

Minutes of the Estates and Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 18 January 2010 at 5:30pm in Conference Room 1, the Astral Centre

Members Present:

Russell Baxter : Staff Member
 Kevin Howes : Member
 David Matthews : Member
 Bob Mee : Member
 Gwen Parsons : Principal
 Richard Perkins : Chair/Member
 Alastair King : Member/Induction

In Attendance:

Teresa Miller : Vice-Principal
 Julie Roper : Head of Finance
 Charles Reynolds : Clerk to the Corporation

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, especially Alastair King who was attending his first meeting as part of his induction programme.

Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence had been received from Ken Applegate who unfortunately was not well.

Agenda Item	Notes	Action
1.	<p>Disclosures of Interest</p> <p>In the event that there would be any discussion regarding the Kirkley Centre the Chair raised an interest in his role with Waveney Community Forum. There were no other declarations of interest.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting.</p> <p>The minutes of the Estates and Finance meeting held on 7 December 2009 were agreed to be a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendments.</p> <p>2.1) Agenda item 7 and first word to be changed from 'Maintaining' to 'Monitoring'</p> <p>2.2) Agenda item 5, tenth paragraph and final word to be changed from 'apprentices' to 'appendices'.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters arising from the minutes and not agenda items</p> <p>3.1) Agenda item 5, Draft Financial Statements and Agenda item 6, Management Accounts.</p> <p>The clerk confirmed that Corporation had accepted the recommendation from the committee with respect to these items.</p>	

	<p>3.2) Agenda item 10, Chair’s Annual Report 2008-09</p> <p>The clerk advised this would be presented at the Corporation meeting on 25 January 2010.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>There had been no correspondence relevant to the committee.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Management Accounts to the end of November 2009.</p> <p>The Management Accounts covering the period to the end of November 2009 were presented to the meeting by Julie Roper. Members were referred to the executive summary which provided details of the key variances from the budget together with details of why they had occurred and what action was being taken, where necessary, to rectify the situation.</p> <p>With respect to income the areas of concern related to reductions in tuition fees and charges and ESF Co – financing income. All other income lines were reported as being ahead of profile.</p> <p>Turning to expenditure Julie Roper reported on both staffing costs, which were currently below budget by £182,000, and Non-Pay costs which were also showing a positive variance of £154,000. It was acknowledged that some of this could be due to timing issues.</p> <p>Having reviewed the Executive Summary members were taken through the detail of the Income and Expenditure Accounts, Balance Sheet, Cashflow, Debtors Report, Capital Budget and Financial Performance Indicators. Each of the above being subject to scrutiny by members and discussed in detail. A key concern remained the uncertainty regarding income streams post the LSC and the lack of contract values relevant to planning next year’s budget. On this last point the Principal advised that she would be meeting the new contracts manager from the Skills Funding Agency on the 20th January to discuss next year’s figures.</p> <p>Having thoroughly reviewed the management accounts and in the absence of any further discussion or questions, it was proposed by Bob Mee and seconded by David Matthews that they be recommended to Corporation for approval.</p> <p>Members voted unanimously in favour.</p>	

<p>6.</p>	<p>Health and Safety Annual Report 2008/2009</p> <p>Presented by Teresa Miller. Members were advised that the very detailed meeting paper, which had been prepared by the College Health and Safety Manager, Marc Wild, clearly demonstrated continued improvement with respect to Health and Safety.</p> <p>In presenting the highlights from the report Teresa Miller made reference to the reduction in the number of accidents over the year. The Chair acknowledged this to be really good. With respect to the year on year increase in incidents reported, where a significant number were attributed to students with identified specific medical conditions, it was Bob Mee's view that these should be dealt with in the same way that a student with a specific learning need was. By doing this it would enable specific need to be identified and met without having an adverse effect on the way incidents were recorded. Members agreed that the Health and Safety Manager should be asked to investigate this matter further.</p> <p>With respect to the number of reportable incidents it was noted that this was down on previous years and that no action had been taken by the Health and Safety Executive.</p> <p>Details were provided on training and induction of staff. All new members of staff received Health and Safety Training on their first day of employment. Significant effort has also been put in with respect to risk assessment and safe systems of work. As a consequence it was reported that the LSC Health and Safety advisor, who had made 3 site visits during this year, was of the opinion that, having graded both the College and North Suffolk Skills Centre as 'good' with a robust 2-3 year plan this could move the College to 'excellent'.</p> <p>Finally the College had achieved a ROSPA Silver award in 2009 and the submission had gone in for the current year with the aim of achieving a 'Gold'.</p> <p>Responding to the presentation and meeting paper members acknowledged the tremendous progress that had been made in moving the College so far forward. To this end the Clerk was asked to send a letter of thanks to Marc Wild, and all involved in supporting him, congratulating him on the significant progress made.</p> <p>In absence of any further discussion it was proposed by Kevin Howes and Seconded by Bob Mee that the committee recommend the report to Corporation for approval.</p> <p>Members voted unanimously in favour.</p>	<p>TM</p> <p>CR</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Property Plan Update</p> <p>Teresa Miller set the scene for the presentation of this paper by reminding members that since the LSC outcome on the original College Capital Project had been delivered Corporation had asked for a new approach to be developed which met the future needs of the College.</p>	

