

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 18 May 2009 at 5.30 pm
in Conference Room 1, the Astral Centre**

Members Present:

Ken Applegate: Member
Russell Baxter: Staff Member
Evelyn Hicks: Member
Jane Hore: Vice-Chair/Member
Kevin Howes: Member
David Matthews: Member
Bob Mee: Chair/Member
Gwen Parsons: Principal
Richard Perkins: Vice Chair/Member
Sally Simpkin: Member
Anne Swietlik: Member

In Attendance:

Ros Pugh: Vice-Principal
Ron Stainsby: Assistant Principal
Charles Reynolds: Clerk to the Corporation

Before the meeting commenced members received a briefing from Chris McGuinness, Head of Personal and Community Development, on the work of her Centre.

Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence had been received from Sheila Keenan, Laura Morgan and Sarah Smith. Apologies had also been received from Teresa Miller who should have been in attendance.

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

1. Disclosures of Interest:

There were no disclosures of interest relevant to the agenda items.

2. Corporation Membership – to receive recommendation from the Search Committee

The Clerk advised the meeting that Search Committee had now interviewed all prospective candidates for membership. Members were also reminded that a report on two of the candidates, Alan Debenham and Ashley Reynolds, had been provided at the Corporation meeting held in March.

Search Committee had met again on 12 May 2009 to meet with Alastair King and, having considered all candidates and completed the process, were now recommending all three to Corporation for appointment.

Referring to the meeting paper, and in response to a question, the Clerk clarified that whilst reference was made to CVs having been circulated they had not. Search Committee had seen CVs for Alan Debenham and Ashley Reynolds. Alastair King did not have a CV. One member expressed concern at the lack of this document.

Action

Having reviewed the meeting paper and received the opinion of Search Committee on each candidate it was agreed to deal with each one separately.

The Chair proposed that Alan Debenham be appointed as a member of Corporation in accordance with the requirements of the Instruments and Articles and Standing Orders for a period of four years. This was seconded by Anne Swietlik.

Members voted unanimously in favour.

Kevin Howes proposed that Alastair King be appointed as a member of Corporation in accordance with the requirements of the Instruments and Articles and Standing Orders for a period of four years. This was seconded by Anne Swietlik.

Members voted in favour. There was one abstention.

Kevin Howes proposed that Ashley Reynolds be co-opted on to the Personnel Committee. This was seconded by Richard Perkins.

Members voted unanimously in favour. There was one abstention.

Part 1a. Open items for noting and action.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on 30 March 2009 were agreed to be a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Page 7 and agenda item 13.3 Project Board

Kevin Howes observed that it was his recollection that not only had Corporation received the minutes they had also agreed with and approved the action taken by the Project Board with respect to the Application in Principle and Capital Project. Members agreed this to be the case. To this end the minutes be amended to read as follows from the end of line 3

Members approved of and agreed with the action taken by the Project Board regarding the Capital Project and the Application in Principle.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes and not Agenda Items

4.1 HR Strategic Plan 2009/2013 (previous agenda item 10). Actioned.

4.2 Freedom of Information – College Publication Scheme (previous agenda item 11). Actioned.

5. Correspondence

5.1 Financial Management and Control Evaluation from LSC. To confirm the LSC agrees with the College self-evaluation

The Principal advised that the College had recently received the ratings as set out in Framework for Excellence. The FMCE was one of these ratings. College performance had been assessed as follows:

Learner Views	Good
Learner Destinations	Good
Employer Views	No grade calculated
Success Rates	Good
Inspection Grades	Satisfactory
Financial Health	Satisfactory
Financial Management & Control	Good
Delivery as a % of Funding Allocation or Contract Value	Good
Resource Efficiency	Good

Members were pleased at this outcome

5.2 Governors Council – Association of Colleges

5.3 Corporation Involvement with Academies – LSIS

5.4 Annual Monitoring Visit - Ofsted

Part 1b Open items for discussion and action.

6. Courses for Concern

Presented by Ros Pugh who advised that the purpose of the report was to inform members about the quality improvements measures needed to ensure the strategic aims of the College regarding its provision could be met.

Ros Pugh believed the picture overall showed improvement although there were still areas that gave concern. There were however no courses performing at less than the required minimum level of performance, which was pleasing.

Members were taken through the detailed meeting paper with care, especially section 2 which reviewed performance on specific courses in Care, Creative and Essential Skills, Construction, Science and Technology and Service Industries. Part of the review included reference to courses identified 12 months ago as giving cause for concern, together with an update on the effectiveness of actions taken to rectify the situation.

