.01.10/R-2). The Clerk advised that the annual review of the document was due. Members were asked to sign the second copy of the Code of Conduct and return it to the Clerk. As proposed by Mr Moody and seconded by Mr Newell, it was

**RESOLVED** *to adopt the Code of Conduct as set out in Paper No CB/26.01.10/R-2.*

**R-3 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2010/2011**

Members received and noted the draft Calendar of Meetings for 2010/2011 (Paper No CB/26.01.10/R-3). As proposed by Mr Newell and seconded by Mrs Adams, it was

**RESOLVED** *to adopt the Calendar of Meetings 2010/2011, as set out in Paper No CB/26.01.10/R-3, subject to re-consideration following review of Committee structure.*

**Action**

## **D-1 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Members received and noted the Principal's Report (Paper No CB/26.01.10/D-1).

### *Machinery of Government Changes*

Members noted that the transition from the LSC to the new funding bodies continues in readiness for 1 April 2010. The Principal reported that the local authorities would have no influence over the funding arrangements for the coming year and, therefore, the change would have no immediate impact on the College. He advised that the relationship with Bexley Local Authority is of concern and nothing had yet been formalised. The KCC had recognised the boundary issue with regard to Medway and the Medway Council would be funding Mid Kent College, however all other colleges in Kent would be funded by the KCC.

The Chairman referred to the Dartford Borough and Gravesham Borough Councils' relationships with Bexley and suggested lobbying. The Principal agreed to make enquiries of the two Councils.

Principal

### *Funding 2010/2011*

Members were advised that the indicative allocation had been received for 19+, currently at 79% of this year's allocation, although a possibility may exist to increase the allocation. At present, there was a shortfall of approximately £ 700,000. The Principal reported that two areas would be affected as a result:

- (1) MOL (formerly NSTC), where there was no public funding. Currently the deficit envisaged was approximately £300,000.
- (2) Halls Training (Air conditioning and refrigeration), where the deficit was envisaged to be £70,000.

However, the Principal believed that an increase of the fees payable should secure approximately 50% of the funding. Members were advised that the College was currently delivering above next year's funding and it would be necessary to match, more closely, this College's priorities and current provision and the Skills Funding Agency's priorities.

Mr Moody sought clarification on the impact of this on the College's own staff in relation to continuing professional development (CPD).

Members agreed that further discussion on the 19+ provision should take place at the Annual Corporate Conference in March.

**Action**  
Clerk

As far as 16-19 funding for 2010/2011 was concerned, the Principal explained that no indication had yet been received, although a meeting with the funding bodies was scheduled for 8 February 2010. The Principal designate had been invited to attend that meeting.

Discussion regarding employing apprentices in order to meet the concerns of employers ensued and the possibility of doing so through a separately established company or Trust. The Principal believed consideration should be given to public sector organisations and apprenticeship schemes, and the possibility of the College providing the training, as is currently underway through Bluewater. He drew members' attention to the College's good relationship with the Dartford Borough Council, in particular.

The Vice Principal advised the College has sought to use apprentices to fill technician vacancies that arise within the College.

The Chairman acknowledged the opportunities for the College in relation to apprenticeships and the need to be innovative without being proscriptive. He stressed the importance of thinking through propositions carefully while ensuring any action was taken quickly.

Further discussion was scheduled for the Annual Corporate Conference.

#### *Capital Project*

The Principal was pleased to report that the demolition of the old C Block at Gravesend had commenced. The construction of the new roadway was imminent and both activities were expected to be completed by the end of April/early May 2010.

Members noted that a compromise had been made regarding the theatre, with the impact of the refurbishment now being spread across two academic years rather than one.

## **D-2 EVERY CHILD MATTERS AND SAFEGUARDING**

Members received and noted the preface from the Principal, together with the report on *Every Child Matters* and Safeguarding, which had been prepared by the Director of Student Services (Paper No CB/26.01.10/D-2). The Principal stated that the report was a position statement, which detailed each of the heads under *Every Child Matters*, and suggested that the Standards Committee should discuss the report and make recommendations to the Board. Members were in agreement with that proposal.

Clerk

Members sought clarification on whether Criminal Record checks were carried out on the contractors on site, and on catering, cleaning and security staff. The Vice Principal confirmed that the catering staff were required to be CRB checked, owing to their involvement with students, whereas cleaning staff were not liable to such checks, owing to their work hours being outside of normal College hours. As far as the contractors, BAM, were concerned, given their operation within clearly defined compounds on campus, CRB checks were not generally required. However the five staff, who did not remain within the confines of the compounds, would undergo checks.

Mrs Adams stated that the flowchart in relation to the College's Safeguarding Policy, which had been forwarded to all members by email on 22 December 2009, was a useful document.

### **D-3 COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Members received and noted the Draft Summary Self Assessment Report 2008/9 (Paper No CB/26.01.10/D-3). The Vice Principal reported that the document was in the same format as in previous years. Mrs Jones suggested that the names of the other special schools associated with the College should be included in clause 1.0.3 on page 3 of the document. Dr Finney requested that the summary pages and those pages relevant to each school/area be forwarded to the appropriate link governors. The Vice Principal agreed to arrange for the production of the papers.

Members agreed with the Principal and Chairman that the Report would be discussed further, together with the Three Year Strategic Plan and One Year Operational Plan, at the Annual Corporate Conference.

