

**Minutes of the Employer & Skills Committee held on Thursday  
31 March 2011 at 5.30pm in Room 2F098, York College**

**Present:** Jon Arundel, Co-opted Committee Member  
Alison Birkinshaw, Principal  
David Johnson, Governor  
Bill Woolley, Governor

**In Attendance:** Richard Frogson, Rollits LLP  
Richard Hinde, Clerk to the Governing Body  
Louise Lawrence-Crockford, Assistant Principal Employer  
Engagement  
John Short, Chair of York College Governing Body  
Dave Tabron, Business Development Manager

The meeting started at 5.45pm.

**Action**

**11.01 Item 1: Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest**  
Apologies were received from Chris Birch, Brian de Vere, Reg  
Rudd and Simon Williams. There were no declarations of interest.

**11.02 Item 2: Minutes of Meeting held on 3 November 2010 and  
Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2010 were  
approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair. The  
following were noted as matters arising:

- The Assistant Principal Employer Engagement reported that she had met with Network Rail on 10 March 2011 and discussion had taken place in relation to a possible joint venture. Discussion had also taken place about the National Rail Academy and a potential partnership arrangement with Network Rail.
- The Principal reported that many issues arising from the November consultation event had been taken forward including reviewing the curriculum and qualifications offered, and involvement with the Boys' Brigade.
- In relation to hospitality and retail training, it was reported that there was already a regional retail training provider operating from York with whom the College did not have a close relationship. This provider achieved good results and there was insufficient capacity in the market to justify the College recruiting staff and setting up in competition with this specialist provider.

**11.03 Employer & Skills Committee: The Way Forward?**

The Principal presented the report giving the context for the review of the operations of the Employer and Skills Committee. It was suggested that Members might wish to consider the future of the

Committee and whether an advisory body might be more appropriate. Consideration was given to whether the Committee should remain and, if so, whether meetings should be restructured to three a year (with increased membership) with well defined agendas to improve the opportunities employers had to influence the strategic direction of the College.

Detailed discussion took place in relation to the future of the Committee; its structure; meeting format; membership; and purpose. Reference was made to the York Business Forum and its business model. It was also queried whether it would be beneficial for the College to present to the Forum. Expanded use of the College's employer newsletter was also considered.

It was acknowledged that there was a need for the College to gain views/ intelligence from employers, and then use this information to influence its strategy and offer to employers. Consideration was given to the best way of engaging with employers in this regard. Governors were anxious to add value to the process; and events had to be sufficiently attractive and relevant to attract employers in the first instance. The College's existing internal employer engagement groups were also considered, and it was acknowledged that they too had a key role to play in liaising with employers and gathering and disseminating information.

***The Employer & Skills Committee resolved to note the report and agreed that, in light of the discussion at the meeting, a further proposal on the future of the Employer & Skills Committee should be produced for distribution to Members (attached at Appendix 1).***

Principal/  
Clerk

#### **11.04 Committee Terms of Reference and Membership**

The Clerk to the Governing Body presented the report and the current Terms of Reference for the Committee. It was explained that these Terms of Reference were last reviewed and approved by the Governing Body on 15 July 2010. In view of the discussion that had taken place in relation to agenda item 3, Members were requested to review the Terms of Reference to ensure that they reflected any proposed changes to the functions of the Committee, regulatory requirements and best practice. Reference was also given to the Committee's Schedule of Business for the remainder of 2010/11 and for 2011/12 in light of the ongoing discussions. It was acknowledged that, in view of the previous discussion, the Terms of Reference were fit for purpose and did not require further amendment.

***The Employer & Skills Committee resolved to endorse the current Terms of Reference for the Committee.***

**11.05 “Challenging Times” (presentation by Assistant Principal Employer Engagement)**

The Assistant Principal Employer Engagement gave a presentation on the College’s employer engagement provision in the context of the challenging times currently facing the sector. Explanation was provided in relation to the level of employer engagement activity at the College; success rates which overall had increased by 20%; the level of income generated; Apprenticeships; Train to Gain; self-finance commercial activity; new courses offered; actions undertaken since the November consultation; and current funding implications.

(Jon Arundel and Bill Woolley left the meeting at 7.00pm).

Further discussion took place in light of the presentation, in relation to agreeing the way forward for the Committee, and the proposal to be produced and circulated to Members.

***The Employer & Skills Committee resolved to note the report.***

**11.06 Any Other Business**

None

**11.07 Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 16 June 2011 at 5.30pm.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm.

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

**Name:**.....

**Date:**.....

## **APPENDIX 1:**

### **PROPOSALS RE EMPLOYER AND SKILLS COMMITTEE**

1. The Committee should be structured as an oversight committee with Governor and Co-opted membership only. Those coming forward from the November consultation should be asked whether they might wish to become Co-optees. The Committee should have the stated remit (in existing Terms of Reference), and receive relevant and agreed papers (the nature of which would need to be agreed, and might involve summary presentations). Co-opted Members would not be able to out-vote Governors. Whilst this Committee would not involve itself in actual employer consultation, Committee members might become involved in the consultation events outlined below.

2. A structure is put in place to:

- (i) Keep employers informed of the College's activities and strategy etc (Employer newsletter, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook etc).
- (ii) Facilitate general consultation (a yearly employers' dinner) including those employers already linked with the College.
- (iii) Facilitate sectoral-specific or themed employer activities involving Heads of Divisions and curriculum staff.

This information would then be used to feed strategy and operational activities via the College's Employer Engagement Strategy Group, and the Governor committee. An annual timetable would be set out to give visibility of the activities organised and relevant Governors will be invited.