

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors
held on Monday 8 February 2010 at 5.00pm in the Community Room, Wellington Road**

PRESENT

Dr V Wylie (Chair)	Ms M Hunt
Ms C Boughton	Mr I Millard
Mr S Catchpole	Mr WA Parker
Mr J Crockett	Mr N Spencer
Dr M Hardacre	Mr D Swingwood
Dr J Hunt	

Ms S Meddings (Clerk)

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr B Dhir
Ms S Nicholson
Ms E Payne
Ms S Prince
Mr P Polowyj
Mr J Stretton

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to Ms Geraldine Swanton from Martineau who was in attendance to present the pre-meeting Briefing on Governors' legal obligations and responsibilities for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children.

The Briefing was followed by a short question and answer session.

In thanking Ms Swanton for her presentation the Chair stated that the issue of CRB checks for City of Wolverhampton College governors would be revisited at a future meeting.

Ms G Swanton and Ms K Douglas left the meeting.

01/10 BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND ITS COMMITTEES – APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

The Chair suggested that agenda item 6 – Appointment of members – should be taken as the first agenda item to enable the newly appointed member to attend the meeting from the beginning.

Ms Michaela Hunt left the meeting for the duration of this item.

The Chair reported correspondence dated 3 February 2010 from the Student Union Executive Committee nominating Ms Michaela Hunt as the student governor to replace Mr Nathan Bettam.

The Chair further reported that Ms Hunt was an AS level student at the College currently studying psychology, sociology and communication & culture.

Resolved:

That Ms Michaela Hunt be appointed as a student member of the Board of Governors for the period ending 31 July 2010 and as a member of the Audit Committee.

Ms Hunt rejoined the meeting and was welcomed by the Chair.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Ms R Bansal, Mr B Bird, Ms K Douglas, Mrs J Kitchen, Mr R Landman and Cllr J Rowley.

There were no declarations of interest.

02/10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – 14 DECEMBER 2009

Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 December 2009 be approved as a correct record.

03/10 MATTERS ARISING – ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2008/09

Arising on Minute No 72/09, in response to a query about whether the outturn for 2008/09 was a deficit, it was confirmed that this was a break even position.

04/10 CORRESPONDENCE

The Chair reported that the Correspondence item related to the Review of Governance and included the AoC Governors' Briefing of 15 January, the letter from Tony Alderman, Chair of the AoC Governors' Council and an initial response to the Review of Governance from the AoC Governors Council.

The Chair confirmed that Governors had also received copies of these documents by post and had received email confirmation of the venues and timings of the West Midlands Consultation events, ie 23 February at Walsall College and 2 March at Warwickshire College, both at 5.30pm to 8.00pm

The Search and Governance Committee had considered the correspondence and recommended that Governors attend one of the two events if possible. It was confirmed that the Ms C Boughton, Mr WA Parker and the Chair would be attending the event at Walsall College.

It was noted that the deadline for responding to the consultation was 31 March 2010. The Chair stated that there would therefore be a further opportunity for Governors to discuss the Review at the Board meeting on 29 March and to receive feedback from governors attending the consultation events.

05/10 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT TO GOVERNORS – FEBRUARY 2010

The Principal presented his report to Governors for February 2010

The main contents of the report included:

- Summary of key points from the college success rates performance for 2008-09
- AoC campaign on adult funding cuts and the college timetable for main contract allocations
- Some staff and student highlights.

In receiving the Principal's report Governors noted the following key areas highlighted in the report:

The overall college success rate has fallen slightly from 79% to 78%.

Areas of continued improvements include: adult learners on all long qualifications have improved and young people's performance at level 3 has increased from 69% (in 07/08) to 72%.

Areas under review as success rates have fallen include 16-18 performance at level 1 and level 2. Particular sectors that are being closely monitored are construction, horticulture and leisure.

In respect of 16-18 level 3 performance, points score per student has improved from 468 (07/08) to 588 (08/09). Nationally the College is 98th in the country of general FE colleges. To be in the top 50 colleges the College would need to improve by another 40 points per candidate. Last year the College's improvement from 07/08 was the third best of all general FE colleges in the country.

An AoC national campaign has begun to highlight the significant cuts in the sector. A survey of colleges by the AoC has highlighted that initial discussions on allocations indicate that nearly 50% of colleges are facing potential cuts of between 20% and 25%, less than 3% of colleges are facing cuts of below 10%, the average across the sector is a cut of 16%.

The initial position for City of Wolverhampton College is a proposed cut of 25% for adult learner provision. Further discussion with the LSC was scheduled with clarification on the full picture expected by the end of March.

Governors noted likely timescales for discussions and final clarification on the main areas of funding. It was noted that a clearer picture should be available by early March and would form part of the programme for the Governors' Strategic Board meeting on 1 March. Following discussion, it was agreed that the College's response to the funding cuts should be a focal point of the Board of Governors meeting on 29 March.

06/10

OUTCOMES OF THE USE OF ALIS, LEVEL 3 POINTS ANALYSIS AND OVERALL SUCCESS RATES FOR 2008/09

Governors received a report on:

- the outcomes of the College's participation in the Advanced Level Information System;
- the College's placing in the DCSF Achievement and Attainment Tables;
- the College's Success Rates by age and level of qualification for the academic year 2008/09, for the Learner Responsive Funding Stream.

The following key issues were noted:

- ALIS data shows that students at AS and A level performed as predicted overall.

- Points score analysis shows the College to be the third most improved nationally, when compared to 07/08.
- Success Rates have shown a slight decline, largely due to weaker achievement for 16-18 at levels 1 and 2.

In response to a question on what the College's students do with their A level results, it was reported that most, ie 76%, go into HE. A report on learner progression, including progression to HE was considered by the Standards Committee on 25 January 2010.

In respect of success rate targets for 2009/10 Governors were requested to approve the targets by age and level of qualification provided in the chart on page 4 of the report. It was reported that these reflect realistic but challenging targets to improve performance across the College. It was further reported that over the next three years the College needs to be achieving overall success rates of 87% if it is to reach the goal of being an outstanding provider. Intensive work on improving 2009/10 performance at level 1 and 2 for 16-18 would make a major contribution to ensuring that the target is met.

Resolved:

That the success rates targets for 2009/10 be approved.

Ms S Nicholson left the meeting.

07/10 ACADEMY UPDATE

The Chair reminded Governors that it had been agreed that an update from the Academy Trust Directors would be a standing item on the Board's agenda.

In respect of the SWB Academy, it was reported that the Academy Principal was in place and the Local Governing Body was to hold its first meeting on 9 February the same day as a "community engagement day" led by Mr B Dhir.

In respect of the North Academy, work was being undertaken on the legal issues with a view to the formal funding agreement being ratified by the Department during March 2010. Interviews for the Academy Principal's post were commencing on 9 February.

Mr WA Parker reported that he had been concerned for some time about the impact of the Academies on the Principal's time and was therefore pleased to report that company secretarial arrangements for the Trust had been set up with effect from 1 February.

It was further reported that the post of Finance Director for the Trust and the two academies had been advertised and that there had been a good level of interest with 50 applications to date.

08/10 MINUTES – SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 18 JANUARY 2010

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting of the Search and Governance committee held on 18 January 2010 and agreed the recommendation from the Committee at Minute No 04/10 on the re-appointment of Mr Brian Moore.

Resolved:

That Mr Brian Moore be re-appointed as the external co-opted member of the Audit Committee for the period commencing 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2014.

09/10

MINUTES – STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 25 JANUARY 2010

In presenting the minutes of the meeting, Dr Hardacre reported that the Committee had considered reports on Learner Progression, a progress review on the work of the College's Teaching and Learning Service and the formal IQER Inspection report together with the College's action plan and associated HE Strategy.

The Committee had further received a briefing from the Vice Principal Quality Standards and Services on the gradings, findings and actions arising from the Mock Inspection undertaken in November 2009.

10/10

2009/10 MONITORING REPORT

Governors received a report on the in-year operating position, with reference to the in-year trading position and the cashflow projections for the financial year.

The following headline issues were noted:

An update of the in-year position has been undertaken with a view to assessing implications for the full year. Governors considered a summary of the variations attached as an appendix to the report and noted that the net overall impact of the variations was not material. It was reported that the College continues to plan to achieve the approved surplus of £772,000.

With regard to cashflow, it was reported that the College would face a tight position until early April and that the method of funding the overspend of £1.2m on the capital development had been revisited. Negotiations were underway with Barclays to increase the bank loan for the Wellington road development by £1.2m which equates to the overspend. The long term loan would move from £12.42m to £13.62m which was affordable. The Board were requested to approve the increase in the loan.

It was further reported that Chair's action had been taken in January 2010 to secure a short term overdraft of £1.75m to the end of February 2010 which would be discontinued once the loan increase was secured. The Board were further requested to endorse the Chair's action.

In considering the report, it was agreed that it was illogical and expensive to continue with a short term overdraft and that this should be consolidated into the bank loan.

In response to a question as to whether there were any benchmarks on borrowings, it was reported that the LSC benchmark was 35-40% of turnover.

In respect of the current ratio, which it was noted was below category A, it was reported that this was predicted to go back to 1.5 by the end of the year. Officers were requested to bring back a forecast to the Board showing when the College would achieve a 1.5 current ratio.

Resolved:

- i) That the contents of the report be noted;
- ii) That the Board notes and approves Chair's action undertaken to secure a short term overdraft of £1.75m
- iii) That the Board notes and approves the proposed increase in the Wellington Road capital development loan of £1.2m

11/10

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Governors received a report on Strategic Planning which

- provided an update on ongoing strategy development within the College
- outlined early modelling work being undertaken in preparation for potential public sector spending reductions that could apply for 2010/11 onwards
- outlined the content and focus of the Strategic Review Board meeting to be held on 1 March 2010

The following were of note:

Progress against the strategic action plan was reported as being generally good with attention focused on:

- Positioning the College to lead an adult skills strategy that focuses on jobs and progression
- Making significant improvements to the learning environment
- Consolidating success with IQER and TQS accreditation
- Preparing for changes in funding
- Integrating the approach to young people who are not in employment, education or training
- Improving apprenticeship capability and preparing for an emphasis on advanced apprentices
- Bringing a greater emphasis on innovation within the College
- Leading the economic regeneration of the City and improvements in the social mobility of its citizens

Further work was underway to focus on the four key aims that were likely to underpin future success and sustainability, namely:

- Cost efficiency
- Curriculum innovation
- Quality improvement
- Business development

In respect of early Indications of likely 2010/11 funding, it was reported that cuts in LSC funded programmes were likely to range from standstill for youth programmes to 25% in some adult programmes. The Senior Management Team was working to understand the implications of developments in funding on an ongoing basis up until end March 2010 when the full extent of the LSC contracts will be known.

Early modelling has identified certain areas for review: for example staffing costs and the contribution of some areas of the College together with areas that have the potential to compensate for shortfalls.

With regard to the Strategic Board review meeting to be held on 1 March, it was noted that the programme would include discussion on the following areas:

- Our strategic priorities and the partners who can help us deliver them
- The challenges we face and how we change the College to meet them and deliver the strategic priorities
- Acknowledgement of the financial constraints we are working within and the sacrifices we will need to make to deliver our vision and mission.

Mr D Swingwood left the meeting.

**12/10 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING –
14 DECEMBER 2009 – PART 1**

Resolved:

That the confidential minutes of the previous meeting of 14 December 2009 – part 1 - be approved as a correct record.

13/10 POLYMER TRAINING UPDATE

In receiving an update on Polymer Training Governors noted the contents of the report and further noted that a full business plan would be submitted to the Resources Committee on 15 March 2010.

Mr B Dhir, Mr I Millard, Ms E Payne, Ms S Prince, Mr P Polowyj and Mr J Stretton left the meeting.

**14/10 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING –
14 DECEMBER 2009 – PART 2**

Resolved:

That the confidential minutes of the previous meeting of 14 December 2009 – part 2 - be approved as a correct record.