



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION – LAKES COLLEGE, WEST CUMBRIA

Held on Thursday 20 September 2007 at 4:30pm in the Boardroom, Lakes College, West Cumbria

PRESENT: Howard Beanland Norma Boyes, Mike Davidson (from item no. 7), Clare Gray , Joe Holliday, Clare Hucknall, Graham Kennedy, John Lackie, Damian McSweeney (from item no. 6), Paul Pharaoh, Cath Richardson, Neil Smart , William Southward and Robert Walker

APOLOGIES: Andrew Armstrong, Carole Carre and Eunice Simmons

IN ATTENDANCE: Karen Wilson (Director of Finance and Business Development), Pippa Tiller (Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Quality), Cyril Wheat (Assistant Principal, External Relations) and Jennifer Foote (Clerk to the Governors)

Paul Pharaoh declared an interest in Item 8 on the agenda – University of Cumbria, in that Martineau Johnson, of which he was a partner, had now been appointed legal advisor to the university

01/07 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Board received the minutes of its meeting held on 28 June.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

02/07 NOTES FROM THE AWAY DAY – 28 JUNE

The Board received the notes of the away day held at Broughton Craggs Hotel on 28 June. The Principal updated the Board on the actions undertaken as a result of discussions during the day. In response to a query the Principal confirmed that there had been no communication from the LSC in respect of comments made during the meeting with the representative of the LSC. The Principal gave an update on current FE/LSC issues, in particular Adult Planning Forums and undertook to submit a more detailed report on these to the next meeting of the Board.

Joe Holliday wished it noted that he had given his apologies for the day, which had not been recorded in the notes.

RESOLVED that the notes be approved.

03/07 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 JUNE 2007

The minutes of the Search Committee held on 28 June were presented and considered. The Board considered the recommendation contained in Minute



No.137 in respect of the appointment of Damian McSweeney as a business member of the Board. Copies of Mr McSweeney's curriculum vitae were circulated for the information of the Board. It was the opinion of the Board that such an appointment would be beneficial to the College in that it forged further links with a major employer in the area.

RESOLVED that the recommendation to appoint Damian McSweeney for a term of office of four years be approved.

Damian McSweeney joined the meeting and was welcomed by the Chair on behalf of the Board. Introductions took place around the table.

04/07 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Board was informed that both student governors had returned to College for a further year. The Board was asked to consider extending the leave of absence due to ill health given to a governor (MC) until his term of office expired on 31 December 2007. The Chair of the Search Committee also informed the Board of the decision to approach Cumbria County Council for a further nomination in respect of the community appointment made by them.

RESOLVED that the leave of absence of MC be granted until his current term of office expires on 31 December 2007.

Mike Davidson joined the meeting

05/07 DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

The Principal submitted the draft three year strategic development plan for scrutiny and review by the Board. It was envisaged that the plan would form the College's strategy in meeting local, regional and national needs over the three year period 2007-2010.

The Board debated the suggestions for the vision and mission of the College and discussed at length the appropriate educational purpose of the College. The Principal explained how the plan had been split into seven key strategic areas. The listing of Higher Education as a key strategic area promoted discussion amongst governors on where HE provision fitted into the educational purpose of a general FE College and to what extent such provision should be promoted. It was explained that the College would not formally be a HE institution with awarding powers. However, it was necessary to recognise that the College did have a part to play in the provision of HE on the west coast through FE-HE progression and also deserved to be recognised as a provider institution. The Board voiced its concerns over the need for the College to ensure that equality of provision between HE and FE was maintained. The Board was informed that the strong FE focus in the document was contained in the sections referring to students and the curriculum and employer engagement/skills agenda. The



Board ratified its belief that it was not the intention of the College to become mainly a HE provider but that it wanted to be recognised as a high performing FE College which also delivered HE provision. The Principal undertook to express more clearly the College's ability to provide foundation degrees and higher skills as part of its provision beyond FE.

RESOLVED that the three year strategic development plan be approved, subject to the following amendments:

1. the wording of the vision statement be amended to read "To be an outstanding college for FE education and training and to support the HE agenda"
2. the mission be reworded to include a statement of the College's intention to be a leading provider of education and training which would underpin local economic and community development.
3. the following amendments be made to the educational purpose of the College: at bullet point 1, the sentence to commence "To raise aspirations...", at bullet point 2, the sentence to commence "To instil..."
4. on page 8, second paragraph the word "higher" be omitted from between the words "college" and "education"
5. the omission of acronyms within the report text.

Having declared an interest in the item it was decided that the interest would have no material bearing on the debate therefore Paul Pharaoh took a full part in the discussion thereon.

06/07 UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA

With reference to Minute No. 146 the Board received the report of the Principal on various developments with the University of Cumbria.

