



**MINUTES OF THE PART I MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE CORPORATION**  
**16<sup>th</sup> MAY 2011**

**Members Present:** Geoff Hacker (Deputy Chairman)  
David Byrne  
Danny Ridgeway (Principal)  
Barbara Johnstone  
Bola Ojo  
Richard Hallett  
Nigel Betts

**In Attendance:** Martin Peat  
Francis Holland  
Graham Guest

The meeting commenced at 1800

**53: Apologies for Absence, Quoracy & Welcomes**

Apologies were received from Mr Michael Clark, Dr Christine Couper, John Eldridge, Jon Allen, Harry Rowland and Catherine Muonga. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

**54: Declarations of Interests**

There were no declared interests against any of agenda items.

**55: Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Chairman.

**56: Summary Action List & Matters Arising**

The '*Summary Action List*' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). It was noted that all action points are agenda items as recorded in the table below.

| <b>MIN REF</b> | <b>DETAILS OF RESOLUTION/ACTION POINT</b>                      | <b>Update for meeting 16/5/11</b> |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 3              | To review its current 10 year financial forecasts to factor in | Agenda item                       |

|         |  |  |
|---------|--|--|
|         | reductions in funding that are expected from the CSR. The revised financial forecasts to be presented to the Corporation for approval.               |  |
| 45(iii) | To report back on forming a strategic alliance with Bexley Adult Education College   | It was confirmed that a meeting of the Project Steering Group was held on 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2011 and arising from the meeting were the setting up of various working groups to look at specific areas with the aim of reporting back so that recommendations from the Steering Group can be put to both Corporations at their respective July meetings. |
| 38      | To delegate authority to the Chairman to sign the contract with the developers and to report at the next meeting any use of such delegated authority | Update provided under the agenda item 'Estates Update'   |

It was **RESOLVED** to note the '*Summary Action List*'.

#### **57: Principals Report**

The report from the Principal was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). The report provided Members with a summary of recent developments in a range of key strategic matters since the last Board meeting in March. These included:

- Enrolments
- Funding
- Bexley Adult Education
- Innovation Fund
- Property
- Learning & Teaching
- Higher Education
- Staff Survey
- Events and award.

The following key points were noted from the Principal:

#### **Enrolments**

Currently the College has 932 16-18 year olds and 1,382 adults. This is still below the 16-18 funding target by 66. The minimum target is 949 because if 95% of the overall target can be achieved then there will be no clawback next year. Recruitment initiatives are still being pursued and this includes working with Charlton Athletic where it is hoped to run some additional courses with them.

## **Funding**

Funding allocations for next year have been confirmed with a reduction in income of £1m. This matter is dealt with under Part III of the meeting

## **Bexley Adult Education**

The intention is to provide both sets of governors with an interim report in June and a feasibility study in July. This should then inform a statement of intent that will become the basis of consultation with staff, students and local stakeholders. Simultaneously, both institutions will need to undertake independent due diligence to ensure that there are no hidden risks to a strategic alliance. The chairs of both corporations are meeting with the two principals and Carolyn Unsted on the 19<sup>th</sup> May to review progress.

## **Innovation Fund**

The SFA Innovation Fund with Greenwich Community College and North East Surrey College of Technology continues to review how each college organises its enrolment processes and thus identify ways that colleges can work together to reduce costs and improve the quality of service that it gives to all applicants.

## **Property**

There have been some very difficult negotiations on the final aspects of the loan deal and the Principal asked for the minutes to record thanks to Martin Peat for his monumental efforts to ensure that the deal did not collapse. A meeting is booked with the SFA to finalise the permission that they must give for the project to proceed.

## **Learning & Teaching**

The new system of lesson observations has commenced and additional funding has been secured from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service to bring in external consultants to undertake observations and to give constructive feedback.

## **Higher Education**

The University of Greenwich's Teacher Training provision is being inspected by Ofsted the week beginning May 23 and the College's PGCE provision will be included in this inspection. Some of the inspection team will be based at the College during the week long inspection where they will observe lessons, interview students and review documentation.

The College is meeting with the University to confirm the overall allocation for next year.

## **Staff Survey**

At the end of March and early April staff were asked to complete an on-line survey. The survey asked staff for their views about their experience of working at the College. This is part of a strategy to improve communication within the College and to identify what we are doing well and where we need to make improvements. An encouragingly high turnout of 241 or 84% completed the survey.

The results have been shared with staff.

The questions with the highest 5 negative responses were:

- My benefits are comparable to those offered by other organisations
- I am paid fairly for the work that I do
- I have adequate opportunities for professional growth within this organisation
- There is a strong feeling of teamwork and co-operation in Bexley College
- I receive the training I need to do my job well

The questions with the highest 5 positive responses were:

- I respect my manager as a competent professional
- I am familiar with and understand Bexley College's strategic goals
- My work is rewarding
- My work is challenging
- I understand how my work directly contributes to the overall success of the organisation

There is a lot of data arising from the survey and even with staff comments it cannot tell the whole story. The College Management Team are looking at the results in more detail and drawing out lessons that can be learnt. The survey was the first that the College has carried out for a number of years and the intention is to make this an annual survey

### **Events and Awards**

Governors were reminded of the invitation to attend the College's celebration of achievement event that is scheduled for 5.45pm on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

### **58: Education Focus:**

#### **(i) Quality Improvement Plan**

'*The Quality Improvement Plan*' (QIP) was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). The QIP outlines the strategic actions being taken to improve the quality of provision which were identified in the 2009/10 Self Assessment Reports. The QIP provided Governors with an update on the progress being made against agreed targets.

