

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 19 October 2009 at 5.30 pm  
in Conference Room 1, the Astral Centre**

**Members Present:**

Mihai Apostol:	Student Member (from agenda item 4)
Ken Applegate:	Member
Russell Baxter:	Staff Member
Alan Debenham:	Member
Evelyn Hicks:	Member
Kevin Howes:	Member
Alastair King:	Member
Bob Mee:	Chair/Member
Gwen Parsons:	Principal
Richard Perkins:	Vice Chair/Member
Sarah Smith:	Staff Member
Anne Swietlik:	Member

**In Attendance:**

Phillip Belden:	Vice-Principal
Teresa Miller:	Vice-Principal
Ruth Harrison:	Assistant Principal
Tom Toolan:	Assistant Principal
Charles Reynolds:	Clerk to the Corporation

At the commencement of the meeting, and before any other business was dealt with members agreed to deal with all confidential agenda items listed on the agenda. The minutes for these items can be found within the Corporation Confidential Minute Book. With the exception of the Clerk to the Corporation all those listed as being 'in attendance' were excluded from the discussions on these items.

**1. Welcome, apologies for absence and disclosures of interest**

**Action**

At this point, Teresa Miller, Phillip Belden, Ruth Harrison and Tom Toolan joined the meeting. A special welcome was extended to the last three who were attending their first corporation meeting since their appointments.

**Apologies for absence.**

Apologies for absence had been received from Jane Hore, Sheila Keenan, Sally Simpkin and Jason King, who should have been in attendance.

**Disclosures of Interest.**

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

**3) 3.1) Re-appointment of Chair and Vice Chairs for 2008-2010**

At this point the Clerk to the Corporation took the meeting and reminded members

that in accordance with standing orders, the chair was appointed for a two year period and subject to annual review. To this end members were asked if they had any concerns regarding the Chair remaining in office for another year. There were no concerns and it was therefore confirmed that Bob Mee would continue as Chair.

The Chair took the meeting.

### 3.1b) Re-appointment of Vice Chairs

Members confirmed that, as he was willing to do so Richard Perkins should continue as Vice-Chair.

The Chair however confirmed that Jane Hore did not wish to continue as Vice-Chair. This meant there was a vacancy. As there were no members willing to show an interest at this time the Chair requested that, after consideration any member wishing to take on the role should contact the Clerk to the Corporation in the first instance.

### 3.2) Appointment of New Student Member

Members were advised by the Clerk that after following due process, the Student Congress had nominated Mihai Apostol, a student on the Air Cabin Crew Programme, as the FE Student Governor.

It was therefore proposed by Anne Swietlik and seconded by Kevin Howes that Mihai Apostol be appointed a Member of Corporation in accordance with the Instruments and Articles of Government and Corporation Standing Orders.

At this point Mihai Apostol joined the meeting and thanked members for giving him the opportunity to serve the College. For his benefit members introduced themselves, as did those in attendance.

## 4) Minutes of Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 13 July 2009 were agreed to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

## 5) Matter arising from the Minutes and non agenda items.

### 5.1) Letter to Bob Russell (previous apologies for absence)

The Clerk confirmed that he had written on behalf of the Corporation to Bob Russell to thank him for his work as a Corporation member and to wish him well for the future.

### 5.1B) College re-branding (previous agenda item 12.4b)

Members were advised that this item would now be on the agenda for the January Corporation Meeting.

## 6) Correspondence

6.1) letters from the Department of Business Innovation and Skills

6.2) Letters from Sheila Keenan

6.3) Letter from Suffolk County Council re Sixth Form

6.4) Letter from Learning & Skills Council

6.5) LSIS Leadership Skills for Governance Programme

6.6) Letter from UCU re pay claim 2009/2010

## **7) Student Performance 2008/09**

In the absence of Jason King, who was on paternity leave, the Principal presented this item advising that the information contained in the report provided an early indication on the performance of the College in the year in question.

Members were reminded that the College wanted to be in the upper quartile with respect to 'Student Success' and that 'Success' was a measure of those students who achieved against the number of students who started the programme of study.

