



**Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 15 October 2008 at 5.00pm in the Board Room, York College**

**Present:** Beth Armer  
Hilary Bainbridge  
Alison Birkinshaw  
Peter Burrows  
Bruce Gilbert  
David Jackson  
David Marsh  
Andy Mendus  
Danny Morgan  
Carol Runciman  
John Short, Chair  
Terry Wolf

**In**

**Attendance:** Trevor Armer, Director of Finance  
Richard Hinde, Clerk to the Governing Body  
Glyn Jones, Assistant Principal: 16-19 A Level/GCSE  
Louise Lawrence-Crockford, Assistant Principal: Employer Engagement  
Graeme Murdoch, Deputy Principal QA & Support  
Bob Saynor, Assistant Principal: Lifelong Learning and HE  
Anne Tyrrell, Deputy Principal Operations  
Clare Wareing, Assistant Principal: 14-19 Vocational

The meeting started at 5.05pm.

**Action**

**08.57 Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest**

Apologies had been received from Jim Clark, Hilary Crook, Kevin Deadman, David Johnson and David Maughan Brown. David Jackson and been delayed and would be joining the meeting later

Governors were requested to make declarations of interest as they arose. As a York City Councillor and the Children and Young Persons Officer at the Council, Carol Runciman declared an interest in the local authority update within the Principal's report and also in the agenda item on the College's Child Protection Policy.

**08.58 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 17 July 2008**

The minutes and confidential minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**08.59 Matters Arising**

**a) Action Summary Sheet**

The action summary sheet was noted.

b) Any Other Matters

There were no matters arising that were not being dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

**08.60 Principal's Report**

The Principal presented her report outlining key developments across the sector and for York College including updates on the DCSF/DIUS/Local Authority; the 2008/09 funding allocation; 2008 recruitment; 2007/08 performance; and other business of interest.

Concern was expressed in relation to the College's increasing difficulty in gaining access to its prospective learners in fifth forms of schools which have a sixth form. Attempts had been made to gain access to school pupils and invite school staff and governors to College events but the response had been poor. Difficulties would likely increase if more schools established their own sixth forms. Concern was expressed that ultimately it would be the learners who suffered in terms of reduced quality and choice. It was **agreed** that it may be beneficial, should the situation continue, for the Chair of the College's Governing Body to contact the chairs of the school governors seeking access to their school pupils and inviting them to further College events.

The role of the local authority in determining the establishment of new school sixth forms was explained, and discussion took place about demographic trends and future learner numbers.

In relation to the College's success rates, it was reported that there were two key areas of weakness. These were short qualifications and level 2 adults. In relation to the latter, it was reported that the latest data showed that the College was more or less at benchmark. However with the former, whilst it was possible the results for 16-18 short qualifications would reach benchmark, it was unlikely that benchmark for adult short qualifications would be reached. It was explained that this was primarily due to the College's work with students on probation, and the difficulty experienced in capturing these achievements.

It was reported that the relevant trade unions had agreed to accept the AoC's pay increase recommendation of 3.2% with effect from 1 October 2008. Discussion was taking place with them in relation to the timing for payment of any increase eventually approved by the Governing Body.

It was also reported that with the changes at ministerial level of relevant government departments, it was likely that significant changes would be made to the format of Framework For Excellence, and that many of the financial elements may be removed. Concern was expressed by members about this, and it was queried whether formal complaint was being made by the AoC in this regard.

Reference was made to the current Financial Management Control Evaluation (FMCE) which required completing as part of the current Framework For Excellence and it was **agreed** that approval of this should be delegated to the Audit Committee for subsequent ratification by the Governing Body at its December meeting.

It was reported that there had been no instances of “whistle-blowing” made during 2007/08.

**The Governing Body resolved to note the report.**

#### **08.61 College Strategic Plan 2008/11**

The Principal presented the College Strategic Plan for 2008/11. It was reported that the version that had been presented at the last Governing Body meeting had been revised in line with Governor’s comments and that this was the final version which required formal Governing Body approval.

Discussion took place about the International Baccalaureate course and whether it was appropriate for future decisions regarding this to be referred to the Quality & Curriculum Committee. However, it was explained that this would be one course only and therefore of less significance than originally anticipated.

It was confirmed that there was no intention within the Strategic Plan to physically divide the College into two according to its provision. However, it was acknowledged that some form of re-branding may be required.

**The Governing Body resolved to approve the College’s Strategic Plan for 2008/11.**

#### **08.62 Health & Safety Report**

The Deputy Principal Operations presented the Health, Safety and Welfare Report for the Summer Term 2007/08, which was considered by members. In relation to the level of accidents, it was noted that the position at the end of the summer term was more in line with previous years, save for the nursery where the College now had a more rigorous reporting of all accidents compared with previous years.

