

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOSTON COLLEGE CORPORATION HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2007

1. PRESENT

Mr P Cropley (chair), Miss N Clements, Ms S Daley, Mr M Gallagher, Mr R Haynes, Mrs L Ladds, Mr T Lightfoot, Mr S McCracken, Mrs P Smith, Mr D White, Revd R Whitehead and Mrs H Wright.

Also in attendance Mrs J Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Mr J Allison-Maybank (Director of Client Services), Mr C Bradford (Deputy Principal), Mr P Collins (Director of Business Development), Mr K Tharby (Director of Human Resources), Mr Richard Ager and Mr Greham Raynham (Nightingale Associates).

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr C Baron, Mrs L Ferreira, Mr T Lascelles, Mr A Reynolds and Mrs R Ward

2. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

a) Meeting of the Corporation 6 December 2006

The Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 6 December 2006, having been circulated, were agreed and signed as a correct record. Members were advised that the College was not currently in a position to proceed with independent Foundation Degrees at the present time because there were insufficient numbers to go ahead with this.

b) Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee 23 January 2007

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 23 January 2007 were received and accepted.

c) Meeting of the Standards Committee 31 January 2007

The Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 31 January 2007 were received and accepted.

3. STRATEGY

Members received a report from the Principal on a number of strategic issues.

The Principal identified the challenges being faced by the College and advised members that funding was being radically changed in 2008-09 to become to a significant degree demand led. This would present special difficulties in matching staffing with requirements and elements of this process will be introduced from

2007-08 onwards. It was likely that there will be very little funding available for non-priority Adult work. The Principal advised that planning is made much more difficult for Colleges because of the volatility of funding and one area which is brought into question is the future of the College's learning centres.

Information was provided on the curriculum review which had been led by the Curriculum Strategy Group. It was noted that it was difficult to predict with any accuracy the funding which would be available for any specific groups, particularly in the light of the commissioning exercise but that around £6.5 million should be available for funding the curriculum offer for 16-18 year-olds. It was noted that one element of the curriculum offer facing some economic challenge was Key Stage 4 and that the College was looking very carefully at the viability of this work. Changes in the arrangements for funding for 14-16 provision, with the funding going to clusters rather than directly to the College from 2007-08, would have to be managed particularly carefully and arrangements in the Spalding area were likely to change when new buildings for the Sixth Form presumptions were completed. One of the issues for concern was the differential in funding treatment of colleges as compared with schools' Sixth Forms.

Pam Smith declared an interest in this item as a member of the Local Learning and Skills Council.

Members agreed that there was a need to lobby on the funding differences between colleges and schools, particularly as competition was developing and there was a risk to Colleges losing staff to the school sector. One element which did provide some stability was the need for collaboration on the Specialised Diplomas which were being introduced, although the vocational elements were less onerous than had originally been proposed. The College was looking closely at income and expenditure in this area as well as in Higher Education, Overseas work and Commercial Training.

With respect to partnership work with other organisations, it was noted that the college had discussed the possibility of introducing an Integration Centre into its new building. It was noted that an Enterprise Centre had opened on the Endeavour Park to encourage development of small businesses.

Members noted progress which was being made in the introduction of the Gender Equality scheme and that the college has complied with the need to have Race and Disability Equality schemes in place already.

4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Members received a report from the Principal on a number of activities which have been taking place in the College. Members were advised that in addition to the activities identified, the Catering students had, for a second year running, achieved a Bronze Award in the Brakes Competition. The Catering section had also been successful in gaining sponsorship from the Vivaldi Potatoes and Pilgrim Frozen Foods for refurbishing the Bistro. Members were particularly interested to note the offer of an unconditional offer to Stanley Young to study cello at the Royal College of Music which was a particularly notable achievement.

5. LEARNING AND SKILLS

Members received a report from the Deputy Principal on performance against LSC learner and funding targets for Further Education for 2006-07.

6. PROPERTY

Mr G Raynham and Mr R Ager from Nightingale Associates attended the meeting for this item.