The Principal was pleased to report that the current headline success rate for the College was 76%, an increase on that published in the meeting paper, and further results were still being waited on which would improve the situation. Therefore the Principal was confident of a final success rate of 80%. When compared with the relevant national benchmark this would put the College into the upper quartile. It was pointed out that national benchmark had gone down by 3% and in response to a question about why this was the case the Principal advised that she could not be sure. There were two possible causes. One a reduction in retention rate and the other a reduction in achievement. It was not however clear what was behind the reduction.

Returning to the College situation members were informed that the retention rate was at benchmark (80%). It was therefore essential that achievements happened.

Members were also updated on the league table results (level II) which were yet to be verified by the Department for Children, Families and Schools. Again the picture was one of improvement from last year although the breadth of students recruited by the College meant that results would not match those of Sixth Forms or other Colleges in the area.

Anne Swietlik observed that she found the information in the report very helpful and an improvement. Members agreed and thanked the Principal for her report.

## **8) Learner Numbers**

Presented by Phillip Beldon who advised that the purpose for the report was to provide information on 2008/2009 enrolment and an update on enrolment for the current year 2009/2010.

Referring to the meeting paper and with regard to 2008/09 enrolment Phillip Beldon was pleased to advise that in all categories the College had been very much on target. In terms of Learner Responsive outcomes it was pointed out that 19+ headcount should read 2131 and not 22131 as printed at 2.1).

With respect to Employer Responsive it was pointed out that the targets had been renegotiated midyear which, in view of the downturn in the economic climate, had resulted in over ambitious targets. Train to Gain targets were however exceeded.

Turning to higher education there had been an underperformance of 21FTE on the contract and the accounts had taken this into account. However overall the College had performed well.

The current enrolment figures for 2009/2010 were then reviewed by Phillip Beldon. With the bulk of full time students already enrolled he advised that the target for 16-18 year olds had already been reached and that there would be further recruitment

opportunities throughout the year. Funding could be increased to 101% of contract value if recruitment numbers exceeded 110% in terms of head count. Recruitment 19+ was also ahead of previous years at this time.

Again because of the economic climate Apprenticeship recruitment was a concern. However discussions were taking place with the LSC about using work placements as a way of enabling more students to complete. This would be via programme led pathways. Details were provided. Members thanked Phillip Belden for his very detailed and pleasing report which was noted.

Alistair King left the meeting at this point.

### **9) Common Inspection Framework – a governors perspective**

In presenting this item Ruth Harrison circulated a briefing sheet to members for reference. It was confirmed that whilst the common grading scale remained the same there were limiting grades relating to Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity which impacted on the final outcome of any Ofsted inspection. These two areas were considered in assuring quality.

Members were taken through the structure of the grading system and Ruth Harrison explained the interrelationship between main grade, contributory grade and limiting grade areas with particular reference to those aspects of the common inspection framework that looked at the role of governors. Once again the fact that Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity were key areas for Governors to get to grips with was stressed.

In terms of when inspections were likely to happen, and unless one has been requested, Ruth Harrison advised that colleges that were deemed to be unsatisfactory and not improving, satisfactory and not unimproving, or good but going backwards would, via a process of risk assessment by Ofsted, be targeted.

In receiving and noting the report members requested that the issues of Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity be considered as part of Corporation self-assessment which would take place shortly.

Members thanked Ruth Harrison for her report.

### **10) Equality & Diversity – revised action plan 2009/10**

Presented by the Principal who advised members that the college Equal Opportunities policy had been reviewed and re-drafted in line with the common Inspection Framework into an Equality and Diversity Policy. The policy was about promoting and celebrating difference and not about removing barriers. An attempt had been made to simplify the policy and the work that members had done with Stella Dadzie on Equality and Diversity was reflected in it as well.

Members were taken with care through each section of the policy to ensure that they also recognised their responsibilities. During this review the chair suggested, as was the case with their policies, that names of individuals should not be used, and if necessary, incorporated into an appendix. Alan Debenham felt that the policy was a really good document. Maihai Apostol observed that when he had first used the college website he felt there had been a lack of information or examples of ex students who had gone on to make successful careers for themselves and could be used as role models. This he felt would be most useful. The chair acknowledged that this was an example of how the college could improve its marketing. The Principal

added that plans were in place to address these types of issues.

