

CORPORATE BOARD

NORTH WEST KENT COLLEGE

Minutes of a meeting of the CORPORATE BOARD

held at 5.30pm on Wednesday, 19 May 2010, at Lower Higham Road, Gravesend

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

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

P-1 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Mr Oguns.

The Chairman referred to Item D-1, the Principal's Report, which he had discussed with the Principal. As many of the items within the report were linked to other items on the agenda, it had been agreed that, in future agenda, the report would appear in the Preamble, immediately following Apologies and the Minutes.

P-2 MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2010 were approved and signed as a correct record.

Action

Clerk

2.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

R-1 SEARCH COMMITTEE

1.1 Appointment of Member, Mr Robbie Higgins, and Mentor

Members received and noted the extract from the Search Committee minutes (Paper No CB/19.05.10/R-1.1). As proposed by Mr Newell and seconded by Mrs Jones, it was

RESOLVED to accept Mr Robbie Higgins as a Member of the Corporate Board for a period of four years.

Dr Finney expressed his willingness to act as mentor to Mr Higgins. As proposed by Mr Newell and seconded by Mr Moody, it was

RESOLVED to appoint Dr Roger Finney as mentor to Mr Robbie Higgins.

Mr Higgins was welcomed to the Board by members.

1.2 Re-appointment of Member, Mr Brian Newell

Members received and noted the extract from the Search Committee minutes (Paper No CB/19.05.10/R-1.2). As proposed by Mrs Adams and seconded by Mrs Jones, it was

RESOLVED to re-appoint Mr Brian Newell as a Member of the Corporate Board for a period of four years.

R-2 ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT TO GOVERNORS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2008/2009

Members received and noted the Annual Health and Safety Report to Governors for the Academic Year 2008/2009 (Paper No CB/19.05.10/R-2).

The Vice Principal reminded members that, as he was now responsible for health and safety, he would ensure that the report was presented to the Board much earlier in the academic year. He reported that further work was planned to include 'near misses' in reporting, as he considered that area important. Members were advised that the membership of the Health and Safety Committee had been widened to ensure greater representation across the College.

Ms Birchenough and Mrs Adams, as members of the Estates Committee, were satisfied with the revised report. Dr Finney remained dissatisfied with

Action

some of the statistics contained within the report, although did not wish to delay the approval of it any further. Mr Parkes welcomed the improvements made within the report and endorsed the desirability of benchmarking, but was more interested in seeing trend data and analysis within the College, over as many years as possible, indicating the number of accidents and near misses, number of RIDDOR accidents, in order to assess what progress was being made.

Members endorsed the report as submitted, but undertook to clarify the requirements for future reporting. As proposed by Mr Butterfield and seconded by Mr Moody, it was

RESOLVED to accept the Annual Health and Safety Report to Governors for the Academic Year 2008/2009 as set out in Paper No CB/19.05.10/R-2.

The Clerk advised that the report was an important document and would be referenced as evidence of the Board's stewardship by the HSE in the event of a serious accident.

The Chairman believed the Committee would progress this important area within the College under the Vice Principal's Chairmanship, commencing with the widening of the Health and Safety Committee membership. The Vice Principal noted that some slips, trips and falls had been identified during the recent meeting, particularly as a result of the capital project works, and remedial works had been carried out. The Chairman reported that he had had sight of the introduction to the Health and Safety Policy, which he would be required to sign in due course. He had stressed that health and safety was the responsibility of **all** and had to be embedded within the College.

R-3 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

3.1 Disciplinary Procedure for Senior Post-Holders

Members received and noted the Disciplinary Procedure for Senior Post-Holders (Paper No CB/19.05.10/R-3.1)

As proposed by Mrs Adams and seconded by Dr Finney, it was

RESOLVED to adopt the Disciplinary Procedure for Senior Post-Holders, as detailed in Paper No CB/19.05.10/R-3.1.

3.2 Disciplinary Procedure for Senior Post-Holders, Optional Terms of Reference for Appeal Committee (Under the Formal Procedure – Section 5)

Members received and noted the Disciplinary Procedure for Senior Post-Holders, Optional Terms (Paper No CB/19.05.10/R-3.2).

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Vice
Principal
(Estates)

As proposed by Mr Newell and seconded by Mrs Adams, it was

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RESOLVED *to adopt the Disciplinary Procedure for Senior Post-Holders, Optional Terms of Reference for Appeal Committee (Under the Formal Procedure – Section 5), as detailed in Paper No CB/19.05.10/R-3.2.*

R-4 STANDARDS COMMITTEE: MECHANISM FOR REPORTING ON EVERY CHILD MATTERS AND SAFEGUARDING

Members received and noted the Preface to Paper No CB/19.05.10/R-4) in relation to reporting on Every Child Matters and Safeguarding. Dr Finney, as Chairman of the Standards Committee, explained that the issue had been discussed at length by the Committee with a view to a standard template being created for reporting purposes. Further consideration would be given at the next meeting, on 8 June, as to the topics to be covered by each report. The Chairman reminded members that governors should not cross into the management of these areas but could stress what evidence they wished to see at each meeting. Members agreed that, to date, reports had been inconsistent and that there was insufficient assurance being given that the areas were being handled appropriately. Mrs Jones, as Safeguarding Champion, believed that the report from the consultant, recently engaged by the College, should be the starting point of any discussions. As proposed by Mrs Adams and seconded by Mr Newell, it was

RESOLVED *to reconsider this matter further, in the light of the consultant's report on safeguarding and conclusions reached at a meeting to be convened, involving the Safeguarding Champion, the Chairman of the Standards Committee and the Principal.*

Clerk

D-1 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Members received and noted the Principal's Report (Paper No CB/19.05.10/D-1), which had been prepared prior to the General Election on 6 May 2010.