With reference to Service Industries there was much discussion on the provision of Catering courses which were very resource intensive and expensive to run. The Principal also advised that whilst there were significant numbers of pre-16 students in this area not many progressed to College provision post 16. Members felt that it would be important to review this area again in six months time.

Finally Ros Pugh advised that there were issues of concern regarding Assessor and Verifier Award training. This had much to do with the difficulty College staff has in tracking students and getting them to finish their awards. In many respects there was little that the College staff could do.

In response to the report David Matthews requested that in future it would be helpful if numeric targets could have been used to help set parameters.

Members thanked Ros Pugh for her report which was noted.

G Parsons

7. Student Attendance Review

Again presented by Ros Pugh who in setting the scene for the report, observed that student attendance patterns were a good indicator of future success and also for identifying students at risk. Over the last twelve months there also appears to have been a change in why attendance was not as good as it should be with many students having to be the primary carer in their household.

Members were taken through the detail of the report which not only highlighted the reasons why students did not attend College, but also set out the strategies being used to support students at risk. Russell Baxter advised that the Learning and Achievement Mentors (LAMs) had really been a help in supporting students during what had been a difficult year. Ros Pugh added that there had been fewer disciplinary cases, suspensions or exclusions as well but that did not mean that there had not been students with real issues to address. What it did mean was that systems were in place to support them.

Referring to the report Jane Hore asked for clarification on what was meant by “poor health” in relation to attendance. Was this physical or mental and did the College work with the appropriate support agencies? Responding Ros Pugh advised that the health issues faced by students could be both physical or mental and the College did have good working relationships with support agencies. Examples were given.

Sally Simpkin made reference to the work of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health services advising that they could support students up to the age of 18.

In the absence of any further questions or discussions members thanked Ros Pugh for her report and were pleased at the progress being made in supporting student attendance. The report was noted.

8. Key Performance Target Monitoring Report Term 2

Ros Pugh took members through a very detailed meeting paper with care. Specific attention was given to the appendices which detailed College performance to date against each Key Performance Target.

The key areas of concern were with KPT1, Achieving Learner Numbers in Line with Priorities. Whilst it was clear that recruitment was in line with priorities the shortfall of 16-19 student numbers would impact on next year’s funding profile. (As a general point on this report it was acknowledged it was difficult to track the relevant numbers).

With reference to KPT6, Responsiveness to Employers, members were advised that accreditation of the Training Quality Standard was being deferred to the next academic year, primarily because of funding concerns linked with the College’s current financial position. Members understood and agreed with this decision and it was agreed that this element of the targets should also be deferred to next year.

It was also noted that the LSC had not been able to grade the College in this area, as had been reported earlier in the meeting.

Turning to KPT7, Workforce Development Ros Pugh was pleased to report that progress had been made. However with KPT8 14-19 Partnership Working members expressed confusion over what was being reported. Whilst it was clear that progress was being made what was not so clear was the relationship, and impact on the College, regarding the different student cohorts at College and the North Suffolk Skills Centre across the age ranges. Ros Pugh agreed to investigate a better way of reporting this information.

R Pugh

Reporting of KPT10, Improving Financial Health, it was noted that the Estates and Finance Committee had reviewed the most recent Management Accounts and whilst the overall position was still difficult there was evidence that it was also improving. There was a possibility of a break even situation by the end of the year.

Finally members noted that there was a separate item on the agenda re KPT12, Capital Plan, when a specific report would be given.

Members were pleased at the progress made to date although recognised that there was a need to keep a close eye on performance overall.

Ros Pugh was thanked for her report which was received.

9. Capital Project – Verbal Report

The Principal advised members that the College had been asked to submit a completed questionnaire about the Capital Project as part of the process being followed by the LSC in determining which projects to be supported. This had been done in the first week of May. There had been follow-up requests for additional information and this was why Teresa Miller was not at the meeting.

Completing the questionnaire had entailed pulling the Design Team together, and had incurred a level of expenditure.

Following the release of Sir Andrew Foster's report an extra £300 million had been released in the Budget for capital projects and two independent agencies had been commissioned to handle the process of determining which projects would be supported. A key consideration was the need for projects once approved to be capable of starting within 3 months. There were other criteria including impact on economic regeneration and interdependency with other schemes.

The LSC Capital Committee were due to meet on 28 May 2009 and full Council on 3 June 2009. The College will know then if the project is not to go ahead.

The Principal advised that extensive lobbying in support of the College scheme had taken place and was still ongoing. There were no guarantees but the College project still had a chance of being supported. Members will be kept informed.

Members thanked the Principal for the update.

