

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the College Corporation held on Thursday 4 December 2008 at 7.00 pm

Present: Mr C Wiper (Chairman)
Mrs S Barnes
Mr T Fisher
Miss J Grundy
Mr M Ithurralde
Cllr E Lister
Mrs L Lyle
Mr J Ramsden
Mr M Shaw
Mr D Warman
Mr N Waterfall-Brown
Mr A Wilson

In Attendance: Mrs J Barker
Mrs A Blackburn
Dr S D Hunnisett
Mr T M Loftus
Mr G Brookes (Clerk)

08/87 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs H Barron, Mr P Davison, Mrs G Laws, Mr C McCain, Prof L Oglesby, and Ms S Robinson and were **accepted** by the Board.

Mr Wiper thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated that, because of the inclement weather, some items would be postponed or curtailed, where appropriate, to shorten the meeting.

08/88 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 September 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2008 were **accepted** as a true record by the Board and were signed by the Chairman.

08/89 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

08/90 Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 20 October 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2008 were **accepted** as a true record by the Board and were signed by the Chairman.

08/91 Matters Arising

Mr Wiper confirmed that Mr Barker had accepted the post of Assistant Principal (Quality and Assessment) and would start in January 2009.

08/92 Outstanding References

There were no outstanding references.

08/93 Urgent Business

No urgent business was raised.

08/94 Publications Distributed since the Last Meeting.

Mr Brookes referred to the QE Newsletter which had been issued with the agenda.

08/95 Governor Training – Value Added Measures
It was agreed that this item could be postponed.

Action Mr Fisher

08/96 Committee Reports

96.1 Finance and Resources Committee

Mr Wiper reported verbally on the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2008 and pointed out that most items were to be covered later at this meeting.

96.2 Audit Committee

Copies of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2008 were issued to Members and then referred to by Mr Waterfall-Brown. He pointed out in particular the good annual reports from the auditors and also, at Ref 43.1, the recommendation that Mrs E Lyle be appointed as Chair of the Audit Committee with effect from 1 January 2009.

The Board **accepted** the report and the minutes of the meeting and **approved** the appointment of Mrs E Lyle as Chair of the Audit Committee from 1 January 2009. Mr Wiper thanked Mr Waterfall-Brown for acting as the Chairman of the Committee for the past year and thanked Mrs Lyle for agreeing to the appointment as Chair.

96.3 Student Committee

In the absence of Mr Davison, Mr Fisher referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2008 and stated how successful it had been. He pointed out that the Student Activities Report and the aims of the Student Association would be presented in full later in the agenda.

The Board **accepted** the report and the minutes of the meeting.

96.4 Remuneration Committee

Mr Wiper referred to the minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 17 November 2008. Mr Brookes pointed out amendments which were to be made in Refs 08/07.4 and 08/08 with respect to the salaries for Mr Loftus and Mrs Wilson. In each case the figure £53,571 should read £53,871.

The Board **accepted** the report.

96.5 Curriculum and Standards Committee

Cllr Lister referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2008 and in particular expressed her gratitude for the contribution Mrs Barker had made in her short time on the Committee. She also welcomed the inclusion of the two Student Members of the Corporation and the benefits which had resulted from their presence.

The Board **accepted** the report and the minutes of the meeting.

08/97 Strategic Update

97.1 Mr Fisher referred to the documents provided to inform members about the developing picture regarding: Machinery of Government Changes; Tees Valley Delivery Group for 14-19 changes; and the next steps in 14-19 reform nationally.

97.2 Machinery of Government

97.2.1 The SFCF newsletter (issue no 1) on the subjects covered:

1. Government Intentions
2. Sixth Form College Designation
3. Other colleges designated as SFCs

4. Young Peoples' Learning Agency (YPLA)
5. Commissioning Process
6. Performance Management
7. Next newsletter.

97.2.2 Mr Fisher pointed out in particular that the next two years will be crucial since significant changes in operation and funding will emerge and that the Board will have to decide if QE is to remain as a Sixth Form College within a newly-created Sixth Form College sector.

