

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOSTON COLLEGE CORPORATION HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 JULY 2008

1. PRESENT

Mr P Copley (Chair), Mr C Baron, Ms S Daley, Mr M Gallagher, Mr D Hanson, Mr R Haynes, Mrs L Ladds, Mr A Lascelles, Mr S McCracken, Mr A Pottle, Mr A Reynolds, Miss L Shannon, Mrs P Smith, 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 P Collins (Director of Business Development) and Mr J Rees (Director of Curriculum & Standards).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr T Huggins, Mrs B Ward and Mr D White.

2. MINUTES

a) Meeting of the Corporation 14 May 2008

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 14 May 2008 having been circulated were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Reference was made to the possibility of supporting the set up of student businesses in the future which might bring eligibility for Enterprise funding subject to this being possible within the terms of the College's insurance.

b) Meeting of the Search Committee 14 May 2008

The minutes of the meeting of the Search Committee held on 14 May 2008 having been circulated were agreed and signed as a correct record.

3. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Members received a report from the Principal about the policy environment within which the College was operating and the changes which were taking place at the Learning and Skills Council.

Considerable debate took place about the lack of clarity which the College was having to deal with about level of fees to be charged to learners and about the fee assumptions within the funding arrangements. It was noted that some of the fee assumptions were not what the College had been expecting and advice on these was being received some time after the College had had to issue the fees which it would charge to learners. Corporation members asked for further information to be provided to them on the effect of these changes.

The Principal also provided members with a summary of the College's key achievements and activities during 2007-08.

4. STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-09

The Principal provided members with a copy of the draft Strategic Plan for the College and it was agreed that this should be taken forward for discussion with the College Management Team prior to confirmation.

5. FINANCE

Members received a report from the Director of Corporate Services on the College's budget for 2008-09 and its draft financial plan.

It was noted that the College was anticipating a considerable surplus on its day to day activities in 2007-08 and that a surplus of lower magnitude was expected in 2008-09. Some discussion took place about the detailed calculation of the figures which appeared in the budget and the financial plan and members expressed particular interest in the assumptions which had been made regarding fuel costs. It was agreed that the Director of Corporate Services should provide further information on this point. It was noted that the Financial Plan had been based on information which was currently available to the College and that there might well be further information available prior to its submission to the Learning and Skills Council.

Having considered the information in detail members agreed to:

- a) approve the financial plan and commentary for submission to the Learning and Skills Council subject to variation if further information became available before submission
- b) confirm the grades shown within the financial plan for the College's financial health and Framework For Excellence performance
- c) approve the planned 2008-09 figures as the College's annual budget
- d) approve the delegation of authority to College Managers to reforecast as the year progressed but with variance analysis being presented against the original forecast.

Mr Hanson and Miss Shannon left the meeting at this point

6. PROPERTY

Members received a report from the Director of Corporate Services regarding progress on the College's redevelopment proposals.

It was noted that the design team were now working on the Application in Principle and that the Corporation needed to establish its decision making and reporting structure. A planned structure for a Project Steering Group had been proposed by the Project Manager. It was agreed that a Steering Group should be set up reporting to the Corporation for decision making but within these parameters determining its own Terms of Reference. Members of the Corporation were asked to express an interest in serving on this Steering Group and it was agreed that

Robert Haynes, Helen Wright, Pam Smith, David Hanson and Mick Gallagher should join the group. Members noted that the Steering Group would also include non-Corporation members since its object was to have oversight of the project rather than to make the key decisions.

It was noted that the College had expressed an interest in acquiring additional land to support implementation of the property strategy and that responses on this were awaited.

Particular consideration was given to the work which needed to be carried out to keep the project moving forward during the period when the Learning and Skills Council considered the Application in Principle. Members considered the option of ceasing work during this period rather than run the risk of abortive fees but noted that this would have a detrimental impact on the implementation timescales. It was agreed that the project team should be asked to review the planned work activity to minimise the level of financial risk to be incurred during this period and that once this information was available the Corporation would review this decision.

Members were asked to consider the detail of College's commitment to the development in Spalding and how this might be managed since the South Holland District Council project needed confirmation of the College's funding to enable it to proceed. It was noted that whilst the Corporation had already agreed to commit to the project formal approval could not be given without LSC consent which was being sought.

Members reaffirmed their commitment to the project and asked that the Principal and Chairman should approve assurances to be sought from South Holland District Council regarding the legal arrangements which would protect the College's position within the development. The key commitments which were being sought related to limitation of future maintenance costs and identifying where the responsibility lay for maintaining the rest of the building in the future. The Corporation were concerned to ensure that the building and its environs were appropriately maintained. Corporation members also wished to have an option on units which might become vacant in the future and to ensure that the College could be the only learning provider in the building. The Corporation was concerned to ensure that its commitment of £2 million to the build process would represent value for money and that this should be confirmed as a maximum contribution with a potential reduction if actual costs proved to be less than anticipated.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Members received a report from the Principal on the work of the Equality and Diversity group during 2007-08 which the Corporation found very encouraging.

8. SKEGNESS ACADEMY FOR SKILLS

Members received a report from the Director of Business Development on the activities of the Skegness Academy for Skills during 2007-08. It was noted that the College offer had been successful during the year.

9. GOVERNANCE

Members received a report from the Clerk to the Corporation about some concerns over the attendance of Tony Lascelles and John Lavin.

Mr Lascelles withdrew from the meeting.

Members of the Corporation noted that Mr Lascelles' attendance had been affected by a period of sickness during the year and agreed that his membership should be maintained.

Mr Lascelles rejoined the meeting.

Members noted that Mr Lavin had not been able to attend any Corporation meetings due to the pressure of work and felt that they had no choice but to terminate his appointment as provided for under section 10.2.b of the Instrument of Government. It was agreed that the Clerk to the Corporation should write to Mr Lavin, who had expressed an interest in continuing as a member, to say that the Corporation appreciated his commitment and would like to see him re-apply for appointment once his workload had reduced.

10. CHAIRMAN 2008-09

Having been nominated and seconded Mr Peter Cropley was elected unanimously as Chairman of the Corporation for the 2008-09 academic year.

11. VICE-CHAIRMAN 2008-09

Having been nominated and seconded Mr Steve McCracken was elected unanimously as Vice-Chairman of the Corporation for the 2008-09 academic year.

12. STAFF AWARDS

Member noted that a letter of thanks had been received from Jim Winter for receipt of the Governors Extra Mile Award.

13. NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Corporation should be moved from its original scheduled date to Wednesday 15 October 2008. Further meetings of the Corporation would take place on:

Wednesday 10 December 2008
Wednesday 25 February 2009
Wednesday 13 May 2009
Wednesday 1 July 2009