In the absence of any further discussion it was proposed by Kevin Howes and seconded by Alan Debenham that subject to the amendment above re names the Equality and Diversity policy be approved.

Members voted unanimously in favour.

Turning to the proposed action plan which was shown as covering a two year period the principal advised that again a deliberate attempt had been made to keep the number of actions manageable. Each one was reviewed. In response to the action on staff recruitment Anne Sweitlik asked whether any follow-up took place to ensure that recruitment had been effective from the college perspective. Responding Teresa Miller advised that performance reviews were carried out as part of the probationary period.

In reviewing the action plan Alan Debenham felt that a two year period was too long and that the action plan should be targeted for delivery in one year. Members agreed this to be appropriate.

In the absence of any further discussion and subject to the time period being changed from two to one year it was proposed by Ken Applegate and seconded by Anne Swietlik that the action plan be appropriate.

Members voted unanimously in favour.

Members thanked the Principal for her report.

### **11) Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection – Annual report 2008/09**

Philip Belden presented this item and took members through the meeting paper with care. It was explained that the purpose of the report was to review 2008/09, inform members on change in legislation and to present a draft safeguarding policy and volunteering policy for approval.

As part of the review of relevant activity during 2008/09 members were advised of the number of incidents that had been dealt with, either within the college or by reference to external agencies.

In terms of legislative changes members were reminded of the introduction of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) vetting and barring scheme and related changes to the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checking system.

Finally Philip Belden advised that, with guidance from DCSF and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and cooperation from the Suffolk Safeguarding Children's Board and Adult Safeguarding Board, a revised policy had been produced for the college. In addition, and as a result of this review a 'volunteering policy' had also been produced for approval to ensure that aspect of college activity was appropriately covered. Members were taken through the detail of both policies.

Responding to the presentation and with specific reference to the policies the chair observed that there appeared to be a different 'style' to that used with Equality and Diversity. He requested that a common format be used for all policies. Members agreed.

Anne Swietlik asked whether there was a similar policy to the Volunteering one for Employers so that there was clarity of expectation there. Philip Belden advised that there wasn't. Members agreed that one should be provided.

**AP/PB**

**AP/PB**

There was also discussion on whether there should be individual policies or sections for each policy in one document. Responding Philip Belden observed that having separate policies enabled the college to provide the relevant policy to the relevant group. Volunteers would not need an Employers policy. This was acknowledged.

The Principal also asked what CRB checking was carried out with volunteers and whether this was the enhanced check.

As it was clear that there were still areas of the policies that needed finalising it was agreed that, because of their importance, the drafts under consideration should be incorporated for a further review at the December corporation meeting as a single document. This was proposed by the chair and seconded but Richard Perkins. The vote was unanimous in favour.

### **12) Complaint and Compliments Annual Report 2008/09**

Ruth Harrison presents the Annual Report for 2008/09 providing an analyses of the complaints and compliments received during the previous year. Specific reference was made to Appendix A which contained a series of tables and charts with comparative data for a five year period. This data clearly indicated a patterned reduced numbers of complaints which was pleasing. In response to a question as to why this was the case Ruth Harrison believed it was because complaints were dealt with centrally speedily and efficiently.

Turning to compliments whilst it was pleasing to note that there had been an increase it was still a concern that there was no systematic collection on these centrally.

Responding to the report Ken Applegate asked whether anything had been learned, good or bad from the data collected. In reply Ruth Harrison confirmed that there had been, particularly the importance of having a centralized process to ensure quick and appropriate responses were made to complaints. It was also clear that the college could do so much more to show off good practice by publicising compliments received.

In the absence of any further discussion members thanked Ruth Harrison for her report which was received.

### **13) Strategic Planning Cycle and targets for 2009/10**

Presented by the Principal who guided members through the very detailed meeting paper. Members were reminded of the strategic goals and priorities, which had been subject to minor modification at a previous meeting. This was followed by a thorough review of the proposed key performance targets for 2009/10. Each was considered and discussed separately. It was also confirmed that the senior management team had thoroughly reviewed each KPT in terms of risk.

