



**Minutes of the Employer & Skills Committee held on Thursday
30 April 2009 at 5.00pm in Room 3F099 York College**

Present: Jon Arundel
Alison Birkinshaw
Gillian Cruddas
David Johnson, Chair
Danny Morgan
Shaun Watts
Bill Woolley

In Attendance: Trevor Armer, Director of Finance
Richard Hinde, Clerk to the Governing Body
Kim Jones, PBS Limited Business Services Manager
Louise Lawrence-Crockford, Assistant Principal Employer
Engagement
John Short, Chair of York College Governing Body
Clare Wareing, Assistant Principal 14-19 Vocational

The meeting started at 5.15pm.

Action

09.11 Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Marcus Milner. It was noted that Alison Birkinshaw would be a little late joining the meeting. No declarations of interest were made.

09.12 Minutes of Meeting held on 22 January 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2009 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

09.13 Matters Arising

a) Action Summary Sheet

It was noted that all issues had either been actioned or were ongoing. In relation to the Committee's proposed Terms of Reference, it was reported that these had been referred to the most recent meeting of the Search & Governance Committee which had considered them with approval subject to amendment relating to the "Election of Chair". It had been agreed that, consistent with all other Committees, the appointment of Chair would be determined and reviewed by the Search & Governance Committee itself.

b) Transitional Arrangements: Full Cost Training and Commercial Activities

The Director of Finance presented the report proposing that the Committee take responsibility for the strategic development of the College's full cost training and commercial activities from 1 August 2009.

It was reported that at the College's Governing Body Meeting on 26 March 2009, in principle support had been given for proposed changes to the administrative structures associated with the College's full cost training and commercial activity. These changes would result in the administration of this activity taking place within the College itself rather than Pure Business Solutions Limited (the Company) from 1 August 2009.

It was explained that this decision had two immediate consequences: Firstly, a series of administrative and financial changes would need to be implemented to effect the transfer of these activities from the Company to the College. Secondly, the strategic development of the full cost training and other commercial activity within the College would need to be progressed in 2009/10 and beyond as a part of the College's 2009/12 Strategic Plan.

The Committee considered the College's governance arrangements in light of this proposed change and it was **agreed** that the College's Finance and General Purposes Committee should take responsibility for overseeing the administrative and financial aspects of the approved change. It was also **agreed** that the Employer and Skills Committee should take responsibility for overseeing the development of full cost training and other commercial activity as a part of its overall responsibility for the development of employer engagement activity at the College.

09.14 Assistant Principal's Report – Including Learner Success and Recruitment: WBL; TtG

The Assistant Principal Employer Engagement presented the report providing an overview of activity and highlighting key issues relating to the current 2008/09 year.

It was reported that further discussions regarding the future of Pure Business Solutions had been conducted and, following the recommendation of the College's Governing Body, a timeline had been developed to inform the recommended closure of the Company, which still had to be validated by the Company's Board. A differentiated marketing strategy was being developed including all employer responsive provision under one publication. It was likely that a high-profile launch for this would take place at the beginning of the 2009/10 academic year.

It was reported that the re-structure of the Business Unit would be finalised by July 2009. The Business Development Manager was now in post with interviews for both the QA Manager and Sales staff conducted in April.

Recruitment of apprentices had not reached contracted numbers. It was explained that this was unsurprising with the present economic climate as the largest area for apprenticeships in the College was

construction trades. Increased levels of 19+ Apprentices had been retained. Overall success rate projection showed a 3% improvement on 2007/08.

Train to Gain recruitment was on target. The projected overall success rate was 91%. The LSC were under financial pressure in the area of Train to Gain and had indicated that any delivery over Maximum Contract Value was unlikely to be funded. Close monitoring of the funding allocation in this area was being undertaken by the College. It was explained that the College was currently providing about £200,000 of training for which it was now unlikely to be paid in the normal course. The College was therefore looking at measures that could be implemented to try and ensure that it would receive payment for this provision.

Discussion then took place about the problem faced by the College in terms of employers wanting training to be provided but the College not being able to provide it because of a lack of Train to Gain funding. The College was devising alternative strategies to try and ensure that this interest was not lost and to try and secure alternative funding streams. The College was maintaining a record of employers that it had been able to assist in these circumstances and those that it had had to turn away.

The College's 2009/10 funding allocation had been received on 7 April 2009. Apprenticeship funding was above the initial 2009/10 budget planning, however Train to Gain was below. The 2009/10 allocation for Train to Gain was £671,375 whereas the College had been hoping for an allocation of approximately £1million. It was anticipated that the College would have a shortfall in its income of approximately £330,000 which would need to be covered by cost-savings.

The Quality Training Standard application had been submitted with an expected assessment date in May or June 2009.

The Brokerage Service had now moved over to Business Link. The Brokerage Service had been very successful and a letter from the Principal thanking the staff for their work in this area had been sent.

PBS Ltd had engaged with 69 companies to March 2009, resulting in 263 delegates enrolling on commercial courses. Westinghouse Rail had requested utilisation of the Yorkshire Rail Academy (YRA) and Track from April to November 2009 at a cost of £36,600. Westinghouse Rail had also improved the College's signalling equipment.

(It was agreed to defer agenda item 5 until later in the meeting.)

09.15 Self Assessment Report – Progress Update: Employer Engagement/TtG/WBL Extracts

The Assistant Principal Employer Engagement presented the report outlining the Employer Engagement sections of the current Self Assessment Report Quality Improvement Plan and updating on progress. It was noted that everything was on course save for the extension of the Observation of Teaching & Learning process to work-based assessment. However, it was explained that there was an observation/verification process by assessors at employers' premises. Further work also remained to be done in relation to embedding the "learner voice" in this area of the College's provision.

09.16 Employer Engagement Sections of College's 2008/11 Strategic Plan – Progress Update

The Assistant Principal Employer Engagement presented the report outlining the sections of the College's current Strategic Plan relevant to Employer Engagement, together with an update on progress to date which was considered by Members.

09.17 Employer Engagement Strategy

Members had been provided with the College's draft Employer Engagement Strategy, and the Chair of the Governing Body introduced the item and circulated draft Employer Engagement objectives for the College for discussion.

(Alison Birkinshaw joined the meeting at 6.05pm.)

Detailed discussion took place about the College's aims and motives in developing its Employer Engagement provision and how these could best be achieved. The College's Mission Statement, financial issues, quality of provision, competitors and Government drivers were all considered in this context. It was felt that it would be appropriate for comprehensive market analysis to be carried out to help inform the debate. It was **agreed** that further work on the Strategy should be carried out and presented to Governors for further discussion at their development event on 8 and 9 May 2009.

LLC

09.18 Any Other Business

None.

09.19 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 18 June 2009 at 4.30pm.

The meeting ended at 7.00pm.

Signed (Chair):.....

Name:.....**Date:**.....