



**Minutes of the Full Corporation meeting held on
10 September 2009**

09.115 Membership

- Ap Mrs J H Chambers
Mr J Connolly
Mrs L Coombes
Mr S Darby
Ap Mr K Green
Mr R Holden
Mr M Lloyd
A Mr K McKoy
Mr T Ndlovu
Ms D Needham
Ms A Neilson (Vice Chair)
Ap Cllr D Pressley
Mr R Rowley
Mr J Savage
Mr J Sephton (Chair)
Ap Mr J Shephard
Mr A Stott

In attendance:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mr M E Murphy | (Clerk to the Corporation) |
| Ms A J Oaks | (Deputy Clerk and College Secretary) |
| Ms G Saville | (Deputy Principal) |
| Mr J Neal | (Assistant Principal) |
| Mr G Adams | (Director of Finance & Resources) |

09.116 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Chambers, Cllr Pressley and Mr Shephard.

09.117 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

09.118 Minutes of the Full Corporation meeting held on 9 July 2009

The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

09.119 Matters Arising

09.119 (Re 09.102 – Acquisition of Retford College Franchise)

The Principal stated that the outstanding issues reported to Governors at the last meeting had been successfully resolved and that Retford College was now owned by the College, with himself and the Director of Finance acting as Directors. The intention was to bring the Retford provision into the main stream College provision as soon as possible after enrolments were completed and students settled, following which the Company would be dissolved.

A three year lease on the premises had been taken, with a break clause after one year. This would allow a search for alternative, more suitable premises or improvements to be negotiated with the landlord

09.120 Performance Monitoring – Quality

The Deputy Principal informed Governors that the regular report highlighting performance for retention, attendance and lesson observations would be presented to the next meeting once data became available. This month's report focused on the recent changes to the Ofsted inspection regime, College Performance Report published by LSC, and the results of the national grades under Framework for Excellence.

The key changes in the Ofsted inspection regime were summarised, in particular the removal of the Annual Monitoring Visit and the introduction of a focused monitoring visit which would review Provider progress within two years of an inspection. Typically inspections would take place every 4-6 years depending on the College's performance. The Deputy Principal emphasised that there would be a limiting grade on the overall effectiveness and Capacity to Improve in relation to Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity and that Every Child Matters themes would become more important. Further details were provided in respect of how inspections would be scheduled.

The key headline figures from the College Performance Report published by the LSC for 2007/8 were summarised to indicate College success rates against national benchmarks showing a three year trend. The information clearly indicated that significant improvements had been made, with the College now being at national level or slightly ahead for all ages on long courses.

As reported at the previous meeting, there had been a delay to the publication of data under Framework for Excellence due to lobbying by the AoC on Colleges' behalf with regard to unannounced changes to the methodology. National figures for some of the dimensions under F4E had been published and details were provided in the report of how the College had performed against the national picture.

The College was Graded 2 for Learner Views and Learner destinations and Grade 3 for Employer Views and Qualification Success Rates. In respect of the grades not published, the College received Grade 1 – Outstanding, for Financial Health, Financial Management and Control, and Grade 2 for Delivery as a percentage of funding allocation and Resource Efficiency.

Governors questioned the source of the data and acknowledged that there had been some issues in terms of responses to the learner and employer surveys. The Deputy Principal commented that it was still unclear as to what would be published in 2010 and that there had been loss of

confidence in the system throughout the sector. The Principal commented that the data for next year would be interesting as F4E was being piloted in the Nottinghamshire schools this year. Overall Governors were pleased with the results.

Governors asked for feedback on enrolment and whether it was likely the College would achieve its targets. The Assistant Principal responded, stating that early indications were positive, with some areas ahead of target and some slightly behind. Further details were provided for Governors information. He added that there was an expectation that the College would achieve its Contract target and that a formal report on the position would be presented to the next meeting of the Full Corporation. The Principal added that the College was currently exploring opportunities to expand WBL provision and also to help Train to Gain providers where the impact of the reduced funding had been severe. Discussion were taking place with T2G partners in the north of the County to increase capacity in Construction and increase the range and variety of provision available. Further to the report at the last meeting that funding for T2G had been drastically reduced, following lobbying of the regional LSC, the College had been successful in securing a further £200,000.

The Report was received.

09.121

Financial Report – Outturn 2008/9 and Final Budget 2009/10

Mrs Coombes joined the meeting.

The Director of Finance presented the report, stating that the year end accounts, including the FRS17 pension adjustments, had not yet been finalised and audited. Governors had previously been circulated with Period 12 Management Accounts in their monthly information packs; these indicated an operating surplus of £110,000 compared to a forecast deficit of £83,000. The improvement was achieved due to restructuring costs against the provision identified in June, making a saving of £147,000.

The operating surplus was offset by the write-off of Property strategy costs amounting to £409,000, a saving against the previous forecast of £450,000 as a result of the reduced cost of drainage and car park works which had now been completed.

In terms of the Budget for 2009/10, the risks associated with a number of budget assumptions had been clarified and these were summarised in detail within the report and included the additional T2G funding received.

The Director of Finance went on to explain that the budget had assumed total pay cost savings from staffing reductions amounting to £570,000. With the completion of the redundancy programme, this figure had been confirmed and the redundancy costs had been provided within 2008/9. The Principal provided details, reporting that the whole process had gone very smoothly thanks to the hard work of the HR Director and her team. From an original 19 jobs placed at risk, only 7 compulsory redundancies were made. There had been no appeals against these decisions. The Principal added that the redundancy notice period had been enhanced by two months for support staff and one month for academic, as a result of being able to complete the consultations within the planned timescales.

