

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the College Corporation held on Thursday 19 March 2009 at 7.00 pm

Present: Mr C Wiper (Chairman)
Mrs S Barnes
Mrs H Barron
Mr P Davison
Mr T Fisher
Miss J Grundy
Mr M Ithurralde
Mrs L Lyle
Prof L Oglesby
Mr J Ramsden
Mr D Warman
Mr N Waterfall-Brown
Mr A Wilson

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

09/01 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr E Lister, Mrs G Laws, Mr C McCain and Mr M Shaw and were **accepted** by the Board.
Mr Wiper welcomed Mr G Barker (Assistant Principal, Quality and Assessment) to this, his first, meeting.

09/02 Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 December 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2008 were **accepted** as a true record by the Board and were signed by the Chairman.

09/03 Matters Arising

Mr Fisher reported that changes being introduced to documentation would cover the actions referred to in 08/99.3 and 08/99.4.

09/04 Outstanding References

References 08/99.3 and 08/99.4.

09/05 Urgent Business

No urgent business was raised.

09/06 Publications Distributed since the Last Meeting.

Mr Brookes referred to the DCSF Spring 2009 Newsletter and the SFCF News Autumn 2008 made available to Members.

09/07 Ofsted Report

- 07.1 Mr Fisher explained the new system adopted by Ofsted in view of the College's 'Outstanding' status at the last inspection report. He referred to the report for the activity carried out on 18 February 2009 and in particular to:
- a. The current category of 'Outstanding or Very Good'.
 - b. The high success rates for 16-18 and 19+ learners.
 - c. The consistently high retention rates for both age groups.

- d. "The SAR states that the College is at the 75% percentile compared to similar colleges nationally for value-added. In the context that many learners enrolled from wards with high levels of deprivation this is a very good performance."

07.2 Mr Wiper stated that the report was very pleasing, and not unexpected, and congratulated everyone at the College for maintaining such high standards.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/08 Governor Training : Value Added Systems

Dr Hunnisett gave a presentation on the value-added systems referred to by the College. He explained what the 4 systems do and their strengths, weaknesses and advantages. The data provided at subject level is useful in monitoring progress and advising and motivating individual students.

09/09 Committee Reports

09.1 Finance and Resources Committee

Mr Wiper stated that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2008 had been reported verbally at the last meeting. He referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2009 and reported that relevant items raised and those raised at the meeting held on 16 March 2009 were to be covered later at this meeting.

The Board **accepted** the report and the minutes of the meetings held on 10 November 2008 and 19 January 2009.

09.2 Audit Committee

Mrs Lyle (Chair) stated that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2008 had been reported verbally at the last meeting. She then reported verbally on the meeting held on 5 March 2009 and referred in particular to the assurance assessments in the Internal Auditors reports.

The Board **accepted** the report and the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2008.

09/10 Capital Project

10.1 Mr Wiper stated that there had been major changes in the situation and asked the Principal to explain. Mr Fisher referred to the Parliamentary Written Statement – Capital Investment in FE Colleges and made the following points:

- a. In the LSC 'College Capital Announcement' dated 10 March 2009 the College was advised to 'avoid incurring any further costs in delivering its project.'
- b. QE's plight was not as dire as many other colleges since the project had reached a natural break and no contracts had been signed for further work.
- c. To date £32k had been spent, half of which would be paid by the LSC, and an application for a full refund will be submitted.
- d. In response to queries raised by Members, the Principal stated that the College's view on the situation and concerns for the future would be covered in the collective response by the SFCF to the Government and the LSC.

10.2 Mr Wiper reported that the situation had been considered at length at the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 16 March at which it was agreed that a report detailing possible options that would be available to the College should be prepared. The report would include the practical and financial implications of each option and Mr Wiper sought the Board's approval to go ahead with this initiative.

The Board **accepted** the report and **approved** the proposal to prepare a report on the options available to the College. **Action Mr Fisher**

Professor Oglesby left the meeting at 7.55 pm.

09/11 Strategic Update

11.1 Mr Fisher referred to the summary of aspects of the College's strategic development that the Members would need to consider.

