

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOSTON COLLEGE CORPORATION HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2007

1. PRESENT

Mr P Copley (chair), Mr C Baron, Ms S Daley, Mr D Hanson, Mrs L Ladds, Mr A Lascelles, Mr S McCracken, Mrs P Smith, Mrs R Ward, Mr D White, Rev R Whitehead and Mrs H Wright.

Also in attendance: Mrs J Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Mr P Collins (Director of Business Development), Mr J Rees (Director of Curriculum and Standards) and Mr K Tharby (Director of Human Resources). Mr R Begy (Chairman, LSC) and Mr N Rashley (Area Director, LSC) – Item 2 only.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Gallagher, Mr R Haynes and Mr A Reynolds.

2. LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL

Mr Roger Begy and Mr Nick Rashley from the Learning and Skills Council gave a presentation on the LSC's key priorities and some of the structural changes which would be taking place within the Council. The Corporation noted that proposals for funding for 2008-09 were likely to be made in January-February 2008. The Corporation discussed with the visitors the opportunities and threats posed by the expansion of Train to Gain and similar provision and concerns were expressed about the impact the changes might have on College funding. Members were advised that there would be opportunities through the European and Social Funds for new work in these areas.

Members were advised that the number of 16-18 year old learners was expected to be relatively static over the course of the coming three year period. The Learning and Skills Council would be working closely with the local authority in the future. The importance of the College making progress with its capital proposals as soon as possible was noted.

Mr Begy and Mr Rashley left the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION – 10 OCTOBER 2007

The Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 10 October 2007, having been circulated, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

It was noted that the Governor Development event would take place on 17 January 2008 and that members of Stamford College governors were being invited to attend part of the session.

4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Members received a report from the Principal on staff and student activities which had recently taken place.

5. FINANCE

Members received a report on a number of financial matters:

a) Finance Report 2007-08

The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee reported on the outcomes of the committee's consideration of the accounts to 31 August 2007.

b) Risk Management

The Director of Corporate Services provided members with information about the College's Risk Management processes and submitted the Annual Report of the Risk Management Group which was accepted.

c) Annual Accounts 2006-07

Members considered in detail the contents of their draft Annual Accounts for 2006-07 and noted that although the College was showing a deficit this was reduced as compared with 2005-06. Detailed comments from the review of the accounts by the Finance and General Purposes Committee were submitted for consideration of members. It was noted that the College's financial position was likely to remain challenging and that the opportunity to cross-subsidise elements of the College's work is disappearing rapidly due to new funding arrangements.

Having given detailed consideration to the accounts Corporation members agreed to:

- i) approve the contents of the members' report and members declarations contained within the accounts
- ii) confirm the appropriateness of accounting policies
- iii) accept the annual report of the Audit Committee
- iv) confirm the reappointment of Baker Tilly as external auditors and Bentley Jennison as internal auditors

- v) accept the annual audit report for 2006-07 and the annual plan for 2007-08.
- vi) confirm their satisfaction with the adequacy and effectiveness of Risk Management, control and governance processes
- vii) authorise the signing of the letter of representation
- viii) approve the accounts and statements for 2006 – 2007 for submission to the Learning and Skills Council and publication.

6. **PROPERTY**

Members received a report from the Director of Corporate Services on the latest position in respect of the College's proposed property developments. It was noted that the College had applied for grant funding from the Learning and Skills Council towards the cost of fees for the feasibility study currently underway.

Corporation members were concerned that the College should clarify the position in relation to the possible land purchase of an alternative site and also the position in respect of possible restrictions on development being recommended as a result of the perceived flood risks for Boston.

7. **GOVERNANCE**

Members received a report from the Clerk to the Corporation on a number of governance issues:

a) Performance Targets 2006-07

Members received information on the performance of the Audit and Standards committees against their targets for 2006-07.

b) Performance Targets 2007-08

Members considered proposals for committee performance targets for 2007-08 and agreed that the Audit Committee targets should be:

- make an annual report to the Corporation
- 80% attendance at meetings
- make an indepth review of a selected area of College activity.

The targets for the Standards Committee were agreed to be:

- achieve 80% committee attendance
- review the implications of the Framework for Excellence
- oversee the arrangements for inspection preparations in the College
- continue to monitor the effectiveness of the monthly Management reporting cycle.

c) Standards Committee Constitution

Members were advised that the constitution of the Standards Committee needed to be revised following the departure of the Deputy Principal. A draft constitution was submitted for consideration. Members agreed to approve the change to the constitution of the Standards Committee to allow it to have a membership of up to 8 governors including the Principal and 2 staff governors with the committee being asked to identify which Corporation members should be invited to serve.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Members considered a report from the Director of Human Resources on Health and Safety arrangements and strategy for the College. It was noted that changed Management arrangements to Health and Safety had been introduced.

Members were pleased to note a reduction in the number of accidents recorded in 2006-07 as compared with 2005-06 and requested that in future as well as the information on the number of accidents the number of lost working days should be also recorded.

Concern was expressed to ensure that governors had input to Health and Safety Management because of their responsibilities and it was agreed that Health and Safety should be the subject of more detailed reporting to the Corporation. It was proposed that this should be included in the Human Resources report in the future.

9. STRATEGY

Members received a report from the Principal on strategic matters which complemented the information provided by the presentation from the Learning and Skills Council at the beginning of the meeting. Information was provided on the Learning and Skills Council statement of priorities and members were advised that there was a shift in emphasis in that the College would not be asked for a development plan but would be told which priorities it needed to address in the future. Payment would be made in accordance with these priorities. The Principal identified for members some of the conflicts in the provision being funded by the Learning and Skills Council for example that the take up of apprenticeships was not good in the main although the Boston area was better than most but that this provision was in competition with the Train to Gain work which was growing. It was noted that the College had strong 14-19 partnerships with the schools which were standing it in good stead. It was felt that competition between providers was becoming stronger and that this was having an impact on relationships. Members noted that in the future 16-19 funding was the only money which the College could guarantee would be paid up front and this had significant potential impact on the College's financial position.

A key point for governors to note in respect of the changing circumstances was the impact which the direction to follow priorities might have on the College's mission.

12. ANNUAL MONITORING VISIT

Members received a report from the Principal on the outcomes of the Annual Monitoring Visit which had been positive. Members noted that one area which was a concern was performance below benchmark related to provision of ESOL classes to migrant workers where poor retention was proving to be an issue because of the movement of learners into and out of the area and the impact of their work patterns on course attendance.

13. SELF ASSESSMENT

Members received a report from the Principal and Director of Curriculum and Standards on the College's Self Assessment for 2006-07. Detailed consideration was given to the grade outcomes and to the cross-college SAR outcomes. The Self Assessment grade proposals were approved.

Members reviewed the Leadership and Management section of the SAR which included Governance and agreed the areas of strengths and weaknesses identified with the addition of a key strength in that the Corporation assures a broad range of relevant skills in its membership which could be demonstrated by the Corporation membership and the considerations of the Search committee.

The Director of Curriculum and Standards described for the members the peer group review arrangements which were being undertaken following a model being promoted across the further education sector.

14. LEARNER INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

Members received a report from the Director of Business Development on the implementation of the Learner Involvement Strategy across the College.

13. DATES OF MEETINGS

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

- 27 February 2008
- 14 May 2008
- 9 July 2008.