

## CENTRAL SUSSEX CORPORATION

### Minutes of a Corporation Meeting held at 5.00 p.m. on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2008 in T11 Crawley Campus

**Membership:** Clive Behagg\*, Patrick Berry, Michael Coughlin, 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 Patrick Berry, Michael Coughlin, Andreia Moniz and Alan Morris.

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. Mark Froud declared an interest as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sussex Enterprise.

#### MEMBERSHIP

3. The Chair advised the meeting that the Search Committee had considered applications from three potential Corporation Members; he and other Members of the Committee had interviewed each of them. The Committee recommended all three strongly, as they each brought a different area of expertise that would, in the Committee's considered opinion, strengthen the Corporation.
4. Zoë Richardson was an accountant from Baker Tilly who had significant experience of the Further Education sector; Tony Hyams-Parish was the partner heading the employment law team within Rawlison Butler LLP, who also had experience of the education sector as a past teacher and a governor of a school, and Ramesh Shingadia had wide ranging commercial and community experience within Crawley.
5. The Chair advised that Zoë Richardson and Tony Hyams-Parish were able to attend the meeting that evening (although Tony Hyams-Parish would have to leave the meeting early because of a prior commitment); Ramesh Shingadia had intended to be available but urgent family matters had arisen which required his presence in Derby.
6. **It was agreed to appoint Zoë Richardson, Tony Hyams-Parish and Ramesh Shingadia as Members of the Corporation, each for a 4 year term of office, commencing with immediate effect.**

Zoë Richardson and Tony Hyams-Parish joined the meeting at 5.05 p.m. and were welcomed.

Gill Marshman left the meeting at 5.05 pm.

#### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF 17<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2007

7. With one correction, the deletion of the word "being" from paragraph 46, the Minutes were signed as a true record.

## MATTERS ARISING

8. **Analysis of Ethnicity of Staffing/24:** It was confirmed that the requested breakdown of staff between lecturing and support staff had been incorporated into the latest HR Progress Report to the Resources Committee.
9. **Gatwick Skills Centre/43:** The Principal advised the meeting that the new Centre had been opened. Mark Froud declared an interest as CEO of Sussex Enterprise and John Peel declared an interest as a Member of the Board of the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) as both organisations were represented in the partnership that had supported the development of the Skills Centre. The Principal advised that the Centre had been given a very good location within the staff restaurant; additional training rooms would become available in July. The details of the agreement and the lease were being finalised at present so that the lease was yet to be sealed.
10. **Wider review of the College's Pension arrangements/54:** The Chair advised that the proposed Group was yet to be convened.
11. **Future Service Funding Rate/64:** As was reported elsewhere in the Resources Committee Report, the actuaries had not adopted the Corporation's recommendations in full.
12. **Self Assessment Report/84:** Clive Behagg confirmed that he had received and approved the final amendments to the Report.
13. **New Vocational Diplomas/87:** The Principal was pleased to report that approval had been granted for the two new Diplomas that would form the basis for the partnership with Oakmeeds College: Business from September 2009 and Care from 2010.
14. **Lobbying in respect of Capital Project approvals/103:** The Principal confirmed that the lobbying by the Chairs and Principals of the Sussex Colleges had proved effective in persuading the Regional Council to increase the frequency of its meetings. In addition, the LSC had instituted a task group to review capital bids in advance of the formal Council meetings, to streamline the process.