97.3 Tees Valley Statement of Intent

Mr Fisher outlined the main points raised in a proposal submitted on behalf of the five local authorities areas of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland which would be known as the Tees Valley City Region. If this proposal is accepted the next stage will be to produce a more comprehensive proposal for the region. It is expected that the position will be clearer by the next Board meeting.

97.4 Delivering 14-19 Reform: Next Steps

Mr Fisher referred to a summary of the DCSF publication (DSS 08/09(13)) which covered: The Entitlement; Learning Route for all; Support of all Young People; Collaboration; and Local Delivery System and Support.

97.5 After discussion it was **agreed** that:

- a. 'Strategic Update' should be a permanent item on the agenda.

Action Mr Brookes

- b. A sub-committee may need to be formed in due course to deal with this subject.

Action Board Members

The Board **accepted** the report.

08/98 College Mission and Strategic Objectives 2009-2014

Mr Fisher pointed out that the College Mission and Strategic Objectives 2009-14 are now due and sought the Board's approval to present a draft to the full Board in March 2009 at which stage any input from Members could be included.

Action Mr Fisher

The Board **approved** the proposal.

08/99 College Performance Reports

99.1 KPI 2008 Report: Student Numbers

Dr Hunnisett referred to the report covering enrolments and average class sizes for 2008-09 and pointed out in particular:

- a. The student numbers are healthy (total 2271) with daytime 16-18 numbers and adult numbers higher than last year.
- b. Yr 1 numbers (991) are lower than expectation (1056) and this may give an opportunity to control numbers during the building project period.
- c. Class sizes on AS courses have fallen whilst those for A2 have increased. Overall the resources are used very efficiently.

The Board **accepted** the report.

99.2 KPI 2008 Report: Views of Year 2 Students (ALIS)

Mrs Barker referred to the report on Yr 2 students' Views (Summer Entry 2008) and in particular to:

- a. The pleasing responses to the questions on each of the following sections:
Attitude to Induction; Attitude to Subjects; Resources of the institution; Pastoral Care, Guidance and Counselling.

- b. New improvement targets and action plans for each section.

The Board **accepted** this very good report.

99.3 KPI 2008 Data: Summary of Subject Performance

99.3.1 Mrs Barker referred to the Student Achievement Summary for 2008 and explained the significance of each column. She pointed out the newly-included data on 'Views of Subjects' and the QE targets for this year and next year and grades this year (4 grade 1 and one grade 2).

99.3.2 Mr Waterfall-Brown suggested that in addition to the table provided in alphabetical order it would be useful to group subjects to show those performing above expectation and those performing below expectation and ranked in order. It was agreed that this could be explored.

Action Mr Fisher

The Board **accepted** the report.

99.4 KPI 2008 Report: Views of Partner Schools

99.4. Mrs Barker referred to the Views of Partner Schools report 2008 based on the responses of 10 of the 14 approached. They show that the College has excellent relations with the schools, with average scores of over 4 in all questions and a performance Grade 1 which is outstanding.

99.4.2 Points raised included presenting the information on the website in a series of bullet points, rather than full text, may be more useful. Mrs Blackburn agreed to discuss this with the Student Association.

Action Mrs Blackburn

The Board **accepted** the report.

99.5 KPI 2008 Report: Views of Staff

99.5.1 Mrs Barker referred to the Views of Staff Report, June 2008. The average score for the 40 questions was 3.95 representing an 'agree' across all the staff who responded (132) with the lowest score (3.19) still representing agreement.

99.5.2 Mrs Barker outlined the changes to the 2006 views and the improvement targets and action plan for 2008.

99.5.3 Points raised in discussion included:

- a. The staff feel valued with a clear progression ladder for teaching staff. However, the opportunity for support staff to progress is more difficult to achieve because of the variety of duties they perform and the specialist skills they use.
- b. The Chairman and the Principal were pleased to note the views of staff.

The Board **accepted** the report.