Internal health & safety audits were now underway. It was explained that these were approached in a supportive rather than an inspectoral manner to ensure that staff teams were settling into the new environment. No major issues of concern had been identified.

It was reported that the College’s alarm system had been reviewed by ADT (who installed it) and the sensitivity of individual alarms had been changed where necessary. As a result there had since been a reduction in the number of false alarm evacuations. It was also

noted that since September 2008 the College had been operating a 3 minute internal delay system on the fire alarm, with the agreement of the local fire officers. This had also resulted in a reduction in the number of evacuations.

**The Governing Body resolved to note the report.**

**08.63 Learner Recruitment**

The Deputy Principal Operations presented the report on the College's recruitment against target to 2 October 2008.

With regard to 16-18 learners it was reported that the College was close to its LSC year-end target, but that at this stage it would wish to be above target. However, it was explained that the College should be in a position to increase its learner numbers during the year as part-year starters would also be included in the figures.

Recruitment of 16-18 apprenticeships was currently below target, and it was believed this reflected the current economic downturn with employers being less inclined to take on apprentices.

With regard to adult provision, it was reported that the College was currently at the same level as its year end position the previous year. It was felt that this was a promising start, particularly in light of course fee increases. However, adult apprenticeships were below target for the same reasons, it was believed, as outlined earlier.

HE provision was above target, whilst international provision was currently below target.

Consideration was then given to the measures being taken by the College to increase retention rates.

In relation to Train to Gain provision, it was too early to be able to make meaningful judgements, and it was noted that the College had still not received confirmation of its 2008/09 Train to Gain targets from the LSC.

**The Governing Body resolved to note the report.**

(David Jackson joined the meeting at 5.55pm.)

**08.64 New College Strategy Group**

Minutes of Meeting on 30 September 2008

This item was treated as confidential and a separate confidential minute produced.

**08.65 A Level Pass Rates 2007/08**

The Assistant Principal 16-19 A Level presented the report on the College's A Level and AS Level success rates, which were above

national levels for the fourteenth year running. Members considered areas where performance was not at the desired level, and consideration was given to the proposed actions to bring about improvement.

The following key strengths were identified:

- The A2 achievement rate was 97.7%. This exceeded the national average of 97.2% and marked an improvement of 0.5% on 2006/07. It was also better than any of the York 11-18 schools, which ranged from 96.6 – 97.3%.
- 33 subjects had an A2 achievement rate of 100%.
- The A2 high grade (A-B) achievement rate was 45.5%, which was an improvement of 3.7% on 2006/07.
- The AS achievement rate was 90.3%, which was an improvement of 1.5% on 2006/07.
- The AS high grade (A-B) achievement rate was 35.5%, which was an improvement of 1.2% on 2006/07.

The key concern was reported to be that the A2 high grade (A-B) achievement rate was below the 2005/06 benchmarks in 17 subjects.

Discussion took place about whether the College had minimum entry requirements for learners to take A levels, and how prospective learners were assessed.

It was noted that a report on “Value Added” measures of success would be presented at a future meeting.

GJ

**The Governing Body resolved to note the report.**

#### **08.66 Policy Review – Child Protection Policy**

The Deputy Principal QA & Support presented the report and the College’s revised Child Protection Policy. It was explained that the Policy had been subject to a significant review, and that it now addressed areas not previously covered by the Policy such as volunteers, contractors and visitors to the College. It identified the range of Designated Officers, and provided a flow chart for referrals to be used in appropriate circumstances. Two necessary revisions were identified in the flow chart and it was **agreed** that these would be done.

GAM

Discussion took place about the use of List 99 checks for home stay providers and landlords, and it was explained that when the College undertook its British Council Accreditation, its use of the List 99 check for these purposes was seen as an example of good practice.

Consideration was also given to the College’s procedures for vetting employers, and it was explained that the College’s processes were already far in advance of current guidance.

**The Governing Body resolved to approve the College's Child Protection Policy subject to inclusion of the agreed amendments.**

**08.67 Framework For Excellence Update**

The Deputy Principal QA & Support presented the report identifying how it was intended to roll out the Framework for Excellence during 2008/09, and identifying the actions taken by the College to meet the information needs of the Framework.

**The Governing Body resolved to note the report.**

**08.68 Student Union President's Report**

The Student Union President presented the report which included consideration of the College's Freshers' Fairs; Student Union involvement with Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) issues; Student Council activity including approval of the Student Union budget; and the Welcome Evening for international learners.

It was also reported that the Student Union President and Principal had recently attended a meeting with representatives of Tesco which had proved very positive in terms of seeking to address a number of issues.

The Chair explained that he welcomed student input at Committee and Governing Body meetings and other development events, and felt it would also be beneficial for Governors possibly to attend the College's Student Council meetings or other student events. It was **agreed** that the Student Union President would liaise further with the Clerk in this regard.