## CHAIRMAN'S ACTION

15. The Chair had not been required to take any formal decision on behalf of the Corporation since the last meeting.

## INTERIM HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

16. Jenny Poore introduced the report, drawing attention to the key elements set out in the Executive Summary. There had been an increase in accidents during this term (which was not yet at an end) when compared to the previous year. These had been taken up with the relevant Directors, who had investigated each of the incidents, and the Health & Safety Committee had reviewed them. The overall conclusion was that the majority were genuine accidents.
17. Security throughout the College was being reviewed in the light of two knife incidents, one of which had been an actual stabbing.
18. The Chair asked for an update on the pepper spray incident referred to in the report, which had occurred on an occasion when he had been in the College. Jenny Poore described the incident in some detail: staff had been evacuated and the emergency services had sealed off the Tower Block.
19. At the time it was not known what had caused the problem; it subsequently transpired that a pepper spray, bought over the internet by a parent as a safety measure, had

been let off in the Learning Resources Centre (LRC). It had been necessary to commission expert consultants to deal with the aftermath, including decontamination cleaning of the whole area; keyboards in the affected area had had to be disposed of. The LRC had been closed for a number of days and it had proved a costly exercise. The learners had been dealt with appropriately under the disciplinary procedures; their actions had been foolish rather than malicious.

20. The incident had been effectively handled; however it had prompted a review of the College's Continuity Plans and a number of useful lessons had been learned.
21. The Principal then drew attention to the review of security that was being carried out following the knife incidents, one of which did not involve any actual injury.
22. The actual stabbing on the other hand, had been a totally random incident when a passer by had pushed a knife into the back of a Premises Officer, on the pavement outside the East Grinstead Learning Centre. The police had been called and the perpetrator arrested. Fortunately the blow had not damaged any of the Premises Officer's vital organs; it had been a flesh wound (which was, in itself, serious enough).
23. The Principal confirmed that the security review would be reported to the Health & Safety Committee and also through the Resources Committee to the Corporation.
24. The Executive was asked to consider revising the accident graph with a view to establishing an accident rate (possibly per 100,000 person-hours).
25. The report was received.

#### **PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE**

26. The Principal introduced his report and took the meeting through the key points. The first section, headed "Machinery of Government", was an initial look at the Government Green Paper published the previous week. He proposed to present more detailed reviews to the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee and the Resources Committee as appropriate; however this was a Government consultation paper and he would welcome the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to work on the College's response.
27. Clive Behagg and Mark Froud agreed to join the Chair and the Principal **and it was agreed that these Members should form a Task and Finish Group to prepare and agree a response on behalf of the Corporation.**
28. It was noted that the Local Authority had been reorganising its services in anticipation of the Government's changing structures; all West Sussex current 14-19 structures had been suspended pending the establishment of a new Strategic Board for West Sussex, supported by three Local Area Partnership Boards (for Areas A, B and C). The Local Area Partnership Board would be made responsible for planning the curriculum requirements of the Area and presenting bids to the Strategic Area Board. Russell Strutt had offered to act as the interim Chair for the Area C Partnership Board, which would have as its membership all Head Teachers and Principals; the first task of the new Board would be to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair.
29. It was noted that the Chairs of the three Partnership Boards would sit on the Strategic Area Board together with Officers of West Sussex County Council. The Strategic Area Board would determine all funding decisions.
30. The Principal advised the meeting that he would keep the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee informed of the details of the new arrangements in respect of both the Local Authority's new responsibilities for 14-19 and the Skills Agency and its role vis-à-vis 19+ learners and Work Based Learning.

Tony Hyams-Parish left the meeting at 5.45 p.m.

