



## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation – Lakes College, West Cumbria**

**Held on Thursday, 24 September 4.30pm in the Board Room of the College**

**Present:** Damian McSweeney (Chair), Paul Pharaoh, Joe Holliday; John Lackie, Cath Richardson (Principal) (Items 1-19); Eunice Simmons (Items 7-20); Andrew Oldham ; Michael Doyle (Items 1-12), Jill Killen; Mark Stanger; Mike Davidson; Susie Shepherd; Gerald Humes (Items 1-12)

**Apologies:** Norma Boyes, Clare Walker, Steve Bradley

**In Attendance:** Karen Wilson, Deputy Principal Finance and Corporate Services (Items 1-19); Cyril Wheat, Assistant Principal (External Relations)(Items 1-19); Chris Nattress, Assistant Principal (Curriculum & Quality) (Items 1-19); Jane Murray (Clerk to the Governors)

### **56/09 Declarations of Interest**

None received

### **57/09 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2009 were agreed and signed as a correct record. The Assistant Principal External Relations informed Governors that two strategic forums to consider Energy Coast Masterplan objectives would now take place in October.

### **58/09 Board Membership Update**

The Clerk informed the Board that resignations from the Board had been received from Eunice Simmons (from 1 October 2009) and Steve Bradley (from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009). The Chair thanked both Members for the knowledge and expertise that they had brought to the Board, and the valuable contribution that they had made.

### **59/09 Appointment of Student Governors**

The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee reported to Board Members that there were two student governor nominees, Adrian Taylor who had stood the previous year, and Dan Carter, a level 1 Hospitality & Catering student, who were keen to be involved and were recommended by the Committee.

## **Resolved –**

- 1) That Adrian Taylor and Dan Carter be appointed to the Board for the academic year 2009-10, subject to their endorsement by the meeting of the college representatives on 29 September 2009 and effective from that date.
- 2) That Adrian Taylor be appointed to the Resources Committee and Dan Carter to the Learner Experience Committee.

## **60/09 Branding & Wiki Demonstration**

Lynsey Thornwaite gave the Board an overview of plans to update the logo for Lakes College, modernising the image and producing a brand guide which would provide a framework for how the logo should be used together with colour combinations. A gradual roll out of the logo was proposed with development costs expected to be £8,000 with a further £7,000 for the brand guide.

Governors were supportive of the changes which they felt looked more professional, and wondered whether the change couldn't happen in one 'go' rather than through a transition period. There were, however, budgetary implications to a more radical approach which Governors accepted. Governors were also keen to see the straplines continue and were advised that this would be included in the design guide. Governors added that some of the added value options, such as bags and t-shirts with the logo, might be offered for sale to students.

Gavin McKew continued with a demo of the Governors' Wiki site which was under development and which would be a communication portal for Governors. A training manual would be produced and Governors were keen to ensure that this would include clear guidelines of how it should be used.

## **61/09 Partnership – Termly Update**

The Vice Chair, who had contributed to the report, informed the Board that since the report had been written, it was clear that an Energus/Gen II merger looked almost certain, which could have repercussions for the college as it would bring both commissioner and provider together as the one entity.

It had been disappointing to note that while speaker after speaker at the energy conference attended had mentioned the importance of an appropriate skills base to deliver the Energy Coast Masterplan, Lakes College had not had a mention.

It was acknowledged that changing perceptions was a gradual process. In-roads were now being made with those commissioning training. It was important for the college to ensure that partnerships were equal, and to ensure that the product on offer was better than the rest. The Chair and Vice Chair had asked that the ½ day December training session should concentrate on how to raise the college's profile and image.

It was noted that the one big advantage that the college had was the 'progressive nature of its training', as young people generally didn't like change and continued their education at the same institution.

Meanwhile, the Assistant Principal External Relations had spotted an engineering opportunity at the conference and had arranged for staff to undertake development training in robotics to allow the college to compete for this kind of opportunity.

The college had also now introduced business improvement techniques training, the first in the area to do so.

**Agreed** – to note the update.

### **62/09 Health & Safety Annual Report**

The Board received an Annual Report on the College's health and safety performance for 2008-09, which had been monitored throughout the year by the Resources Committee. The Board noted that given the volume of activities and people using the site, health and safety incidents were remarkably low and were pleased to note the Learning and Skills Council 'excellent' grading for health and safety.

They were reassured that where there was a growth in incidents in a particular area, remedial action was undertaken. The importance of health and safety was a major feature of the induction process for staff and students.

**Agreed** – to note the report.

### **63/09 Capital & Revenue Budgets Annual Update (including pay award)**

As the Annual Financial Plan had been approved by Governors at their July meeting, there was little new to report. Train to Gain funding remained very tight, and there was now some discussion about the clawback of funding from colleges nationally. Income of around £207,000 was at risk.

There was little change in the position with respect to the national pay award. The Association of Colleges (AoC) continued to recommend a pay award of 1.5% - only one union had reluctantly accepted the award to date. Governors were advised that practice previously had been to pay the recommended award ~~from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009~~, even if no final decision had been reached.

It was established that the additional money allowed in budget for the pay award would help offset the potential claw back of £207,000 mentioned above.

**Resolved** – to note the report and to authorise the payment of the AoC recommended pay award of 1.5% from 1 August 2009.

