



**Minutes of the Employer & Skills Committee held on Wednesday
3 November 2010 at 5.30pm in Ashfields Restaurant, York College**

- Present:** Alison Birkinshaw, Principal
David Johnson, Governor
Michael Proctor, Governor
Shaun Watts, Co-opted Committee Member
Bill Woolley, Governor
- In Attendance:** Helen Ashby, National Railway Museum
Chris Birch, William Birch & Sons Ltd
Leigh Briggs, HSBC
Brian DeVere, Yorkshire Bank
Richard Frogson, Rollits
Sam Garside, Student Governor
Anj Handa, Leeds, York & North Yorkshire Chamber of
Commerce
Richard Hinde, Clerk to the Governing Body
Sue Hirst, Employer Engagement (QA) Manager
Alastair Jackson, ARUP
Louise Lawrence-Crockford, Assistant Principal Employer
Engagement
Tony Lee, York Racecourse
Andy Mendus, Governor
Steve Ollis, Nestle UK Ltd
Reg Rudd, Doosan Babcock Energy
Tom Sharp, Stone Soup
Nick Sheppard, Langleys Solicitors
John Short, Chair of York College Governing Body
John Skelton, J Skelton Garage Services
Dave Tabron, Business Development Manager
Ian Tempest, Visit York
Rebecca Thompson, York Minster
Richard Vining, Shepherds
Simon Williamson, Federation of Small Businesses
John Yeomans, York Professionals

The meeting started at 5.30pm.

Action

- 10.15 Welcome to the College**
The Principal welcomed delegates to the meeting, explained the aims of the evening and provided an overview of York College. College Governors and members of staff were introduced.
- 10.16 Introduction to Employer Engagement at York College**
Louise Lawrence-Crockford, Assistant Principal Employer Engagement, presented an introduction to Employer Engagement

at York College. The presentation focused on what the College did; the key business sectors and organisations the College worked with; College success rates; and key strategic developments at the College. The Assistant Principal then went on to outline the potential business benefits of employers engaging with the College together with proposed areas for development which might require employers' support. The Assistant Principal then handed over to Steve Ollis, Technical Trainer at Nestle UK Ltd which had a long history of employer engagement with the College. Mr Ollis gave a presentation explaining the relationship between the Company and the College; the projects undertaken; and the benefits derived by Nestle and students.

10.17 Delegates' Consultation and Feedback

Delegates were given the opportunity of a round table discussion to consider whether the College was doing the right thing, and what improvements could be made. This was followed by a feedback session, the results of which are recorded in Appendix 1.

10.18 Local Enterprise Partnerships

Bill Woolley, Director of City Strategy and Deputy Chief Executive of City of York Council gave a presentation on the current position relating to Local Enterprise Partnerships and how they could impact on York, the wider region and business.

10.19 Comprehensive Spending Review and the Future

Louise Lawrence-Crockford, Assistant Principal Employer Engagement gave a presentation on the Common Spending Review; what this could mean for students, employers and learning in the future; and what measures could be taken in readiness for the anticipated impacts. Delegates were also referred to information about the role of the Co-opted Committee Member at York College and invited to complete the form provided if they were interested in becoming a Co-opted Committee Member of the Employer & Skills Committee.

10.20 Delegates' Consultation and Feedback

Delegates were given the opportunity of a round table discussion over dinner to consider in what ways the College and employers could prepare for the impact of the Common Spending Review, the results of which are recorded in Appendix 2.

The meeting and dinner ended at 8.45pm.

Signed (Chair):.....

Name:.....

Date:.....

APPENDIX 1:

- Perception of the lack of apparent commitment to Equality & Diversity (E&D)/ inclusivity within College literature, particularly in relation to those with learning difficulties. Provision of basic training courses in this regard by the College could prove lucrative and would emphasise the College's commitment to such issues.
- The importance of offering bespoke courses for large employers and the need to offer more generic stuff for small businesses in hospitality and tourism.
- The need to offer clear and independent Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to Employers (as well as to students).
- The importance of replacing entities like Business Link with clear signposting. The College has a key role to play to ensure that it aligns itself with the appropriate new bodies and systems to ensure it gets its messages across.
- The need for clarity and employer focus on the College's website and literature - emphasising the basic values and features of the College which those whom know the College take for granted.
- The patchy perception of the College as an employer-friendly organisation. There are many and varied contacts with Heads of Divisions, tutors, and managers across the College, and there was a feeling that the College was not coordinating, managing and exploiting these in an effective way.
- Surprise at the extensive range and scope of the College's offer and facilities.
- The College did not make enough of its skilled and experienced staff when promoting the College.
- Employers were seeking students with a better understanding of the world of work and what business was about, together with the core generic skills necessary to succeed. There is scope for the College to do more in this regard.
- Serious concern was expressed that a decision as to whether a course was going to be day release or block release was not taken until the day before the course started. These types of decisions should be taken before such courses are advertised.
- Not enough regular feedback on apprenticeship performance and issues.
- Every course should have a module explaining that business is about making money.
- Work placements were very useful.
- Need to understand what business needs and offer those courses.
- HE may not be in the contemplation of young people.
- Clarity with framework fees was required.
- Subject-related events should be held for students and employers. Employers could deliver sessions for students. Employers could act as guest speakers on particular issues.
- Talks should be provided to groups of students regarding their options in employment.

