



**Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 9
December 2009 at 5.00pm in Room 1F024/025, York College**

Present: Hilary Bainbridge
Alison Birkinshaw
Peter Burrows
Jim Clark
Elizabeth Fenn
Tom Hobman
David Jackson
David Johnson
Andrew Lindsay
David Marsh
Lynne Marston
David Maughan Brown
Andy Mendus
John Short, Chair

In

Attendance: Trevor Armer, Director of Finance
Richard Hinde, Clerk to the Governing Body
Glyn Jones – Assistant Principal 16-19 A Level
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 Resources

The meeting started at 5.05pm.

Action

09.54 Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from Kevin Deadman, Bruce Gilbert, Danny Morgan, Carol Runciman, Terry Wolf and Clare Wareing.

Governors were requested to make declarations of interest in relation to any agenda items. David Jackson and Lynne Marston declared an interest in relation to agenda item E1d) on the College staff pay award for 2009/10.

09.55 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 14 October 2009

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

09.56 Matters Arising

a) Action Summary Sheet

The action summary sheet was considered and it was noted that all items had been actioned or were in progress.

b) Any Other Matters

There were no matters arising not otherwise dealt with on the present agenda.

09.57 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 local 14-19 update; 2009 recruitment/financial forecast update; the 2008/09 final success rates performance; and other business of interest.

In relation to success rates, it was reported that overall 16-18 success rates had improved by 5% (to 82%) and were now in the top 10% of all colleges. The overall 19+ success rates had improved by 5% (to 77%) and were now in the top 25% of all colleges. Significant improvements had also been made in Apprenticeships which had achieved an 80% success rate and Train to Gain which had achieved an 88% success rate. It was noted that one student, James Swanton, had achieved the highest mark in the country for his Film Studies A Level qualification and that he had now taken up a place at Cambridge University to read English. Congratulations to James and his team of teachers were recorded.

Discussion took place about the local 14-19 position and the Chair stated that he anticipated organising a meeting with Councillor Carol Runciman in January or February 2010 to consider the situation further. **Chair**

The Governing Body resolved to note the Principal's Report.

09.58 College Annual Report

The Chair presented the College's proposed Annual Report for 2008/09 which was considered by Members.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the College's Annual Report for 2008/09.

09.59 Health, Safety & Welfare Annual Report 2008/09

The Deputy Principal Resources presented the Health, Safety & Welfare Report for the Summer Term 2009 together with the Annual Accident Report for the Academic Year 2008/09.

In relation to the number of accidents, it was reported that this had increased slightly on the previous year although it was felt that this was due to more effective reporting. All management health & safety audits had been carried out as anticipated with 100% compliance. It was noted that the 2009/10 audit regime would be even more stringent.

It was further reported that a "Seeking Assurances" visit to the

College had been made by the LSC on 4 November 2009. As a result, the College's performance had been assessed as "Good and Improving", and it was hoped that this could be raised to outstanding in 2010 when the College's revised management systems and initiatives were fully embedded throughout the College and further evidence in respect of safe learner targets/outputs was available.

The Chair requested that the report should also include a reference to the relevant training undertaken by Governors during the course of the year.

DPR

The Governing Body resolved to approve the College's Health, Safety & Welfare Annual Report 2008/09, subject to agreed amendment.

09.60 2009/10 Learner Enrolments – Progress Report

The Deputy Principal Resources presented the report summarising the data on recruitment as at 26 November 2009.

It was reported that with 16-18 Learners (excluding apprenticeships) the College's targets had been exceeded. There had been an increase of 116 learners compared with the same point last year and the College was currently 90 learners ahead of its LSC year end target. The College was currently over 5% above its Standard Learner Numbers (SLNs) per learner. This was because the College was achieving an average of 1.44 SLNs per learner against a funding level of 1.40 SLNs per learner.

The Deputy Principal Resources explained that it was vital for the College to be above target this year as the College's funding allocation for the next year would be based on its performance in both 2008/09 and 2009/10. As the College was below target in 2008/09, it needed to exceed target for the current year.

