

CENTRAL SUSSEX CORPORATION

Minutes of a Corporation Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 19th May 2008 in T11 Crawley Campus

Membership: Clive Behagg*, Patrick Berry*, Martin Delbridge (Vice-Chair)*, Mark Froud, Paul Harding*, Tony Hyams-Parish*, Gill Marshman*, Sylvia Meli*, Andreia Moniz, Alan Morris, John Peel (Chair), Mark Read*, Zoë Richardson*, Ramesh Shingadia, Russell Strutt* and Charlotte Wright*.

* = present

Also in attendance: Suri Araniyasundaran, Sue Dare, Maureen Kilminster, Jenny Poore and Nick Whitley (Clerk)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mark Froud, Andreia Moniz, Alan Morris, John Peel and Ramesh Shingadia and for lateness from Paul Harding.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. There were no interests to declare.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF 27th MARCH 2007

3. The Minutes were signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

4. **Response to Green Paper Task & Finish Group/27:** The Clerk advised the meeting that Mark Froud was unable to attend the Task & Finish Group, which was due to meet at 5.00 p.m. on Thursday 5th June. The Chair, John Peel had asked for another volunteer to join this Group. No one expressed any immediate desire to join the Group, however at the end of the meeting Paul Harding agreed to join its membership.

CHAIRMAN'S ACTION

5. There were no actions to report.

INTERIM HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

6. Jenny Poore introduced the report. She drew attention to the number of accidents, which was higher than in previous comparable periods. She had reviewed this carefully with the Health & Safety Officer, who had confirmed that there was no underlying trend or pattern to be discerned. There was a larger number of "Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations" (RIDDOR) incidents; this was generally attributable to first aiders sending learners to Casualty for wounds or injuries to be checked as a safety precaution. As had been explained previously, this automatically triggered a RIDDOR report to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

Tony Hyams-Parish joined the meeting at 5.09 p.m.

7. Jenny Poore also drew attention to the follow-up to the Stress Survey, being carried out by external consultants.

8. The Vice-Chair asked the staff members about the staff's reactions to the Stress Survey. In response, it was stated that there appeared to have been a positive reaction, with a good response rate. It had allowed staff to think about the issues. Jenny Poore confirmed that there had been good representation from all parts of the College staff in the responses.
9. **The report was received.**

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

10. The Principal introduced his report. He drew attention to the significant changes in the funding methodology and approach being introduced for 2008/2009, which were outlined in the report. He had reported his concerns to the Resources Committee, drawing attention to the fact that the main funding streams were being radically changed and funds were being re-allocated. This process would not be finalised until the end of June.
11. A measure of the degree of uncertainty was the fact that he had reported to the Resources Committee serious concerns about the provisional funding allocation for 16-18 learners; the day after the Committee the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) had advised the College that the value of that allocation had been increased by £700k.
12. He proposed that the Executive should prepare an initial budget for the Corporation to consider at its July meeting, on the basis of the best fit that could be achieved in the short time between receiving the final details of the various funding streams and the deadline for the meeting. The aim would be to achieve a break-even budget; however the assumptions would need to be re-worked and reviewed over the summer period, with a view to the budget being revised as necessary within the first three months. This proposal would be considered further with the Resources Committee report.
13. The Principal then turned to the Crawley Masterplan and took the Corporation through the complexities of meeting the requirements of the LSC. As far as he was concerned, notwithstanding all the challenges to the plans presented by the LSC, he was committed to ensuring that the buildings would be fit for purpose and not too small for the future needs of the College. LSC Officers had stated that, once the data tables for the Learners Numbers and associated Guided Learning Hours (GLH) had been recast into a new set of data templates, the bid could be registered, and worked through by the LSC Officers in preparation for its submission to the Regional Council.
14. He drew attention to the need to close the Horsham campus as outlined within the Property Masterplan; this was essential if financial headroom were to be achieved. Formal consultation about the proposals had begun with the Unions and staff.
15. It was noted that approval had been granted from September 2009 for the majority of the new Diplomas that the College was developing; however one, Society, Health & Development could not commence until September 2010 and had conditions attached. Sue Dare explained that the requirements for the Diploma extended beyond the normal requirements of health care, including wider issues such as citizenship; these had not been sufficiently addressed within the bid as submitted and therefore needed to be worked up further.
16. The Principal advised the Corporation that the Oakmeeds project would now not be starting until 2010, to give the school adequate lead time to introduce the proposals to parents and pupils.
17. The Train to Gain consortium had been led successfully by the College for the last two years; however the LSC had now decided against large consortia and preferred to contract with individual providers. As a result the consortium would be disbanded,

with a consequent loss of the consortium management fee (worth between £200k and £300k).