99.6 Student Activities Report

In the absence of Mr Job, Mrs Blackburn referred to the Student Activities Report October 2008 and stated that, as usual, the range and number of extra curricular activities was remarkable considering the pressures on students between May and October.

The Board **accepted** the report.

99.7 Aims of the Student Association

99.7.1 In the absence of Mr Davison, Mrs Blackburn referred to the Aims of the Student Association which had been presented to the Student Committee (at Mr Davison's request) in November. Justin Ramsden and Jessica Grundy outlined the five aims.

99.7.2 Mr Wiper expressed his gratitude for such an impressive report.

The Board **accepted** the report.

08/100 Capital Project

100.1 Mr Fisher summarised the progress to date on the capital project which is being overseen by the Finance and Resources Committee. The feasibility study is complete and approval in principle of the sale of local authority land had been given by Darlington Borough Council on 2 December 2008. The College should now move to RIBA Stage C design and this will need LSC approval.

100.2 Mr Fisher referred to the LSC Project Description paper and in particular to the key dates, scheme details and requirements. He pointed out that the commencement of Stage C design would now be January 2009 and not December 2008. Also, that AA projects were to be retained.

100.3 Mr Fisher stated that the Finance and Resources Committee had approved, subject to LSC's approval, costs of the order of £200k-£300k to proceed to Stage C design, half of which would be funded by the LSC. Also, that there would be risks involved should there be any changes in government policy, the local authority consideration or funding constraints/policy. He proposed that the Board give approval to proceeding with the project as outlined and for the Finance and Resources Committee to continue to monitor its progress.

The Board **approved** the proposal.

Action Mr Wiper/Mr Fisher

100.4 Mr Fisher informed the Board that the College has its full complement of students and the application rate continues to be high. It is not proposed that the College increases the number of students it enrolls for 2009/10. It was proposed that the College should review its admissions policy and present a report to the Board meeting in March 2009.

The Board **approved** the proposal.

Action Mr Fisher

08/101 Personnel Reports

101.1 Staff Salaries 2008/9

Mr Fisher referred to the Staff Salaries report dated October 2008 and effective from 1 September 2008. The increases were 2.45% (except for Support Staff points 8 and 9 (3.6%)) and the overall amount was within the figure in the budget approved by the Board.

101.2 Personnel Report.

Mr Fisher referred to the Personnel Report dated 10 November 2008 which covered new appointments (7), leavers (2) and other staffing news.

The Board **accepted** the report.

08/102 Finance Reports

102.1 Internal Auditor's Annual Report for 2007-08

102.1.1 Mr Waterfall-Brown referred to the BJ report for the year ended 31 July 2008 which had been considered by the Audit Committee and recommended to the Board for approval. He pointed out in particular:

- a. The audit opinion (Section 3.1) which states: "the College has adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes to manage the achievement of the organisation's objectives."
- b. The operational assurances for the policies, procedures and operations reviewed (7) were all good. (Section 4.2).
- c. The summary of Conclusions and Recommendations in which the overall opinions on the six audited assignments were 'substantial' 5 and 'good' 1.

102.1.2 Mr Waterfall-Brown expressed his gratitude to the SMG and in particular Mr Loftus and his team for all the hard work involved. Mr Wiper thanked the Audit Committee for the outstanding report.

The Board **approved** the Internal Auditor's Report for 2007-08.

102.2 Financial Statements Audit: Management Letter for 2007-08

Mr Waterfall-Brown referred to the KPMG Audit Highlights Memorandum and Management letter dated 29 October 2008 which was in a different format to those of previous years. He pointed out in particular:

- a. In section 4 KPMG state that there were no observations to make with respect to their audit work and regularity audit.
- b. Matters for future consideration (Section 5) including developments in funding arrangements and new sector initiatives.
- c. The Framework for Excellence (Section 5) which Mr Loftus reported is being carried out by the College in a pilot scheme.
- d. The Audit difference referred to in Section 3 and Appendix 1 and which was explained by Mr Loftus.

