

Northumberland College Corporation

Governing Body

Minutes of meeting held on 6th May 2008 at 5.30pm at Kirkley

Present: L Ions (Chair)
R Ellis-Jones (Principal)
P Sample
S Barlow
I Todd
P Pratt
M Rossi
C Smith
J Wright
R Casson
K Morrison

In Attendance: C Taylor (Clerk)
I Holmes (VP Finance)
H Wright (VP Curriculum)
T Shirley (Observer)
A Timmins (Ryders – 050 only)

GB08/0043 Apologies and introductions

Standing apologies were given for Eric Fisher. Apologies had been received from LG, DF and NH. The Chair introduced KM to her first meeting and confirmed that TS was attending as an observer and would formally be appointed at the next Search committee. Due to personal reasons ZL had stepped down the Chair confirming that as and when ZL felt fit the Corporation would welcome her back.

GB08/044 Declaration of Interests

None.

GB08/045 Confirmation of Quorum

The meeting was quorate (the members present meeting the minimum requirement of 6).

GB08/046 Minutes of the last meeting dated 12 March 2008

The minutes were confirmed as true and accurate subject to one change at 034.

GB08/048 Matters arising and not otherwise covered on the agenda

GB08/028 (4) Chair had met with the Chair of Tyne Met and it had been agreed that a meeting was not appropriate at this stage.

GB08/031 (2) ALS - this would be dealt with later on the agenda under the budget.

GB08/032 Equality, Diversity and Child Protection – HW expressed her thanks to governors for returning the health checks. The results had been analysed and a report would be produced later. HW to interview three governors and it was later agreed that SB, RC and MJ would be interviewed to complete the process.

GB08/039 Learner involvement – MR confirmed that DFer would present a new system at the July meeting.

GB08/049 Comments from the Chair

The Chair updated Governors on the following:-

1. The Vice Chair nomination – only one nomination had been received and IT and JW seconded the appointment of MJ as Vice Chair;
2. The Chair and REJ had met with the Northumberland Cheese Farm Chair and MD who had expressed an interest in working out of Kirkley Hall site. IH and RH were now pursuing this to the next stage;
3. Alan Dixon had been approached about what AoC support could be offered to governors. A response was awaited.
4. An invitation to the official opening of the hair and beauty salon in Berwick was extended to all governors as unfortunately LI could not attend.

GB08/050 Comments from the Principal

The Principal updated Governors on the following:-

1. It had been a close call with minimum levels of performance but having received support from the regional LSC who noted that students had not suffered the issue was with data capture the construction provision had been retained. Thanks had been expressed to the LSC for their intervention.
2. The college was now leading on vocational diplomas lines which showed strong partnership working. To ensure that that this was successful a monitoring plan would be produced to the Corporation.
3. The college had been sponsored by the Red Meat Forum to visit Green Mount in Ireland. The visit had been successful and a revisit was planned with governor representation.
4. The new build team felt that it was time to go public on the new site and after discussion Governors agreed to enable the consultation process to take place.

REJ

A presentation was then given by Adrian Timmins on the first design stage. After discussion governors confirmed that they were happy with the outline plans.

GB08/051 Draft Strategic Plan approval

REJ presented seeking approval and consideration on parts 1, 2 and 3 together with the key performance indicators and supplementary questions. Governors worked through the various sections commenting upon wording, noting that:-

1. the mission should be worded as agreed at the Retreat throughout the document;
2. pace and timing, students and employers should be included within the vision ;
3. there should be consistency in style and the wording should be positive;
4. the strategy should include working with partnerships;
5. the finance section should be high level as some operational items had slipped in. It was agreed that governors should pursue this discipline further by flushing out how finance was to strategically fit with the budget;
6. the Standards committee would regularly receive performance indicators and break them down so that each committee could monitor them appropriately. Governors expressed the need to have the right indicators which could be changed throughout the course of the plan;
7. the plan to be written so that all staff understood and could see what was required at a governor and staff perspective.

The draft plan was received and approved subject to the amendments indicated.

GB08/052 Enrolment and funding 07/08 data

There are concerns with 19+ enrolments, it being noted that this was a national trend. With regards to ALS, IT confirmed and explained the reason why he had asked for a

paper on this. It was not about deploying someone but whether it was a governor issue and if it should be looked at from a strategic stand point.

After a healthy debate it was agreed that:-

1. 19+ was a problem and this should be addressed to ascertain where the college was going;
2. David Ferguson would present to the next Standards committee on how we draw on local experience. It was noted that HW was currently looking at how better to deploy ALS in the business cycle and that HW would produce this at the correct time;

Clerk

IH confirmed that plans were in place to close the 19+ gap and he was confident that the college would come close on 16+. 19+ would be 3% below target and the ALS target would be achieved. It was agreed that the report should include a column on "expected outcome".

GB08/053 Update on the monitoring visit from OFSTED CONFIDENTIAL

REJ and HW informed governors of the OFSTED visit confirming that the results were positive and the college was becoming more self aware. Staff were committed and acted as a team. A draft report would be received in 4 to 6 weeks. The key themes of the visit were improvement and success and pass rates; how the college had developed learner involvement, improved development practice; improved data and how it had improved programs and employer engagement.

It was indicated that the overall judgement was that the college had made reasonable progress and OFSTED were extremely pleased with the learner voice strategy, observations on teaching arrangements and the sharing of good practice. The recommendation was that the college should systemise. Self assessment was still a concern but this was getting better.

GB08/054 Capital Expenditure Request

After consideration the Cap Ex 34 request was agreed but REJ was asked to look into the alternative cost of a tarmac base.

GB08/055 Draft Minutes of Standards Committee held on 1st April 2008

The Chair of Standards worked through the minutes explaining what documents the committee was working through. The minutes were received in draft.

GB08/056 Draft Minutes of the F&P Committee held on 15th April 2008

The Chair of F&P worked through the minutes and REJ gave a verbal update on the strike indicating that 38% of staff went out on strike. UCC had accepted the pay award for this year. Negotiations however for next year had currently broken down. The draft minutes were received to the meeting.

GB08/057 Audit Committee - Recommendation

The Chair of Audit produced a paper outlining the tender process for the internal and external audit service. It was recommended that the appointment of KPMG at external auditors and PWC as internal auditors be approved. After discussion governors confirmed their support of the recommendations.

GB08/058 Topics for the next Corporation Meeting

Paper on ALS
Learner Involvement

GB08/059 Any other business

Since the equality and diversity training had been cancelled earlier that day it was agreed that the clerk should rearrange this for the 8th July. Financial training for new governors would run concurrently on the same day.

REJ confirmed a party in the park for staff at the end of term. Governors were invited and invitations would be sent shortly.

GB08/060 Designation of items of confidential if required

OFSTED

New Build

GB08/061 Date of future meeting

The next meeting will be held on 8th July 2008

ACTION LIST

Reference	Content	Managers
10.7.07 GB07/080 Gender Equality etc	Update in 6 months on staff training and if any difficulties had arisen.	D Fer
18.12.07 GB08/019 Matters arising	Update to Learner involvement in May 2008. Now to be produced in July	MR/DF
22.1.08 GB08/017	High Gain governance issues – paper to be produced by High Gain Chair	High Gain Chair
12.3.08 GB08/031	Paper on ALS to be produced to the next meeting	REJ
6.5.08 GB08/050	Plan to ensure success on partnerships to be brought to the Corporation	REJ
6.5.08 GB08/051	Approval of strategic plan at July meeting	REJ