Members reviewed the monitoring data against each of the listed improvement activities. It was noted that College attendance is down 1% to 81% from the figure of 82% that was reported at the March meeting of the Corporation. Overall 16-18 retention was also down 1% at 88% with 19+ remaining at 92%.

Following review it was **RESOLVED** to note the '*Quality Improvement Plan*'

#### **(ii) Learner Voice Monitoring Report**

The '*Learner Voice Monitoring Report*' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). The report from the President of the Students Union reported on progress made

during the year against the stated expectations and outcomes listed in the Learner Involvement Strategy.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

**59: Finance & Estates Focus:**

**(i) Management Accounts**

The '*Management Accounts for the period up to March 2011*' were received (copy attached to the signed minutes). The following key points were noted:

- The College is forecast an operating loss of £401k against the budget of a deficit of £483k.
- Further review of staffing costs are being undertaken to monitor and take action to reduce costs wherever possible.
- The Balance Sheet remains in a strong position and the year-end SFA financial category remains 'Good'.
- Redcliffe Nursery has been sold, subject to contract, assisting a total year positive cash flow of approximately £400k. Permission to sell the property was sought following a successful sale process. The price gained was £475k, this was unconditional and the purchaser has proof of funds.

The Board was informed that provision has been made in respect of externally delivered Apprenticeships by Brights Training. The College is currently investigating the contractor in terms of quality and audit and has taken a prudent approach in terms of the financial position. The governors will receive a report on findings at the next meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Management Accounts.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the sale of Redcliffe Nursery for the price of £475,000 and to note that this would be completed in the following two weeks.

**(ii) Financial Regulations**

The '*Financial Regulations*' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes)

It was confirmed that other than minor changes to job titles and the Board structure, the regulations remain the same as the previous version.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the '*Financial Regulations*'.

**(iii) Ten Year Financial Plan 2011-2020**

The '*10-Year Financial Forecasts*' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). The College has submitted the ten year financial plan along with other supporting documentation, ie the education case, contracts, bank facility letter etc to the Skills

Funding Agency. The reports were requested in order for the College to receive permission to undertake the relocation project.

The plan shows the draft budget for 2011/12 taking into account the funding changes for 2011/12 and then the forecasts for the following years. It also includes the financial deal for the relocation including the cash flow projections and capital planning. For the years ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 the College's financial health is assessed as being good for each of the years.

The College has not yet received any formal feedback as to the approval and has also not received any queries from the SFA requesting clarification or additional information.

Following review it was **RESOLVED** to approve the revised '*Ten Year Financial Plan 2011-2020*'.

#### **(iv) Relocation Update**

The College report '*Relocation Update*' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). From the report the following points were noted:

##### **Contract**

The Project Agreement (P.A.) which is the legal contract between Bexley College and the Barratt/Osborne partnership set up to deliver the new College, is in final format and is available for the Chair to sign. There are no material variations to the contract from the previous agreements and so the College lawyers, Thomas Eggar, are still recommending it to the Governors for approval. Their previous letter remains accurate in terms of liability and gives Governors details of the deal structure. The local Authority are also being kept up to date with progress and continue to be very supportive. The College expects the SFA permission in the coming days.

##### **Timeline**

Although tight and challenging, the target of building to commence in early 2012 for September 2013 occupation still stands.

##### **Funding**

The bank guarantee required by Barclays is now in place by Barratt's and Osborne and the facility letters are being written by the banks lawyers this week.

##### **Skills Funding Agency**

The College has submitted all of the required documents to the Skills Funding Agency in order to receive the necessary approval to both sell the Tower Road site and take out the bank loan.

##### **Next Stages**

Once the P.A is signed, the planning meetings will recommence with the London Borough of Bexley. The aim is to clarify all points prior to submission of the application wherever possible.

The final RIBA drawings will also be made available to the College to enable final external design approval prior to the application.

The College will involve the Management team in the internal layout and resources of the new building to ensure it is fit for purpose for the delivery of the Curriculum in 2013.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the relocation update and to approve the contract for signature by the Chair and Principal.

**60: People & HR Focus**

**(i) Annual Health & Safety Report**

The 'Annual Health & Safety Report' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). The Health & Safety Report confirmed that there were no reported RIDDOR accidents between August 2010 and April 2011.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

**61: Any other Business**

There was no other business.

**62: Date of Next Meeting(s)**

Governor Strategy Meeting Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2011 from 09.30 – 13.00.  
Board meeting Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2011 @ 1800

The meeting closed at 20.00

Signed: ..... Date: .....  
(Chairman)

**SUMMARY ACTION LIST**

| <b>MIN REF</b> | <b>DETAILS OF RESOLUTION/ACTION POINT</b>  |            |
|----------------|--|------------|
| 59(I)          | The Board was informed that provision has been made in respect of externally delivered Apprenticeships by Brights Training. The College is currently investigating the contractor in terms of quality and audit and has taken a prudent approach in terms of the financial position. The governors will receive a report on findings at the next meeting | VP Finance |