1. Funding

1.1 *16-18 Funding*

Members noted that the Principal had written to the Chief Executive of the Young People's Learning Agency in relation to the reduction of some £700,000 in funding. The Principal advised that a reply had been received, which acknowledged that the case had been well-stated, although no additional funding was being offered. It had been stressed, however, that there was the potential for in-year adjustments. The Principal confirmed that

the College had no intention of reducing 16-18 student numbers next year and was hopeful that by demonstrating year-on-year growth, the College would be in a better position for 2011/12.

1.2 *Adult Funding*

Members noted that SMT had been working with Heads of School and their teams in planning numbers for 2010/11 in order to ensure that priority areas were being targeted.

2. Machinery of Government

The Principal understood an announcement was expected next week on the reformation of Government departments, following the election. In the meantime, he had been ensuring close links were in place with Bexley and Kent County Council. The Principal reported on a positive note, that, the Deputy Director for Education in Bexley believed that the College had a strong role to play in that Borough.

3. Accommodation Issues

3.1 *Dartford*

Members were pleased to note that the Acacia Hall in Dartford had been secured for the end of this academic year and the commencement of the next, during refurbishment of the Miskin Theatre. Although the refurbishment of the theatre was more problematical, the construction of Blocks S and B was on target.

Members were advised that the College had become dissatisfied with the level of service provided by William G Dick, Quantity Surveyors, and had terminated association with them, by means of a formal letter from the Corporation's solicitors, Maples Teesdale. Norman Rourke Pryme were now providing the service previously undertaken by William G Dick Partnership. On advice from the Vice Principal, members were satisfied that there was no conflict of interest as a result of the change in consultant and, as proposed by Dr Finney and seconded by Mr Moody, it was

RESOLVED *to approve the appointment of Norman Rourke Pryme as Quantity Surveyors in relation to the capital project at the Dartford campus.*

The Vice Principal advised that the Dartford capital project was over budget at present, however adjustments would be made to bring the project back on budget.

3.2 *Gravesend*

Members noted that the Gravesend project was on budget and demolition had been completed. The new roadway was currently under construction. The

Vice Principal reported that student numbers in Engineering for 2010/11 had increased and, as a result of the growth in student numbers at the Gravesend campus, the one double mobile remaining on site would be purchased. It would remain at the back of the site. The School of Maritime Operations and Logistics would relocate to The Maltings soon.

The Vice Principal drew members' attention to the lease with the Port of London Authority in relation to Denton Wharf, which had commenced in April 2008 at a cost of £17,000-£18,000 per annum. He explained that the property had become surplus to requirements and he was hopeful that the College could be relieved of its obligations under the Lease, without cost. In that event, the Thameside campus would be utilised by MOL, mainly for work associated with the fire training ground and the jetty. The Clerk referred to the Financial Memorandum, specifically with reference to lease arrangements, and advised that the College might be obliged to report such changes to the appropriate funding agency, subject to the value of the transaction. The Vice Principal advised that the National Sea Training Trust would also be advised.

3.3 *SusCon*

Members were delighted with the Principal's announcement that the College had secured £2m of capital funding towards the SusCon project. Despite the stipulation that the project would be a "National Skills Academy"-led initiative rather than a College one, members thanked the Director of Enterprise for her efforts in securing the funding.

4. Higher Education

4.1 *IQER*

The Principal reported that the IQER, the HE equivalent of Ofsted, had been conducted during April. He was pleased to report that feedback had included agreement in all respects, confidence in all areas, and a reported wide range of good practice. The full report would be submitted to the Standards Committee in June.

4.2 *University of Greenwich*

Following attendance at a meeting of the Partner College Principals with the Vice and Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Greenwich, the Principal reported that he believed that, in future, there would be more intervention by the University in order to meet their priorities. At present, there is some duplication between partner colleges and 'value for money' was being mooted for the future. The University was also keen that fees for full-time programmes mirrored those charge by the University. The Principal noted that the College was reviewing its HE offer to ensure the appropriate balance will be achieved.

Clerk

5. Formal Collaboration Opportunity

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5.1 *Trust Partnerships*

Members noted the Principal's report on possible trust partnerships with local schools. He explained that Hextable School was keen to explore whether the College would become a partner in its trust. Under that Trust, the school would become a foundation school, which had wider implications for the leadership and governance arrangements for the school rather than the College or its Board. The Principal believed such a collaboration would provide the College with another link to the community. Also, he believed it would provide an opportunity to share good practice on behalf of both parties, particularly through staff development.