With 16-18 Apprenticeships, it was reported that the College was currently 90 below target, and concerns were expressed about the College's ability to meet this target in the current economic climate. There was evidence that employers were reluctant to take on Apprentices, and this was leading to conversion from Apprenticeships to full-time FE programmes.

Adult Responsiveness provision (excluding apprenticeships) was at 72% of the College's year end target which was ahead of the same time last year. As predicted, the College's funding level was higher than the same time last year when the College was achieving 76% of its year end target. The College was currently achieving nearly 100% of its SLN target and was confident of exceeding its target funding level for Adult Responsive provision. It was explained that in the current position the College would not be able to achieve learner number targets in some priority provision such as Skills For Life.

The College had made the LSC aware of this and did not expect there to be any impact on its funding.

With Employer Responsive, 19+ Apprenticeships were currently 34 below target, with the College having the same concerns as for 16-18 Apprenticeships. However, the College anticipated achieving its other Employer Responsive (Train to Gain) targets for 2009/10.

Construction Skills were currently 56 below the position at the same time last year. Current enrolment to HE was 11% above target (with estimated levels of withdrawals taken in to account). The College was 5.8% above the top end of its direct HE contract, although it was not believed that this would have any funding implications for the College in the current year. International recruitment was 41 below target.

Members then gave consideration to the actions being undertaken by the College to try and address those areas of potential under-recruitment.

SMT

The Governing Body resolved to note the report.

09.61 Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy

The Deputy Principal Resources presented the College's Safeguarding Young People & Vulnerable Adults (Child Protection) Policy for approval. It was explained that the Policy had been updated to ensure that it was in line with latest regulation and statutory requirements as well as reflecting best practice. The Policy had previously been considered and recommended for approval by the Personnel Committee in June 2009 subject to inclusion of their proposed amendments which had been accepted by the College's Safeguarding Management Group. This revised Policy now reflected these changes as well as other changes made as a result of the impact assessment and further changes necessitated by new guidance from the Association of Colleges (AoC) and Ofsted.

(Andy Mendus joined the meeting at 5.30pm.)

The Governing Body resolved to approve the College's Safeguarding Young People & Vulnerable Adults (Child Protection) Policy.

09.62 Personnel Committee

Minutes of Meeting on 1 December 2009

The Clerk to the Governing Body presented a verbal report on the meeting, which was noted by the Governing Body. It was explained that two specific recommendations had been made both of which were on the present agenda.

09.63 2008/09 College Self Assessment Report

The Deputy Principal Quality Assurance & Support introduced the College's Self Assessment Report (SAR) for 2008/09, and explained the process that had been followed. It was explained that the Report had been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Governing Body Committee Chairs' Group held on 25 November 2009 together with the proposed Quality Improvement Plan. The document setting out the improvements required to move up a SAR grade for 2009/10 was also presented and it was noted that these actions had been agreed with Heads of Division as part of the self assessment validation meetings. The Deputy Principal QA&S then presented the individual grades awarded for each of the College's curriculum areas; service areas; and cross – college themes which were considered by Members before they went on to consider the overall cross – College grades that were being proposed.

(David Johnson joined the meeting at 5.40pm.)

Members noted the following key changes in the SAR that were being proposed when compared to the previous year's Report.

With curriculum areas, three had improved, none had gone down and the remainder had stayed the same. Six had been graded as outstanding.

With cross – college themes, three had improved and the remainder had stayed the same. All had been graded as outstanding or good.

With service areas, two had improved, one had dropped a grade and the remainder had stayed the same. Again, all had been graded as outstanding or good.

The Overall Effectiveness of the College had been graded good; Capacity to Improve had increased to outstanding; and Outcomes for Students, Quality of Provision and Leadership and Management had all been assessed as good.

The proposed grades for Safeguarding and Equality & Diversity were noted and it was explained that this was largely due to uncertainty surrounding the new inspection framework. Until further clarity was provided in this regard it was felt that the College needed to be prudent in its own assessment of these areas. It was noted that the College had successfully managed to bridge the gap in the performance of male and female students and this would be reflected in the Report. Further improvement in the success rates for Health & Social Care was also noted.

