

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 13 MAY 2015

1. PRESENT

Mr P Cropley (Chair), Mr A Atkins, Mr M Gallagher, Mr D Hanson, Mr S McCracken, Mrs A Mosek, Mr C Pett, Mr A Reynolds, Ms S Richards, Mr P Scarlett, Mr K Smith and Mrs H Wright

Also in attendance: Mr P Collins (Director of Business Development), Mrs F Grady (Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality), Mrs J Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation) and Mr K Tharby (Director of Workforce Development)

Meeting attendance: 63%

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms I Lebedowicz, Ms O McMahon, Ms J Mitchell, Mr D Shutts, Mr M Stubbs and Mr G Tawton

Minutes were taken by Mrs J Webb (PA to Principal)

Mr D Hanson (Vice Chair) opened the meeting in Mr P Cropley's delayed attendance.

2. MEMBERSHIP

A Search and Governance Committee meeting had been held prior to today's meeting and feedback was given to the Board. The following points were noted:

- The Committee recommended that Peter Cropley be reappointed due to his skills set and wealth of knowledge. It was unanimously agreed that the recommendation be approved.
- The Committee did not feel able to recommend Iwona Lebedowicz's reappointment as no supporting statement had been received.
- Members agreed the following appointments to Committees –

Siobhan Richards – Audit Committee
David Shutts – Standards Committee
Chris Pett – Standards Committee

3. REVIEW OF ACTION LOG

Members reviewed the action log and it was noted that all points had been dealt with and were complete.

Peter Cropley joined the meeting and took the Chair.

4. MINUTES

- Corporation – 25 February 2015

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 February 2015 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record.

There were three Matters Arising:

- i) Steve McCracken referred to item 8d relating to the collection of tuition fees and Janet Hemmant informed Members that it was still proving to be quite challenging but that some progress has been made.
- ii) In relation to Phil Scarlett's suggestion that empty units at Springfields in Spalding be used for advertising, Amanda Mosek informed Members that Paul Collins had followed this up however all units were now fully occupied, but this will be borne in mind for the future.
- iii) Amanda Mosek referred to item 9 relating to the complaint and confirmed that Peter Cropley had written to the individual and that no further correspondence had been entered into. A response from the SFA had however been received and they had not upheld the complaint. An appeal can be lodged by the person but only against the process and not the decision. To date no further contact has been received.

- Remuneration Committee – 25 February 2015

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2015 were restricted to non-staff and student governors.

Members who had received the Minutes agreed to approve the recommendations without further discussion.

- Audit Committee – 19 March 2015

The draft Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2015 were reviewed.

Adrian Reynolds informed Members that the tenders for external auditors had now taken place and Baker Tilly had been reappointed to act as the College's external auditors.

- Finance & Resources Committee – 9 February 2015

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2015 were reviewed

- Finance & Resources Committee – 20 April 2015

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2015 were reviewed

Janet Hemmant reminded Members of the Committee that an additional meeting had been scheduled for Monday, 18 May 2015 when implications of

the budget will be discussed. There are no papers for this informal meeting and the content will be shared electronically.

- Search & Governance Committee – 25 February 2015

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2015 were reviewed.

5. REPORTS

a) Principal's

Members received a report from the Principal.

Amanda Mosek brought Members' attention to a number of points under strategic matters, namely:

- The College will receive almost £1M less in funding in the next academic year. The implications of this were discussed.

Adrian Reynolds enquired about the position in relation to the College's partners and this was explained.

- The Dual Mandate, which is a BIS consultation paper, was discussed, specifically the concept of specialisation which is something the Government is keen to move forward. The difficulty of specialisation in rural areas was debated.

Peter Cropley sought clarification on the evaluation of the Employer Ownership of Skills pilot and it was confirmed that this related to pilot projects that occurred in 2013/14.

Amanda then referred to the letter from the FE Commissioner and reminded members that his role is to go into failing colleges. Members reviewed the letter that had been received, specifically the warning signs that a college was failing. Governors were encouraged to ask questions.

Adrian Reynolds enquired about the apparent low occupancy of Spalding Campus during the recent visit. Amanda confirmed that the building was not always full and there was still potential growth there.

Amanda then drew Members' attention to the KPI data for Quality and Standards. For the benefit of new Members Amanda explained what the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings were and how they were used. It was pleasing to note that retention is good overall and this should impact positively on success rates.

Finally, a discussion took place on the analysis of the staff survey results, April 2015. Various points were raised and clarification sought and given on individual results. Two areas of concern were discussed in more detail i.e. poor communication/sharing of good practice between departments and security concerns. Amanda assured Members that these were being looked into in more depth and solutions being sought to address them with more training being provided where necessary.

b) College Performance Against 2014-16 Business Plan

Members received a report from the Principal.

Amanda explained that each area, curriculum and business support, produces an annual business plan and reporting and monitoring is carried out on a regular basis. Amanda advised that she had downgraded to Amber the KPI regarding growth financial stability as she was now not confident that the College would see overall growth this year.

Peter asked for Chris Pett's opinion regarding SP3, "To engage with employers and the community....." In his opinion he felt it was often the employers who are to blame for lack of engagement. He advised that very good links are now being developed between the College and his company. He recommended continuing to promote and encourage links with employers.

Kieran Smith suggested that it may be worthwhile the Marketing Department contacting the local radio with a view to having employers on talking about what Boston College did for them, similar to the recent campaign where members of college staff were promoting their own curriculum areas. Paul Collins was asked to follow this up with Katrina Gilbert, Marketing Manager.

c) Strategic Priorities 2015-18

Members received a report from the Principal.

Members were reminded that they had debated these at their development day in March and they had subsequently been updated.

