

Minutes of the Stourbridge College Corporation Meeting held on Thursday 20th October 2011 at 4:30pm in the Board Room, Art & Design Centre

Present:

Amanda Bache
John Coyne
Lynette Cutting (Principal)
Rishma Dattani
Julia Fitzsimmons
Eve Haddow (Student)
Tim Heaney
David Nolan (Chair)
Tracey Pearce (Staff)
Chelsie Screen (Student)
Tony Seaton
Tim Sunter (Vice Chair)
Matt Ward
Fiona Yardley (Staff)

In attendance:

David Beasley (Clerk)
Louise Jones (Vice Principal)
Elaine Giles (Vice Principal)
Steve Cutler (Assistant Principal)

Preliminary Item – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Heather Ross, the College's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Officer, gave a presentation on EDI in Governance, following-on from the EDI context presentation to the Board on 7th July. She set out Governors' responsibilities for EDI in the context of the legislative framework and the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework, and highlighted the key components of the College's Single Equality Scheme. The data used to assess achievements was explained, and Governors were reminded of the importance of the Equality Impact Assessments and the key questions that Governors should be asking related to diversity, participation, policies, priorities & objectives. She concluded the presentation by referring to some extracts containing key messages from the Annual EDI Report and the Self-Assessment Report, referring to the handout on EDI definitions and resources, and requesting Governors to complete the anonymous EDI data survey.

Governors questioned the process for assessing the reasons behind the success rate statistics. Heather Ross advised that she worked with the Assistance Principals and Directors to review the information. The Principal said the EDI Strategy Group would review any associated recommendations and actions related, and reminded Governors that Jenni Ord was a member of that Group in her capacity as Link Governor for EDI. The Chair thanked Heather Ross for the presentation.

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from David Darlaston, Steve Davies, Dennis Hodson and Jenni Ord.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Eve Haddow and Chelsie Screen, the new Student Governors elected the previous day, and Fiona Yardley, the new Support Staff Governor, to the meeting. He said that he had met Henrietta Dalton earlier that day and had thanked her for her contribution as Student Governor over the past year.

2a Declaration of Interests

- 2a.1 No interests were declared.

2b Appointment of Student Governors & Support Staff Governor

- 2b.1 The Clerk noted that Student and Staff Governors, having been elected by the student body and the teaching/support staff as appropriate, are appointed by the Corporation subject to the statutory eligibility provisions as set out in the Instrument of Government.

The Corporation resolved:

To approve the appointments of Eve Haddow and Chelsie Screen as Student Governors for a two year term, and Fiona Yardley as the Support Staff Governor for a four year term, with effect from 20th October 2011, the first year being probationary in each case.

2c Are we living our Values?

- 2c.1 The Chair asked members to be mindful of the College Values during the meeting's proceedings.

3 Minutes of Previous Meetings

- 3.1 The minutes of the Corporation meetings held on 7th July 2011 and 22nd September 2011 were approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.
- 3.2 The Chair said that the majority of the matters arising would be covered during the meeting. Steve Cutler confirmed that the updated Financial Regulations arising from the review would be presented to the November meeting of the Finance, Resources & Property Committee and then to the December Corporation meeting for approval.

4a Chair's Report

4a.1 IT Support for Governors

- 4a.1.1 Referring back to previous discussions at Corporation, the Chair said that he felt that it was important to lead on IT developments as a Governing Body and that following assessment of various platforms for governors' use at meetings he was recommending the iPad 2 as meeting the requirements for small footprint, report readability and annotation, future adaptability and battery life. The cost of the use of paper for Committee and Corporation report packs outweighed the outlay involved so the proposal was financially viable. He said that some governors had expressed concerns with priorities, but there were many priorities to be addressed; the College should be an exemplar.
- 4a.1.2 The Chair asked members if anyone had any major issues with the proposal. The question was asked as to whether or not the Amazon Kindle would be a more cost-effective solution if the requirement was simply to provide the ability to read files. The Chair said that the Kindle had been considered along with other tablet & notebook products, but that he didn't believe it was appropriate that the solution should be inherently limiting. He added that access to wi-fi for some governors may be an issue that would need to be addressed, and some IT support would be required. The Principal added that the topic had been under review for some considerable time and a decision needed to be taken. No other major issues were raised by those present.

4a.2 IT Strategy

- 4a.2.1 The Chair reported that he had had a meeting with the Principal and Alex Speed, the College's IT Director, and discussed Alex's ideas regarding future initiatives. The Chair said

he was keen to align the future Accommodation and IT Strategies and look at their inter-relationships.

4a.3 Governors' Strategy Input

4a.3.1 Referring to the Governors' strategy session at the September Board meeting, the Chair said that the next step was to overlay the outputs with the current Strategic Priorities, with the result being fed into the Governors' Away Day event. The Clerk would circulate the transcript of the outputs from the September group discussions. The Principal said that it was important to determine at the Away Day any adjustments in strategic direction, but that there was a bigger Property and IT development agenda to address for future years aligned with replacing the Advanced Technology Centre.

