

CENTRAL SUSSEX CORPORATION

Minutes of a Corporation Meeting held at 4.30 p.m. on Monday, 20th October 2008 in T11 Crawley Campus

Membership: Clive Behagg*, Patrick Berry, Martin Delbridge (Vice-Chair)*, Leslie Edwards*, Mark Froud*, Paul Harding*, Tony Hyams-Parish, Gill Marshman*, Sylvia Meli*, Adam Passingham*, John Peel (Chair)*, Mark Read*, Zoë Richardson*, Ramesh Shingadia and Russell Strutt*.

* = present

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

The meeting opened with a presentation from the Faculty Directors covering the key activities within their Faculties and priorities for the 2008/2009 academic year. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is attached to these minutes.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received from Patrick Berry, Tony Hyams-Parish and Ramesh Shingadia.
2. John Peel advised the meeting that Alan Morris had contacted the Clerk to explain that his secondment abroad, which he had expected to end by the end of the summer, had been extended. He had therefore offered his resignation.
3. **It was agreed, with regret, to accept Alan Morris's resignation with immediate effect.**
4. The Chair of the Corporation agreed to write to Alan Morris, thanking him for the time he had attended Corporation meetings, when his contribution had been highly valued.

STUDENT MEMBER APPOINTMENT

5. The Chair introduced the newly nominated Student Member for the Crawley Campus, Leslie Edwards.
6. **It was agreed to appoint Leslie Edwards as the second Student Member with immediate effect for a term of up to four years.**
7. It was noted that Leslie Edwards would need to leave the meeting at 6.00 p.m.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

8. There were no interests to declare.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF 14TH JULY 2008

9. The Minutes were signed as a correct record.
10. **It was agreed that Minutes 22 to 37 inclusive should be held confidential to protect the commercial interests of the College.**

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF 15TH SEPTEMBER 2008

11. The minutes were signed as a correct record.
12. **It was agreed that Minutes 38 to 44 inclusive should be held confidential to protect the commercial interests of the College.**

MATTERS ARISING

13. **Capital Developments Masterplan:** The Principal informed the Corporation that a meeting had been arranged with the Learning & Skills Council's (LSC) Regional Property Adviser on Wednesday 29th October. There was a meeting of the Regional Infrastructure Group (RIG) (the new, Officer level stage in the process) scheduled for the 4th November, at which Central Sussex College's educational case (and in particular the learner numbers and associated Guided Learning Hours) would be considered. It was planned to submit an application for Approval in detail (AiD) for Phase 3 of the Haywards Heath Development by the end of October; it was likely that AiD would be granted in March 2009.
14. The Principal confirmed that, provided approval was granted in March or April 2009 the business case for the development would remain unaffected; however if it or the Crawley Masterplan were further delayed it would affect the business case; the planned growth in student numbers was predicated on the investment in new buildings. The positive impact of new buildings could already be seen in the rise in enrolments at the Haywards Heath Campus.
15. Suri Araniyasundaran advised the meeting that the contractors for Haywards Heath Phase 3 had agreed to hold their price until April 2009. It was hoped to carry out the removal of asbestos and demolition works during the summer term 2009; completion of Phase 3 was likely to be December 2010, a delay of some 3 months.
16. Concern was expressed at the impact of the delay on student numbers, particularly since the whole building programme had become spread over a three to four year period.
17. It was confirmed that delays to the Crawley Masterplan may have a negative impact on the proposals for a University Centre in Crawley.
18. **Minutes of 14th July 2008, E-Learning/46:** The Executive was asked to provide a progress report to the March Corporation meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S ACTION

19. The Chair advised the meeting that he had carried out the annual review of confidential minutes and reports and had released those that were no longer

commercially sensitive. Those matters that contained personal sensitive data relating to individuals and those where the matter remained commercially sensitive continued to be held confidential.

20. The Chair advised that he had now signed the Skills Pledge on behalf of the College.

21. The Chairman's Actions were approved.

ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

22. The Principal introduced the report highlighting three key issues for the Corporation to note in particular. The first of these was the increase in accidents, which was accounted for by working practice issues in three Faculties: Construction, Engineering and Service Industries. Following investigation, the Health & Safety Committee had been satisfied that this represented improved reporting, as a result of a tightening up of procedures by the new Faculty Directors. This would be monitored over the coming year to ensure that there were no other underlying problems.
23. The second issue was that of workplace inspections. More training and improvements in procedures for the inspections had been introduced during the prior year and this would be monitored carefully during the current year.
24. The third was Stress management, which had been a major project during the year (and had been reported to Corporation previously).
25. The Principal also drew attention to the new procedures for dealing with fire alarms, which involved trained members of staff investigating each incident to establish whether the Fire and Rescue Services should be called; as a result there had been no need to call out the Fire Service.
26. The Principal identified the positive actions taken to address and reduce staff absences, through increased manual handling training and early intervention by the College's Occupational Health Nurse.
27. It was suggested that more attention could and should be paid to recording and investigating "near misses"; while it was noted that some near misses had been recorded, the number was very low compared to the number of accidents.
28. It was noted that there appeared to be a substantial drop in the accident rate for students. The Clerk was asked to check that the figures shown in the report were correct and inform the Corporation by email after the meeting. It was not clear whether accidents to the College's Work Based Learners were included in the statistics if the accident happened in the workplace; it was agreed to provide clarification on this point.

