

**MINUTES OF THE
STRATEGY, FINANCE & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD IN ROOM 814 AT MATTHEW BOULTON CAMPUS
ON THURSDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2010 AT 8.00AM**

Present:

Mr D Edmonds (Chair)
Dr C Braddock (Principal)
Mr A Burley (AB)
Mr S Pearce (SP)

In Attendance:

Mr C Hill (Executive Director of Support Services) (CH)
Dr R Minett (Executive Director of HE and International) (RM)
Mr B Pattni (Executive Director of Finance and Data Management) (BP)
Mr M Clark (Deputy Chief Fire Officer – Shadowing the Principal)
Mrs C Bennett (Clerk to the Corporation) (Clerk)

Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Mr N Frankland and Mr T Lipscombe.

Item 1* - Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 December 2009

- 1.1 The public and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2009 were approved.
- 1.2 AB asked whether there were any further developments in relation to Item 2 of the minutes of 3 December 2009, more specifically as to whether there had been any feedback on the review of the Tier 4 system.

RM joined the meeting at this point.

- 1.3 RM said that no feedback had been received as yet.
- 1.4 AB also asked if any issues had arisen in relation to the UK Border Agency visit. RM confirmed that no issues had arisen but confirmed that the visa office was still closed down.

Matters Arising

An updated version of the Agenda was provided at the meeting. The order of items therefore differed to that set out in the meeting pack.

Item 2 – Schools Academy and Challenge Schools (Item 4 in the meeting pack)

(i) Schools Academy Programme

- 2.1 This item was presented by CH. CH explained that the Corporation previously approved the sponsorship of a Birmingham School. Matters had progressed and further information could be provided to the Committee in terms of the identity of the school, timescales and negotiations. CH addressed these issues in more detail as set out in his paper.
- 2.2 CH said that there were still confidentiality issues surrounding the identity of the school and for that reason it should not be identified in the minutes at this stage.
- 2.3 Questions were raised by those present as to the reasons why the College wished to pursue this programme and the types of risks involved. CH explained that in terms of business risk it was necessary to ensure the College has sufficient resources. CH also explained that this issue had already been dealt with by identifying key personnel to develop the programme.
- 2.4 In terms of financial risk, CH explained that this was a low risk to the College as the project was fully funded by the DCSF as is the new build, which is in partnership with the local authority.
- 2.5 The Chair added that strategically it was a good move for the College to build up a link with schools particularly in terms of funding going forward.
- 2.4 A more detailed discussion then took place amongst those present in relation to how the schools academies process works, timescales, how many academies a college may have, how the College Corporation works with the schools board and why the particular school in question.

RESOLVED:

The Corporation to continue to support the Academy proposal and note progress/timescales.

(ii) Challenge Schools

- 2.5 CH provided details on National Challenge which was launched in June 2008 and is a DCSF programme to ensure that at least 30% of pupils

in every maintained secondary school in England achieves at least five higher grade (A* - C) GCSEs including English and Maths by 2011.

- 2.6 CH confirmed that the College was in discussions with two challenge schools, one as a primary partner and the other as a secondary partner.
- 2.7 CH explained that the proposal would support the College schools and curriculum development strategy by providing pathways of choice after Year 11 and direct engagement with the school development and improvement strategy.
- 2.8 CH went on to explain that in terms of the school where the proposal is that the College be a primary partner, discussions have centred on the school moving into trust status. CH gave those present a more detailed explanation of what this meant.
- 2.9 Members present again raised queries in relation to whether there were any financial and business risks to the College, in particular in relation to management time. CH explained that again key personnel had been identified to deal with this programme and the College had always had a schools team within management. BP also added that in terms of the Schools Academy Programme and this programme there is no more work involved than what was involved with the merger.

RESOLVED

The Committee to note the engagement with Challenge Schools with the intention to move into Trust arrangements.

Item 3 (Item 2 in the Meeting Pack) – Statement of Priorities – Young People’s Learning – the Impact upon the College

- 3.1 This item was presented by RM. He explained that the “16 – 19 Statement of Priorities and Investment Strategy 2010/11” was issued in January this year by the DCSF and LSC and outlined the priorities for young people and the strategy for allocating investment in education for this group.
- 3.2 RM explained to the Committee that the changes in the commissioning bodies, funding and revised priorities will require some re-profiling of the curriculum on offer for 2010/11. RM went on to say that the College needs to ensure it develops a strategy to achieve the maximum funding benefits afforded by the new policy.
- 3.3 RM guided those present through the table set out in this paper which addressed the criteria for funding provision and commissioning guide and the impact upon the College. Each policy/objective was looked at individually and discussed in detail amongst those present.

