

CORPORATE BOARD

NORTH WEST KENT COLLEGE

Minutes of a meeting of the CORPORATE BOARD

held at 5.30pm on Tuesday, 22 March 2011 at Oakfield Lane, Dartford

Present: Mr E Anderson (Chairman)
Dr R Finney
Ms E Birchenough
Mr J Parkes
Mrs S Adams
Mr N Butterfield
Mr G Moody
Mr B Newell
Mrs P Jones
Mr O Oguns
Mr R Higgins
Mr A Parkinson
Mr D Gleed

In attendance: Mr D Holland (Clerk to the Corporation)
Mrs P Morgan (Vice Principal)
Mrs C Hopkins (minuting secretary)

P-1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Singh Gill and Ms Wroblewski.

P-2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were submitted in respect of this Board meeting.

P-3 MINUTES

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2010 were approved and signed as a correct record.

Action

3.2 Matters Arising

3.2.1 (R-3) E-Safety Policy

The Clerk advised that the Director of Curriculum, Gravesend, had confirmed that other policies relating to misuse, which he believed to be sufficient, were in place.

3.3 The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 5 March 2011 were approved and signed as a correct record.

3.4 Matters Arising

3.4.1 None was raised.

P-4 RESERVED

P-5 RESERVED

P-6 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Members received and noted the Principal's Report (Paper No CB/22.03.11/P-6).

Recap on Funding following the Corporate Conference on 5 March – Members were reminded that the funding allocation for 2011/2012 was expected at the end of March.

Internal Planning Cycle – The Principal advised that the internal planning cycle of next year's curriculum is progressing well and he did not anticipate changes to the levels or areas offered from September 2011.

Strategic Plan 2011-14 – The Principal reported that the strategic plan, discussed at the Corporate Conference, had been revised and included within his report. He advised that the operational plan was now being considered.

Wolf Report – The Principal reported that the Wolf Report had been published recently and that he expected the report to be taken up by the Government.

OFSTED Outstanding – Members were pleased to note that Ofsted had now provided formal recognition in relation to the Performing Arts area and "Ofsted Outstanding" could be used on publicity and materials relating to the area. He considered this would be extremely advantageous to the College.

Meeting between Kent Principals and Kent MPs – The Principal reported

that the KAFEC Principals had met Kent MPs on 9 March at a dinner organised by the AoC at the House of Commons, where they had discussed the difficulties for students following on the imminent demise of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). They had also discussed Further Education Colleges delivering Higher Education courses, often at a lower cost than Higher Education providers.

Trust Partnership with Northfleet School for Girls – The Memorandum of Understanding with the Northfleet School for Girls was appended to the Principal's report.

Local Opening of the Miskin Theatre – The Principal reported that, while the formal opening of the new facilities at Dartford was expected at a date to be fixed during 2011/2012, a more local opening of the refurbished Miskin Theatre was expected in July 2011, to coincide with a major summer production by the Performing Arts students. Invitations would be forwarded to members in due course.

Re-arranged date for SusCon Formal Opening – As advised previously, the formal opening of the SusCon building has been delayed due to the unavailability of the Minister for Further Education. Members would receive revised invitations in due course.

Referring to the strategic objectives, Dr Finney expressed concern at setting the aim too high, particularly the target to be 'outstanding by 2014' which he would like to believe, but considered to be unrealistic. He was not convinced that it could be achieved within three years, given that staff were preoccupied with the security of their employment at this stage.

The Principal explained that the work and approach of staff had to change and that this was about unlocking potential. He believed that the College would have resources, following the completion of the capital projects, and, following the restructuring exercise, would have the right staff in place. He believed the changes, though initially unsettling, could also have a positive effect in encouraging the performance of all.

The Principal was thanked for his report.

R-1 AUDIT COMMITTEE

1.1 Risk Register and Risk Reduction Plan

Members received and noted the Risk Register and Risk Reduction Plan (Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-1.1).