Leslie Edwards left the meeting at 6.00 p.m.

29. The Chair reminded the Corporation Members that, by receiving the report they were accepting responsibility for it.
30. **The report was received.**

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

31. The Principal introduced the report, which drew together the strands of Equality & Diversity considered in more detail by the respective Committees, as indicated schematically in the diagram appended to the report. He drew particular attention to the three main Equality Impact Assessments carried out during summer 2008, namely the Review of the Admissions Process, the New Building Projects and the Survey of Asian Pakistani Learners.
32. The Principal drew attention to the gender distribution for learners; the numbers were affected by the College's focus on engineering and construction training. He was encouraged by the fact that the College success rate for males was very similar to that for females and that the success rates for learners from Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) groups had improved and were now broadly in line with national averages. The figures provided evidence that the College was doing a good job both in preventing discrimination and in promoting diversity.
33. It was noted that the overall proportion of students with a declared disability was 21%; this compared with a level for the general population in West Sussex of 14%. It was confirmed that the total included the learners within Foundation Learning, the Faculty specialising in addressing the needs of disabled learners.
34. The Principal drew attention to the proportion of staff employed to provide direct services to learners; at 71% this compared favourably with the sector average of 69%. The proportion had improved slightly as a result of the restructuring of the College. The proportion of full-time to part-time staff was also an important ratio, particularly since full-time staff tended to be more available for training and Faculty meetings outside teaching time. However, the current proportion of 70:30 full-time: part-time staff appeared about right for the moment, particularly since demand-led funding was now a significant and growing feature of the College's financing. It was likely to move closer to 60:40; this did present the College with a challenge to ensure effective training and development for all staff.
35. The proportion of BME staff was considered in more detail. It was pointed out that an analysis of BME staff based at the Crawley campus was 12%: some 2% below the BME population for Crawley. The Executive was looking to recruit more staff from a BME background and was also looking into the progression and promotion of BME staff. There was likely to be an issue the College needed to address, but more work needed to be done to identify this correctly. There was also a need for further work to identify staff with disabilities.
36. The Chair reminded the Corporation that the Corporation had a responsibility for monitoring and ensuring that Management and the College were promoting Equality & Diversity effectively.
37. The Principal confirmed that, when reviewing the College's performance in respect of Equality & Diversity, it was judged against the background population relevant to the aspects of the College that were being assessed. There were two main objectives to be addressed: removing barriers that prevented or hindered individuals from benefiting fully from the College, and promoting diversity.

38. There was currently new legislation before Parliament in the form of a single Equality Bill; this would consolidate a great deal of disparate legislation and would place new requirements on the public sector in particular. The current separate duties to promote disability, gender and race equality would be drawn into a single equality duty, which would be extended to cover gender reassignment and sexual orientation, age and religion or belief. It was expected that this Bill would pass into Law by April 2009.
39. Adrian Dodwell gave an outline of a number of ways in which the College sought to promote a positive attitude towards disability. It was confirmed that the College supported over 3000 students with disabilities across the College as a whole, of whom some 460 had a need for highly specialised support from the staff within Foundation Learning.
40. **The report was received.**

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

41. The Principal introduced his report, drawing attention to the first section, the 3 Year Operational Plan 2008-2011, which he had included for information. He then focussed on enrolments which were showing a very positive picture to date. The College had been expecting a downturn in the recruitment of apprentices and full-time adult learners; this had not happened and recruitment in these categories had held up well. He attributed this to the investment the Corporation had made in Employer Services and Sales Staff over the last two years.
42. In consequence the risk associated with recruiting 16-18 apprenticeships and full time adult learners had reduced; however the target income for Train to Gain and tuition fees and charges remained a significant risk. The early signs were encouraging and unlike some other Colleges, Central Sussex College did not need to alert the LSC that there was a danger to the College of financial instability and associated problems.

