

## BOSTON COLLEGE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOSTON COLLEGE CORPORATION HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 JULY 2013

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#### 1. PRESENT

Mr P Cropley (Chair), Ms I Lebedowicz, Mr S McCracken, Mrs A Mosek, Mr P Scarlett, Mr B Walder, Mr D White and Mrs H Wright.

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

Apologies received from Mrs L Adey, Mr M Gallagher, Mr D Hanson, Mrs L Ladds, Mr A Lascelles, Mr N Percy, Mr A Reynolds, Mrs S Richards, Mr R Stanley and Mr J Woodward.

#### 2. TEACHING AND LEARNING: GOVERNORS' ROLE IN OFSTED INSPECTION

Members received a presentation on the Governor role in an inspection and had feedback from Helen Wright's visit to a recent conference on the experiences of other college Governors in respect of teaching and learning. This included their involvement in the evaluation of teaching and learning through processes such as lesson observation.

A discussion took place about the design of the appraisal process and how this contributed to the improvement of teaching and learning. A key element for Governors to enable them to address this issue is the quality of the data supplied to them and it was agreed that the simplification of data to ease understanding is important. One thing which had been identified at the conference was the Swindon college experience which had identified the importance of learner support in ensuring the quality of teaching and learning. Another key point which had come out of the conference was that Governors have to be prepared to get involved in the work of the College and not just to attend meetings. An understanding of the data is critical to the role and members noted that the Standards Committee had found the involvement of a trained Ofsted Inspector in its work particularly valuable. It was agreed that a set of the slides forming the presentation should be circulated to all members of the Governing body.

#### 3. MINUTES

##### a) Meeting of the Corporation – 15 May 2013

The Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 15 May 2013 having been circulated were agreed and signed as a correct record.

##### b) Meeting of the Standards Committee – 11 June 2013

The Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 11 June 2013 were received.

#### **4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Members received a report from the Principal on a number of strategic matters and news items including an update to Key Performance Indicators for the College.

A discussion took place about future funding and it was noted that current indications were that savings on the 16+ Education Budget were likely to be modest from the Department of Education but that there were likely to be more cuts through the Department for Business Innovation and Skills for 19+ education and training.

Information was shared with members about the management restructuring which was currently under way which had a primary objective to aid communication and improve the College's focus on teaching and learning and better enable the sharing of good practice. In respect of the latter members were advised that the College had received a notice of concern from the Skills Funding Agency in respect of its 2011-12 Adult success rates. The response to this notice was reviewed.

Members were advised that recently there had been a Data Protection breach at the College and information was provided on what had happened and how this had been reported to the data commissioner. The College had some audit work carried out in this area prior to the breach but was proposing to carry out a data penetration exercise. It was agreed that the Chairman and Principal should work together to ensure that whatever necessary was done to ensure future breaches were avoided.

In respect of funding members were advised that difficulties were being faced in achieving the single adult budget and that there was likely to be a higher level of clawback than had been hoped. Whilst monitoring systems had been developed during 2012-13 the College accepted that these would have to be further improved in the coming year since members noted that the potential shortfall could wipe out the forecast surplus on the 2012-13 budget. The 2013-14 budget would not be affected by this. Members felt that the College needed to improve its risk management in this area and a question was raised about whether the partnership work in particular should form such a large part of the College's budget but no conclusions were drawn on this at this point in time.

#### **5. NEW STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2013-14**

Members received a report from the Principal proposing strategic priorities for the College for the coming year. The priorities and vision statement proposed were agreed.

A discussion took place about the need to have a mission statement for the College and it was felt by many members that this was superfluous. It was agreed that the College should cease having a mission statement. The College's values were also discussed and it was agreed that there should be no changes to these but that further notes should be provided with the statement of values to amplify them.

#### **6. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT**

Members received a report from the Director of Workforce Development on Equality Diversity and Inclusion activities and measures including the work of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group. Members felt that the report evidenced a successful year in this area of the College's activities.

## **7. CURRICULUM LINK VISITS BY GOVERNORS**

Members received a report from the Principal on feedback from the Curriculum link visits which had taken place.

A suggestion for future links made by Phil Scarlett was that in the future Governors should attend a performance monitoring meeting for their area and members felt that this would be a useful development. Another development which was agreed was that a pre-visit briefing should be sent to members before their visit.

A debate took place about the way in which visits were organised and it was agreed generally that the most successful visits had not been too structured but had some hosting to ensure that Governors were able to get the best out of their visits. Links were proposed again for 2013-14 with members changing to new areas. Members felt that rotation of links would assist with developing member knowledge of the College and with succession planning for different roles within the committees and the main board.

A discussion took place about how members could look at the input of English and Maths across the Curriculum areas. It was felt that it would be useful if the Standards Committee could have some input on this and that potentially a check list could be added to the pre-visit briefing sheet. It was suggested that other colleges could be asked how they were dealing with this. The discussion included how English and Maths skills could be raised to base levels and it was noted that there was a proposal currently being implemented for English, Maths and ESOL training.

It was noted that the key areas which were subject to review by members would be part of the discussions to take place at individual meetings with the Chair in the coming weeks.

## **8. POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN**

Members received an update from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality on progress against identified improvement targets which were summarised against both the Quality Improvement Plan and Post Inspection plan. A discussion took place about activities which were being undertaken to address the issues identified following the inspection and the progress report was rated to identify where the College was against each of the identified targets. The information reviewed looked specifically at steps to improve teaching and learning.