31. Funding for 2008/2009 promised to be more difficult than anticipated. The LSC would not build any planned growth into the 16-19 allocation for the year; any actual growth that could be achieved would be unfunded during the year, but would be consolidated into the base-line for funding in the following year. Furthermore, the 19+ core funding would be cut by 3.5%. Although the actual allocation was not yet available, the best estimate currently was that it would be some £700k below that shown in the Three Year Forecast. Applications for the coming year were up by 12% compared with last year.
32. Although the growth would not be funded it was essential to increase the number of 16-19 learners in the coming year.
33. The Principal then drew attention to the opportunities presented by Work Based Learning (WBL) and Train to Gain. The apprenticeship target for the current year was likely to be achieved and a realistic increase of 5% was planned for the coming year. Train to Gain was also planned to grow, by a much larger percentage (starting from a much lower base-line). The new agreement with Sussex Enterprise to sell training was already beginning to show results. Mark Froud reminded the Corporation of his declared interest as CEO of Sussex Enterprise.
34. The Principal also reminded the meeting of the Task and Finish Group's recommendation to double the College's sales force, which was being implemented.
35. The Principal then drew attention to the proposed University Centre in Crawley; this was to have been discussed at the last Corporation Away Day, but because of time pressures the item had been deferred. He went through the section in the report and advised that a joint letter had been sent from Crawley Borough Council, the College and Brighton University to the Secretary of State, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (the Rt. Hon. John Denham MP), offering Crawley to be a Pilot Centre for the Government's initiative.
36. The Principal highlighted the progress being made towards harmonising pay and conditions for the College as a whole; a consultation exercise with staff would be taking place throughout April. He would keep the Resources Committee informed of progress. He stressed that the costs for teaching staff were planned to be broadly cost neutral; however the impact of the Job Evaluation Programme for Support Staff would not be known fully for several months and could present affordability issues, which may require the implementation of the scheme to be reviewed and/or phased.
37. The Principal then gave an overview of the results of the Stress Survey, which had also been reported to the Health & Safety Committee. The survey had been carried out in line with advice and guidance from the Health & Safety Executive; using the services of the independent Research and Consultation Unit (RCU). The response rate (481 staff completing the questionnaire) was impressive and enabled reliable trends to be identified.
38. Overall the range of scores appeared reasonable; the main area to be addressed was "Demands" (i.e. workload, work patterns and the work environment).
39. Finally, the Principal drew attention to the Section on Equality and Diversity and took the meeting through the analysis of Learner Success Rates. He advised the meeting that he chaired the College's Equality and Diversity Committee, which was overseeing a programme of Equality Impact Assessments. He confirmed that he would ensure that progress in respect of students would be reported to the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee and that staff matters would be reported to Resources. **It was agreed that an overall report bringing together all aspects of the Corporation's responsibilities would be made to the Corporation in the Autumn.**

40. **The report was received.**

#### **REPORT OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

41. Martin Delbridge introduced the report highlighting the report of the OFSTED Annual Monitoring Visit. The main challenge arising from the visit was how to move the College from "good" to "outstanding".
42. The other main point to note was the review of the merger, which had confirmed its success. All but one of the targets had been met, a year early. This could be misinterpreted as reflecting targets that had been set too low; however at the time they were set, they had appeared challenging, particularly since most merged Colleges experienced an initial dip in quality and or enrolments. This dip had been avoided by the new College.
43. **The Corporation congratulated Adrian Dodwell and his team for achieving the Matrix Accreditation; the Chair of the Corporation agreed to write formally to them.**
44. **The report was received.**

#### **REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

45. In the absence of Patrick Berry, Paul Harding introduced the report. He drew attention to the fact that the Human Resources (HR) Report was beginning to reveal useful information about staffing trends. The Stress Survey that had been carried out was also an impressive piece of work.
46. Paul Harding drew attention to the Management Accounts; these revealed a generally healthy picture, with the finances of the College moving forward satisfactorily. The Committee had reviewed two consecutive months' figures, for the end of January and for the end of February; between the two months, the figures and forecast outturn for Work Based Learning (WBL) had increased, but Train to Gain had not shown the expected improvement.
47. Concern was expressed that the College was £200k behind on tuition fees. Suri Araniyasundaran advised that the outturn on tuition fees was forecast to be £150k less than the original budget; this was attributable to two main areas of activity. One was Adult and Community Learning (now referred to as Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL)). This offered a low contribution rate and as such had limited impact on the bottom line. The other was Skills for Life, where the College was attempting to transfer its provision from LSC funding to fee-earning; this was proving very difficult. The remainder of the Faculties were doing well.
48. **It was agreed that a short paper reviewing tuition fees, identifying what was succeeding and where the problems lay, should be presented to the next Resources Committee.**
49. The Principal drew attention to the resistance the College was experiencing as it sought to raise fees for Adult Education for leisure. It was commented that the College should aim to subsidise those courses that were addressing social need (such as language skills), particularly where individuals could not afford the fees; learning for fun should cover its full costs.
50. **The report was received.**