11.2 SFCF Newsletter (Issue No 2, 17 Feb 2009)

The SFCF Newsletter Issue No 2 dealt with the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill. The aspects covered included SFC Designation, SFC Provision, Duty in relation to the Local Area, LA's responsibility Young People's Learning Agency. The SFCF is continuing discussions on other major issues.

Mr Fisher pointed out that the Board will have to decide in due course the courses of action to be taken.

The Board **accepted** the report and the SFCF Newsletter.

11.3 14-19 Partnership

11.3.1 The Board considered the Darlington 14-19 Partnership Agreement – January 2009 which covered the Purpose, Partners, Scope and Remit, Roles and Responsibilities of Partners, Structure, Operating Procedures, Partnership Review, Dispute Resolution, Interests of Members, Joining and Leaving the Partnership and Winding up the Partnership.

11.3.2 Points raised in discussion included;

- a. Involvement in the Partnership would enable the College to keep abreast of initiatives in the area and would be helpful in terms of strategic issues.
- b. The links with other providers and agencies, particularly the Children's Trust.

The Board **approved** the agreement and the College's participation in the partnership. **Action Mr Fisher**

11.4 South West Durham Educational Trust

11.4.1 Mr Fisher referred to the paper on Newton Aycliffe and Sunnydale Schools Educational Trust which gives details of the proposal for three 11-16 schools to form an educational trust in which QE has been invited to be one of three initial external core partners.

11.4.2 Points raised in discussion included:

- a. The College would be able to consolidate links with the schools and be involved in educational developments in that area.
- b. The College's participation could be of mutual benefit to the schools and the College in terms of strategic issues and preparing students for post-16 education and attracting students to QE.
- c. The scheme would be funded through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.
- d. It is expected that the trust will be formalised by July 2009.

11.4.3 Mr Wiper proposed that the College accepts the invitation to become an external core partner in the trust and that this be confirmed before July 2009.

The Board **approved** the proposal.

Action Mr Fisher

11.5 Association of Governors

11.5.1 Mr Fisher referred to the letter from the Darlington Association of Governors which invites QE College Corporation to become a full member of that body. The Association represents all nursery, primary, secondary and special schools in the Borough and its constitution has recently been amended to include local FE colleges.

11.5.2 Mr Fisher stated that membership would be beneficial and would provide a further forum for networking on educational matters. He proposed that the Board give approval to becoming members of the association.

The Board **approved** the proposal.

Action Mr Fisher

11.6 Mission Statement

Mr Fisher referred to the draft Mission and Strategic Objectives 2009-2014 and to minor changes which had been introduced. All the staff and the Student Association had been involved in the process and agreed the outcome.

The Board **approved** the Mission and Strategic Objectives 2009-2014.

11.7 Admissions – Key Issues

11.7.1 Mrs Blackburn referred to the paper Admission – 2010 – Key Issues and in particular to:

- a. The numbers of applications from partner schools are increasing and this year the dead-line for them was brought forward to mid-January.
- b. The cut-off point for the waiting list for other applicants is being made earlier each year and for the current batch it was 25 November 2008.
- c. The map illustrating the extent of the areas from which students travelled during 2005-06 and also 2008-09.

11.7.2 Mrs Blackburn stated that the admission policy and process for the 2010 entry will need careful consideration and that proposals will be submitted for approval to the next meeting of the Board.

She added that any suggestions the Members may have for inclusion in the policy would be most welcome. **Action: Members/Mr Fisher**

11.7.3 Points raised in discussion included:

- a. The College is popular with students from outside the Darlington area.
- b. Distance from QE should not be a factor. Having students from outside Darlington is a benefit.
- c. The future levels of funding available for courses and accommodation will influence the numbers of students the College can enrol.
- d. Feedback on the points raised by the paper would be a useful item for the Student Committee to consider at its next meeting.

The Board **accepted** the report

09/12 College Performance Reports

12.1 SAR 2008: Whole College Self Assessment Report

Mr Barker referred to the Whole College Self Assessment Report 2008, which was in a new format, and in particular to the Quality Improvement Action Plan 2009. Members commented on the improved format which was easy to follow.