DPQA&S

Members then went on to consider the proposed Improvement Plan for 2009/10 together with the desired outcomes, for implementation by SMT.

SMT

The Governing Body resolved to approve the College's Self Assessment Report 2008/09, together with the Quality Improvement Plan for 2009/10.

09.64 Progress on Strategic Plan 2009/12

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report identifying the main progress to date with activities that supported the achievement of the College's strategic objectives. It was reported that at this stage progress was in line with the College's plans. Members commended staff on the format and clarity of the report.

The Governing Body resolved to note the report.

09.65 Equality & Diversity Annual Report 2009

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report providing an overview of the College's staff and student profiles relating to age, gender, ethnicity and disability, and how these had changed over the last four years. The report also identified the key areas of change to which the College would have to have regard going forward; and identified progress made during 2008/09 in terms of developing the College's Equality & Diversity Strategy; staff training; and involvement with the wider College community.

It was noted that there had been a continued improvement in the gender balance of learners. It was also noted that there had been a decrease in the number of students recorded with a disability, and the possible reasons behind this were considered. It was explained that this figure was related to the receipt of learning support benefits, and if a student fell outside the eligibility criteria for these benefits they wouldn't then feature in the LSC's statistics. Concern was expressed that this fluctuation may not represent a change in the actual number of students with a disability but rather in the way that they were assessed. The Deputy Principal QA&S undertook to clarify this position.

DPQA&S

(Bob Saynor joined the meeting at 5.55pm.)

The Governing Body resolved to approve the Equality & Diversity Annual Report 2008/09.

09.66 Student Success 2008/09

a) 16-19 Vocational (including 14-16)

The Assistant Principal 16 -19 A Level presented the report on student success with the College's vocational provision in 2008/09. The following key points were explained:

- There had been significant improvement on 16-18 success rates at all levels during 2008/09.
- A number of Divisions showed very good or outstanding success rates.
- NEETS provision had been very successful.

- Very good or outstanding Under 16s success rates.
- Some outstanding Value Added results and high grades for BTEC nationals.
- A number of Divisions had poor vocational success rates at some levels.
- Significant volumes of untimely achievements in some Divisions.
- Some poor Value Added results for BTEC Nationals.

Members considered these strengths and weaknesses, and further consideration was given to the other proposed actions to bring about improvement in the College's vocational provision where necessary.

The Governing Body resolved to note the report.

b) Adult Students; Higher Education; International Students

The Assistant Principal Lifelong Learning and HE presented the report and explained that with Adults outcomes for 2008/09 showed a continuation in improvements over previous years, and that this had been the result of targeted student support and closer attention to data accuracy. Given that the College's strategic objective was to have all lines in the top 25% of all colleges by the end of 2009/10, progress had still to be made on Long Level 1 and 2 provision. Current actions being taken in relation to further improvements included continued improvement of individual student tracking; ensuring students were on appropriate programmes; ensuring a range of support strategies were put into place to support achievement and success; and ensuring qualifications on offer matched student needs.

With regard to HE, it was reported that overall success rates had improved from 69% in 2007/08 to 72.3% in 2008/09. Retention for 2008/09 was 85% and achievement was at 89%, with an expectation this would improve due to some students re-submitting work due to mitigation. The areas where further actions were being undertaken were considered by the Committee.

It was reported that success rates for International students overall were high. This was due to high outcomes in both retention and achievement.

The main programme of study for international students was the International Foundation Programme (IFP) accredited by the University of York. Of the 43 who started the programme 40 had completed. This represented a 93% retention rate, a 100% achievement rate and an overall success rate of 93%. The areas with lower success rates were considered together with the measures being taken to try and bring about improvement.

The Governing Body resolved to note the report.

c) Employer Engagement

The Assistant Principal Employer Engagement presented the report showing the continuing improvement in Work Based Learning (WBL) and Train to Gain success rates for 2008/09.

In relation to WBL it was reported that there may be just one area - Health, Public Services and Care - which was below Minimum Level of Performance (MLP). This area was currently showing an overall success rate of 45.45%, against an MLP of 50% for "overall success".