- As a community, we should celebrate our young people.
- College leavers don't always have the skills sets required by industry.
- More flexibility is required regarding providing training during typical holiday periods.
- Apprenticeships should suit employers' requirements rather than the College's term times.
- The College needs to engender the correct attitude to work/ values in its students, as some employers recruit on the basis of attitude rather than actual skills.
- It is correct that the College should promote student success but it's also important for the College to highlight good employer relationships.
- The way the College communicates its offer is crucial, including the College's flexibility in providing bespoke training. It is felt that this communication could and should be improved to ensure more people are aware of what the College has to offer. If this was done, employers would be much stronger in their support for the College.
- Lack of awareness that the College had such great facilities that were open to the public or available for hire.

APPENDIX 2:

- Few employers viewed funding changes as a critical issue. Instead the emphasis was on the College providing a good (often bespoke and flexible) product that employers would be willing to pay for.
- *Opportunity for the College: Customer Service*, short course with qualification:
 - targeted at all York hospitality, tourist and retail businesses (and then North Yorkshire etc).
 - to ensure all visitors to York are welcomed and well treated wherever they go by people who are friendly, keen to help and knowledgeable about the business they work in and the city.
 - work with Visit York to set up and market as a major effort to support the development of the city's tourist business under the York College and Visit York brands.
 - start with a course for the City's hospitality and leisure CEOs.
- *Opportunity for the College: Commercial Courses*: A range of basic generic courses for businesses to get their teams trained in areas such as:
 - basic IT (word, excel, database management, publisher etc.)
 - first aid, health and safety, hygiene, equality and diversity, health and well being.
 - how to respond to public sector tenders (for example how to put in place the necessary infrastructure of policies etc required and how to fill in the forms.)
- *Opportunity for College: Courses targeted at specific sectors that can be readily tailored to meet the particular needs of an individual business*:
 - technician training for businesses based at Science City.
 - multiskilling; training electricians to do mechanical work and vice-versa.
- Increased use of evenings to provide training/ courses.

- *Opportunity for College:* National Rail Academy: Network rail are reportedly looking to set up a national training centre in York (linked to them taking a lot of work previously contracted out, back in house).
- *Opportunity for College:* Heritage Skills Construction Certificate: Apparently English Heritage is requiring (or about to require) this of people working on their projects. (This may be quite wide as it could apply to projects they have to approve as well as those they fund). Essentially this includes “heritage biblical crafts”.
- Is there an opportunity for apprenticeships in more specialist construction disciplines – for example stained glass?
- The York local authority may be particularly interested in the Customer Service courses and in the multi-skilling work the College has done (bespoke courses?).
- More needs to be done in terms of promoting room hire at the College.
- Support for new businesses: Mentoring support is seen as vital to the success of new businesses (including university spin-outs or trades starting setting up on their own account).
- Is there an opportunity for a city-wide approach pulling together the various schemes already operating into something more cohesive and effective (more penetration, better quality, more efficient?).
- Employers realise that funding is very tight and they expect to pay for more than they might have done in the past. Nevertheless they see using the College as a good way of accessing any funding that might be available.
- The Federation of Small Business may well be a good route to market providing a data base for direct marketing and endorsement as well as ideas for courses.
- One company had sought the College’s advice when recruiting. They had been unable to find a student with one year (of a 2 year course) completed who had the specific skills they were looking for. A College student was found who completed their studies and worked for the company. It was suggested that the College could do more to help companies match their skills needs with students.
- Provision of a “supervisory” course to include communications; dealing with and managing people; attitude; and values.
- Does the Boys Brigade offer an opportunity – 16-18 students?
- Basic business training should be provided (including profit and loss etc).
- Continue dialogue with employers.
- Consider presenting to York Business Forum.
- The College should be a focal point for an employer group and facilitate wider forums.
- Be more pro-active in putting deals together; acting as a hub; and generating links.
- Create a virtual notice board for York businesses and student communication.
- Businesses will pay for essential training from the most economical provider.
- *Opportunity for College:* College should consider providing CIPD qualification (a regular cycle of demand from prospective students).
- There is a shortage of skilled welders.

- *Opportunity for College*: the provision of a general “house-keeping” course for the tourism sector.
- Important to maintain closer links with College leavers who have left and set up their own businesses: opportunity to mentor; good role models; opportunities for placements; good marketing opportunity; guest speakers?