4a.3.2 The Chair advised that the Away Day event had been re-scheduled from 2nd December to Monday 23rd January in order to secure a key external speaker. After some discussion Governors said that they preferred to schedule the full day this year and so give sufficient time to the agenda.

4a.4 King Edward VI College Collaboration

4a.4.1 The Chair reported that he and the Principal had met with the Chair and Principal of King Edward VI College to discuss the proposals for working together on growing the A-level provision. They had concluded that the time wasn't yet right to put the joint growth plan in place, but King Edward's would be assisting the College regarding their approach to achieving A-level outcomes.

4b Principal's Report

4b.1 The Principal said that she and the Chair had had good discussions at lunch with some of the students earlier that day; she said that it was one way of breaking down any concerns of students being able to communicate with the Management Team and Governors. She was aiming to do this once a month and had agreed this initiative with the Chair of the Student Council, Rebecca Whittaker. She hoped that some of the Governors would be able to attend the lunches and meet with the students.

4b.2 The Principal reported that the College had undergone an Integrated Quality & Enhancement Review (IQER) inspection earlier that month. It had gone fairly well; the academic standards aspects had been fine, some public information elements needed to be brought up to date. Elaine Giles confirmed that this had now been done.

5 Items Requiring Governors' Urgent Attention

5a Safeguarding

5a.1 Elaine Giles confirmed that there were no significant safeguarding items to report.

5b Equality & Diversity

5b.1 Louise Jones said that the key facts related to Equality & Diversity were documented in the EDI Annual Report; she urged Governors to read it.

5c Health & Safety

5c.1 Louise Jones said that there were no urgent health & safety items to report, noting that the number of reportable incidents had fallen considerably over the previous year.

6 The Student Voice

6.1 Elaine Giles reported that the first meeting of the Student Council had gone very well and augured well for the year ahead.

7 Performance against Targets & Objectives 2010-11

- 7.1 Louise Jones said that in July she had presented a work-in-progress performance report against the 2010-11 objectives; this report was the final version. She referred to the RAG status against the objectives and the fact that out of the 12 objectives, 10 were green and 2 were amber. The College's overall judgement was that the objectives for the year had been achieved. The Chair said that the Management Team should be congratulated on the report. A question was asked concerning the adoption of good practice related to employer-driven 14-19 provision as noted at the Black Country University Technical College recently; the Principal said that this was in hand and selected aspects would be reviewed for integration into the College's framework.

The Corporation resolved:

To note the Report.

8 Reports from Finance, Resources & Property Committee

8a Meeting held on 6th October 2011

- 8a.1 The Committee Vice Chair reported the following key items from the meeting:

- (1) The Committee had reviewed the first set of the new format Management Accounts and governors had welcomed the changes that had been introduced.
- (2) The Committee had been comfortable with the Annual Health & Safety Report and welcomed the reduction in the number of reportable incidents.
- (3) The Committee had discussed the College's response to the press coverage related to the vacating of the Longlands site and were happy with the approach taken to date.
- (4) The Committee had discussed the paper presented on 16-18 Apprenticeship growth and considered the implications of a range of growth targets and the associated risks and challenges; the Clerk confirmed that an updated version of the paper reflecting the outcome of the discussions had been circulated to Committee members.

8b Partner Contracting Report 2011-12

- 8b.1 Elaine Giles reminded Governors that an initial version of the report had been presented at the July Corporation meeting; this updated report included the proposed contract values for each partner. She explained that growth figures in the report would be achieved through the sub-contracts, and in that context the College was reviewing their risk assessment process to ensure that it was sufficiently robust in order to minimise exposure.

- 8b.2 Governors asked if the College would be able to react flexibly to changes in the sub-contract and partner profile. Elaine Giles agreed that this was an important factor, as well as the fact that the Skills Funding Agency would be looking at the proportion of external to internal delivery and as a consequence would only approve finance in tranches.

The Corporation resolved:

To approve the Partner Contracting Report 2011-12.

9 Reports from Students, Curriculum & QA Committee

9a Meeting held on 13th October 2011

- 9a.1 The Committee Vice Chair reported the following key items from the meeting:

- (1) The Committee had discussed the outcome from the meeting with King Edward VI College and the support being provided to the A-level provision, hoping that the associated targets would be reflected in the Quality Improvement Plan.

- (2) The Committee had reviewed the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and was pleased that the SAR was much improved from the early draft. The Employer Responsive and Learner Responsive data was now much clearer; all Governors must read the SAR and assimilate its key messages.
- (3) The Committee had looked at the amended Student Council Constitution and were happy to recommend its approval subject to clarification concerning the audit of the Council's accounts. Elaine Giles confirmed that this aspect was covered under Clause 17 of the Constitution.
- (4) The Student Involvement Report had been reviewed, with the Student Governor providing some useful input on how feedback to students could be improved in some situations.
- (5) The Safeguarding Annual Report was welcomed as a good report, and the Committee had noted that the increase in incidents being raised reflected a greater awareness of the subject across the College.