In relation to Train to Gain the MLP was 65%, and projections for the year end showed that this would be met for all of the College's sector subject areas. It was noted that the success rate for the College's plumbing provision - acknowledged to be a very difficult qualification - was 100%. The College also received bonus payments for the first time from Construction Skills - the body which holds the contract for apprenticeships in this area. It was also explained that in spite of the College's improved success, it was anticipated that the national trend would show a decline in 2008/09.

Discussion took place about the decision that had been taken by the College to cease providing Health & Social Care Apprenticeship provision, the reasons behind this, the impact on potential students, and alternative provision that was being offered. Discussion also took place about the possible impact the current economic climate could have on the College's Construction Apprenticeship provision, and how to continue to attract potential new students to this area.

The Governing Body resolved to note the report.

09.67 Student Surveys 2008/09

On Programme/ End of Course

The Deputy Principal Quality Assurance & Support (QA&S) presented the report with the trend analysis showing how the College's satisfaction survey outcomes had improved over the last three years. Outcomes had been analysed by gender, age, mode of attendance, college brand, ethnicity and learning difficulty/disability. A set of recommendations had then been considered by the College's SMT and a resultant action plan produced which would be steered by the College's new Quality Manager. A "You said, we did" response to students had also been prepared.

It was noted that there had been a 64% response rate which was an improvement on the previous year. With the on-programme survey, all questions had showed increased satisfaction levels from 2007/08, and the most improved areas were the ones that had been the lowest rated in 2007/08. This was said to be due to improvement actions that had been taken although some further work was still needed. With the end of course survey, the responses

to ten out of eleven questions relating to Charter promises showed improvement and the responses to all questions relating to Facilities and Services showed significant improvement on the previous year.

It was acknowledged that overall the results were very positive and encouraging. The Deputy Principal QA&S reported that a round of Student Focus Groups was taking place, at which the survey findings were being discussed.

Discussion took place about one of the findings relating to the availability of computers at College. It was reported that three utilisation surveys had been carried out which had shown that at no time had there been 100% utilisation of all available computers in the Learning Centre. A further survey would be carried out this year. It was also noted that it was now possible for students to bring their own laptops in to College to work on. Members of staff at each level of the Learning Centre were also able to advise students where vacant computers were and monitor usage to ensure study-related activity was given priority. Discussion also took place about the responses relating to College transport and the reasons why, although satisfaction levels had improved, this was still a low-scoring area.

The Governing Body resolved to note the report.

09.68 Quality & Curriculum Committee

Minutes of Meeting on 11 November 2009

The Chair of the Quality & Curriculum Committee presented the minutes of the meeting, which were noted by the Governing Body. Particular reference was made to Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) and progress made with the York Working Group on the 14-19 Partnership and the proposed Common Application Process. Members stressed the need for this Working Group to come up quickly with strategies and plans to effect the required improvements in the availability and quality of IAG.

Reference was also made to the Governor Curriculum Link scheme; and to Internal Reviews that had been carried out. It was reported that the College was no longer offering new Diplomas at levels 1 or 2 but was continuing to offer them at level 3. The problems experienced with the new Diplomas at levels 1 and 2 were explained, and the differences with such provision being taught in schools were also noted.

09.69 Student Union President's Report

The Student Union President presented the report providing an overview of a recent meeting in London between two members of the Student Union Executive and two local MPs to discuss issues relating to HE student fees. It was stressed that the College's SMT must be consulted and their authority obtained by the Student Union **TH**

before any steps were taken towards inviting any prospective Parliamentary candidates to speak at the College.

The Governing Body resolved to note the report.

09.70 Finance & General Purposes Committee

a) Analysis of the 2008/09 Financial Performance

The Director of Finance presented the report providing different analyses of the College's financial performance in 2008/09, intended to assist Governors to interpret the financial information provided in the College's 2008/09 Financial Statements.

It was reported that the indicators confirmed that the College had achieved its financial objectives for 2008/09 and had been compliant with the financial covenants associated with the College's loan with Lloyds TSB.

The College's financial performance had also been broadly consistent with that forecast in the New College Project Final Capital Bid. Any variances were not considered to be significant.