The Board **approved** the Financial Statements Audit Highlights Memorandum and Management letter (dated 19 October 2008) for the year ended 31 July 2008.

102.3 Financial Statements Audit: Teachers' Pensions Letter

Mr Loftus referred to the KPMG letter dated 4 October 2008 entitled: "Opinion on Contributions made to Capita Teachers' Pensions by QESFC " in which the auditors consider that the relevant contributions for the year ended 31 March 2008 have been paid in accordance with the rules.

The Board **accepted** the report.

102.4 Risk Management: Annual Report for 2007-08

Mr Loftus referred to the Risk Management Report for 2007-08 and in particular to:

- a. Para 1.3 which gives the SMG's assurance that the process employed discharges the Corporation's duties.

- b. Section 3 in which the activities carried out during the year were considered.
- c. In Section 4 the action plan for 2008/09

The Board **approved** the Risk Management Report for 2007-08

102.5 Finance Statements Audit: Management Representation Letter

Mr Loftus referred to the KPMG letter dated 4 December 2008. He pointed out that this is the normal type of letter raised at this time of the year. The Audit Committee had considered the letter and recommended that it be approved by the Board and signed by the Chairman and the Principal.

The Board **approved** the letter.

102.6 Re-Appointment of Auditors

Mr Waterfall-Brown reported that the Audit Committee considered that the auditors had provided satisfactory service throughout the past year and recommended that the Board gave approval for their re-appointment namely:

- a. KPMG as the Financial Statements and Regularity Auditors.
- b. Bentley Jennison as the Internal Auditors.

The Board **approved** the re-appointment of both auditors.

102.7 Annual Report and Financial Statements for Year ending 31 July 2008

Mr Loftus referred to the Annual Report and Financial Statements for Year ending 31 July 2008 which had been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee and the Audit Committee and recommended by both for approval by the Board. He pointed out in particular:

- a. The narrative pages (2 to 8) containing the Members' report. Any amendments or additions the Members may have could be included at this stage but none were proposed.
- b. The requirement that the Chairman and Principal are to sign pages 9, 15 and 16 as indicated.
- c. The figures on page 19 onwards have been audited and cannot be changed. They are the same as those already presented to the Board except for a change to the historical cost surplus (from £650k to £730k). Mr Loftus explained the reasons for the change.

The Board **approved** the Annual Report and Financial Statements for Year ending 31 July 2008.

102.8 Finance Report 1 August to 31 October 2008

Mr Loftus referred to the Finance Report for the 3 months to 31 October 2008 and reported that the College remains in a healthy financial position.

The Board **accepted** the report.

102.9 Annual Report on the Work of the Audit Committee

Mr Waterfall-Brown referred to the Annual Report which had been considered by the Audit Committee and recommended to the Board for approval. He pointed out in particular the conclusion that:

"The Audit Committee considers that the Governing body's responsibilities have been satisfactorily discharged."

The Board **approved** the report.

102.10 Auditor's Thematic Review of Governance

Mr Waterfall-Brown referred to the Bentley Jennison report on their Thematic Review of Governance across their client base which was presented to the Board for information. The review covers the key findings about committees, how they are run, what information is provided, their frequency and duration and examples of good practice.

The Board **accepted** the review.

08/103 Governance Issues

103.1 Members' Details and Governors' Training Events

The Clerk proposed that requests for current details of Members and information about forthcoming training events be sent out to Members.

Action Mr Brookes

This was **agreed** by the Board.

103.2 Annual Timetable of Board Items.

The Clerk referred to the proposed annual timetable for Board items.

The Board **agreed** the timetable.

08/104 Urgent Business Raised under item 08/93

No urgent was raised.

At this stage Mr Wiper informed the Members that Mrs Barker was leaving the College at the end of term to take up the post of principal. He congratulated her, thanked her for her contribution to the College and to governors meetings, and wished her well for the future.

08/105 Confidentiality

The Personnel Report referred to at Ref 101.2 is confidential.

08/106 Date and Agenda for the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 19 March 2009 at 7.00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30 pm.