## **REPORT OF THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

51. The Chair of the Corporation took the meeting through the report, drawing attention to the "Orange Book" that had been published after the meeting had taken place. He stressed that future increases in pay for Senior Postholders were dependant upon the College continuing to move towards excellence.
52. **The report was received.**

## **REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP (MASTERPLAN)**

53. The Clerk circulated a revised cover sheet that included two additional recommendations drawn from the report of the Group's second meeting (held on 20<sup>th</sup> March).
54. Paul Harding took the meeting through the two reports. He drew particular attention to the problems that were being experienced with the new dance floor in Phase 1 at Haywards Heath, which had been re-laid once already, and may well have to be re-laid a second time, once the damp and water penetration issues had been resolved. The Group had recommended that the Executive commission independent expert advice to establish what the underlying problem(s) may be.
55. The preparatory work for Phase 3 at Haywards Heath was progressing quickly, although the tendering process had proved complex and the Contractors involved had asked for an extension of time before submitting their bid. A two week extension had been granted.
56. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) would require a full twelve weeks to process the Application in Detail once it was registered by them; because of the LSC contribution rate and value it would need to be approved at national level. There was a Capital Programme meeting scheduled in July; should it not meet that time-scale it could not be considered formally until September. This would cause the College some difficulty, since it was planned to carry out some necessary demolition works, including the removal of asbestos from the whole of the existing site, during the summer recess (while there were no students on site).
57. There were three options facing the College:
- a) allowing everything to be halted with a year's delay to the project,
  - b) carrying out the demolition works during the Autumn term, while staff and students were on the campus,
  - c) carrying out the demolition works in advance of LSC approval.
58. The Group had asked the Executive to review the three options with a view to presenting a recommendation to the next Corporation meeting.
59. The detailed Planning Application was due to be submitted to the Planning Authority at the end of the week.
60. Paul Harding then drew attention to the Application in Principle for the Crawley Masterplan; a detailed Planning Application had been submitted to Crawley Borough Council. The full bid for the Masterplan was now with local LSC Officers, who were checking it for completeness prior to registering it.
61. The Architects had completed the design to RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Stage D; however it would be necessary for them to progress through Stage E to Stage F, to enable a fully detailed specification to be provided for tendering purposes, to establish a fixed price contract that would safeguard the College's interests.

62. It was noted that the additional cost of this design work would bring the College's commitment to over £1.6m, with no certainty that the LSC would approve the schemes; however it was pointed out that this represented no more than c. 2% of the total cost with a low risk that the LSC would refuse the schemes; furthermore 50% of the preparatory costs of the Crawley Masterplan were reclaimable from the LSC even if the scheme were rejected and 65% of the preparatory costs for Phase 3 of the Haywards Heath scheme would be reclaimable.
63. Paul Harding also drew attention to the requirement to review all the major capital development projects that had been carried out over the last few years, to establish what had gone well and what lessons had been learnt. The Task and Finish Group wished to include feedback from students to inform the review. The Group proposed that it be given delegated authority to carry out the reviews on behalf of the Corporation.
64. **The report was received.**
65. **The actions of the Task and Finish Group in supporting the Executive were noted.**
66. **It was agreed that the Executive be authorised to commission additional work from the Architects (and any other necessary Consultants) to continue working on RIBA Stage E to F for the Crawley Masterplan, up to a maximum additional cost of £260k by the 19<sup>th</sup> May.** It was recognised that this would bring the total commitment on both schemes to £1.6m and it was noted that a further request for additional costs would be submitted to the next Corporation meeting.
67. **It was agreed that the Task and Finish Group be given delegated authority to carry out post project reviews on past capital projects including the Haywards Heath College Science Laboratories, the two Crawley College Longley buildings and Disability Discrimination Works funded by the LSC.**