One issue which the information presented identified was variability in apprenticeship success rates which differed significantly across the College.

## **9. FINANCE**

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Corporate Services on the budget for 2013-14 and financial plan.

Members were advised that the Finance & General Purposes Committee had already reviewed and commented on the proposed budget information and that there had been some relatively minor updating since the meeting of the committee.

Members noted a number of key points on the financial plan including the College's forecast modest surplus for 2013-14. It was noted that there were still a number of variables determining the outcomes for 2012-13 including performance against the single adult budget as recognised earlier in the meeting.

Members reviewed the proposed financial objectives and priorities and agreed that these were appropriate. A discussion took place about the fact that the budget did not at this point include any provision for a pay award and the issues which pay levels were causing particularly in relation to pay levels for teaching staff. Members were concerned about the lack of provision for a pay award and expressed a preference to make some provision for this if possible even if it occurred later in the year once College performance in 2013-14 became clearer. A debate took place about how a pay award might be distributed and about the College's previous use of recruitment and retention bonuses and how these had impacted in the past. One of the options considered to address the pay award issue was to make a non-consolidated bonus rather than a pay award if finances allowed later in the year.

A discussion took place about the identified risks to the 2013-14 budget and members were advised that the balance between cash and creditors could be particularly susceptible to change.

Members agreed that efficiencies were going to have to be found going forward to cover things like pay awards or recruitment bonuses and that the College needed to address cost reductions where possible. The possibility of employer sponsorship for some of the College's activities was discussed in relation to how this might aid the College's financial performance.

A discussion took place about the cashflow forecast and particularly the low point in the College's forecast cash position. Members agreed that it would be prudent to ensure that an overdraft would be available to the College if it proved to be necessary during 2013-14.

Having debated these points members agreed to approve the financial plan and commentary presented and to confirm the College's financial health grades as computed and presented. The 2013-14 figures were approved by members as the College's base annual budget for the year.

## **10. PARTNERSHIPS**

Members received a report from the Director of Business Development on partnerships looking at current issues and the re-contracting process which was being undertaken for 2013-14. It was noted that the novation for a partner who had gone into administration and whose position had been discussed by the Board previously had been completed and final teaching was being carried out. This has had an impact on performance against partner's contracts in 2012-13. Members were pleased to see that a rigorous process of evaluation of partners was being carried out and it was noted that the College looked at audited and most recent accounts of partners to keep up to date on their financial status.

## **11. PROPERTY**

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Corporate Services on a number of property issues relating to completion of the grant supported work and the status of

property transactions which were in progress.

A discussion took place about the terms of the letting of part of the Red Lion Quarter to Eastern Enterprises Limited which would be undertaking property management activities in relation to the centre. Members noted the proposal to grant a peppercorn lease to the company for a five-year period whilst viability of its business model was evaluated and it was noted that professional advice had been taken on this point. Members reviewed the likely income and expenditure for Eastern Enterprises as it undertook this role and noted that there could be risks involved if the company's solvency was at risk as a result of these activities. It was noted that predictions of performance and current year performance indicated that this was not likely to be an issue with the peppercorn rent but that the company's turnover would need to increase once a market rent was introduced.

Members agreed that under the circumstances reviewed it was appropriate for Eastern Enterprises Limited to be granted a five-year peppercorn lease on part of the premises.

## **12. LINCOLN COLLEGE**

Members received a confidential paper from the Principal on an approach received from Lincoln College about the possibility of forming a hard federation and members discussed the pros and cons of such an arrangement.

Members felt that in the short term the College had to primarily concentrate its energies on getting ready for the next inspection and that this matter might be reviewed further after that point. A number of alternatives were considered for taking this kind of development forward and members felt that, whilst at this stage it was not appropriate for the College to progress a hard federation, it might be interesting to look at other ways of working, possibly through shared services within the sector. It was agreed that College Managers should be asked to look further at options available to the College.

## **13. GOVERNANCE**

Members received a report from the Clerk to the Corporation on the Audit and Accountability Annex to the Code of Governance which had been reviewed by the Audit Committee and recommended for adoption. Members agreed to adopt this annex.

A list of dates for meetings for 2013-14 were considered. It was agreed that, subject to a change to the September date proposed for the Finance & General Purposes Committee, other dates should be accepted but that the times of meetings should be reviewed during the Chair's meetings with individual governors to see if these should be changed.

## **14. RED LION QUARTER**

Members received a report from the Director of Business Development on the performance of the Red Lion Quarter. Members noted that the business plan for re-opening the restaurant as a coffee shop were close to completion and it was agreed that this development should progress as soon as possible.

**15. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR 2013-14**

Having been duly nominated Peter Cropley was elected as Chair of the Corporation for the 2013-14 academic year.

**16. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR 2013-14**

Having been duly nominated Bob Walder was elected as Vice Chair of the Corporation for the 2013-14 academic year.

**17. MEMBERSHIP**

It was noted that the Corporation and committees would be losing two members shortly, Roy Stanley and Lynn Ladds. It was agreed that the Chair should write to both of these members thanking them for their contribution to the work of the Corporation.

Members also thanked Steve McCracken for his work during his period as Vice Chair of the Corporation.

**18. TERRORISM INSURANCE**

Members considered the option to add terrorism to the insurance cover for the College and, after some discussion of the risks, agreed that this cover would not be required.

**19. NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Corporation would take place on 16 October 2013 with the time to be confirmed.