18. As far as meeting the needs of employers was concerned the curriculum was constantly being developed in line with the demands. A new diploma in fashion retailing had been developed by staff within the College and a pool of Assessors with a range of skills suited to the new qualifications (such as NVQ's in Waste Management and Warehousing) was being built up. These new staff would only be employed as and when there was a need for them.
19. It was noted that the Skills for Life Team were working with Crawley primary schools to run language classes for the parents and it was suggested that the scheme might be usefully expanded to include Haywards Heath primary schools to address the community need there as well. The Principal agreed that this should be investigated further.
20. The Principal then drew attention to the progress being made towards outstanding. Firstly, following the successful whole College INSET day focussing on values and on the behaviour we should expect of students and ourselves, a student behaviour project had been set up to review and revise procedures, and to consider how to avoid inconsistencies of approach. All staff were to be trained in how to manage challenging behaviour, with a view to a fresh start being made for the College from September. In the same way a staff behaviour project was being progressed. This was very much based within Faculties and the campuses. It was suggested that managing student behaviour might usefully be addressed within the induction programme for all new staff.
21. A second approach to developing excellence was a follow up from a training day on process management. The Executive Director Team would be spending time resolving how best to take that approach forward, involving both process owners and process users. Some aspects of it would involve negotiations about service levels and costs for support departments; but there was also a need for a fundamental review of overall processes.
22. The target success rates for the period to 2010/11 had also been reviewed, to consider whether they would lead to the College being outstanding by then. There was a need to balance the drive for high achievement with the College's mission to be inclusive. The revised profile included within the Principal's Report had been confirmed with the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee. The College aimed to hit the Government's 80% success rate target three years early.
23. The Principal then outlined the results of the Stress Survey. He had included the feedback that had been provided to all staff. There had been a very good response rate, helped by the Union's request that a hard copy of the questionnaire be sent to people's homes (in addition to the online version they could access). This paper version had proved unexpectedly popular.
24. The results from the survey had been reasonably satisfactory, although there were some tough messages especially with respect to the demands on staff of roles and jobs and a general feeling that there was duplication of effort and cumbersome processes.
25. The Principal confirmed that the Survey had produced individual reports by Faculty or Department; these were being addressed with individual Directors.
26. One of the findings had been that staff felt there was a lack of mutual support; this was one of the aspects being explored by the consultants in the staff focus groups.

27. It was likely that a further survey would be carried out in a year's time; however it was planned to move away from branding it with the negative term Stress Survey, in favour of its becoming part of a wider Staff Wellbeing Project.
28. It was suggested that the survey results might be shared with the students; the Principal agreed to put this to the Steering Group. He praised the members of that Group, who had approached the whole activity in an extremely constructive way.

Paul Harding joined the meeting at 5.45 p.m.

29. The Principal then drew attention to the progress with harmonising pay and conditions. He stressed that Management and the Unions were close to completing their agreement on this. The relations with the Unions were now very positive. As far as the costs of harmonisation were concerned, additional pay costs had been introduced in the previous year because of the move of Crawley staff onto the Association of Colleges (AoC) Pay Spines and Conditions of Service, and there would be a further element to this in the coming year. Harmonisation of pay and conditions across the College, however, had been largely cost neutral, increased pay being offset by a significant reduction in teachers' overtime rates.
30. The Job Evaluation project was going well with the pilot stage due to be completed in early June. The overall scheme should be completed by the end of June.
31. All new appointees (and promoted staff) would be placed on the new contractual terms and conditions. These would also be offered to all existing staff; however there would be no compulsion to move them from their existing contractual terms.
32. Finally, the Principal drew attention to the anticipated inspection of the College, which would probably take place near the end of October 2008 (four years after the last Crawley College inspection). The Corporation would need to be more fully briefed nearer the time. He was asked to establish what the OFSTED Inspectors would require of the Corporation Members, to enable them to prepare effectively.
33. **The report was received.**

REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

34. The Clerk took the meeting through the report, in the absence of the Chair of Audit. He drew attention to Jon Wright's resignation from the Committee, as his secondment to the Middle East was shortly to become full-time for several years. The Corporation expressed its gratitude for all that Jon Wright had done to support it. This had been particularly important for the Corporation since Members of the Audit Committee were unable to simultaneously to be Members of the Resources Committee.
35. **The report was received.**