Mr Parkes, as Chairman of the Audit Committee, reported that the Risk Champion, currently the Vice Principal (Estates), had been invited to attend the meeting but had been unable to do so on this occasion. Mr Parkes reported that the Committee had sought clarification, in the absence of the

Risk Champion, from the Director of Finance and Systems about the reduction in the net risk scores of many of the risk areas and triggers contained within the document. He advised that some additional explanatory narrative had been included. The Principal explained that the Risk Register had been discussed subsequently by the Senior Management Team and, in future, a narrative would be provided in relation to any amendment to the net risk score.

Members were satisfied with the approach taken and, as proposed by Mr Newell and seconded by Dr Finney, it was

RESOLVED to accept the Risk Register and Risk Reduction Plan, as detailed in Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-1.1.

1.2 Auditors' Letters of Engagement

Members received and noted the extract from the Audit Committee meeting held on 2 March 2011 (Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-1.2). Members were satisfied with the Committee's proposal to review auditors on a three early basis and as proposed by Dr Finney and seconded by Mrs Jones, it was

RESOLVED to endorse the Audit Committee's recommendation that a full and thorough review of both audit firms be undertaken on a three yearly basis, with consideration being given to the staff feedback and annual Performance Indicators, such review to commence with the Internal Audit Service during the summer term 2011. The Clerk is to advise each audit firm of the process to be undertaken.

Clerk

Mrs Adams suggested that a 'value for money' exercise should be undertaken generally. Members concurred.

R-2 POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

2.1 Financial Regulations

Members received and noted the Financial Regulations (Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-2.1) which had been amended. Members were satisfied with the amendments and, as proposed by Mrs Jones and seconded by Dr Finney, it was

RESOLVED to endorse the revised Financial Regulations, as detailed in Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-2.1.

2.2 College Fees

Members received and noted the Director of Finance and Systems' paper entitled *Fees Policy 2011-2012* (Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-2.2). Mr Parkes

sought explanation for the suggestion that fees remain at £650 for the next academic year. As a member of the Policy and Finance Committee, the Principal explained that some colleges had increased fees and student numbers had declined. Furthermore, this College recruited limited numbers of fee-paying 19+ students and therefore the impact would be minimal. Members were satisfied with the response and as proposed by Mrs Jones and seconded by Dr Finney, it was

RESOLVED *to endorse the recommendation of the Policy and Finance Committee that tuition fees for 19+ full-time students not entitled to fee remission should remain at £650 from September 2011.*

2.3 Further Expenditure on Capital Project arising out of VAT Liability Reduction

Members received and noted the extract from the Policy and Finance Committee relating to expenditure of funds on the capital project (Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-2.3). Members noted that the Board had approved expenditure of various items (consisting of £305,000, £86,000, £250,000 and £400,000) and that both the Estates and Facilities Committee and Policy and Finance Committee were proposing that no further expenditure on the capital project be made, pending the preparation and cross-referenced discussion of the requested Estates Strategy and Academic Strategy. As proposed by Dr Finney and seconded by Mr Newell, it was

RESOLVED *to endorse the recommendation of the Policy and Finance Committee that no further, additional expenditure be made on the capital project prior to the preparation and discussion of estates and academic strategies.*

2.4 Learner Support Fund

Members received and noted the extract from the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 8 March 2011 (Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-2.4). At the request of Dr Finney, a brief annual report on the Fund would be made to members. The Clerk agreed to amend the Terms of Reference of the Policy and Finance Committee for submission to the next meeting. As proposed by Mrs Jones and seconded by Mr Newell, it was

RESOLVED *that the administration of the Learner Support Fund be delegated to the Executive.*

R-3 STAFF AND STUDENT COMMITTEE

3.1 Staff Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure

Members received and noted the Staff Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure

Principal/
Staff
Governor
(Support)

(Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-3.1).

Dr Finney expressed disappointment with the document, which appeared to him to have been “cobbled together”. Members believed the title to be inappropriate as the document apparently applied to a wider catchment than staff and included visitors, contractors and sub-contractors. Following brief discussion, members agreed that the title should be amended to read “Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure”.