In discussion the importance of calculating staff pay costs with respects to the financial key performance targets was acknowledged Ken Applegate also stressed the need to increase non LSC funded activity. On this point the chair felt it important for corporation to have a specific action plan which dealt with how this was achieved so that it could be appropriately monitored. Mihai Apostol also felt it important to cut out unnecessary spending across the board. The Principal confirmed that spending was tightly controlled.

In the absence of any further discussion it was proposed by the chair and seconded

by Anne Swietlik that the key performance targets for 2009/10 be approved. Members voted unanimously in favour.

The Principal then reviewed the strategic planning cycle with members and following discussion it was proposed by Kevin Howes and seconded by Anne Swietlik that this be approved. Members voted unanimously in favour.

#### **14) Lowestoft Sixth Form update**

Teresa Miller updated members on the plans in place to ensure that the college could provide appropriate student services facilities, learning resource centre facilities and refectory facilities for both the college and the sixth form.

With reference to student services work was scheduled to take place early half term to modify and enlarge the space available in the Horizon Centre.

The situation was not so straight forward re the Learning Resources Centre and Refectory. The plan however was to strip out the first floor of the tower block and locate the LRC there. This would as a consequence free space for the Refectory to take over.

It was confirmed that this would need to be completed by September 2011 and finance still had to be found. To this end a bid had been submitted to EEDA for funding support.

In thanking Teresa Miller for her report the chair observed that carrying out this work would vastly improve the facilities for the colleges own students. Members received the report with thanks.

#### **15) Draft Corporation Training Programme 2009/10**

Presented by the Clerk who confirmed the details of the proposed training to be carried out in conjunction with East Norfolk Sixth Form College and Great Yarmouth College Corporations.

In addition members were asked to confirm if they would like access to on-line safeguarding training and that there was a proposed joint visit to UCS Ipswich in January.

It was proposed by Kevin Howes and seconded by Anne Sweitlik that the programme be approved. Members voted unanimously in favour.

#### **16) Members attendance list 200/09**

Again presented by the Clerk who advised that in the past corporation had requested a review of attendance by Search Committee with a report beck on actions taken take to corporation.

Members agreed this should be the approach followed.

#### **17) Members Eligibility and Register of Interest Forms**

The clerk reminded members that it was corporation policy that these documents were renewed annually. To this end members were asked to complete and return the forms to the Clerk as soon as possible.

#### **18) Members Skills and Training Needs Analysis**

**AP Members**

As with the previous item the Clerk requested these forms were completed and returned as soon as possible. The Chair asked that search Committee review the Skill Audit Form.

AP Clerk

Part 1C- Open items to be noted.

## **19) Minutes of the Committee**

### **19.1) Audit Committee**

Anne Swietlik provided members with a verbal report on the issues covered at the Audit Committee Meeting held on 21 September 2009.

Responding to the report the chair thanked Anne Swietlik and proposed that for the remainder of the year she be elected chair of Audit. This was seconded by Ken Applegate.

Members voted unanimously in favour.

The chair also sought volunteers to serve and Audit Committee and also asked search committee to review committee membership at its next meeting.

AP Members / Clerk

### **19.2) Estates and Finance Committee**

Richard Perkins provided a verbal report for members on the issues dealt with at the Estates and Finance committee meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

## **20) Any Other Business**

### **20.1) Bank Loan**

Teresa Miller advised that, in accordance with Corporation instructions arrangements had been made to turn the revolving credit loan into a medium term loan. After much deliberating and in the knowledge of the chair and chair of Estates and Finance it had been determined that Lloyds TSB offered the most appropriate deal.

In order to progress this it was necessary for Corporation to agree a resolution instructing the bank to act. The resolution was set out in the meeting papers.

It was therefore proposed by Richard Perkins and seconded by Kevin Howes that corporation agree the resolution.

Members voted unanimously in favour.

### **20.2) College SAR Validation Day**

Confirmed as Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009 venue Hotel Victoria.

### **20.3) Corporation SAR Review**

Confirmed as taking place on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Conference Room 1 Astral Centre commencing at 5:30pm

## **21) Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next Corporation meeting will take place on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009 at 5:30pm in Conference room 1, the Astral Centre.

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