The Governing Body resolved to note the report.

b) 2009/10 Year End Financial Forecast

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

c) 2009/10 Financial Objectives Progress Report

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

d) College Staff Pay Award 2009/10

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

e) LSC Financial Health Confirmation

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

f) Value For Money Policy

The Director of Finance presented the College's Value For Money Policy Statement which had been updated in light of a recent review of its content for relevance; consistency with good practice in the FE sector; and consideration at the most recent meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the College's revised Value For Money Policy.

f) Minutes of Meeting on 23 November 2009

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. Specific reference was made to the fact that the Committee had resolved that the New College Project loan should not be repaid during the 2009/10 academic year together with the reasoning behind this; to the fact that the Committee had resolved that the College should commence with a feasibility study to deliver more detailed proposals in relation to its future Property Strategy; and to the initial outcomes arising from the College's ongoing MIS Review.

09.71 Audit Committee

a) 2008/09 Financial Statements Audit Management Letter

The Director of Finance presented the report summarising the findings and recommendations of the College's 2008/09 Financial Statements Audit. It was noted that, subject to the approval of the accounts by the Governing Body, KPMG anticipated issuing an unqualified audit opinion for the year ended 31 July 2009. It was explained that KPMG were required to report all material misstatements that management had corrected in the financial statements, and it was noted that the overall effect of such adjustments had been to decrease the operating surplus and net assets by £164,000. KPMG had confirmed that there weren't any unadjusted audit differences to report.

Discussion took place in relation to the provisions of FRS 17 and the pension fund figures, and it was noted that the Audit Committee had already considered the Management Letter with approval.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the 2008/09 Financial Statements Audit Management Letter.

(David Marsh left the meeting at 7.00pm.)

b) 2008/09 Annual Internal Audit Report

The Director of Finance presented the report summarising the findings and conclusions of the work undertaken by Bentley Jennison as the College's internal audit service providers during 2008/09.

The annual opinion on internal audit assurance contained in the Annual Internal Audit Report stated:

"We are satisfied that sufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to allow us to draw a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of York College's arrangements." It continued by saying that for the 12 months ended 31 July 2009, based on the work undertaken, their opinion regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of York College's arrangements rated Governance, Risk Management and Control as "Green" (the highest level of assurance on a three point traffic light system).

Members noted that improvements had been made on the previous year and acknowledged that the report was very positive. Discussion also took place in relation to the College's grading as "risk defined" in relation to the Risk Maturity review that had recently been carried out by the College's internal auditors. "Risk defined" was the middle of five possible standards relating to the College's approach to risk management and was consistent with much of the FE sector.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the 2008/09 Annual Internal Audit Report.

c) 2008/09 Audit Committee Annual Report

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2008/09 which was considered by Members. It was explained that the report was a review of the Audit Committee's activity and the service of the internal and external auditors during the course of the year. It was noted that the report had been approved by the Audit Committee which had resolved that it should be presented to the Governing Body prior to the signing of the College's financial statements.

The Governing Body resolved to endorse the 2008/09 Audit Committee Annual Report.

d) 2008/09 Financial Management and Control Evaluation

The Director of Finance presented the report with the College's proposed FMCE return for 2009/10 which was considered by Members. It was explained that the College had opted to submit a Short FMCE return for 2009/10 as most of the information submitted in 2008/09 was still relevant and valid. It was noted that the FMCE had to be approved by the Governing Body and returned to the LSC by 31 December 2009. It was further noted that, as for the previous year, the College had assessed its overall grading for financial management and control to be "outstanding".

The Governing Body resolved to approve the College's FMCE return for 2009/10 for submission to the LSC.

DF

e) Minutes of Meeting on 24 November 2009

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented the minutes of the meeting, which were noted by the Governing Body.

09.72 Pure Business Solutions Limited

a) 2008/09 Financial Statements

The Director of Finance presented the report on the 2008/09 Financial Statements for Pure Business Solutions Limited, the College's wholly-owned subsidiary company. It was explained that these financial statements had been approved by the PBS Limited Board of Directors at the Company's Annual General Meeting on 23

November 2009. It was also noted that the Company's financial statements had been incorporated into the College's financial statements.

