

SOUTH CHESHIRE COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION/SMT STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT HELD AT ROOKERY HALL HOTEL ON FRIDAY 15 JANUARY 2010 AT 9.00 AM

PART A MINUTES

Present:

K Lea (Chair of the Corporation)
V Harris (Vice-chair of the Corporation) (from the point shown)
P Swift (Principal and Chief Executive)
J Bache
C Blanchard
J Dowell
F Ellison (from the point shown)
L Izan
R Jones
U Koch
K Newbould
D Roddis
M Simon
T Wheeler (until the point shown)
D Wright (withdrawing as shown & attending as a governor from the point shown)
S Yates

In attendance:

A Fau-Goodwin (Vice Principal 14-19 Curriculum & Strategy)
S Wainwright (Vice Principal Adults Skills HE & Business Development)
G Bebbington (Director of Finance and Administration)
D Harwood (Director of Quality)
N Peet (Director of Operations & ICT) (leaving and returning as shown)
S Salter (Director of Organisational Development)
E Davies-Jones (Clerk to the Corporation)

The Chair welcomed members of the Corporation and SMT to the meeting and outlined the objectives of the meeting namely to provide an opportunity for members of the governing body and SMT to discuss important issues relating to the College's strategy, educational character, mission and performance in the forthcoming year and beyond.

Item

01/10 FORMAL MATTERS

Diane Wright withdrew from the meeting at this point.

01/01/10 Appointment

The Chair informed members that the Search Committee had held a meeting on 18 December 2009 and that following the resignation of John Dwyer as a member of the Corporation, the members of the Search Committee had considered the vacancy arising. Members were informed that Diane Wright, who has served as an external co-opted member of the Organisational Development Committee since 1 August 2009, has confirmed that she still wishes to be considered for appointment as a member of the Corporation and that it is the unanimous recommendation of the members of the Search Committee that she should be appointed as a member of the Corporation.

IT WAS RESOLVED to appoint Diane Wright as a member of the Corporation for an initial one year period ending on 14 January 2011.

Diane Wright rejoined the meeting at this point.

01/02/10 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Thomas Howard.

01/03/10 Declarations of Interest

The Chair enquired whether any of the members attending this meeting considered that they held any personal interest in the items as listed on the agenda to be considered at this meeting. Margaret Simon's position as Mayor of Cheshire East Council as previously declared was noted. No other declarations of interest were made.

01/04/10 Approval of Part A Minutes of Meeting held on 3 December 2009 & Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 December 2009

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Part A minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2009 and the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2009 be approved as a true and accurate record of those meetings and that the Chair sign them accordingly.

There were no matters arising which are not covered by the agenda.

01/05/10 Report of the Search Committee

The Chair informed members of the matters considered by the Search Committee at its meeting held on 18 December 2009. Members considered the recommendations concerning the membership of the Corporation's supporting committees and the arrangements for the governor/curriculum link programme for 2010.

Members noted that changes to the curriculum link programme were being proposed to enable governors to gain experience and awareness of different areas within the college provision. Members considered whether the format of the programme should be reviewed and further developed.

The Chair then went on to inform members that the committee had considered the proposed policy on succession for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporation, which included details of the role, responsibilities and job description. He emphasised to members that all governors should have an equal opportunity and access to training to understand the roles and that those members wishing to do so should be given the opportunity to chair meetings.

IT WAS RESOLVED to:

- ***make the following appointments:***
 - ***Diane Wright as a member of the Finance Committee;***
 - ***Kate Newbould as a member of the Audit Committee;***
 - ***Simon Yates as a member of the Search Committee; and***
 - ***Uwe Koch as a member of the Campus Development Committee with the terms of reference of that committee being amended accordingly;***
- ***approve the programme of governor/curriculum links as proposed and request that the Search Committee review the format of the curriculum link programme reporting back to the Corporation with recommendations;***
- ***approve and adopt the new policy on succession as presented.***

01/06/10 Report of the Campus Development Committee

Members considered the minutes of the committee's meeting held on 18 December 2009. Members noted that Margaret Simon had informed the committee of her absence at that meeting, which was due to a prior Mayoral engagement. The Chair informed members that the building contractor had confirmed that, as at the date of that meeting, the construction of the building was progressing on time and on budget.

Members considered the proposed response of the College to the request made by T-mobile to site some equipment on the roof of the new building and took note of the following factors

affecting the College's position: the time constraints; the legal position of the College as landlord under the existing lease; and the apparent difficulty which T-mobile has had and continues to have in identifying and securing alternative sites to relocate the telecoms equipment from the roof of the Tower Block.

IT WAS RESOLVED to approve that a response should be given to T-mobile on a without prejudice basis and subject to contract that the possibility of locating some of the telecoms equipment onto the roof of the new building should be investigated subject to T-mobile bearing the entirety of the costs and giving an irrevocable undertaking that such equipment would be removed by 2015 i.e. the end of the period covered by the current lease agreement.

Members were informed that the College proposes to continue its tenancy of the premises located at Rail House until 20 July 2010 after which date the requirement for this additional accommodation will not be required.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the arrangements and terms under which the premises at Rail House are leased for the period to 20 July 2010 are approved.

Members were also asked to consider whether the authority to agree and approve the heads of terms could be given to the Campus Development Committee to act on behalf of the Corporation in order to facilitate the process for agreeing and concluding the terms of that lease.