The Principal advised the Corporation that the earliest inspection date was now the 24th November. All the Self Assessment Report (SAR) reviews had now taken place, and subject to some final confirmation of achievements, the individual grades could be finalised. There would be some hard decisions to be made, where Faculties or Departments were on the cusp of one grade or another. The section on Leadership and Management would be peer reviewed by a Panel as had been done so successfully for the 2007 SAR.

43. The Principal drew attention to the measures the College was taking to implement the Government's Workforce Reforms. This initiative was aimed at professionalising the sector's workforce and ensuring that all teachers and lecturers were not only qualified in their subject but also in teaching. In addition, each teacher was required to undertake a minimum of 30 hours Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Another requirement was that all teaching staff had to register with the Institute for Learning (IfL). He was able to confirm that 95% of the relevant staff had now registered; the 20 who had not done so were either on long-term sick leave or had variable hour contracts with the College with little actual contact, and therefore had yet to appreciate that Membership of the IfL was a contractual requirement for their continued working for the College.

45. The Principal drew attention to the Student Behaviour Project; it was early days to be making any judgement about its success, but this was an important aspect of the College's movement towards being an outstanding college.
46. It was noted that there had been a change in the LSC's fee policy, in that the College was no longer permitted to charge fees for NVQ's in the Workplace. The Principal advised the meeting that the LSC had informed the College of this change in policy, which affected the current year's budget, on the 18th September. Based on the previous year's income, this could represent a loss of £120K. It was pointed out that, since the budget was set at breakeven, a reduction in income of this magnitude could move the College into a deficit.
47. The Principal stated that the Sussex Principals had asked him to include this in his letter to the LSC on their behalf, pointing out that it was not possible to manage a college effectively with such late notification of funding allocations and of such significant policy changes.
48. The Chair advised that he would also raise this at the Sussex Chairs' meeting in November.
49. The Principal confirmed that a review of the College's financial position and planned actions to manage cost reductions would be undertaken during November and would be reported to the Resources Committee in December in the first instance.
50. The Principal drew attention again to the peer review meeting on 5th December; he stressed that all Members of the Corporation would be welcome to make an input to the meeting.
51. **The report was received.**

REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

52. Mark Froud introduced the report. He drew particular attention to the proposal to review the Corporation's arrangements for monitoring the capital developments. This additional review was proposed by the Committee because of the high value of the capital developments being commissioned by the Corporation.
53. The Committee had also reviewed the complexity and bureaucracy associated with Train to Gain; although this presented significantly less risk to the College than when it was leading the Train to Gain consortium during the past two years, these continued to present substantial operational difficulties. A matrix indicating the complexity had been circulated with the Audit Report.
54. Mark Froud drew attention to the internal auditors' overall opinion, which was that "Central Sussex College has adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes to manage its achievement of the College's objectives". This he considered was the key assurance required by the Corporation.
55. **The report was received.**

56. The addition to the audit programme, at a cost of £2,500 - £3,000 to review the governance arrangements for monitoring capital developments, was approved.
57. The complexity and bureaucracy associated with Train to Gain and other Work Based Learning contracts was noted. The Chair agreed to raise this with the Chairs of the Sussex Colleges at their next meeting.
58. The proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee were approved, namely:-

that the fourth bullet point in 1.1 read: "members of the Resources Committee"

and that 2.8 read: "To review annually, as part of the College's annual accounts, the accounts of the Students' Association/Students' Union."

REPORT OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

59. Martin Delbridge introduced the report. He drew attention to the importance of Every Child Matters and recommended that Alison Moore, who had given a very full presentation to the Committee, be invited to give a similar presentation to the Corporation as a whole, perhaps before the beginning of one of its meetings.
60. The Committee had reviewed achievements, focussing on the Haywards Heath results. These had already been considered in detail by the Local Community Board (LCB), where there was appropriate expertise and experience within the membership of the Board; he suggested that it would not be necessary to go through them again at this meeting. He confirmed that, in future, the LCB would provide the Committee with a clear report of its findings, with sufficient analysis to avoid the Committee having to go over the same ground.
61. Martin Delbridge drew attention to the importance of the attendance rate; high attendance was a route to improving achievement.
62. The Committee had considered the Link Member Scheme; it was confirmed that any Corporation Member was welcome to join the scheme. The LCB had proposed some revisions to the protocol, which the Committee had supported.
63. The Committee had reviewed an extensive report of the latest Employer Satisfaction Survey; it was evident that the College was seen as having a positive impact, by providing good quality training. The main area for improvement was in feedback to employers about the progress of their employees on training courses.
64. Martin Delbridge drew attention to the Committee's discussion of the proposed University Centre; the discussion had been cut short because it was judged that this should be considered by the Corporation as a whole. The Committee had found the consultants' so-called feasibility report somewhat confusing, particularly how it fitted in with the College's Masterplan and how another body could be making proposals about how the College's building

should be organised. The Committee had also been concerned by the time the College's Management Team were having to devote to this development.