REPORT OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

36. Martin Delbridge introduced the report. He drew attention to the Committee's review of the Quality Improvement Plan; the Members of the Committee had been impressed by the range and scope of the plan, and how well the College was addressing its requirements. He congratulated all those involved with devising and monitoring the Plan, which was essentially on track.
37. The Committee had discussed the College's involvement with NEETs (those young people Not in Education, Employment or Training) and, in particular, the sort of social environment that was required to address the needs of the young people involved and to cope with the particular challenges they presented. Sue Dare advised that, during the current year some 40 to 50 young people who were classed as NEETs had enrolled on special courses; initially they were given the opportunity to "taste" a

number of different programmes, as well as gaining employability skills. The College was able to provide progression to further training for some of them, but it did not suit all of them.

38. The raising of the compulsory education and training age would bring more challenges in respect of such young people. One large group of NEETs consisted of young mothers, who had a particular set of social and welfare as well as educational needs.
39. The Committee had had an initial discussion about the College's Higher Education (HE) Strategy and the initiative to develop a University Centre in Crawley. The proposal had been generally supported in the light of the established need for increasing the levels of progression to relevant HE provision in Crawley. The proposed programmes of study were primarily for Foundation Degrees, principally sponsored by local employers.
40. While the Committee supported the concept, there were concerns about the amount of management time that the initiative may require, particularly at a time when the Management Team was already stretched. There had to be a limit to the extent to which the College responded to this initiative and it was agreed that the Executive should keep the Committee informed of the demands it was placing on them. At present the College was being asked to assist in a feasibility study. It was recognised that the initiative was being driven politically as well as from an educational perspective.
41. The Committee had also considered an introduction to the Government's consultation paper about the changes to the Machinery of Government. The Resources and the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee would both need to keep abreast of developments.
42. It was noted that, underlying the changes, was an intention to plan 14-19 provision to meet the needs of the economy and the skills required for industry. Community based learning would continue to be funded, but on a limited basis.
43. **The report was received.**

REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

44. Patrick Berry introduced the report. He commented that the Committee had received a very good presentation from Sarah Radley on Marketing in the College, she had demonstrated an extremely wide ranging brief.
45. The Committee had reviewed the Management Accounts for the year to 31st March 2008; essentially despite some adverse variances the finances were on track for the current year but it was clear that next year would prove more difficult. The forecast surplus was still not sufficient for the College's needs; because of funding changes, there was unlikely to be any operating surplus next year. Headroom would only be achieved by disposing of property. What was clear was that the College was being given less and less discretion over its activities; the funding was becoming more and more prescribed.
46. On a more positive note, although the overdraft facility continued in place, it had not proved necessary to draw on it.
47. It was noted that the Principal had advised the Committee to expect a significant shortfall in LSC funding based on the provisional 16-19 allocation. As identified in the Principal's Report, the situation was not as severe as feared; the best estimate currently was that there was an overall shortfall of some £800k. This was, in the Principal's judgement, tough but manageable. Provided the finances for 2008/2009 were brought and kept under control and the Horsham premises were closed by the

end of that year, it should be possible to reintroduce the planned headroom for 2009/2010.

48. The Executive would prepare a budget for 2008/2009 that the Corporation could approve at its meeting on 14th July; however more detailed work would be needed over the following three months to ensure that the financial situation could be effectively managed during the year, without damaging the long term health of the College.
49. It was recognised that the changes in the funding regime were affecting all Colleges; it was suggested that the Chair may wish to take this up on a Regional basis. The Principal advised that he would be convening a meeting of the Sussex Principals to review their collective position.
50. It was noted that there were two main aspects of the College's operations that needed further attention, one being average class sizes (which needed to rise) and the other the cost of managing the various campuses and buildings.
51. The principal drew attention to the changing character of the Crawley based provision; it was becoming more focussed on full time learners. Adult applications were down largely because of the increasing cost of fees and the down turn in the economy.
52. **It was agreed that a Special Corporation meeting be convened towards the end of September to review the 2008/2009 budget and three year financial forecast and to prepare for the anticipated inspection by OFSTED.**
53. **The report was received.**

REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP (MASTERPLAN)