IT WAS RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Campus Development Committee to approve the terms of the lease under which the proposed tenant, Total People Limited, may occupy part of the new campus building and that the terms of reference of the committee be amended accordingly.

The Director of Finance and Administration presented a tabled paper to members informing them that due to a change in the Learning and Skills Council's capital support payment profile post Application in Detail submission, the College was required to arrange an additional bank loan facility to cover project payments until the final LSC capital support of £19million is received in April 2011. A revised financial plan approved last July accounted for the additional bank borrowings commencing in February 2010 to enable a clearer picture of the amount required and to reduce the period to be covered by the additional facility. He informed members that the additional facility required, which is included within the latest cash flow projections, is £15million.

IT WAS RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Campus Development Committee to act on behalf of the Corporation to:

- ***approve and accept the terms and conditions of the additional Bank Loan facility;***
- ***and***
- ***arrange for the facility letter to be authorised by the relevant accounting officers.***

Vic Harris joined the meeting at this point

01/07/10 Financial Statements 2009/10 to 30 November 2009

The Director of Finance and Administration presented the financial statements to 30 November 2009 which showed –

- closing bank balance £722,000 with borrowings of £19,094,000 (original estimate £1,104,000 with £2,100,000 borrowings);
- actual operating surplus of £58,000 against original estimate of £72,000 operating deficit due in the main to a positive variance of £146,000 on staffing costs;
- projected bank balance as at the year end is £1,017,000 with £27,488,000 borrowings (original forecast £1,037,000 with £20,345,000 borrowings).

The Director of Finance and Administration informed members that the financial statements for the period to 31 December 2009 would be sent by mail to the members of the Corporation's Finance Committee as soon as they had been prepared.

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive and approve the financial statements to 30 November 2009.

02/10 SETTING THE FUTURE STRATEGY

The Principal gave a presentation detailing the challenges and opportunities which will be facing the College going forwards. He gave details of the impact of changes and cuts in government funding which are already having an initial impact on the College's current and planned provision. He set out the following as the key strategic priority areas for the College:

- Financial stability
- Employer engagement
- Curriculum development
- Partnerships
- Raising standards

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive the presentation and approve the key strategic priorities as proposed.

Francis Ellison joined the meeting at this point.

Tim Wheeler and the Director of Operations and ICT left the meeting at this point

03/10 GOVERNANCE - TAKING THE AGENDA FORWARDS

Members considered the strengths and the actions/areas for improvement as identified in the responses received from individual members as part of the 2008/09 self assessment of governance. Members then went on to review the key governance issues raised during the presentation received on 11 December 2009 (ref: Min. no: 57/09) and the approaches which may be considered concerning the way in which the Corporation carries out its business.

IT WAS RESOLVED to direct the Committee Chairs, together with the relevant senior manager, to determine the approach which will be taken to ensure that information is presented and considered by each committee in the most efficient way possible whilst meeting the requirements of the terms of reference of that committee.

04/10 WORK BASED LEARNING/EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Vice Principal, Adults Skills HE & Business Development gave a presentation to members detailing the proposed strategy for employer engagement to be followed over the forthcoming three year period, the performance measures to be used and the development plan which would support the strategy.

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive the presentation recognising the importance and emphasis which is to be given to the delivery of the strategy for employer engagement.

The Director of Operations and ICT returned to the meeting at this point.

05/10 STRATEGY FOR LEVEL 1 RECOVERY

The Director of Quality and the Vice Principal, 14-19 Curriculum & Strategy, gave the presentation to members setting out the strategy which is being followed to address the Level 1 underperforming courses as identified at the Corporation meeting held on 11 December 2009 (ref: Min. No: 56/02/09). The Director of Quality also identified the further quality improvement initiatives which are being implemented across the curriculum.

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive the presentation and note that the Quality and Standards Committee would be receiving a follow-up report on the delivery of the strategy at its meeting in June 2010.

06/10 MARKETING & PR STRATEGY

The Vice Principal, Adults Skills HE & Business Development gave a presentation to members detailing the new strategy for marketing and public relations which is proposed for the College's provision for the following key markets: 14-19 year olds; adult learners; higher education, and work related learning provision.

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive the presentation and to receive, at the Corporation meeting on 25 March 2010, an update report on the development and delivery of the strategy.

07/10 STAFF DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Director of Organisation Development gave a presentation to members setting out the issues which the staff development strategy will address and elements of the staff development programme which is being delivered to address these issues.

The Director of Operations and ICT then gave a presentation to members detailing the specific ICT administration skills, on line teaching skills and learning development issues and the staff development which will be undertaken with staff to develop these skills.

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive the presentations.

08/10 SUMMARY OF KEY DECISIONS

The Chair of the Corporation thanked the Principal and senior management team for the presentations given during the course of the day. He also thanked members for their contributions to the discussion of the issues arising. He emphasised the key requirement for management to work together in delivering the strategies presented and the paramount importance which must be given by the team to delivering the employer engagement strategy and the staff development strategy.

IT WAS RESOLVED that an additional meeting of the Corporation is to be arranged at a date following the country's general election, for the purpose of reviewing the delivery of the key strategies.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded after Part B business at 4.22 p.m.

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(Chair)
Production: 22 January 2010
Chair's approval: 23 January 2010
Corporation approval: 25 March 2010