#### **REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP (CORPORATE INCOME)**

68. The Chair of the Corporation introduced the report, drawing attention to the improvements in fee and Work Based Learning income that could be seen, following the increase in the sales force.
69. The Group anticipated holding one more meeting at a future date to be determined, to consider long term strategy.
70. **The report was received.**

#### **REPORT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY BOARDS**

71. Martin Delbridge introduced the report from the Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath Local Community Board. He drew particular attention to the contribution that had been made to the success of the LCB by Jonathan Goodwin, one of the Staff Members who had recently resigned because of needing to focus on making the most of the opportunities for his students in the new building at Haywards Heath. He had stated that he was thrilled with the new building.
72. The LCB had received reports on the attendance and retention of students which were encouraging and had been pleased to see a further rise in applications to join the Campus.
73. The Link Member Scheme visits were going well; however the report of the findings had been deferred to the next meeting of the Board.

74. Charlotte Wright confirmed that the students were pleased with the new building; the drama students in particular loved the new theatre facilities. They made a great difference to the practical assessments.
75. The Principal confirmed that Bill Rammell MP, Minister of State, Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, would be opening the new building at a formal ceremony on the afternoon of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008.
76. Paul Harding then introduced the report of the Crawley, Horsham and East Grinstead LCB. He drew attention to the real value added by the LCB in facilitating the engagement of the College with hard to reach young people within the Crawley community. He did express concern however, that there was a lack of involvement from the business community. This was a matter that had been discussed at the Governance & Search Committee.
77. **The report was received.**

#### **REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE**

78. The Chair of the Corporation introduced the report. He drew particular attention to the changes to the constitution of the Corporation. The membership had previously been set at 19, to take account of the complex structure of different categories of membership required under the old Instrument and Articles. With the simplification of that structure, the Committee had been able to review the number of members actually required.
79. As a result the Committee was recommending that the "Determined Number" be set at 17, recognising that should a particular area of expertise be needed to strengthen the Corporation in the future, the Number could be changed accordingly.
80. The Committee had also reviewed whether there should be a special category reserved for Parent Members. It had been concluded that there was no special need to have more than the minimum number of designated categories. The parent body had proved a fruitful recruiting ground for Corporation Members in the past and parents with relevant experience and skills should continue to be encouraged on an annual basis to apply to become a Member of the Corporation, without being specifically designated as a Parent Member.
81. The Committee's recommendations were considered individually.
82. **It was agreed that Committee Minutes should be published on the College Website only after the report of that Committee meeting had been received at a meeting of the Corporation.**
83. **It was agreed that the Resources Committee be asked to review the procedures for grievance, suspension, disciplinary measures and dismissal on behalf of the Corporation and advise accordingly.**
84. **It was agreed that all Corporation members who do not have a specific designation set out in the Instrument and Articles be referred to collectively as Members.**
85. **It was agreed to remove the designated Parent Member category, but that applications be sought annually from the parents of students be considered by the Governance & Search Committee.**
86. **The revisions to the Standing Orders were approved.**
87. **It was agreed that the determined membership of the Corporation be 17.**

## **CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

88. The Chair advised the meeting that it had been a particularly busy period; he highlighted some of the more significant activities in which he had been involved:-

A 2 day so-called Deep Dive residential conference for the LSC: a problem solving method to brainstorm approaches to raising employer engagement with skills training in the South East.

Several interviews with potential Corporation Members.

The Corporation Away Day.

Presentation of Awards for Construction.

The opening of the new Gatwick Skills Centre facilities.

Several meetings on the new University Centre.

Several LEAG and CADIA meetings

Visit to Oriel High School Maidenbower

Various meetings of the West Sussex Economic Partnership and Gatwick Diamond Steering Group.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

89. The Chair advised the meeting that he would be unable to be present at the next meeting of the Corporation (19<sup>th</sup> May) and that Martin Delbridge had kindly confirmed that he would Chair the meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.05 p.m.