12.2 SAR 2008: Whole College KPI Reports

12.2.1 Mr Barker referred to the KPI reports on Curriculum, Guidance and Views and in particular to the sections on Enrolment by School and Destinations of Completers.

12.2.2 Points raised in discussion included the suggestion of having a précis of the reports for the Members with specific points highlighted in a synopsis at the beginning. **Action: Mr Fisher**

12.3 SAR 2008: Operational Plan

Mr Barker referred to the Operational Plan which was colour-coded for ease of reference. An interactive electronic counterpart is available which can be updated directly by the relevant Directors or SMG members.

The Board **accepted** the three SAR 2008 reports.

12.4 Destinations

Mrs Barnes referred to the Destinations 2008 – Key Points paper and in particular to a number of specific cases. The College maintained a 96% rate students achieving their first choice with 88 students starting degree courses.

The Board **accepted** the report

09/13 Personnel Report

Mr Fisher referred to the Personnel Report dated 19 January 2009 which covered New Appointments (5) and Leavers (5). In addition, two further appointments had been made the previous week. He reported that all the new members were of good quality and experience.

The Board **accepted** the report

09/14 Health, Safety & Welfare Report

14.1 Mr Fisher referred to the Report for the period 1 August 2008 to 28 February 2009 which covered: first aid, child protection, procedures, fire safety, protective equipment and health promotion.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/15 Finance Reports

15.1 Finance Report 1 August to 28th February 2009

Mr Loftus referred to the Finance Report to 28 February 2009 and in particular to:
Para 1.1 - The College remains in a healthy financial position.

Para 1.4 - Bank loans totalling £151k that were not subject to breakage
and 3.4 costs had been repayed early.

The Board **accepted** the report

15.2 College Funding Allocation 2009 -10

Mr Loftus referred to the LSC **Letter** and Provisional Funding Statement dated 9 January 2009 which notified the College of its provisional funding position. The final funding had been expected on 13 March 2009 but was still not available from the LSC at the time of the meeting.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/16 Planning Reports

16.1 Operational Plan 2008-09 Evaluation

Mr Barker referred to the Evaluation of the Operational Plan 2008 which covered Programme Area Actions, Whole College Actions and actions from Whole College KPI Reports. He highlighted in particular the analysis being carried out of student numbers taking a gap year prior to university.

The Board **accepted** the report

16.2 Planning Cycle 2009-10

Mr Barker referred to the QE Self Assessment Cycle 2009 report which illustrated the key aspects of the process.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/17 Governance Issues

17.1 Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)

The Clerk referred to booklets available to Members about the LSIS which was formed on 1 October 2008 and combines the best aspects of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) and the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA)

17.2 Forthcoming Vacancies

The Clerk informed Members that the terms of office of a number of members will come to an end on 31 August 2009 and 31 December 2009:

2 Parent Members (31.08.09)

2 Co-opted Members (31.08.09)

1 Business Member (31.12.09)

Members were asked to inform the Chairman, Principal or the Clerk (before the next Search Committee meeting which is to be held on 4 June 2009) of any potential candidates who would be suitable for consideration as Members.

Action Members

09/18 Governors' Training Events

A governor induction event will be held on Thursday 30 April 2009 at New College, Durham (between 4.30 pm and 7.30 pm). Any Members interested were asked to contact the Clerk.

Action Members

09/19 Declaration of Interests.

Members were issued with pro-forma for personal details and declaration of interests and asked to return them to the Clerk.

Action Members

09/20 Other Business Raised under Item 09/05

No other business was raised.

09/21 Confidentiality

The following are confidential:

a. The Personnel Report (ref 09/13)

b. References to options in the capital project (ref 09/10).

09/22 Date and Agenda for the Next Meeting

The Principal explained that the planned date for the next meeting (2 July 2009) clashes with an important commitment which had arisen. He proposed that the next meeting be held on Thursday 25 June 2009. This was **agreed** by the Board. It was further **agreed** that the Members not present would be informed of the change.

Action Mr Brookes

The date of the next meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 25 June 2009 at 7.00 pm.

Before closing the meeting Mr Wiper asked that the Board's congratulations be recorded for Ms Sarah Robinson's award of the OBE in the New Year's Honours List.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.20 pm.