BA/RH

**The Governing Body resolved to note the report.**

(Carol Runciman left the meeting at 6.55pm.)

**08.69 Finance & General Purposes Committee**

a) Minutes of Meeting on 25 September 2008

The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee presented the minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting, which were noted by the Governing Body.

b) Committee Terms of Reference and Schedule of Business 2008/09

The Chair presented the Terms of Reference and schedule of business for 2008/09 for the Finance & General Purposes Committee, which had been considered by the Committee at its last meeting. It was explained that the Committee had felt that its "general purposes" role should be more clearly stated in its Terms of Reference to include other general and overarching matters (such as marketing) which did not fall entirely within the remit of any other Committee. This had now been reflected in revisions to the Terms of

Reference. Consideration was also given to the proposed workplan for the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

**The Governing Body resolved to approve the Terms of Reference and workplan for 2008/09 for the Finance & General Purposes Committee.**

c)i) Draft 2007/08 Management Accounts

The Director of Finance presented the report summarising the 2 October 2008 draft of the College's 2007/08 management accounts, which it was noted were subject to audit by the College's Financial Statements Auditors during the week commencing 6 October 2008.

It was reported that the draft year end management accounts indicated a deficit of £842,000 (excluding the impact of FRS 17 pension costs). This was after the revenue impact of the exceptional transactions associated with the New College Project and Information Strategy. If these transactions were excluded, the College's underlying financial performance in 2007-08 was expected to be a surplus of £1,016,000.

If this underlying performance was confirmed by the Financial Statements Auditors, the College's underlying surplus would be far better than indicated in the College's 2007/08 budget and subsequent forecasts.

**The Governing Body resolved to note the report.**

c)ii) Draft 2007/08 Management Accounts: Financial Analysis

The Director of Finance presented the report providing analysis of the College's financial performance in 2007/08, which was considered by members.

It was reported that the College's draft 2007/08 financial statements indicated that the College's financial performance in 2007/08 exceeded that forecast in the College's 2007-08 Budget, 2007-08 Mid-Year Forecast and the 2007-08 June Year-End Forecast; achieved all of its strategic financial objectives for 2007-08; and exceeded that assumed in the New College Final Capital Bid.

They also indicated that the College was compliant with the financial covenants associated with the New College Project loan at 31 July 2008.

Once the College's financial statements had been finalised by the auditors, the College's final financial performance would be confirmed to the Governing Body at its meeting on 17 December 2008.

**The Governing Body resolved to note the report.**

d) 2008/09 Tuition Fee Policy

The Director of Finance presented the report and the College's proposed Policy on the determination of tuition fees for its educational provision. It was explained that the Policy had been updated to reflect changes in LSC guidance and changed roles and responsibilities within the College, but that the core policy was largely unchanged.

It was noted that the Policy had been reviewed by both the College's Fees Task Group and the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

**The Governing Body resolved to approve the College's Tuition Fees Policy for 2008/09.**

e) Value For Money Policy Statement

The Director of Finance presented the report together with a revised version of the College's Value for Money Policy Statement, which had been updated to reflect some changes suggested at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting on 25 September 2008. However, whilst the F&GP Committee had recommended approval, it had been acknowledged that further development of the Policy was required in future in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

It was explained that during the last two years, clearer guidance had become available from the Learning and Skills Council and this re-drafted policy sought to reflect that guidance.

The purpose of this Value for Money Policy was to articulate how Governors and managers took steps to ensure that they were able to: "Secure the efficient, economical and effective management of all the College's resources and expenditure, capital assets and equipment and staff so that the investment of public funds was not put at risk."

**The Governing Body resolved to approve the College's Value For Money Policy for 2008/09.**

**08.70 Formal Resolutions to Open Bank Accounts**

This item was treated as confidential and a separate confidential minute produced.

**08.71 Employer and Skills Committee**

a) Minutes of Meeting on 9 October 2008

The Principal presented the minutes of the meeting, which were noted by the Governing Body.

Discussion took place about the current membership of the Employer & Skills Committee and consideration was given to other organisations from which other prospective members could be co-

opted.

**The Governing Body resolved to appoint Gillian Cruddas as an External Co-opted Member of the Employer & Skills Committee for a period of three years with immediate effect.**

b) Committee Terms of Reference and Schedule of Business 2008/09

This item was deferred pending further refinement by the Committee.

**08.72 Pure Business Solutions Limited – Meeting on 9 October 2008**

This item was treated as confidential and a separate confidential minute produced.

**08.73 Any Other Business**

It was explained that the Committee Chair's SAR meeting currently scheduled for 25 November 2008 would have to be re-arranged.

**08.74 Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 17 December 2008 at 5.00pm.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Richard Hinde  
Clerk to the Governing Body

**Signed (Chair):** .....

**Name** .....

**Date:** .....