Similarly, the College had been approached by the Head Teacher of Northfleet School for Girls, although such collaboration was likely to be within a co-operative trust.

The Principal reported that there was no financial commitment involved and he believed that the College could resign from the trust at any time if it considered it necessary. He believed it a good opportunity for the College.

Mrs Jones understood there to be a financial incentive for the schools in the early stages and believed that other schools would approach the College on a similar basis. That said, she believed the staff development opportunities to be considerable.

Members discussed the proposals and, following discussion, as proposed by Mrs Adams and seconded by Mrs Jones, it was

RESOLVED *that the Principal should progress 'in principle' discussions with the schools in relation to becoming involved in Trust arrangements, pending further information being provided to members.*

Principal

6. Staffing Issues

6.1 *Vice Principal Recruitment*

The timetable for the recruitment of the new Vice Principal was drawn to members' attention. Members were advised that the selection panel would consist of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Mrs Adams, Ms Birchenough and the Principal. The Principal confirmed that the interviews would be scheduled for Tuesday, 15 June 2010 at the Gravesend campus. Following confirmation of members' availability to attend that evening, it was agreed that an extraordinary meeting of the Corporate Board would be held, subject to a suitable candidate having been selected. The Estates Committee, scheduled for 5.30pm, would commence after the extraordinary meeting.

All

Clerk

7. Student Successes

Action

7.1 *Prize winning students*

Members were delighted at the recent success of three students in the Regional Construction ‘Skills Build’ competition, gaining first place in Carpentry (Charlie Connor), Joinery (Kieran Tucker) and Senior Painting and Decorating (Laura Scott). Members agreed that those students should be invited to the buffet at the commencement of the next Board meeting, in addition to the official opening of the Gravesend campus.

Principal

9. Challenges and Opportunities for the next 12 months and beyond

9.2 *University Technical Colleges*

Another potential partnership opportunity was noted, *University Technical Colleges*, which have been described as similar to the technical schools of the 1950’s. There were currently three in the country and one was being planned for Greenwich, in collaboration with Lewisham College. The Principal advised that consideration may be given to this in the future.

9.3 *Employer Responsible Work*

The Principal reported that Apprenticeship Training (and/or Recruitment) Agencies would be considered by SMT in June and by the Board in July following review of practices within Kent and best practices from around the UK.

Members were advised that the application to receive the employer training kitemark, the ‘Training Quality Standard’ had been unsuccessful in February/March; feedback and the report were expected later this month. The Principal believed the failure related to embedding of skills within the College, however he would await the report for further information.

The Chairman thanked the Principal for his first report to the Board, which, as discussed earlier, would be placed within the Preamble, in future.

Clerk

D-2 GOVERNORS’ REVIEW GROUP

The Chairman referred to two meetings of the Governors’ Review Group, which had taken place in March and April 2010. He advised that the informal notes would be submitted to the full Board at its next meeting in July.

Clerk

The Chairman advised that a comprehensive report would be made to the Board in July which provided the Group’s suggestions for the Board’s consideration. These included matters such as the new name for the Estates Committee, possibly the Asset Management Committee, and its Terms of Reference; the Terms of Reference of an Human Resources Committee; the

process for appointment of Chairmen of Standing Committees, which the Group considered should follow the same process as that applicable to Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Corporation; the Board's self-assessment process.

In relation to the self-assessment process, the Chairman advised that the Group had considered a second 'away day' in order to discuss and complete the Corporate Board Self-Assessment Report. Members agreed and Saturday, 9 October 2010 was entered in the Corporate diary.

Action

Clerk

I-1 SEARCH COMMITTEE

1.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Search Committee held on 4 May 2010 (Paper No CB/19.05.10/I-1.1) were received and noted.

1.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

I-2 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 4 May 2010 (Paper No CB/19.05.10/I-2.1) were received and noted.

I-3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO MARCH 2010

Members received and noted the Management Accounts to March 2010 (Paper No CB/19.05.10/I-3).

I-4 CAPITAL PROJECT STATUS REPORT, MAY 2010

Members received and noted the Capital Project Status Report as at May 2010 (Paper No CB/19.05.10/I-4).

I-5 USE OF CORPORATION SEAL 2009/2010

Members received and noted advice that the Corporation Seal had not been required during the period 16 March 2010 and 11 May 2010 (Paper No CB/19.05.10/I-5).

I-6 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Members received and noted the Register of Corporation Members'/Senior Staff Interests 2009-2010 (Paper No CB/19.05.10/I-6).

I-7 REPORT ON GOVERNOR TRAINING EVENT: EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE SEMINAR

Members received and noted the report of Ms Birchenough following her attendance on 27 April 2010 at a governor training event entitled “Effective Governance Seminar” (Paper No CB/19.05.10/I-7).

C-1 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman referred to the official opening of the Gravesend campus. He advised that the former Principal would be invited to attend the event. Following brief discussion, members agreed that the former Vice Chairman, John Hill, should also be invited.

C-2 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

5.30pm, Wednesday, 7 July 2010 in the Boardroom, Dartford

Action

Clerk