Members received a report from the Director of Corporate Services on the proposed property developments. Mr Raynham made a presentation on the latest position and one of the issues which was highlighted was a need to get an agreement in place with the property developers with regard to the site acquisition for the College. It was agreed that investigation should take place to ascertain why there was a delay in reaching an option agreement on the College's preferred site. An issue which was proving challenging was a need to resolve car parking arrangements for the College which would have to be sorted out over the next few days. Other issues related to planning considerations to ensure acceptability of scheme from the perspectives of the Environment Agency and English Heritage. A further issue being addressed was the proposal that the ground floor frontage of the College should include commercial retail frontage. A discussion took place around this point and the possibility of gaining sponsorship for the College's retail activities on the frontage was identified. It was agreed that further information about College costs in development of the scheme should be provided on a regular basis.

7. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Members received a report from the Director of Business Development on a number of issues:

a) Employer Responsiveness and Vocational Excellence

Having achieved the EMSKILLS award, the college has been asked to participate in testing of the New Standard for Employer Responsiveness and Vocational Excellence.

b) Train to Gain

Issues relating to the speed with which the Train to Gain contract was developing were identified and it was noted that nationally and regionally there had been slow take-up on Train to Gain. It was pointed out that this activity needed to generate an operating surplus and that a 5% charge on partnership activity was normal. A better contribution could be obtained if Train to Gain delivery was in-house.

c) Apprenticeship

Members were advised of the college's recruitment and achievement for apprenticeships and it was noted that the 2005-06 achievements significantly exceeded National Success Rates and showed improvements from the previous year. Members were advised that apprenticeship recruitment was down across the whole of the Lincolnshire and Rutland LSC area. One area of concern which has arisen was the inordinate weighting given to a very small area of lower-than-required performance which had produced a single negative element on the risk review of the college's Apprenticeship work. The college's position on provision of the courses with low levels of provision which had raised this concern was being reviewed.

d) Community Learning

Members were advised that the financial position of the Community Learning Centres was giving cause for concern and that limited funding was likely to be available for this type of activity in the future. The college was reviewing options for the maintenance of these centres and was also investigating potential for future ESF funding for this work.

8. **FINANCE**

Members received reports from the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Director of Corporate Services on a number of issues:

a) Finance and General Purposes Committee Review and 2006-07 Financial Performance

The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee reported the outcomes of the Committee's deliberations and it was identified that there were some concerns about the college's financial performance in 2006-07. It was noted that a number of cost-saving measures had been implemented and the Committee was comfortable that the actions taken since its meeting had been appropriate.

b) Fees and Charges 2007-08

The Director of Corporate Services reported on the proposed fee increases for 2007-08.

c) Risk Management

Members were advised that satisfactory progress continued to be made in implementing the college's Risk Management Plan.

9. **PERFORMANCE AND STANDARDS**

Members received a report from the Director of Performance and Standards on College performance. Details were provided on the College's success rates from 2004-05 onwards.

Members approved success rate targets for 2006-07 which had been previously considered by the Standards Committee. It was noted that the College's proposal for success rates had been affected by the changing profile of provision as short courses were reduced in number. This would also probably affect the National Success Rates when they are published. Members of the Corporation were advised that the college had a positive position in respect of the minimum levels of performance expected by the Learning and Skills Council with the exception of a very small volume of Work Based Learning which had been considered separately.

10. INSPECTION REPORT

Members received a report from the Principal on the Inspection outcomes for New College Stamford, Lincoln College and Grantham College.

11. ANNUAL LSC PROVIDER REVIEW / RISK ANALYSIS

Members received a report from the Principal on the outcomes of the Annual Provider Review and Risk Analysis.

Chris Bradford left the meeting at this point.

Members were pleased to note that the outcomes of the review had been positive and favourable in comparison with other providers.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Student Security

Members discussed concerns regarding a number of unfortunate incidents which had recently occurred where College students had been threatened and assaulted by local youths. Members were advised that the college was liaising with the police with regard to these incidents and had taken a number of steps to ensure student safety.

b) Student Union

Members were advised that the Student Union had an issue about affiliation to the National Union of Students because of some steep subscription fee increases. It was noted that Mr John Allison-Maybank was reviewing this situation.

13. DATES OF MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meetings of the Corporation were to take place on:

16 May 2007

11 July 2007

It was suggested that the May meeting might be held at the Skegness Academy for Skills. It was agreed that a Governors meal should be held during May or June with the Governors partaking of the meal which had won the Catering section a prize in the Brakes Competition.