9b Self-Assessment Report 2010-11 & Quality Improvement Plan 2011-12

- 9b.1 Louise Jones referred to the report from the Students, Curriculum & QA Committee meeting, noting that the SAR was the document that the Inspectors would use. They would be checking its content against the actual position so it had to be accurate. She added that a number of areas of the SAR were being updated with final data and as a result of reviews, including feedback from the Committee, and a final version would be circulated to Governors. She drew Governors' attention to the Sector Subject Area data, and the key strengths and areas for improvement.
- 9b.2 The Chair said that it was important that the report content confirmed the views of the staff; the Principal advised that the SAR had been presented to the middle management and they felt that it did reflect the College.
- 9b.3 Louise Jones said that the QIP had been updated since its review at the Students, Curriculum and QA Committee review, and included some additional items. She reported that of the 13 actions ear-marked for October, 6 were green, 5 amber and 2 red, so work was in hand but there was plenty to do.

The Corporation resolved:

To approve the Self-Assessment Report 2010-11, subject to the final updates being made to the document, and to note the Quality Improvement Plan 2011-12.

9c Student Council Constitution

- 9c.1 Elaine Giles presented the amended Student Council Constitution, explaining that it had been updated to reflect the latest National Union of Students template and reviewed to ensure that it met the College's requirements.

The Corporation resolved:

To approve the Student Council Constitution.

10 Reports from Governance & Search Committee

10a Meeting held on 20th September 2011

- 10a.1 The Chair reported that the meeting had considered Committee membership in the light of the retirement of Ian Hart and Fred Bentley as Governors, the appointment of Matt Ward, and the need to appoint new Vice Chairs of the Students, Curriculum and QA Committee and the Audit Committee. Procedures related to the handling of confidential material had been reviewed; amendments to the Standing Orders would follow. Self-Assessment of the

Corporation and Committee Terms of Reference modifications were on the Board meeting's agenda.

10b Appointment of Vice Chairs of Audit and Students, Curriculum & QA Committees

- 10b.1 The Chair reported that the Governance and Search Committee had recommended that Amanda Bache be appointed Vice Chair of the Audit Committee and that Tim Sunter be appointed interim Vice Chair of the Students, Curriculum and QA Committee, given his role as Vice Chair of the Corporation, until another member could be appointed to the role.

The Corporation resolved:

To approve the appointment of Amanda Bache as Vice Chair of the Audit Committee for a two year term, and Tim Sunter as interim Vice Chair of the Students, Curriculum & QA Committee.

10c Committee Terms of Reference

- 10c.1 The Clerk explained that each of the Committee Terms of Reference had been amended to reflect the decisions approved at the July Corporation meeting related to Governors' and Committee Chairs' & Vice Chairs' terms of office and related aspects.

The Corporation resolved:

To approve the amended Committee Terms of Reference.

10d Corporation Assessment Process 2011-12 including Governors' Attendance Target

- 10d.1 The Chair said that it was proposed to use the Druines on-line Governance Health-check questionnaire for 2011-12, using the results of the 2010-11 activity as a benchmark. This self-assessment, which would be reviewed by the Board, would again be supplemented by 1-to-1 reviews of Governors with the Chair, but this year involving Governors completing the associated template beforehand and thereby providing a better opportunity for feedback. The 1-to-1 reviews would also validate the skills and experience profile for each governor, such that the overall Corporation profile could be used in succession planning.

- 10d.2 The Chair reported that the Governance & Search Committee had discussed the attendance target for governors, that was currently annotated on the Corporation & Committee attendance register as 65%. The Committee had agreed that this target needed to be updated, and recommended that the aspirational target for Governors' attendance across the breadth of their commitments should be set at 80%.

The Corporation resolved:

To approve the proposed approach to the Self-Assessment of the Corporation for 2011-12, including the aspirational attendance target of 80%.

11 Report from Remuneration Committee Confidential Item - Minuted Separately

12 Have we lived our Values?

- 12.1 The Chair asked Governors to reflect on whether the meeting proceedings had been aligned with the College' values as set out on the agenda.

13 Any Other Business

- 13.1 No items were discussed.

14 Dates of Future Meetings (all at 16:30 except for the Away Day event):

Thursday 8th December 2011
Monday 23rd January 2012 *[Away Day event – revised date]*
Thursday 15th March 2012
Thursday 26th April 2012
Thursday 24th May 2012
Thursday 12th July 2012 *[revised date to be confirmed]*

15 Reports for Information

15.1 The following Reports had been circulated to Corporation members for information; no points of clarification were raised at the meeting:

- (a) Management Accounts – Aug 11;
- (b) Health & Safety Annual Report 2010-11;
- (c) Longlands Strategy Report;
- (d) Student Involvement Annual Report 2010-11;
- (e) Safeguarding Annual Report 2010-11;
- (f) Safeguarding Strategy & Action Plan 2011-12;
- (g) Link Governor Scheme Annual Report 2010-11;
- (h) Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report 2010-11.

The meeting closed at 17:55.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chair