

HOPWOOD HALL COLLEGE

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporation** held on 10 December 2009 at 1600 hrs.

Present	Sultan Ali	Robert Clegg (Chair)	Phil Chadwick
	Linda Feerick	Ann Holt	James Gallagher
	Alun Morgan	Clive Reid	Derek O'Toole (Principal)
	Caroline Taylor	Clint Street	
In Attendance	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)	Janet Meenaghan (VP (C&S))	OJ Rahim (Exec Dir Skills)
	John Spindler (VP(F&CD))		
Apologies	Ian Bain		

12/09 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The apologies were accepted. No notice had been received of any member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and no interests were declared. Paul Harness had offered his resignation because of increasing work commitments, which the Chairman had regretfully accepted.

13/09 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

- a. The Minutes of the meeting held on the 15 October 2009 and the special meeting held on the 13 November 2009 were confirmed and signed.
- b. There was no urgent business requested.

14/09 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

re 6/09b. After meeting with LSC representatives it had been decided to process the meeting to discuss the failure to meet assurances in a smaller and less formal forum; this was noted and endorsed.

15/09 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS (UNCONFIRMED)

- a. Standards Committee. (15 October 2009). The minutes were received.
- b. Audit Committee. (1 December 2009). The following was noted and agreed:
 - (i) re 14/09. External Audit Management Letter. The External Audit Management Letter had been recommended and was approved (to inform 19.09c);
 - (ii) re 15/09. A special audit of TTG related issues had been completed by PWC (at a fee of £11,100) and the provisional findings were noted;
 - (iii) re 18/09. Annual Committee Report to the Corporation 2008.09. The report had been recommended and was approved (to inform 19.09c); and
 - (iv) re 19/09. FMCE 2008/09. The FMCE had been recommended and was approved.

The minutes were received.

- c. E&F Committee. (10 December 2009). A verbal report was received; the ill-health retirement situation had been progressed by the Remuneration Committee and had been agreed by the Corporation (9/09a(iii)). The issue was now further complicated by the raising of a formal grievance against the Principal by the former Exec Dir (FP&HR); this issue was being dealt with under College Grievance

procedures and would be reported to the Corporation (possibly via the Remuneration Committee) when appropriate.

- d. EDC. (10 December 2009). A verbal report was received and the recommendation that Construction and Engineering provision should be transferred to the Middleton campus to be accommodated in a newly built facility at a cost of £8m providing that LSC grant funding of £3.82m was confirmed was fully discussed and unanimously accepted.
- a. **The minutes were received and the grievance situation noted.**
- b. **The External Audit management Letter 2008/09, the Annual Committee Report and the FMCE were approved.**
- c. **The provisional report by PWC was noted.**
- d. **Construction and Engineering provision would be transferred to the Middleton campus in a newly built facility (Conditional on being) part funded by LSC grant (Of £3.82m).**

16/09 PRINCIPALS REPORT

The latest initiative to emerge from the Dept for BIS was the “Skills for Growth” White Paper. The key themes, implications and opportunities and “Skills Investment Strategy”, were delivered as a comprehensive electronic presentation (attached to the filed copy of these minutes), which was then fully discussed. The future was challenging: MOG changes, an imminent general election and the difficult financial situation all combined to ensure that 2010 would require a flexible and responsive approach. It was stressed that the priority remained the students’ achievement and the strict focus on that would remain. A working group had been established to manage a revision to the development plan in response to the changes and it was agreed that the Vice-Chairman, Clint Street and Linda Feerick would join the group to provide governance input.

- a. **The information was received.**
- b. **The VC, CS and LF would join the Development Plan Working Group.**

17/09 EXECUTIVE REPORT (VP(C&S))

- a. Curriculum and Strategy Report. An update was given on progress towards the Curriculum and Quality related Balanced Scorecard of Headline Performance Indicators (HPI). An evaluation of the current situation was compared, in the accompanying papers, with results brought to the last meeting together with amended determination of required actions. A distilled table (with full details behind in Annex A) clearly detailed the changes and they were indicated using RAG identifiers; the whole was supported by a detailed narrative. The Balanced Scorecard was then considered and each HPI individually explained and discussed in detail. The creation of a temporary post of AD 14-16 was noted, the background discussed and welcomed. Despite the result of an IQER, completed in October, which had awarded the highest grades for the 3 areas examined, work continued on improving the HE focus and an action plan would be submitted to the QAA by the end of the year. The 8% MLP profile set for 2008/09 was now confidently expected to be significantly exceeded as current assessments showed only 4.61 below the MLP threshold. Current interim indicators of success rates had showed an encouraging lift to 75% with further increases expected when the final results were analysed. Continuing work with the SAR had resulted in an overall assessment of Grade 3 and internal audit outcomes were awaited in 3 areas, including Safeguarding and feed back would be given.
- b. HE Strategy. The HEFCE had required submission of a dedicated HE Strategy, to a required format, by 11 January 2010. HE was a vital component of the curriculum offer and accordingly eight key objectives had driven the drafting of the Policy. The approach was welcomed and discussed; the Policy was approved for submission.
- c. Customer Service Update. The customer service group (CLASS) had been improving customer service using, as the framework, the Customer Service Excellence Standard; the CLASS group had aspired, amongst its main purpose of improving service, to gain accreditation against that standard and that had now been applied for. In November a pre-assessment visit was completed and 50/57 elements met the required standard. There would now be a desktop review in early January, followed by a full assessment, over 3 days, in February; some Corporation Members would provisionally be required from 1500-1600 in February.

- d. Safeguarding. The termly safeguarding report was considered and discussed; the dramatic increase in instances, from 2-31 for the similar period in 2008/09, was probably due to enhanced awareness of the issue and wider training. The greater proportion of the incidents listed involved females at the Rochdale site and could have been prompted by the imbalance of DSOs, with fewer at Middleton, which was being resolved. Only one incident involved a member of staff who had since left. There were relatively fewer reports from the BME sector and the reasons were being actively investigated. A "Stay Safe" week had been planned for March and the outcome would be reported to the corporation. The Safeguarding Policy was then closely considered and discussed; it was commended as comprehensive and practical and was approved. Thanks and congratulations were recorded to Kris Skelton for her determined, professional approach and hard work.

a. The information was noted.

b. The HE and Safeguarding Policies were approved

18/09 EXECUTIVE REPORT (ED (Skills))

The revised Organisational Structure at Orchard was attached at Appendix 1.

- a. TTG. There had been continuing achievement in driving the employer engagement strategy forward. TTG target performance over the start of the year was considered and discussed, the MCV stood at £2.6m with a negative variance of -6.7% but achievement of the whole target was confidently expected.
- b. WBL. WBL had a MCV of c£949k, the total resulting from the merger with the RMBC, which had brought an increase of 150%. Although results were well above profile for the first quarter this was unlikely to continue through the rest of the year since recruitment was now extremely tight, the main challenge was in the 16-18 cohort and it appeared that 19+ may be more successful. Technical administrative problems relating to funding methodology had introduced difficulties, the largest of which had surfaced during an LSC audit and c£320k would be clawed back; the Audit Committee had considered this at AC 16/09. Corrective action had now been taken and full details were listed.
- c. Learn Local, Skills Ladder and R2R. A summary of activity was fully considered, discussed and noted. Positive partnerships with a number of key stakeholders had been established; in particular the work with TESCO over the last eight months had proved particularly and mutually beneficial.
- d. TQS. The Quality Manager at Orchard would now be managed by the AD Quality and has developed a schedule for delivery of the TQS and the operational team would continue to drive towards this important award. Details were at Appendix 2.
- e. The Skills for Growth initiative had been fully considered during 16/09 and the local impact was assessed and discussed. The assumptions on which the paper was based did not fit the economic profile for Rochdale and a pro-active approach in partnership with RMBC was being adopted if necessary to challenge some areas which may be disadvantaged.

The Information was received.

19/09 EXECUTIVE REPORT (VP (F&CD))

- a. Finance Report. The Finance Report accurate to 31 October and thus the first quarter had been scrutinized in detail by the E&F Committee and they had noted that the present forecast position had been distorted by early LSC payments. The current surplus stood at £912k against a forecast £793k a favourable variance of £119k resulting from the lower staff costs. YTD income was £124k below expectations due mainly to a lower than expected Adult Safeguarding contract, whilst YTD expenditure was £243k to the good, mainly because of a lower level of pay award and unfilled posts. All other variations were noted as fully attributable and were analyzed and discussed. LSC income over the year was based on student numbers and FTE and the current position was scrutinized the graphical information was then studied and discussed. Key PIs were then also considered and discussed and, although the overall FMCE Grade was noted as "Good", the key areas for development were noted and agreed.
- b. The HR Report had been introduced to the E&F Committee at the meeting held earlier that day and it would become a standing item at future meetings and would inform an annual report to the

Corporation. It was a comprehensive document that had originated from challenges facing the HR organisation, which had been discussed in the E&F Committee. The content was discussed and, of particular note, were the reductions in Grievances and Disciplinary cases so far in this academic year.

- c. AFS. The Audit Committee had recommended the annual committee report and external audit management letters to the corporation (re 17/08 b) and the final versions of these had been noted at 15/09b, the annual internal audit report for 2007/08 had been approved by the Corporation at 5/09d and the E&F Committee had recommended the AFS 2006/07 to the corporation. The AFS was then discussed in the light of those recommendations, the I&E deficit of -(£1088k) was not a true picture of performance, which should more fairly be seen as an operating loss of c£450k. The higher figure was a reconciliation of pension settlements, losses incurred in the abortive estate development strategy and the reversal of previous building write offs. The Statements were approved for signature.

- a. **The information was received.**
- b. **The HR Report was welcomed.**
- c. **The AFS was approved for submission**

20/09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be at 1700 on 4 March 2010.