Governors enquired about the level of morale amongst staff following the process. Mr Savage, staff Governor, commented that he believed the process to have been positive and that staff were now looking forward to 2009/10. The Vice Chair requested clarification of whether subjects that had been failing in terms of success rates had been withdrawn, impacting upon the workload of remaining staff. The Principal confirmed that whilst no reductions had been made to the breadth of the curriculum offer, capacity had been reduced in response to concerns about quality in some areas, for example in Construction. The Deputy Principal added that some areas were overstaffed as a result of falling demand, but that in other areas there was an increasing demand. The restructuring process had been necessary to bring about the essential balancing of resources and to support the required improvement in quality.

Governors recognised that considerable management resource had been taken out but that this was part of the medium term strategy following recent improvements in performance. Mr Ndlovu questioned whether the reduction in staffing was consistent with the enrolments currently being identified in curriculum areas. The Principal reiterated Mr Neal's earlier comments stating that it was rather too early to predict the outcome at this stage, but the report to the next meeting would be able to provide a clearer picture.

Ms Needham requested the Director of Finance provide a reconciliation of the balance sheet reserves for further information. Mr Adams agreed to provide this outside the meeting. Governors' concerns when approving the budget at the July meeting, that there should be minimum impact on the quality and staff development budgets, had been recognised and budgets of £47,000 and £75,000 respectively had been protected.

The Director of Finance continued, reporting that the award of contractual incremental awards was proceeding as agreed, but that the assumption remained that there would be no general costs of living award.

The Principal advised Governors that the Trade Unions had requested clarification of their decision to review the situation later in the year in the light of affordability and to confirm that any nationally agreed general pay award would be implemented as soon as affordable.

Considerable discussion took place with regard to the potential financial impact and the need to ensure solvency in the long term. All issues were debated at length, particularly the need to review the financial position closely throughout the year before making a decision on affordability. Several options were put forward for discussion. Ms Needham proposed that it would be prudent to review the matter again in terms of affordability when the financial accounts for the half year were made available. Considerable debate took place with regard to the merits of this proposal.

The Chair emphasised that it should be noted that as in previous years, the Corporation wished to honour the AoC recommendation and to make a general pay award, but only when they were certain it was affordable. It was acknowledged that this was the first year since Incorporation that a pay award had not been made. Following thorough discussion of all options put forward for consideration, it was

- RESOLVED 09.121.1** That it would not be appropriate for the Corporation to make a commitment on the implementation of a general pay award for 2009/10 unless and until such time as a national agreement was reached.
- RESOLVED 09.121.2** That the affordability of implementing any national recommendation relating to 2009/10 pay and conditions will be considered by the Full Corporation at that time.
- RESOLVED 09.121.3** That reports on progress of the national negotiations on pay and conditions be included on the Agenda for Full Corporation meetings each quarter until such time as a recommendation is made.

To conclude, the Director of Finance stated that the overall budget remained as approved, with an operating break even position.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Finance for the report.

09.122 Bassetlaw District Children Centre Financial Report to 31/3/2009

A report had been prepared by the Children's Centre Finance Officer. The Principal explained that as the Commissioned Accountable Body for the Children's Centre the College has an obligation to manage the budget, and therefore Governors should maintain oversight in discharging that contractual responsibility. He added that he believed being involved in the Sure Start programme provided many indirect benefits for the College within the Community which far outweighed the level of any unfunded costs.

The Director of Finance summarised the figures within the report. A budget of £1,792,115 had been provided, of which £1,710,674 had been expended. The new buildings in Manton, Gateford and Rhodesia and Central Retford had only been completed half way through the year, which largely explained of the £81,441 underspend. £64k of the underspend had been utilised on various resources for the Centres, including staff recruitment and development. The budget for 2009/10 has been allocated at £2,213,541 and early recruitment of staff to begin developing Round 3 areas was implemented in June 2009. It was noted that financial reports were presented to the District Partnership Board on a quarterly basis and presented to Nottinghamshire County Council on a quarterly basis. The recently completed financial audit raised no issues of concern.

The Report was received.

09.123 Self Assessment

A short report had been circulated to Governors outlining proposals for the next self assessment event to be held in the autumn term. The Deputy Principal explained that curriculum teams were currently undertaking the self assessment process to form judgements about their performance

against the five key inspection questions. When the success rate data becomes available in October, judgements will be revisited, following which the whole College SAR will be produced incorporating the views of business support areas and Governors. The final report is required to be submitted to the LSC by 31 December 2009.

It was proposed that the date already scheduled for a development event on 26 November was appropriate for self assessment as this would allow Governors to reflect on their role in the previous year in the context of the College's performance for 2008/9, as well as to consider progress towards the 2012 goal. The outcome of this self assessment event will then be incorporated into the College SAR.

RESOLVED 09.123 **That the Clerk and the Deputy Principal develop a programme with a focus on the 2008/9 data and Governors' understanding of their role in contributing to improved performance.**

09.124 **Equality and Diversity**

No new issues were raised.

09.125 **Governance Risk**

No new risks were identified.

09.126 **Confidentiality**

None of the business conducted was deemed confidential.

09.127 **Date and time of next meeting**

Thursday 8 October 2009 at 6.15 pm.

Signed (Chairman) _____ Date _____