Development of the Lillyhall Campus Project

The first meeting of the project steering group had taken place in August and had been positive. A Project Manager had been appointed and funding could be progressed. It was expected that the project would be completed in three year's time, resulting in an integrated campus situated between the College and Nuclear Academy.

FE/HE Interface

The selection process was underway for a HE Co-ordinator post to be shared between the four FE Collages.

Options Appraisal Steering Group

An impartial and objective appraisal had been commissioned to be carried out by FE Associates. The notes of the Options Appraisal Steering Group, the revised timetable for the appraisal and suggested names for the consultation process were submitted for information as appendices to the report. The Principal advised the Board that close scrutiny of the appraisal would be maintained to ensure it remained constant in its objectivity.



The University of Cumbria had identified that there was a need for HE provision for the west coast and negotiations had commenced to create a virtual department of Engineering and Construction in partnership with Lancaster University.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

07/07 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT

The Principal submitted a copy of the full report and risk assessment received from Ofsted in respect of the Annual Assessment Visit which took place on 27 June 2007. The judgement of the Inspectors was that the College was Grade 2, Good.

The Board expressed itself very pleased at the findings of the report and requested that the Principal congratulate those members of staff involved on its behalf.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

08/07 COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Board received the outturn report on the College's Key Performance Indicators for 2006/07. The Principal was pleased to be able to report that the £600k deficit forecast earlier in the year had been turned into a £200k - £300k surplus. The Board congratulated the College executive on the successful implementation of the financial recovery plan. The Principal drew the Board's attention to the 16-18, WBL and HE targets which had not been fully achieved and explained the remedial measures which had been instigated in response.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

09/07 FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Board received the report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services in respect of the provisional financial outturn for 2006/07 and confirmation of the budget for 2007/08. The Director explained that managers across the College had been made aware of the need to keep to budget lines. Staff productivity had been very good, with the College's flexible working contracts allowing for prudent management in this respect. The College had self assessed as financial health category grade B for 2006/07 (Minute No 141 refers) but it was understood that the College would aim to self assess as grade A for 2007/08.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.



10/07 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The Board received the overview of treasury management activity for 2006/07. Governors queried whether it would be feasible to revise upwards the investment income for the current year. However, it was explained that the College had set some challenging financial targets this year therefore any such revision would not be prudent.

11/07 PAY AWARD 2007/08

The Board received updated details of the 2007/08 pay award. Details of the AoC recommendation were explained together with the current status of union negotiations. The Board noted that the recommendations again included specific provision to ensure that the lowest paid workers were guaranteed a minimum level salary increase. It was understood that such measures would eventually impact on higher grades as pay differentials were eroded away. The College was aware of this possibility and was monitoring the situation accordingly. The award had yet to receive endorsement by all unions involved but the Board was asked to approve the payment in order to ensure that staff were rewarded for a successful 2006/07 by receiving a timely inflationary pay award.

RESOLVED that the staff pay award for 2007/08 consist of a 2% increase, on all salaries and allowances, from 1 August 2007 followed by a further increase of 1% from 1 February 2008, with the second instalment (1 February 2008) for those staff on points 4 to 14 inclusive being rounded up to ensure that the overall award for these staff for 2007/08 to be £500.

12/07 CURRICLUM AND QUALITY REPORT

The Board received the report of the Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality on the following issues:

- Full time courses
- Student induction
- Achievement and retention
- Value added data
- Attendance
- Self Assessment Report 2006/07
- Courses for Review
- Equality and Diversity
- Every Child Matters
- Student Newsletter
- Full time numbers

In respect of the current numbers for full time 19+ students the Board queried whether the College was exceeding its risk parameters as decided for full time recruitment figures. In response the Principal informed the Board that initial



notice had been given to the LSC of the over enrolment in the full time 19+ category but that it was still too early in the year to be sure of the exact position in this respect.

With reference to courses for review the Board was informed that courses requiring support were monitored through development plans by both the Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality and the Quality Improvement Committee.

The Board was asked to note the grades awarded to business support areas which had been graded using a number and letter system as recommended for action by the Board at the away day in June. The Board commended the Central Information Systems for its self assessed grade of 1 and also the three business support areas which were awarded a grade 1 for capacity to improve.

In response to a request for clarification the Board received an explanation of the "Moodle" virtual learning environment, as used by students.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

13/07 GOVERNORS COLLABORATION EVENT

The Principal informed the Board that the collaboration event for Governors would take place this year on Thursday 15 November 2007 at Kendal College. The programme had not yet been finalised but it was anticipated that timings would be similar to the event held in 2006. The Principal confirmed that group transport could be arranged if necessary.

14/07 APPOINTMENT OF CLERK

The Board received the report of the Principal on arrangements for the appointment of a Clerk to the Governors. The position had been occupied under an interim arrangement by the Clerk to the Corporation at Carlisle College. An agenda for the special Board meeting needed to approve the appointment following the recommendation of the Selection Panel was circulated.

RESOLVED that the arrangements for the selection process be approved as follows:

0.4 post at a salary of circa £32k pro rata

Interviews to take place on Friday 28 September

Panel members: Chair, Vice-Chair, Principal, Norma Boyes, Joe Holliday and John Lackie



15/07 CORPORATION SELF ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

The Board received the report of the Clerk containing an analysis of the self-assessment questionnaire completed by governors at the away day in June 2007. Information contained in the analysis had been extrapolated to form the basis of an action plan for governance for 2007/08. Whilst it was recognised that the document contained some useful insights into actions to be taken forward it was also noted that some of the questions were concerned with what could be described as trivial issues. It was recognised that, for the process to be of any tangible benefit, governors needed to be able to feel that they could answer honestly rather than as a means to ensure a good response to the self assessment. It was confirmed that one of the first duties of the new Clerk would be to oversee and complete the action plan which would be reviewed at the self assessment away day in June 2008.

RESOLVED that the analysis of the self assessment questionnaire be noted and the governance action plan 2007/08 submitted as appendix 2 to the report be approved.

16/07 CORPORATION TRAINING PLAN 2007/08

The Board received the report of the Clerk on a suggested training programme for the Corporation for the academic year 2007/08. The Board was requested to consider revising the current arrangement of one away day in June to two half days in November/December and June. The provision of an away day earlier in the year to consider the strategic development plan would allow for the Corporation to advise on the plan in its draft form rather than receiving the final version in June. In response to a query the Principal affirmed that this schedule would correlate with the College's planning cycle. It was accepted that the Ofsted Inspection of 2006 followed by the appointment of a new Principal meant that it was reasonable to carry forward the training programme into the current year.

RESOLVED that the Corporation Training Programme for 2007/08 as set out in the report be approved.

17/07 CORPORATION ATTENDANCE RECORD

The attendance record for corporation meetings for 2006/07 was presented for scrutiny and comment. The Clerk explained that current LSC guidelines had been used to calculate the attendance percentages. The target attendance for 2006/07 was 80% which had not been achieved. Members were reminded that the target for 2007/08 had been set at 75%. The Search Committee had instigated measures to deal with issues surrounding individual governor attendance. In response to a query it was explained that one of the student



governors had not been included in the attendance figures for 2006/07 because they had attended in the capacity of student observer.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

18/07 REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

The Clerk submitted the Corporation Standing Orders for review. Suggested amendments incorporated the inclusion of a paragraph to fulfil the Corporation's responsibilities under the revised Financial Memorandum of 2006, the amendment of committee numbers to reflect current arrangements and the rewording of the paragraph on urgent items. The Clerk explained that it was unlikely that any amended Instruments and Articles would be available during 2007 and therefore it was sensible not to attempt any further revision of the Standing Orders, Terms of Reference or Code of Conduct at this stage.

RESOLVED that the revised Standing Orders as set out in the appendix to the report be approved and adopted.

19/07 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Clerk submitted the current membership of the Committees of the Board for review. The Board debated best practice in respect of student governor membership of committees and considered the options available in respect of appointments to vacant positions. Governors also considered the efficacy of proposals from 2006 for governor attendance at the Student Forum to be rotated from within a nominated group. It was agreed that allowing a governor to attend Student Forum group meetings over a period of time allowed for a continuity of representation and a greater understanding of student issues. The current size of each committee was considered and the Board was satisfied that the membership adequately reflected the needs of each individual committee.

RESOLVED that

1. Resources Committee be allocated one student member place, the meetings to be attended by either student governor as appropriate
2. Damian McSweeney be appointed to the vacancy on the Resources Committee
3. Mike Davidson be appointed to the vacancy on the Audit Committee
4. Robert Walker be appointed to the vacancy on the Remuneration Committee
5. Norma Boyes and John Lackie be appointed governor representatives on the Student Forum for 2007/08.

Bill Southward left the meeting



20/07 STUDENT FOCUS AUDIT TRAIL

In response to a request from the Chair, the Principal tabled the report of the Quality Manager on the College's student focus audit trail. The report explained the mechanisms used in College for tracking student complaints and concerns. The Board discussed issues in connection with the availability of robust mechanisms whereby students could raise any concerns they might have in connection with the College either during or after their course. It was explained that whilst student surveys could be completed on-line it was also possible to request a hard copy if required. Information received from the surveys was made accessible via the College's computer systems and practical feedback on issues was also displayed via College notice boards. The system for dealing with student complaints was scrutinised at Inspection and had been acknowledged as "good".

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked Jennifer Foote for her work as interim Clerk for the College during the previous six months.

The meeting closed at 7:05pm