	<p>It was made clear that what was being reviewed was a working document that would last for a number of years. It was however necessary to be clear on what the College priorities were, the risks associated with these and of course the costs and financing issues. If plans were considered and implemented carefully and thoroughly it would be possible to mitigate against risks. It was Teresa Miller view however that if the issue of money and finance took the lead then there would be problems. It was however essential to do something if the breadth of curriculum offer was to be protected.</p> <p>At this point, and led by Teresa Miller, members reviewed the appendices to the main meeting paper which set down ten priorities of need and set out an options appraisal which identified four possible ways forward.</p> <p>It also looked at College need over the short term, to September 2011, medium term from 2011 to 2015, and long term, from 2015 onwards. Funding options were set, especially the development of the new sixth form and outcomes and impacts were identified.</p> <p>In discussion Bob Mee asked for clarification on the anticipated life of the Tower Block and whether it would be structurally sound for the time periods referred to. Responding Teresa Miller and the Chair advised that, according to the structural survey carried out by 'Chick' the Tower Block had a life of up to 40/50 years.</p> <p>Returning to the options Appraisal Review, and having continued the factors for consideration Teresa Miller believed Option 4, refurbish the present site with a new building possibly on or offsite, was the way to go. It was also her belief that the College needed to have its plan in place so it could act as and when funding became available.</p> <p>The chair asked whether there had been any contact with Carters about a possible build and lease back for the EngTech building. If not he believed there was merit in doing so. Teresa Miller advised that she would follow this up.</p> <p>Alastair King asked what else the College was doing to make sure it was getting best use of the accommodation and resources it had. Whether this was to change the curriculum or to vary start and finish times.</p> <p>Responding Teresa Miller advised that the College did monitor how well it used its resources. It was also pointed out that the capital project, had it gone ahead, would have resulted in a reduction of the floor space used by the College. The Principal added that a key issue was the use of specialist space and there was the opportunity to look at different ways of using this.</p> <p>Bob Mee observed that whilst what was being reviewed was very much a working document it would be very important to work out how the needs of the College could be sold to the Corporation. It was his view that there needed to be much more detail, graphs, costs etc and also linkage to the existing agreed master plan to help 'sell' the concepts and avoid a piecemeal development of the site which was something that had happened in the past.</p>	TM
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	<p>Following on from this David Matthews believed the issues at hand were about the biggest decisions that the Corporation had to make. He was of the opinion that there was not a clear enough picture on all the options, and associated risks, to be able to take decisions on such a major strategic issue. There was he believed a need to test all the options.</p> <p>The Principal reminded members however that certain things had to be done, especially those linked to the development of the new Sixth Form and provision of accommodation for delivery of the Engineering programmes for which accommodation had been found.</p> <p>Responding to David Matthews concerns Bob Mee advised that option 4 was already agreed Corporation policy with the addition of 'On or off-site'. The issues for Engineering were the same as those faced with the Sir Christopher Cockerel Centre. That was either to develop a new facility or pull out of the curriculum area. This would be completely unacceptable both in terms of meeting an important need locally and as a community based College. Therefore the option had to be to commit to the principle of finding a way forward.</p> <p>Kevin Howes added that Corporation already had a policy and members should remember this. The College was a Community College and it was important that the facilities needed were provided. To this end he proposed that the recommendation from the Committee to Corporation with regard to the options appraisal was to regard to the options approval was support option 4 which was to:</p> <p>"Refurbish the present site with a new building possibly on or off-site".</p> <p>recognising that this might take several years to achieve. Alastair King seconded the resolution. Members voted unanimously in favour.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Date and Time of next meeting</p> <p>The next Estates and Finance meeting will take place in Monday 15 March 2010 commencing at 6:00pm. The venue will be conference room 1 in the Astral Centre.</p>	