#### 64/09 Management Accounts and Financial Update

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services reported that the process of closing down the accounts for 2008-09 continued and no significant changes were expected. As previously discussed, the position was much tighter than in previous years, but with the strong starting position, the College was in a far more robust position than many others, and there was confidence that 'outstanding' financial health could be maintained in the short term. The college continued to over provide for 16-18 year olds.

In response to questioning, the Board was informed that it was a deliberate policy by the college to over-provide for 16-18 year olds, ~~as a strategy to get growth consolidated into future funding allocations. The college enjoyed good progression rates. Given that many~~ ~~most~~ would choose to continue their education at the college as an adult, ~~this would generate~~ income ~~in future years.~~ ~~The college enjoyed good progression rates.~~ It was, however, acknowledged that the situation had reached a stage where there was a need to closely monitor and review, as the value of overprovision had now reached £250,000 ~~for 2008/09.~~

~~It was noted that whilst~~ Turnover in 2008-09 looked like being 10% up ~~on the previous year, the,~~ ~~but~~ surplus was down ~~by~~ 50% ~~indicating~~ growth ~~but at the cost of a much tighter operating position.~~

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**Agreed** – to note the update.

#### 65/09 Audit Minutes

The minutes of the audit committee were received and noted.

#### 66/09 Independent Safeguarding Authority

The Board noted the likely effect of new legislation for the college, and that a common approach would be developed by the four colleges in Cumbria.

#### 67/09 Key Performance Indicators

The key performance indicators were received and noted. The Board had already been informed of those showing red. In response to questioning the Director of Finance and Corporate Services informed the Board that while it was accepted that there was an element of subjectivity in some of the data collection, further work would continue this year to ensure that data was measured as objectively as possible.

**Agreed** – that the performance be noted.

#### 68/09 Integrated Quality Enhancement Review

The Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Quality, updated the Board on the visit by the Quality Assurance Assessment Team during the past two days. The team, from the Quality Assurance Agency, is responsible for assessing Higher Education Provision.

He was pleased to report that the follow-up visit had gone well and that the required standard had been met. 17 out of 18 earlier requirements had been made, with one requirement still to be met on a handbook issue. It was noted that follow up assessment is generally on a four-year cycle.

Governors welcomed the news and expressed their thanks to all those staff who had worked hard over the summer to ensure that the standard was met.

### **69/09 Quality & Curriculum Overview**

The Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Quality, updated the Board on the latest quality and curriculum developments:

Indicative success rates for 08/09 were looking positive, although there had been a change by the Learning and Skills council to the 6-week retention rule which was likely to adversely affect retention rates by 1-2% although all colleges would be in a similar position.

The estimated results (excluding key skills) were just below target for 16-18 and just above target for 19+, with the estimated overall rate averaging out on target.

Train 2 Gain success rates were estimated at 90% (minimum levels are 65%); and work-based learning provision is estimated at 68% (minimum levels 50%).

The complaints' procedure had been subject to recent review and from now on complaints would be categorised to enable easier identification of an increase in trends in any one area. There was agreement that complaints were encouraged as this enabled better services.

It was noted that response rates to the Employer Survey results had been very low and Governors made several suggestions about ways in which the College might consider encouraging a better response rate, including face-to-face distribution and internet.

Governors did note that satisfaction rates with contract arrangements had dropped significantly and were assured that the college was following up on the results.

In response to questioning, early indications of enrolment for 2009/10 looked positive. 16-18 enrolment looked up again, and full-time students looked like increasing by about 50. A health warning was added that it was too early in the term to be more specific or to place any reliance on the figures.

Further questioning ascertained that some courses had been oversubscribed but that efforts were being made to accommodate students, either by staggering classes or intakes.

**Agreed** – to note the update.

#### **70/09 Change of Structure**

The Principal informed the Board of a change of staff structure designed to respond to the difficulties of recruitment in the current economic climate at Director level and to strengthen the team in daily contact with external employers. Under the new structure the Deputy Principal, Finance & Corporate Service remained a Senior Postholder.

**Agreed** – that the position be noted.

#### **71/09 Revised Risk Policy**

The Deputy Principal Finance & Corporate Services was grateful to the NDA for sharing their expertise on risk, which had helped clarify some of her thoughts on the revised risk policy presented to Governors.

**Resolved** –

- 1) That high and very high risks should be reported to Governors on a regular basis.
- 2) That the risk policy be adopted.

#### **72/09 Self-Assessment Follow Up**

The Clerk presented a report which detailed the findings of the Governance Self-assessment, suggesting a more radical approach than in previous years with the objective of forming a governance strategy.

**Agreed** – that a working group of the Search & Governance Committee, together with any other Board member who might be interested, develop the strategy and present recommendations to the December Board.

#### **73/09 Application of the Seal**

The Clerk asked for a Governor to be formally agreed as a substitute to sign legal documents on behalf of the College to which the seal should be applied.

**Resolved** – that Mark Stanger be appointed as a substitute.

#### **74/09 Search & Governance Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2009 were received and noted.

#### **75/09 Confidential Items**

Under Instrument 14 (5) (a), the Principal and staff members withdrew.

**76/09 The Principal's Appraisal**

The Chair outlined the process and presented the appraisal. Governors made no additional comments other than to identify the need for Governors to continue to offer their support to the Principal, particularly in the current difficult, external climate.

**Agreed** – that the appraisal be noted.

**The meeting closed at 7.00 pm**