54. Paul Harding introduced the report. He pointed out that a further submission had been made to the LSC for the Crawley Masterplan with amended details in support of the educational case. A new template was required, which was being prepared.
55. In the meanwhile the detailed plans for Haywards Heath Phase 3 were being worked through.
56. As far as timings were concerned, the earliest that the Crawley Masterplan submission for Approval in Principle could now reach the LSC National Committee was its September meeting; however if all went well, it might be possible to start on site in January 2009. The Group supported the approach the Executive wanted to take, to slow the design work at this stage; the design team were in agreement with this. Even so additional fees needed to be authorised; this would increase the College's exposure to the risk that the LSC may not approve the Application in Principle. In that case half of the fees only would be recoverable from the LSC.
57. The Group had tested the merits of the approach and were convinced that the College was doing the right things for the right reasons. The costs of maintaining the existing Crawley campus and refurbishing parts of it would rise exponentially over time, if they were not replaced by new buildings that were fit for purpose. There would be no capital support funds from the LSC for the maintenance and refurbishment.
58. Paul Harding then turned to the Haywards Heath development and drew attention to the problem of water ingress. The Contractors now believed they knew what was causing the problem and work to rectify matters was due to start in about four weeks time. It was confirmed that no classroom space had been lost because of the problem.

59. At the last meeting of the Corporation it had been suggested that there may be a delay in obtaining Approval in Detail for phase 3 of the Haywards Heath Development. The Executive had reviewed the issues and discussed possible options further with the Task and Finish Group. There were two substantive matters to resolve: the timing of the removal of asbestos from the existing buildings and the demolition of those parts of the current building that would be surplus to requirement once Phase 2 of the new building was brought into service.
60. The Task & Finish Group was recommending that the Corporation authorise an intrusive asbestos survey of the existing buildings and the removal of the asbestos over the summer period. The cost of the survey and removal was estimated at £140k.
61. It was not considered desirable to carry out any further demolition work at this stage, partly because of the difficulty in completing the work before the new term started and more particularly because of the risk that the LSC may not approve the Application in Detail in the form submitted. The Task & Finish Group were therefore recommending that the College's exposure to risk be limited.
62. There were some costs associated with moving staff into the new building which needed to be approved; the Group also supported a proposal to construct a link between the old and the new building together with a ramp to access it, to facilitate the movement of students and the delivery of supplies. The link would remain as part of the permanent structure of the buildings when Phase 3 had been completed and had originally been planned to form part of the Phase 3 construction.
63. With the additional costs being proposed for both the Crawley Masterplan and the Haywards Heath Phase 3, the College's exposure to the risk that the LSC might not approve the capital bids would rise to approximately £2.1m. This would be a Balance Sheet item.
64. The Principal confirmed that notwithstanding the delays in the LSC's review of the preparation of the bids, the College and its plans remained high on the priority list for the South East Region's capital projects.
65. **The report was agreed.**
66. **It was agreed that the Executive be authorised to incur a further sum of up to £295k, between 19th May and 16th July for Architects' and other Consultants' fees on the Crawley Masterplan.**
67. **It was agreed that the Executive be authorised to incur up to a further £270k of expenditure on the Haywards Heath development, in advance of receiving LSC approval to proceed with Phase 3, namely up to £30k for moving staff, up to £140k for an intrusive asbestos survey and asbestos removal and up to £100k for the construction of a link into the new buildings.**

REPORT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY BOARD (LCB)

68. The Clerk laid round copies of the LCB report.
69. Martin Delbridge introduced the report, focussing on the Link Scheme, which had been the main item for the meeting. He was pleased to report this development in the LCB's role; the Scheme had been introduced to help the Corporation in monitoring the College's provision, and to assist in maintaining effective contact between the Corporation and the College.
70. Six visits had taken place so far within the scheme following a range of approaches. Each report had added something particular in its own way; everyone involved had stated that they found the visits beneficial.

71. By common consent it had been decided to move away from using a common template for the visit; it was considered more helpful for those visiting to obtain a more subjective impression basing it particularly on student's views.
72. The next round of visits would use the local Self Assessment Report as a starting point and would include observing lessons and talking to students afterwards.
73. It was noted that applications to the Sixth Form Centre at Haywards Heath were up again compared to the previous year; this was thought to be attributable, at least in part, to the new buildings. Charlotte Wright commented that the impact of the new building, once it opened, had been marked; the new theatre and facilities for drama were extremely good and were valued highly by the students.
74. **The report was received.**

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

75. The Chair had provided a list of the more significant activities he had been involved in since the last meeting: Attendance at the University of Sussex Court, at the inauguration ceremony of the Gurjar Hindu Union's Temple in Crawley, a meeting with DTZ and the Principal concerning the impact of the proposed University Centre on Crawley, the Big Skills Breakfast at the Arora Hotel, Crawley, Gatwick Diamond Future Plans 2008-2011 at the Gatwick Hilton and the Sussex FE Chairs' Committee in Brighton.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

76. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.