### **I-1 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO DECEMBER 2009**

Members received and noted the Management Accounts to December 2009 (Paper No CB/26.01.10/I-1).

### **I-2 CAPITAL PROJECT STATUS REPORT, DECEMBER 2009**

Members received and noted the Capital Project Status Report as at December 2009 (Paper No CB/26.01.10/I-2).

*Gravesend* – The Vice Principal reported that Marks Demolition had been selected as the demolition contractor following tender and interview. Unfortunately, asbestos tiles underneath the flooring had come to light and their controlled removal would delay the demolition slightly. The former reception area and library (now referred to as G Block) within old C Block would remain, although the remainder of old C Block would be demolished.

**Action**

Vice  
Principal

Vice  
Principal

Clerk

The Vice Principal anticipated demolition and construction of the new roadway to be completed by the end of April/early May to enable the formal opening of the new campus to take place. He hoped that further discussion on the formal opening could take place at the Annual Corporate Conference.

**Action**

Clerk

*Dartford* – Members were advised that no further dene holes had been identified. He advised that the building contracts with BAM had been signed prior to this meeting by the Chairman and Vice Chairman and were due to be signed by BAM on Thursday, prior to engrossment by Maples Teesdale.

The Vice Principal explained that construction was on schedule for Blocks B and S. As far as Block H was concerned (the refurbishment of the swimming pool and theatre), the current level of the floor of the swimming pool would be lowered to allow adequate headroom for rehearsals.

Members were satisfied with progress to date on the capital projects.

**I-3 USE OF CORPORATION SEAL 2009/2010**

Members received and noted advice that the Corporation Seal had not been used during the period 9 December 2009 and 18 January (Paper No CB/26.01.10/I-3).

**I-4 REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP IN ENGLISH FURTHER EDUCATION**

Members received and noted the AoC's letter dated 4 January 2009 [sic] together with the publication entitled *A Review of Governance and Strategic Leadership in English Further Education* (Paper No CB/26.01.10/I-4). The Chairman suggested consideration be given to this matter at the meeting of Chairs of standing committees. Members agreed.

Clerk

**I-5 GOVERNOR TRAINING: DR R FINNEY – BOARDROOM BRIEFING – SELF ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

Members received and noted Dr Finney's report on his training session entitled "Self Assessment and Quality Improvement" (Paper No CB/26.01.10/I-5).

Dr Finney referred to the previous item (Item I-4), specifically the different primary purposes for governance outlined on page 15, ie (1) governance for maximising institutional performance and success, (2) governance for accountability and compliance, and (3) governance for representation and democracy. He believed that the second purpose (governance for accountability and compliance) had been predominant for the last ten years, although such focus appeared to be changing.

Referring back to his report, Dr Finney worked through the conclusions of the group which could be applied to this College, bearing in mind Ofsted's 2008 Report entitled *How Colleges Improve*:

**Be *impatient* for success** – He said that Leadership and Management at the College had been designated a Grade 3 for many years and feared that would be the case again this year, unfortunately. However, he questioned whether that grade had affected students (did they know or care?) and believed the core question was *what did governors want to be?*

**Insist the SAR is completed in the Autumn term** – Dr Finney considered the report too lengthy and believed that four pages, rather than twenty, per school/department would be more appropriate.

**Keep innovating and do not let system compliance become an end in itself** – Dr Finney suggested the system should not beat the College.

**Identify and empower the drivers for change** – Say what is required and allow Heads of School/Section the opportunity to produce it.

**Ensure the SAR is owned by everyone** – Ensure that all views are invited and considered, governors, SMT, staff, students, employers.

**Our Board self-assessment process needs some clearer direction** – Dr Finney believed members should be clearer with their requirements.

Mrs Jones was of the view that judging the College solely on Ofsted's parameters was the wrong decision, as she perceived the College to be clearly better than 'satisfactory'. Ms Birchenough suggested that the Board was not asking itself the correct questions and was not comparing correctly the data as FE moved very quickly in some areas.

The Vice Principal explained that Ofsted was not the only judgment used and that there were many examples of where the College was 'good' rather than 'satisfactory'. The Principal believed the College to be 'good' and acknowledged that it was unfortunate that Ofsted had not yet attributed a Grade 2 to Leadership and Management. He referred to the strengthening of the Quality Unit, under a new director, which was adopting more of an Ofsted approach, and to the different judgments now being made compared to two years ago. The Principal explained that the grades may not have changed but the criteria behind the grade had changed. He considered that if the basics were correct this year, then the College was in a strong position to achieve a Grade 2 in November. Further, the Senior Management Team was doing everything it could to increase the grade but the test would be at inspection, probably in November. The Principal was 'relatively confident' that the grade would change in November.

The Chairman stated that Ofsted could not be ignored, neither could the LSC or the next funding body/ies but the Board needed to consider all the additional data and responses from others to determine if the College was

'good'. He believed that the College had to "play the game", the rules of which being imposed externally, whilst not ignoring governors' strategic aims.

**Action**

**C-1 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Vice Principal reported that various KCC councillors would be visiting the College next week to view the accommodation. Also, Alistair Grindley, the LSC National Property Advisor, would be visiting on 1 February 2010.

**C-2 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Annual Corporate Conference: 8.45am, Saturday, 6 March 2010, The Learning Shop, Bluewater, Greenhithe

Ordinary Meeting: 5.30pm, Tuesday, 23 March 2010 in the Boardroom at Dartford