



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on
Thursday 4th April 2006 at 5.00 p.m.
in the College.**

Present:

Dr G Hillier	(Chair) (Business Governor)
Mr R Darling	(Vice-Chair) (Business Governor)
Mr J Coulthard	(Community Governor)
Mr G Groom	(Principal Governor)
Mrs S Hall	(Foundation Governor)
Mr R Johnson	(Business Governor)
Mrs J Lewis	(Co-opted Governor)
Mr P Nightingale	(Foundation Governor)
Mr G Ritchie	(Business Governor)
Mr P Roe	(Business Governor)
Miss P Rutherford	(Foundation Governor)
Mr P Smith	(Staff Governor)
Mr N Upton	(Business Governor)
Mr G Watts	(Staff Governor)
Cllr J White	(Local Authority Governor)

Apologies for absence

Prof B Hobbs	(Co-opted Governor)
Cllr P Todd	(Local Authority Governor)

Mr D Stevenson (Professional Assistant and Clerk to the Board)

Officers:

Mrs J Judge	(Assistant Principal, Students & Quality Assurance)
Miss D McFarlane	(Assistant Principal, Resources) (Deputy Clerk)

Absent:

Mr G Flanagan	(Business Governor)
Mr D Healey	(Student Governor)

In the absence of the Professional Assistant the meeting was recorded by the Assistant Principal (Resources) in her capacity as Deputy Clerk.

The meeting was quorate throughout.

PART A FOR PUBLICATION

The Chair welcomed Sylvia Hall on her return to the Board as a Foundation Governor.

1172 Declarations of Interest

Members present were asked to declare in advance any matters on the agenda in which they had an interest.

No interests were declared.

1173 Minutes of the Board meeting held on 16th February 2006

The Minutes of this meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

1174 Focus on: The new measures of success and the 'Provider Quality Gateway'

The Assistant Principal (Students & Quality Assurance) presented a report identifying the current issues in this area. Members were able to question and discuss these matters. It was recognised that the College was well placed to respond to the measures. A handout of the presentation was distributed which included the website address for 'Success for All' where additional information could be obtained. The Assistant Principal was thanked for her report.

1175 Matters arising from previous meeting

982 Meeting with TCP

The Principal has written to TCP and is awaiting a response

Action: Principal to arrange meeting with TCP when response received

1150 Annual Review of Policies

A matrix of policies had been circulated highlighting key policies which would come to the Board for approval via the Committees.

Actions : Principal to establish an ongoing review cycle.

It was also agreed that the whistle-blowing policy would go to the Audit Committee prior to going to the Board

1164 Audit Committee vacancy

a) It was agreed that Sylvia Hall be appointed to the Audit Committee

b) P&N had discussed the current Board vacancy and were recommending that the Board should look to appoint a health care or Social Services professional. A short list had been identified

Action : Chair to contact individuals on short list with a view to calling them to an interview through P & N Committee

1169 Health & Safety – off-site placements strategy

This was included as part of Agenda Item 7(b)

1176 Board & Committee Decisions – Outstanding Actions

The Professional Assistant had circulated a report on those decisions on which actions were still outstanding.

Noted

1177 Report of Chief Executive/Principal

(i) Health & Safety

A report had been circulated and was noted. The Principal reported on the College's success in achieving the RoSPA Silver Award. This provided a national benchmark for the College within the educational sector. The College would now strive to achieve the Gold Award.

Action : Principal to congratulate staff on behalf of the Board for their hard work in achieving this.

ii) Briefings and Actions

The Principal had circulated a summary of the activities in which the College was involved. The Principal highlighted the Education Bill, the implications of which were discussed.

The Principal reported on the very successful 3-day Enterprise training event undertaken by 80 College students funded by One North East through Aspire. An evaluation report will be sent to Central Government. The College intends to make this part of its core curriculum for fulltime students as part of an 'employment skills pack' to give students an 'edge' re employability skills.

iii) Financial Report

In addition to the loss of ETP monies previously reported, Full Cost International income was significantly down on budget and costs against this income were being minimised as far as possible particularly with regard to staffing. Future College budgets would be re-based to reduce the risk in this area. The current College outturn forecast is showing a deficit of £310k at this time. The Chair of the F&GP Committee reported that this had been discussed in detail at its meeting on 7th March. The Management team are working hard towards minimising this deficit.

iv) Marketing & Recruitment

The target enrolment for 16-19 full-time students had been achieved, and even though the part-time adult enrolment target may not be achieved it is anticipated that the College would achieve its LSC income target.

