

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOSTON COLLEGE CORPORATION HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2012

1. PRESENT

Mr P Cropley (chair), Ms L Adey, Mr J Earl, Mr M Gallagher, Mr D Hanson, Mr R Haynes, Mrs L Ladds, Mr T Lascelles, Ms Iwona Lebedowicz, Mr S McCracken, Mrs A Mosek, Mr N Percy, Mr A Reynolds, Mr R Stanley, Mr B Walder, Mr D White and Mrs H Wright.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Woodward.

2. LEARNER PRESENTATION

Josh Earl, Student Governor, gave a presentation on behalf of the Boston College Students Union which focused on why students chose the College and what they felt about the College. It was felt that it was helpful for governors to receive regular updates on Learner Voice feedback and it was also agreed that a copy of the slides used in the presentation should be circulated to members.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Members considered a number of recommendations from the Search Committee in relation to Corporation membership:

- a) It was agreed that Adrian Reynolds, who has done an excellent job as Chair of the Audit Committee and contributed significantly to the work of the Corporation, should be reappointed at the end of his existing term for a further 4-year period.
- b) It was agreed that Mick Gallagher, who has been a strong supporter of the College and contributed well to the work of the Corporation as well as having key insight into the working of local authorities, should be reappointed at the end of his existing term.
- c) It was agreed that Helen Wright, who had made a significant contribution to the work of the Corporation particularly as Chair of the Standards Committee, should be re-appointed at the end of her existing term.

It was also agreed that Iwona Lebedowicz should have her existing 1-year term extended to a standard 4-year term of office.

Discussions took place about committee membership and the importance of members becoming involved in this part of the Corporation's work. It was requested that any members not serving on committees should advise the Clerk of their preferences as to the committees to which they might be appointed. Following this

discussion it was agreed that Bob Walder should be appointed to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Iwona Lebedowicz to the Standards Committee.

4. MINUTES

a) Meeting of the Corporation 14 December 2011

The Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 14 December 2011 having been circulated were agreed and signed as a correct record.

A reminder was issued to members of the Corporation who had not yet dealt with their CRB disclosures to request that they complete this as soon as possible.

b) Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee -25 January 2012

The minutes of the meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 25 January 2012 were received.

5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Members received a report from the Principal on a number of key issues affecting the College and its operation including the successful bid for student numbers from the Higher Education Funding Council and indicative funding for 2012-13.

Members were advised that management responsibility for budgets, particularly staffing budgets, was being reviewed and that an audit report was being produced on support staffing. It was anticipated that there may be a need in the light of funding allocations for some redundancies.

The curriculum planning process will provide key indications of how the College's 2012-13 funding targets were to be delivered and careful consideration would be given to the make-up of College delivery. The curriculum planning process is anticipated to be complete by 20 April and it was agreed that the Corporation should arrange an evening event after this date to look at the outcomes of this process.

Consideration was given to the budget setting process for 2012-13 because difficulties experienced in 2011-12 had demonstrated that the budget setting process had some serious flaws. The auditors have been asked to have a look at budgeting procedures and processes at their next main visit. It was noted that Steve Stanley had been appointed as the College's new Finance Manager and would be playing a key role in the development of the 2012-13 budgets. A particular weakness which had been identified was the lack of a link between curriculum planning and financial planning and the College was conscious of the particular need to relate financial planning and information to the needs and levels of understanding of non-financial managers. Corporation members were advised that the College's leadership team was very concerned about financial performance in 2011-12 and had identified a potentially serious deficit position which was currently being addressed with the support of a temporary Finance Manager who had been in place during the Finance Manager vacancy. Members were advised that further information on the budget position would be provided as soon as it became available and it was agreed that a further meeting of the members to consider this would be required.

6. NEW CHALLENGES, NEW CHANCES

Members received a report from the Principal on the government's vision for the reform of Further Education in Skills for Sustainable Growth. The key elements of the report were outlined and a discussion took place about the employer ownership pilot which was being introduced. Particular note was taken of the government's desire to give the further education sector more freedom and flexibilities which would allow governors to consider new organisational business models.

7. PROPERTY

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Corporate Services on the works being carried out under the Enhanced Renewal Grants.

Members also considered a report which had been prepared by the Principal on the potential acquisition of the Red Lion Quarter in Spalding and members were concerned to ensure that this acquisition was based on a sound financial footing. It was noted that a business plan was being prepared which would be considered by South Holland District Council and others involved in the sale of the property and this would be circulated to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Members agreed that the acquisition of the Red Lion Quarter represented a significant opportunity for the College and would add strength to the Corporation's balance sheet and approved progressing this acquisition.

8. LEARNER VOICE INITIATIVES

Members received a report from the Principal on the operation of the Learner Involvement Strategy and the arrangements for getting feedback from learners on their views of the College. It was noted that the new strategies for engaging with learners were proving to be very useful.

9. FINANCE

a) Finance Report 2011-12

Members received a report from the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on the committee's consideration of the College's accounts. It was noted that following the submission of these accounts some serious questions had arisen about financial performance in 2011-12.

b) Risk Management

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Corporate Services confirming that the College continued to monitor risk and that the process would be the subject of a routine audit later in the year.

10. GOVERNANCE

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

a) Code of Conduct

A new draft Code of Conduct was presented for consideration and it was agreed that this should be adopted and that a highlighted version identifying the changes from the previous Code of Conduct should be circulated to members.

b) Equality

Members considered arrangements to ensure that the Corporation and its committees demonstrated due regard to the Public Sector Equality duty. It was agreed that the Corporation standing orders and the constitutions of all of the Corporation's committees should include the statement:

"This Group/Committee will have due regard of the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it."

c) Handbook

Members noted that the Search Committee had reviewed the proposed Governor Handbook for 2011-12 and agreed its content and this would be circulated to members. A list of key dates was circulated to members at the meeting.

11. PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

Members received a report from the Director of Business Development on the College's partnership strategy. Partnerships were noted to be of very significant importance to the College's delivery of targets and the value of these had increased significantly during 2011-12. Members discussed potential vulnerability of the College to risk if a partner failed and were advised of the checks which the College carried out as to minimise this risk.

12. INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Members were advised that the College had been fully reaccredited for the Investors in People Award.

11. DATES OF MEETINGS

It was noted that a Governor Development Day would take place on 2 March 2012 and that the next full Corporation meeting would be held on 16 May 2012.

A further meeting to allow consideration of the College's financial position would be arranged before that date.