The Principal reported that the document had been considered and agreed by the Senior Management Team and the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). He reminded members that the JNC had been operating within the College for approximately five years and was a forum for managers and unions to meet four or five times a year.

As proposed by Mr Parkes and seconded by Mr Newell, it was

RESOLVED to adopt the Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-3.1, subject to amendment of its title to ‘Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure’.

3.2 Single Equality Scheme 2010-2013

Members received and noted the Single Equality Scheme 2010-2013 (Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-3.2).

Dr Finney believed the values, at section 1.2 on page 2 of the document, to be paramount.

As proposed by Mrs Jones and seconded by Mrs Adams, it was

RESOLVED to adopt the Single Equality Scheme 2010-2013, as detailed in Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-3.2.

The Clerk referred to the presentation provided by the Human Resources Manager prior to the meeting of the Staff and Student Committee on 9 March 2011. He believed the presentation would be useful for all governors as the statutory duty was shared by the entire Board. Members agreed that a shorter version of the presentation should be made to the full Board, prior to the meeting on 18 May 2011. The Clerk agreed to advise the HR Manager accordingly.

Clerk

3.3 Terms of Reference

Members received and noted the amended Staff and Student Committee Terms of Reference (Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-3.3). As proposed by Ms Birchenough and seconded by Mrs Adams, it was

RESOLVED to endorse the Staff and Student Committee Terms of Reference, as detailed in Paper No CB/22.03.11/R-3.3.

D-1 CAPITAL PROJECT STATUS REPORT, MARCH 2011

Action

Members received and noted the Monthly Status Report for March 2011 in relation to the capital project (Paper No CB/22.03.11/D-1).

Referring to page 7 of the report, the Principal highlighted that planning applications will now be issued to retain certain temporary accommodation and the temporary road at the Dartford campus.

Members were advised that the College had taken possession of the refurbished theatre and staff and students were very impressed with the quality of the facilities. Staff from other colleges had also commented on the high standard of accommodation.

Referring to page 8 of the report, the Principal advised that much of the rented temporary accommodation would be released as soon as possible, to avoid further costs. As far as the furniture, equipment and fitting out costs, he was confident that they would come within target.

Following a request from Mr Oguns, the Principal would ask the Vice Principal (Estates) to provide Mr Oguns with details of the retention monies and the reasons for the percentage currently being retained.

Principal

I-1 ESTATES AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE

1.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Estates and Facilities Committee held on 1 March 2011 (Paper No CB/22.03.11/I-1.1) were received and noted.

1.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

I-2 AUDIT COMMITTEE

2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 2 March 2011 (Paper No CB/22.03.11/I-2.1) were received and noted.

2.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

I-3 CORPORATE CONFERENCE

3.1 The minutes of the Corporate Conference held on 5 March 2011 (Paper No CB/22.03.11/I-3.1) were received and noted.

3.2 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

I-4 POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 8 March 2011 (Paper No CB/22.03.11/I-4.1) were received and noted.

4.2 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

I-5 STAFF AND STUDENT COMMITTEE

5.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Staff and Student Committee held on 9 March 2011 (Paper No CB/22.03.11/I-5.1) were received and noted.

5.2 **Matters Arising**

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I-6 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS, JANUARY 2011

Members received and noted the Management Accounts as at January 2011 (Paper No CB/22.03.11/I-6).

I-7 USE OF CORPORATION SEAL 2010/2011

Members noted that the Corporation Seal had been used on a number of occasions between 19 January 2011 and 14 March 2011 on documentation in relation to the capital project at Dartford, the surrender of the lease with the Port of London Authority and in relation to the SusCon Project.

C-1 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Referring to student governors, the Principal reported that a website facility offered by the National Union of Students would be considered by the College and the Assistant Principal/Director of Student Experience and Support would be working with the Vice Principal of the NUS for ways to engage with students.

Action

C-2 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Action

5.30pm Wednesday, 18 May 2011 in the Training Restaurant, Gravesend