Steve queried whether the strategic priorities were in sync with the FE Commissioner's letter, to which Amanda replied that they were.

Members approved the new document.

d) Higher Education Strategy 2014-17

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality.

Fiona Grady gave an overview of the HE Strategy that had been formulated a few months ago. She said that the Strategy needs to be 'agile' and prepared to change. There was a debate on the merits of the Higher National Diploma compared with Foundation degrees. Discussion took place on the pros and cons of offering both of these forms of provision and also the merits of e-learning and distance learning. HE growth is important for the College going forward.

e) Spalding Campus Update

Members received a report from the Director of Business Development.

Paul Collins advised that the private sector occupancy remains high and the centre is being used for a variety of purposes. Most of the offices are now let and he said he was pleased that the building still looks fresh and is well

presented. Rents per square metre were discussed. Phil Scarlett said that there was a surplus of accommodation within the Spalding area with varying degrees of occupancy but he felt that RLQ remains quite prestigious and desirable. Unfortunately the actual location is not ideal as there is no natural footfall within the area. He went on to say that the negative comments about the Centre appear to be disappearing.

The provision of the Hair and Beauty salon was a welcome addition to the facility and does draw clients. However the tinted windows to the units does not particularly give a welcoming impression but that this was a design fault with the original concept.

The Pantry and Parlour are now operating out of the previous Sage Restaurant and trade appears to be picking up for them. Helen Wright enquired on what basis the unit is let and Janet explained the terms of the lease from Eastern Enterprises.

f) Safeguarding

Members received a report from the Head of Learner Services and this was presented by the Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality.

Fiona Grady informed Members that it is a legal requirement that they receive an annual report on Safeguarding. There have been significant changes during the past year with the introduction of the new Counter-Terrorism Act and 'Prevent' training is being embedded into the staff development cycle for all staff.

Discussion took place on the safeguarding data within the report and it was noted that the College gives very good support to the students at Boston College.

Steve said that he was attending the East Midlands Governors Network event on 22 May where a subject for discussion will be the obligations now placed upon Colleges & FE training providers arising from the Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015. Amanda offered to send a copy of the College's draft Prevent Strategy document to him prior to his attendance, for which he thanked her.

g) Finance

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Corporate Services.

Janet Hemmant circulated headline information and gave an overview of their content.

Discussion took place regarding the headline comments and issues surrounding them.

With regard to De Montfort campus planning does not appear to be moving ahead as quickly as was anticipated it was agreed that Janet would follow up on the following action points:

- Look at the Cyden agreement to check whether what they agreed is being adhered to

- Telephone the Case Officer at the Planning Department to clarify points on the use of facilities which appear to have been challenged.

Referring to the accounts themselves Steve McCracken sought clarification on additional funding in relation to performance and clawback situations. Janet explained the difference with the various funding streams and how these are implemented.

h) Property

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Corporate Services.

Janet informed Members that the College were in receipt of a Capital Works Grant of £106K and that the College needs to match fund it. Although not a vast sum it would enable some improvement works to take place to existing estate.

Janet then gave an update on specific property matters:

- Shodfriars Hall – feedback from the Heritage Lottery Fund had been positive but a decision had been made to withdraw from this potential development because of the lengthy implementation timescale and inherent risks in a listed building.
- Skegness – Peter, Janet and Amanda gave feedback from a further meeting they had attended with a Governor from the Grimsby Institute who had been in conversation with the landlord of the property. Negotiations are continuing.
- Sam Newsom lease will be coming to an end in 2018 and communication is awaited from Lincolnshire County Council as to next steps. There is a need for enhanced Performing Arts provision facilities to be sited alongside Music ideally, and consideration is to be given to possibly building on Rochford site if alternative accommodation cannot be sourced.
- Solar and Biomass energy efficiency was discussed and it was noted that solar energy panels are already in place on top of the Library and Sixth buildings. Biomass had been looked into previously but was not deemed to be viable, at present. Kieran Smith spoke about WREN and the Bicker Wind Farm who he was aware of were offering grants for these types of initiatives. Janet Hemmant was asked to follow these up.

i) Governance

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Corporate Services.

Janet informed Members that the Code of Good Governance had now been issued and she suggested that it is adopted after the new regularity audit framework is issued as it will then be clearer which areas the College should adopt. In reply to Steve's question on whether the College is at liberty to write its own version of the Code, she confirmed that it was.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills had released a document in March 2015 entitled 'An Assessment of the Impact of Governance Reform in Further Education Colleges – a Review of Expectations' and this was included in the pack for members' consideration.

A draft list of Corporation and Committee dates had been put forward for discussion. One amendment was noted to the final meeting of the year which was agreed to be advanced by one week. The document will now be updated and circulated.

Peter Cropley asked that every effort be made to attend the final Corporation meeting of the year on 8 July as attendance had been low recently. He asked that Janet Hemmant send a reminder to Members to this effect.



6. **PROGRESSION**

Peter Cropley referred back to page 75 of the papers relating to the Higher Education Strategy, following on from the discussion surrounding e-learning and distance learning, and sought Members opinions on whether the College should be looking at training people for jobs not just in the local area but further afield as the job market is very limited locally. Fiona said she fully supported this suggestion.

Phil Scarlett said he had attended a recent Lincs Agrifood Forum and two subjects had been raised, FE in the agrifood sector and the amount of money, in this sector, that is being invested in the University. He suggested that someone from the College attends the meetings as out of the £12M pot a total of £3M is pinpointed for FE and one provider is scooping most of these funds up. Amanda responded saying that she was on the ESIF Committee so did get to hear about these and thanked him for his suggestion.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Corporation will be Wednesday 8 July 2015 in the BCUC, Medlock Suite.