65. The Chair of the Corporation stressed that the consultants' report, which had been inappropriately named "feasibility study", had included a great deal of hypothetical speculation. The Principal reminded the meeting that the Corporation had resolved to sell off that part of the site and the University Centre plans were not part of the Masterplan. He had made this very clear at the meetings he had attended to discuss the University Centre. He and Maureen Kilminster were supporting the University of Brighton, who were the lead organisation for the University Centre, primarily to ensure that the curriculum that was being developed would meet the progression needs of the College's learners and would address local employers' requirements. It was noted that the consultants who had prepared the report were property developers, not curriculum experts.
66. The Principal identified that the Senior Leadership Team was being stretched by the extensive partnership work that was required because of the changes to the Further Education sector and the way it was being restructured, planned and funded. This was leading him to review the resources that were required; this could involve either strengthening the support for middle managers to enable the Executive Directors to be released from operational tasks or to establish specific partnership roles at middle management level.
67. **The report was received.**
68. **It was agreed that the revised Link Member Scheme and its Protocol be adopted by the Corporation.**
69. **It was agreed that the proposed changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference be approved, namely to add:-**
- "To monitor the Link Membership Scheme" and**
"To review annually the Students' Association activities"
- and to remove:-**
- "Receive an annual report of the evaluation of the College's Employer Services against the A4B standards."**

REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

70. Paul Harding introduced the report. He drew attention to the Committee's increased focus on staffing issues; these were being more effectively monitored now. The question of providing health insurance for staff was under review; the Committee had asked for a cost benefit analysis to be carried out.
71. The Committee had again raised the question of benchmarking the College with respect to its Human Resource (HR) measures; it was acknowledged that it was extremely difficult to get comparable data from other colleges, so the Committee had asked for the College to be compared with other industries, particularly from the public sector.

72. The Committee had reviewed the Management Accounts for August; although it was too early to draw any conclusions from one month's figures, what was evident was that there was a deterioration in the College's cash flow. Last year, it had not proved necessary to draw on the College's overdraft facility' however, this would change over the coming months.
73. The Committee had felt confident that the Senior Leadership Team had matters under control, notwithstanding the constant changes in government and LSC policy and funding arrangements.
74. **It was confirmed that the Resources committee would review the implications of the change in fee policy for NVQs in the Workplace, at its next meeting, recognising that the loss of fee income would be in the order of £120K.**
75. **It was noted that the Income and Expenditure Account as currently presented did not distinguish between fixed and variable costs. One of the key issues was to recognise the marginal contribution additional income represented and it was agreed to consider further at the Resources Committee what additional information should be provided.**
76. **The report was received.**
77. **It was agreed that the proposed change to the Committee's Terms of Reference be approved, namely to insert "the staff" before "appraisal scheme" in 3.35.**
78. **It was agreed that "or successor body" should be added to "LSC" on every occasion that it was named in any Committee's Terms of Reference.**
79. **It was confirmed that a Task Group consisting of John Peel, Patrick Berry, Tony Hyams-Parish, Zoe Richardson and the Clerk be established to scrutinise the College's pension arrangements. There was an open invitation to others to join the Group.**

REPORT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY BOARD (LCB)

80. Martin Delbridge introduced the report. He highlighted the LCB's concerns about the delay to the construction of Phase 3 of the building development; members of the Board had offered support and help if appropriate. The LCB's expression of support was welcomed.
81. The low take-up of the new diplomas, both locally and nationally, was noted; it was suggested that this may be contributed to by the way the schools were publicising the new curriculum to their pupils.
82. **The report was received.**

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

83. The Chair informed the meeting that he had attended three inspection preparation meetings which he had found fascinating. He had been particularly impressed by the attitude of the staff in attendance with a more

positive and confident approach than at the time of the reinspection two years ago.

84. He had also attended three Masterplan meetings, and had accompanied the Principal and others to a meeting in Chichester about plans for the transfer of responsibilities for 14-19 education and training from the LSC to West Sussex County Council.
85. He had attended two Awards Evenings and encouraged all members of the Corporation to attend; what came across, particularly from talking to the students after the formal presentations, was how good a job the College was doing, and how good the students felt about themselves as a result.
86. He had also attended five meetings about the University Centre proposals for Crawley.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

87. It was suggested that since the demise of the Policy & Planning Committee, the Corporation had not had any extended discussions about long-term policy issues. These tended only to be considered at the Away Days. The Chair agreed to consider with the Principal and the Clerk how best to address this.
88. It was noted that the next Corporation was scheduled for the 15th December, to be followed by a meal to which all were invited.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.35 p.m.