- 3.4 RM highlighted various issues emerging out of the table including the fact that courses falling below standard are unlikely to be funded and that it was important that the College had representation on the various funding bodies (SFA, sector councils, employers etc).

RESOLVED

- (i) to support the re-profiling of the curriculum structure and other actions to meet the requirements of the statement of priorities;
- (ii) to support the Executive in taking the appropriate actions to reduce provision on those courses that fall below the minimum levels of performance or do not achieve appropriate success measures.

Item 4 – Funding Update Presentation and Verbal Update on Learner Responsive Allocations for 16 – 18, 19+ and Employer Responsive Contracts (Item 3 in the Meeting Pack)

(i) Funding Update Presentation

- 4.1 This was an information providing exercise for those present at the Committee meeting. CH provided a summary of the 157 paper circulated at the Committee meeting relating to funding.
- 4.2 CH then led those present through a presentation, the main points being an outline of the new funding regime (i.e. funding to come from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Young People's Learning Agency, the Skills Funding Agency or local authorities and that adult learner funding is under severe pressure
- 4.3 CH indicated that going forward there need to be a heavy emphasis on efficiency, priorities and performance.

(ii) Verbal Update on Learner Responsive Allocations for 16 – 18, 19+ and Employer Responsive Contracts

- 4.4 BP presented a verbal report on this issue for information purposes. He stated that he had recently met with the LSC and although the actual allocation percentage had not been disclosed as yet, it was not good – somewhere in the range of 5 – 25% cut.
- 4.5 BP explained in more detail some of the consequences of the funding cuts but also what other opportunities might be available in terms of funding.
- 4.6 A detailed discussion took place amongst those present and questions were raised by members to management about the consequences of reduced funding for this College and others. It was agreed that as a large financially stable institution, the College is in a better position in

comparison to others. However it was agreed that testing times were ahead and alternative financial allocations may need to be looked into.

- 4.7 BP said that he should have additional information from the LSC by the next Corporation Meeting on 17 March 2010.

The Principal and MC joined the meeting at this point.

- 4.8 The Principal introduced MC (Deputy Chief Fire Officer for the Region) who had been shadowing her over the past five days.
- 4.9 With regard to the item under discussion, the Principal added that it is not obvious at this stage what opportunities could be explored as a result of the funding cuts but as these emerge, management would keep the Committee updated. The Chair added that this in itself supports the view to pursue projects like the Schools Academy Programme.
- 4.10 The Principal said that Eversheds and the 157 Group had produced a useful publication on "Preparing Colleges for the Future" and suggested it be circulated to members. The Clerk said she would do this.

RESOLVED

- (i) The Executive to update members of the LSC funding position at the next Corporation meeting on 17 March 2010;
- (ii) The Clerk to circulate the 157 Group and Eversheds publication to members on "Preparing Colleges for the Future".

Item 5 – Presentation – Riverside Strategic Options

- 5.1 BP presented this item. He stated that the Riverside and Estates Committee were due to meet on 9 February 2010 but because of the implications on strategy and finance going forward, it was considered appropriate to bring it to this Committee as well.
- 5.2 BP initially provided the background of the Riverside Project to the Committee, explaining that the project was under way until LSC funding was pulled at the beginning of 2009.
- 5.3 BP went on to say that both the Senior Management team and the Corporation remain committed to the Riverside Project but further scenario planning is required due to the financial challenges in terms of the funding position that we now find ourselves in.
- 5.4 BP outlined a number of options to the Committee which ranged from doing nothing, continuing with the project as planned but finance it differently, building a smaller new build or refurbishing existing

campuses. In respect of each option, BP outlined the opportunities and risks involved particularly in relation to funding the project.

- 5.5 In considering each option, a detailed discussion took place amongst those present, particularly in relation to the risks involved. Various queries were raised including whether the College would be able to fund the project at a time when the LSC was already planning on making substantial funding cuts. At the same time, it was agreed amongst those present that a lot of work had already been carried out on this project and it was important to plan for the future.

RM left the meeting at this point.

RESOLVED

The Senior Management team keep pursuing the Riverside Policy

Item 6 – Funding Proposals for Riverside (Chris Monk Report)

- 6.1 It was agreed with the Chair that this item be starred and sent to the Riverside and Estates Committee for scrutiny. The Chair agreed to this.

***Item 7 – Management Accounts up to 31 December 2009**

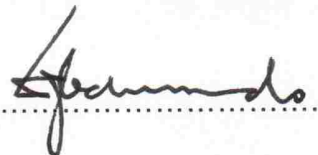
- 7.1 These were for information only. Any queries in relation to them are to be directed to BP.

There was no other business.

Date of Next Meeting – 29 April 2010 (*now re-arranged to 13 May 2010*)

The meeting ended at 10.20am.

Signed (Chair)



Date.....

13 May 2010.