The Governing Body resolved to note the report on the 2008/09 Financial Statements for Pure Business Solutions Limited.

09.73 Risk Management

a) 2008/09 Risk Management Annual Report

The Director of Finance presented the report on the College's Risk Management activity during the 2008/09 financial year. It was noted that this report had been developed from the format recommended by the LSC. It provided a summary of activity in the year 2008/09 and conclusions reached to inform the Governing Body's decision to approve the statement of corporate governance and internal control in the College's 2008/09 financial statements. It was explained that the Audit Committee had considered the report at its meeting on 24 November 2009 and recommended the Governing Body to approve it.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the 2008/09 Risk Management Annual Report.

09.74 2008/09 Financial Statements

a) 2008/09 Members' Report and Financial Statements

The Director of Finance presented the report describing the College's financial performance in 2008/09, including the results of Pure Business Solutions Limited.

In summarising the financial performance of the College in the year to 31 July 2009, it was noted that the College had generated an operating surplus of £185,000. This was after one-off revenue expenditure of £230,000 associated with the College's property strategy. If this expenditure were excluded, the College would have achieved an operating surplus of £415,000. The College's operating surplus before all exceptional items and FRS 17 pension costs was £1,657,000.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the College's 2008/09 Members' Report and Financial Statements.

b) Letter of Representation to the Auditors

The Director of Finance explained that the College was required to provide the financial statements auditors with a Letter of Representation before the auditors' report could be finalised. The purpose of the letter was to provide reassurance to the financial statements auditor on a number of material accounting issues; potential breaches of law and regulations; fraud; and related party transactions. Members considered the proposed letter and noted that the Audit Committee had recommended the Governing Body to

approve it.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the Letter of Representation to the College's Financial Statements Auditors, and to authorise the Chair and Clerk to sign it on behalf of the Governing Body.

Chair/
Clerk

c) Re-appointment of Financial Statements and Regularity Auditors
The Director of Finance presented the report with a summary of the conclusions of the Audit Committee's review of KPMG's performance as the College's financial statements and regularity auditors in 2008/09.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the re-appointment of KPMG as the College's financial statements and regularity auditors for 2009/10.

DF

09.75 College HE Strategy

The Assistant Principal Lifelong Learning & HE presented the College's proposed Higher Education Strategy 2009/10. It was explained that the Strategy provided an overview of the main elements which had an influence on current and future higher education activity. The requirement to submit an HE Strategy applied to all FE colleges, whether directly or indirectly funded by HEFCE, and the Strategy had to be approved by the College's Governing Body before being submitted to HEFCE by 11 January 2010. It was explained that future HE funding was dependent on the College having a coherent Strategy like the one presented. It was also explained that the Strategy primarily comprised of various elements from existing documents, many of which had already been reviewed by Governors.

Members considered the Strategy and noted that it had already been considered with approval by the Quality & Curriculum Committee.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the College's Higher Education Strategy 2009/10, for submission to HEFCE.

APLL&HE

09.76 Governance Issues

a) Search & Governance Committee: Minutes of Meeting on 25 November 2009

The Chair of the Governing Body presented the minutes of the meeting which were noted by the Governing Body, paying particular attention to the specific recommendations for approval.

The Governing Body resolved to appoint Andrew Lindsay as a member of the Personnel Committee.

Clerk

b) Governance Self Assessment 2008/09 and 2009/10 Governance Improvement Plan

The Chair of the Governing Body explained the revised process that had been followed to date in relation to governance self assessment for 2008/09. Members then considered the Governance self assessment including key strengths and weaknesses that had been recommended for approval by the Self Assessment Working Group; Search & Governance Committee; and the Committee Chairs' Self Assessment Group. It was noted that an overall grade 2 (Good) was being proposed for Governance at the College. Members then considered the proposed Governance Improvement Plan for 2009/10.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the Governance Self Assessment for 2008/09, together with the Governance Improvement Plan for 2009/10.

c) Committee Terms of Reference

The Clerk presented the proposed Terms of Reference for the Audit and Personnel Committees which had been recommended by those respective Committees for approval by the Governing Body.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee and the Personnel Committee.

d) Remuneration Committee

The Chair of the Governing Body presented the report on the Governing Body's Remuneration Committee and its current membership and procedures.