A report had been circulated indicating the status of enquiries, applications and the conversion of applications to offers made for 2006-07, by school.

The Principal advised that he was managing to financial limits and focusing recruitment to the LSC targets. The Board agreed this was the best thing to do.

v) Retention & Achievement

Current overall in-year retention for 05/06 is 86%. This is an improvement against the previous year; however retention has dropped from the previously reported figure due to late reporting of withdrawals.

The College withdrawal procedure is currently being reviewed to ensure timely reporting of withdrawals.

Action : Assistant Principal

- vi) **Staff Utilisation**
It was noted that the detailed report on utilisation was not included in the pack. The Principal reported that staffing costs are currently expected to outturn within budget.
- vii) **Progress against Development Plan**
The report was noted.
- viii) **Franchising**
The report was noted.
- ix) **H&S for WBL**
Two incidents on employers' premises had occurred. The students had been withdrawn and placed with alternative employer. Ideally the College would work with the employers to improve H&S issues but the first priority is the safety of the students hence the need to withdraw them.
Action : The WBL Manager and H&S Manager are to lead an initiative to collate an FE+ database for validated employers regarding H&S.

The Report of the Chief Executive & Principal was discussed and noted, with any actions as shown against each item.

1178 Accommodation Strategy – up-date

Richard Darling and the Principal up-dated members with regard to developments which had taken place. It was reported that the LSC National Capital Committee had approved the College's New Build AIP subject to the LSC National Full Board approval. A detailed application would now need to be submitted by July 06. The Board congratulated R Darling and the Executive Team for their hard work. It was reported that in accordance with the delegation given to the F & GP Committee, and recorded in their Minutes, below, agreement had been reached on the sale of the land at Redcar Lane at a value which would enable the new build to take place. Final contract negotiations with the buyer are in progress.

The Board was reminded that details relating to the sale must remain confidential.

The Principal asked if a single-item Board meeting could be arranged in late June to approve the detailed application.

Action : Professional Assistant to arrange meeting

1179 Performing Arts courses

The Principal verbally reported on the concern over the College's Performing Arts curriculum area in the light of its current and future recruitment and retention issues. The College was at a critical stage in the design of the new build and Performing Arts was a large part of the investment for relatively few students. The Principal recommended closing the Performing Arts area at the end of the 05/06 academic year. In relation to students on the first year of a two year course, these would be 'brokered' to Stockton Riverside College which has a CoVE in Performing Arts and therefore would allow them to continue their study within an excellent resource base Transport support would be provided to the students. The Board discussed adequacy and sufficiency in this area within the Borough. The Board recognised the implications for staff in the area who would be redeployed where possible.

If redeployment was not an option then the staff would become redundant. Appropriate consultation would take place.

After full discussion, the Board agreed that Performing Arts should cease in the light of the high capital investment, current under-performance and more than adequate existing provision at other FE colleges and schools. The space in the New Build would be better utilised in growing areas such as specialist engineering.

1180 Staffing Arrangements

The Principal tabled a detailed report identifying the proposals he was recommending and he reported on the negotiations which had taken place with the recognised trades unions with regard to the staffing re-structure and changes to the terms and conditions of employment which he was proposing. The report identified the differences between the current contracts and differences between management and union proposals. There had been detailed and wide-ranging discussion of the issues. It was also reported that the matter had been considered by a Special Meeting of the F & GP Committee, which had evaluated the affordability of the proposal, and by the Employment Committee, which had considered terms of employment. Members discussed the implications of implementing these proposals. The Principal had hoped to conclude the negotiations with the unions by 3 April but had been unable to do so and asked for additional time in order to try to reach an agreement with the unions.

The Chair identified that even when the current situation is confirmed, if the College consistently performs well, it would be possible in future years to revisit the pay structure for further consideration.

**Actions : Principal to continue to negotiate with a view to reaching agreement with the unions by 15 May
Special Board meeting to be called for 16 May at 5.30 p.m. to receive and agree final proposals**

1181 Fees Policy

The Principal recommended that the Board agree that course fees for part time adult students be raised in line with LSC recommendations to 32½ % of the national base rate. It was further recommended that full time adult students for whom the College currently waived fees be charged at 50% of the LSC recommended rate if they did not qualify for full fee remission

The Board agreed the recommendation in relation to part time adult students.

The Board asked for further analysis of the impact regarding full time adult students to be brought to the next Board before a decision is taken

Actions: Principal

J Coulthard left the meeting at this point. The meeting remained quorate.

1182 Review of Strategic Planning event

The Chair presented to the meeting a review of the Strategic Planning event and, for the benefit of those members who had been unable to attend, he drew out the main issues which had been discussed at each session.

Outcomes of the event are now with the Strategic Management team to draft a Strategic Plan which will be brought to the Board in July.

Action : Principal

R Johnson left the meeting at this point. The meeting remained quorate.

1183 Investors in People

The Principal reported that against revised and more challenging criteria the College had been successful in renewing its Investor in People status. The College had asked to be re-assessed in 18 months in order to judge progress.

Action : Principal to congratulate staff on behalf of the Board

1184 Report of Academic Board

A report had been circulated identifying the main issues considered at the meeting of the Academic Board.

Noted

1185 Student Council Report – update

A report had been circulated identifying the main issues considered by the Student Council. Issues raised by this Council were being taken into account when designing the New Build wherever possible

Noted

1186 Governors' Liability Insurance

A previous meeting of the F & GP Committee had considered the position with regard to the liability of governors following a recommendation from the AoC that this matter should be re-visited after recent legal changes. F & GP Committee had considered the report, and found the position to be satisfactory.

The Board noted the Minute of F & GP Committee, below, and confirmed its approval of this arrangement, and asked for an annual update.

Action : Assistant Principal

1187 Minutes of meetings of F & GP Committee:

(i) 7th March 2006

The Minutes of this meeting were adopted. The Board noted the decision in respect of the sale of the land at Redcar Lane which had been delegated to this Committee. It also noted the discussion on the current budget deficit.

(ii) 23rd March 2006

The Chair of the Committee reported on the Committee's considerations of both the affordability and the human aspects of the staffing proposal.

The Committee recommended the proposed structure as correct and affordable but recognised there may be further changes to it as negotiations were ongoing.

In adopting these Minutes the Board recognised that it had previously considered the issue dealing with staffing arrangements, above (Minute 1180) and below (Minute 1190).

1188 Minutes of P & N Committee, 21st February 2006

The Chair highlighted that the Committee had agreed that a schedule of training be established for each Board member and that each Board member should be requested to undertake individually the nine AoC Governance training modules. The Clerk has circulated information in respect of this and has asked for feedback as modules are completed.

The Minutes of this meeting were adopted.

Action : The College would provide hard copies of the modules to those Governors who requested them

1189 Minutes of Audit Committee, 21st March 2006

- (i) **Minute A06-004 Merger of Internal Auditors**
The Board approved the recommendation of the Audit Committee
- (ii) **Minute A06-006 Dispensation for the interim Regularity Audit**
The Board approved the recommendation of the Audit Committee
- (iii) **The other minutes of this Committee were adopted.**

1190 Minutes of Employment Committee, 23rd March 2006

In adopting these Minutes the Board recognised that it had previously considered the issues dealing with Staffing arrangements, above. It was noted that the apologies from G Ritchie had been omitted from the minutes

The staff members and Assistant Principals withdrew from the meeting at this point. The Principal remained in his capacity as Chief Executive to advise the Board on his proposals and did not participate in the meeting in his capacity as Governor. The meeting remained quorate.

1191 Remuneration Committee 4th April 2006

This item is minuted separately in Part B of these Minutes and is not for publication. In the absence of the Deputy Clerk the item was minuted by the Chair.

1192 Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Board will be held at 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday 30th May 2006 in the College.

A special meeting of the Board to be arranged by the Clerk for Tuesday 16th May 2006 at 5.30 p.m. in the College to finalise Staffing arrangements

Action : Professional Assistant

A further meeting is to be arranged towards the end of June to agree the final capital application to the LSC

Action : Professional Assistant