



GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting on 22 May 2008

Present: Mr Neil Arlett, Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mrs Carol Clapham, Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Mrs Pippa Hadfield, Mr Denis Holly, Dr Ken Hopkins, Mrs Heidi Macdougall, Mr Rob Soutar (Chair), Mr Ravi Tandon,

In attendance: Dr Ruth Brinton and Mr Peter Cooper (Deputy Principals)
Mr Philip Eyles (Clerk), Mrs Ruth Jones (Finance Director)

[The meeting was preceded by Governors' Training on Finance]

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Amanda Atfield, Charles Davies, Rob Doran, Jenny Gunning, Steve Hancorn, Bob Ing, Emily Marshall, Andrew MacDonagh, Amy Morgan and Margaret Turner

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2008

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record and signed

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Referring to Minute 5, the Clerk announced that Governors' Training on Emergency Planning will take place at 7pm on Thursday 10 July, immediately before the Governors' Meeting

5. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's schedule for a ballot on candidates for the post of Chair of Governors was approved. The Clerk explained that, whilst the ballot will assist the election process, the actual election must take place at a formal Governors' meeting

6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal emphasised the following from his report:

- Parental Questionnaires – more replies (121) this year and more favourable responses than in 2006 and 2007
 - Student Questionnaires – as reported in Minute 7 of Staffing Committee Minutes, students' perceptions were also more favourable this year
 - Retention – very good at 95%, well above the 91% national benchmark
 - Attendance – good at 89%, although there are no national benchmarks
 - Machinery of Government – sixth form colleges will be administered by Local Authorities on behalf of the Department for Schools, Children and Families. The Local Authorities' role in the performance management and 'commissioning' of 16-19 education is a key issue
- The Principal's Report was **NOTED**

7. OPERATIONAL PLAN MONITORING

It was **NOTED** that all the objectives listed have now been achieved

8. EXTERNAL REPORTS

i. Framework for Excellence (Pilot)

The College was given an Overall Performance Rating of *outstanding* on this reporting framework, which has been devised and imposed by central government through the Learning & Skills Council. The overall rating derives from grades given to thirteen key performance areas within the three 'dimensions' of Responsiveness, Effectiveness and Finance. Eleven of the areas had been graded as *outstanding* and the other two as *good*.

Governors were also given information about the overall performance of other sixth form colleges in the pilot. All further education colleges will have to be assessed through the Framework for Excellence from this September.

- ii. Learning & Skills Council's Regional Provider Assurance Audit
The purpose of the audit was to gauge the effectiveness of the College's financial management and governance arrangements. Its conclusion, that there are nine strengths and no weaknesses or recommendations, corresponds with an opinion of *Full assurance: outstanding*
- iii. Inspection Report of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)
Following their inspection in April, the Ofsted inspectors concluded that the College's performance is **OUTSTANDING** in all respects. Although the College's strengths hugely outweighed its weaknesses, there are a few areas for improvement to be addressed
 - insufficient completion of key skills portfolios in Information and Communication Technology at Level 2
 - unsatisfactory temporary classroom accommodation

Governance is good *but not outstanding* and after discussion by Governors of the likely reasons for this, the following were identified as areas for improvement:

- Governors' attendance has been weak in recent years, as listed in the Self Assessment Report
- The Board monitors the College's performance well, but there is insufficient analysis of the Board's own performance

It was agreed that the performance of College staff has been shown to be quite outstanding. The Chair of Governors will speak to staff to congratulate them.

The Governing Body **NOTED** all three reports, and also the areas for improvement

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Finance & Premises Committee on 8 May

Governors considered the Committee's report on the Monthly Management Accounts for February and March, and also the accounts for April that had been posted to Governors since the Committee Meeting. Regarding the Funding Allocation 2008- 09, it was noted that the allocation has now been revised to £7.617M. The Fees and Charges Policy (2008-09) was considered, as was the Committee's long and robust discussion of the capital project for a new building at the north end of the College site and improved sports facilities

The Governing Body **AGREED TO APPROVE**

- Monthly Management Accounts for February, March and April
- Fees & Charges Policy (2008-09)
- Projected rent of £40,000 payable for temporary classrooms (for 1 year) within the capital project

The Committee's minutes were also **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

ii. Staffing Committee on 14 May

The Committee had undertaken a fundamental review of its Terms of Reference, and proposed renaming the Committee to reflect the large amount of work it now undertakes on students' well-being. The wider brief of the Committee means it would benefit from student input, so it was proposed that the exclusion of Student Governors from membership should be removed and that Student Governors should be encouraged to join the committee.

The Committee had also considered the thorough, interesting and effective reports on Disability Equality and Gender Equality and the Equality & Diversity Impact Assessments

The Governing Body **AGREED TO APPROVE**

- The Committee's revised Terms of Reference
- The Committee's change of name to the Staff & Students Committee

The Committee's minutes were **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

iii. Curriculum Committee on 14 May

The Governing Body **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Committee's proposals for revised Terms of Reference. The purpose of the change is to give Student Governors more choice about which committee to serve on. They will no longer be required to serve on the Curriculum Committee and may choose instead to be on the Staff and Students Committee

There was discussion of the proposed Enrolment Target and the proposal to revise the Curriculum Policy to require Governors' approval of significant curriculum changes and the course masterfile. Curriculum changes should now become a standing item on Curriculum Committee agendas

The Governing Body **AGREED TO APPROVE**

- the Enrolment Target of 1681 students
- the revised Curriculum Policy (2008-09)
- the proposal that it approves the course masterfile annually

The Committee's minutes were **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.30pm on Thursday 10 July, *preceded at 7pm by Governors' Training on Emergency Planning*