It was reported that in the course of undertaking governance self assessment for 2008/09, it had become apparent that not all Governors were fully aware of the operation of the Remuneration Committee, and that some did not feel completely comfortable with it. The present position was that no Governors other than those on the Remuneration Committee were made aware of or approved the salary levels/ pay awards determined for designated senior post-holders or the Clerk at the College. This had raised concerns in relation to the effective discharge of their responsibilities and accountability.

It was reported that best practice suggested that the Governing Body should play a more active role in this process. Whilst the College's arrangements for carrying out appraisals/ performance reviews for senior post-holders were quite standard and not in contention, the limited extent to which the Governing Body participated in the determination of salary and pay award levels was unusual in the sector.

The Chair explained that it was proposed that in the interests of greater accountability and transparency, following such deliberations by the Remuneration Committee, it should provide the subsequent meeting of the Governing Body with a confidential report (whether verbal or written) setting out its recommendations for the proposed pay awards for the senior designated post-holders and Clerk. These recommendations should then be considered by the Governing Body (with all Staff and Student Members having withdrawn together with all other members of staff and the Clerk) and it would then be the Governing Body that would actually make the decision and determine the salary level/ pay award accordingly. The proceedings of this part of the meeting would be minuted as confidential and not generally circulated.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the proposed revisions to the operation of its Remuneration Committee; and that the Terms of Reference for the Remuneration Committee should be reviewed by the Search & Governance Committee to reflect the changes envisaged.

Clerk

09.77 Any Other Business

The Chair Of the Governing Body introduced a discussion about the possible future structure of governance arrangements/meetings at the College which had been discussed at the most recent Search & Governance Committee meeting. The Chair indicated that this was in response to perceived concerns about some Governors not being sufficiently involved across the full spectrum of the College's activities; the amount of time required at Governing Body meetings to deal with formal process and the consequent lack of time for debate; the need to ensure Governors focussed on strategy whilst retaining close scrutiny; the desire both to obtain the maximum contribution from all Governors (including Co-opted Committee members) and enable Governors to get the most out of their involvement with the College; and the extent to which interaction took place with the wider community. The Chair explained that this had led him to consider whether a more stream-lined governance model would be better. This might involve a cycle of ten Governing Body meetings per year whilst retaining the Audit, Remuneration and Search & Governance Committees. Most or all of the other sub-committees would be disbanded.

(Peter Burrows left the meeting at 7.45pm.)

The Chair stated that if this idea were pursued further, the next stage would be to obtain examples of meeting agendas and work plans from a college which had already adopted this approach. Members then engaged in a lengthy discussion about the possible benefits and disadvantages of moving to such a system. Key points raised included:

- Would it mean a greater time commitment by Governors and, if so, what would this be?
- Would such Governing Body meetings be unduly long and cumbersome?
- Would larger meetings (as opposed to smaller committee meetings) discourage some Governors from participating?
- Would this revised structure lead to a greater emphasis being placed on the quality of Teaching & Learning and the overall student experience?
- Concern that the removal of the Quality & Curriculum Committee could be detrimental to standards of performance.
- It would require a different approach to report writing and meeting discipline.
- Would it mean that issues were considered in less detail than they are currently at the committee level?
- Would it affect Governors' relationship with College staff?
- Would it significantly increase or decrease SMT workload?
- Much of what is considered at meetings is prescribed in any event (eg by the LSC, Ofsted, statute) and this would continue to be the case.
- Had similar arrangements been tested by Ofsted in inspection and what was Ofsted's view?

(David Maughan Brown left the meeting at 8.00pm.)

The Governing Body resolved that copies of meeting agendas and work plans from other colleges where such a governance model had already been adopted should be obtained for consideration at the next Search & Governance Committee meeting.

Clerk

09.78 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 23 March 2010 at 5.00pm.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

Richard Hinde
Clerk to the Governing Body

Signed (Chair):

Name

Date: