



Halesowen College

Minutes of the Special Corporation Meeting

held Saturday 16 May 2009

Present: Pam Thomas (*Chair*), Keith Bate (*Principal*), Phil Osborne (*Vice Chair*), Corinne Crannage, Paul Downing, Andrew Hanson, Neil Hobson, Liane Purnell, Priya Sheridhar, Gloria Smith, Alan Taylor

In attendance: Paul Bridgewater (*Director of Teaching and Learning*)
Mary Higgins (*Director of Curriculum Planning*)
Jacquie Carman (*Director of Finance and Administration*)
Di McCathie (*Director of Students*)
Claire Smith (*Elected Student Governor Designate*)
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from David Prain, Alison Perks, Nicholas Ronan, Leslie Williams and Rebecca Miller.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Ofsted Inspection 11-15 May 2009

Keith Bate thanked the governors, staff and students for their work across inspection week noting that inspectors had commended the exemplary student conduct.

Keith Bate reviewed for members the detailed grading structure for college inspections (as previously considered). The College Executive reported on the inspectors' findings under each of the common inspection framework key questions and in relation to Every Child Matters as were presented to a meeting of key staff and the Chair at the end of the inspection week.

Pam Thomas commended the College on receiving an excellent response where the College was recognised for its good work with outstanding features.

Keith Bate noted that this was an excellent time to continue improvements in provision.

In response to the detailed consideration of the feedback given, members considered the elements of both good and outstanding provision and decided to seek informal independent advice on any possible subsequent action to be taken by the College.

Action: Keith Bate

4 Strategic Plan 2008–2013

Keith Bate reported that since the setting of the Strategic Plan in 2008 the national economic position had changed considerably.

Jacque Carman presented a detailed review of the unprecedented macroeconomic turmoil and its potential future effect on the College financial management including loss of investment revenue. At this point in time the College's financial position remained very strong.

With regard to capital development and reported Learning and Skills Council national funding difficulties Jacque Carman reported on the completion of Block 8 and the submission of plans for continued development.

Jacque Carman further reported on changes to the revenue funding arrangements with the forthcoming dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council, adult funding provision and reduced Train to Gain funding. Issues regarding the 2007/08 funding had been resolved and funding for 2009/10 looked positive.

Keith Bate asked about the finances beyond 2010. Jacque Carman responded that the College must consolidate its position prior to the new funding regime and that future funding would be subject to increased efficiency targets and value for money.

In response to a question from Gloria Smith, Keith Bate confirmed that the College was represented on appropriate forums.

Jacque Carman concluded that the College continued to have a strong financial base.

5 Strategic Priorities 2008/2009

Keith Bate reviewed legislation currently progressing through government whereby 16-19 commissioning would be directed through Local Authorities with the young People's Learning Agency and the Skills Funding Agency taking overarching roles. The new potential for colleges to re-designate to 6th Form status required consideration. Children's Trusts would also gain greater powers and there may be increased opportunity for joint working on foundation degrees.

Keith Bate reported that there remained continued emphasis on collaboration with schools and other partners. Locally, Windsor High School had achieved approval for a 6th Form and had gained capital funding agreement.

Mary Higgins introduced the Innovation Nation white paper, covering aspirations to develop the knowledge economy and the skills required for the 21st Century. Implications continued to be the importance of achieving the new Training Quality Standard kite mark, workforce development, partnership working and flexible and responsive curriculum offer.

The Learning Revolution publication proposed a culture of adult learning with an adult learning pledge, a learning festival and the opening up of more spaces for learning. Fifty Union Learning Centres were being included. Older people and disadvantaged people were amongst those being targeted. Digital technology would be important with inherent issues about digital literacy. New performance indicators for informal learning were proposed with Ofsted to provide a new way of inspecting this.

Under development of New Diplomas, Mary Higgins reported that the current provision was being delivered well and that a further three diplomas had been approved for 2009/10. Much interest in the diploma lines had been received from Windsor and Earls High School pupils. Success had been achieved through Gateway Three for a further five diplomas commencing 2010. However, a cautious approach was being taken with further links with other providers required for successful delivery. Work was needed to increase school interest in delivering diplomas pre 16.

Gloria Smith noted that there was some misunderstanding from students on what the actual content and delivery of a new diploma entailed making it important that advice and guidance made this clear.

Keith Bate reflected on the development of the Transformational Projects. The Collegiate work with both Earls High School and Leasowes Community College was progressing very well. Time implications in relation to extending and maintaining collaborative relationships required consideration.

6 Priorities for 2009/10

Keith Bate reported on the very positive results of the Recognition, Reflection and Reward Scheme and in relation to Preparing for Economic Prosperity noted the potential to consider short term internships for graduates, apprenticeships and the development of Careers Champions. Further to this the College should consider alternative employment routes via training provision and extended pathways for teachers, learning support and assessors.

Mary Higgins reported that a number of new Higher Education programmes were due to commence but that reduced HEFCE funding was having an impact on this. More progression routes were being developed commencing 2010 and further areas were being considered.

Mary Higgins further reported on the forthcoming Higher Education IQER involving an integrated quality review which provided an opportunity to consider delivery and the supportive infrastructure including raising the College profile.

Keith Bate reported that the College needed to further consider corporate responsibilities and reputation, in particular a corporate brand. The College needed to research the Halesowen College customer base to have a clearer understanding of the market. Contemporary marketing approaches including relevant use of technologies were also required.

Keith Bate also reported that it was timely to review internal processes in relation to modern working practices and the next phase of digital learning and developments. It was agreed that future priorities for staff Continual Professional Development would be considered at the next meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee.

Action: Keith Bate

Keith Bate formally recorded his thanks to Pam Thomas for her commitment and support.

7 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Corporation is scheduled for 9 July 2009.

Closed: 12.20pm