10. Outcome of the Customer Service Excellence Assessment – Verbal Update

Presented on behalf of Teresa Miller by the Principal who advised that the College had yet to receive formal written feedback. However the College had been successful in achieving the standard and indeed against a number of the criteria assessed had been measured as excellent.

This award had replaced Charter Mark and was more difficult to achieve. One area for improvement was to ensure that Corporation understood the "essence" of the award better.

Ken Applegate asked whether this success would be the subject of PR activity. It was confirmed it would once the report had been received. It was also possible to hold an award ceremony, the Principal advising that the award itself came from the Deputy Prime Minister's Office.

Members thanked the Principal for her positive report.

11. Calendar of Meeting Dates and Committee Membership re 2009/2010

Presented jointly by the Chair and Clerk who advised that, at the recent Search Committee Meeting, where the calendar and committee membership had been reviewed, there had also been discussion on whether it was time for Corporation to review the way it dealt with Curriculum and Standards Key Performance Targets and issues.

Following thorough discussion at Search Committee it was the recommendation that Corporation should establish a short life working group to investigate if improvements to the current arrangements can be made, to ensure an appropriate level of consideration is given by Corporation to the relevant strategic aims and Key Performance Targets. It was also suggested the group report back to the July Corporation Meeting.

Responding members asked who could be involved, whilst clarifying that Search Committee Members had volunteered to be such a group this was not in fact a Search Committee issue and should be open to any members to participate.

Following discussion it was proposed by Anne Swietlik and seconded by Richard Perkins that such a group be established.

Members voted unanimously in favour. The Clerk to organise and members to volunteer to the Clerk. With regard to the Calendar, and following discussion, it was suggested and agreed to move a LOWES Board meeting from March 2010 to February 2010.

Clerk

It was therefore proposed by Evelyn Hicks and seconded by Kevin Howes that members adopt, as amended, the Calendar of Meetings and the committee membership for 2009/10.

Members voted unanimously in favour.

Part 1c Open items to be noted.

12. Minutes of the Committees

12.1 Audit Committee

Jane Hore presented the draft minutes for the Audit Committee Meeting held on 27 April 2009, which were noted. She also updated members on the key issues discussed at the meeting.

12.2 Estates and Finance Committee

Richard Perkins presented the minutes of the Estates and Finance Committee Meeting held on 23 March 2009, which were received, and advised that he had reported on the key issues discussed at the last Corporation Meeting.

The Chair presented a verbal report on the most recent meeting held on 11 May 2009 again updating on the key issues dealt with. These had included an update on the College IT Infrastructure, the Management Accounts, a review of performance against Key Performance Targets an update on activity at the North Suffolk Skills Centre and the Kirkley Centre lease situation.

Members thanked all Chairs for their updates.

12.2a. Health & Safety Policy

The Chair advised that the Estates and Finance Committee had reviewed the Health and Safety Policy and were recommending its acceptance. The meeting paper indicated two amendments that were to be made but had not been actioned as yet. Therefore approval was subject to the amendment to the document taking place.

It was therefore proposed by Kevin Howes and seconded by Ken Applegate that Corporation approve the Health & Safety Policy as amended.

Members voted unanimously in favour.

12.2b College Financial Regulations

The Clerk advised that, in accordance with the Committee Terms of Reference the Estates and Finance Committee had reviewed the Financial Regulations and had approved them. However there was a requirement for Corporation to be advised that this action had been taken on its behalf.

Responding members endorsed the decision but requested that the Financial Regulations as they related to travel expenses be tightened up by including time periods with which claims should be made.

Clerk/T Miller

13. Any other Business

13.1 Senior Post Holder Update

The Principal advised that the closing date for applications had been 15 May 2009 and that following a shortlisting exercise prior to the Corporation Meeting the original list of 18 applicants had been reduced to 7 who would be invited for interview 4/5 June 2009.

The programme for this would be issued as soon as possible. Anne Swietlik had made herself available for both days to provide continuity. There would be a need to call a Special Corporation Meeting to receive recommendations for action and to confirm any appointment. As yet no dates for this had been fixed but it could be Monday 8 June 2009. Clerk to advise.

Clerk

13.2 Public Access to Meetings

Richard Perkins expressed concerns that whilst Corporation had a policy on giving members of the public access to Corporation Meetings it was not necessarily clear how they would find out how to make a request to attend in line with the policy.

Following discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should add a suitable entry on the Corporation Home Page on its website making clear how such a request could be made.

Clerk

Part 2 Confidential Items

There were no confidential items

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next Corporation Meeting will take place on Monday 13 July 2009. The venue to be Conference Room 1, the Astral Centre.