

## **UNCONFIRMED MINUTES**

### **GOVERNING BODY**

#### **Minutes of the meeting held at 2.00pm on 7 May 2010**

**Present:**

J Bloomfield	C Manning
R Carter	E Milburn (Chairman)
S Cook	R Millea
J Finn	J Roberts
S Gerber	J Simmonds
A Gordon-Stables	B Smith
D Hills	E A Williams
S Leggo	R Windsor

**In attendance:**

- R Rauchenberg RSM Tenon (to item 9)
- A Elba-Porter
- D Howells (Deputy Principal)
- P Thirkettle (Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality to item 9)
- M Wagner (Vice Principal, Student and Business Services)
- M D Fell (Corporation Secretary)

The Governors welcomed to the meeting Amber Elba-Porter, who was shadowing Sarah Leggo in her Student Governor role.

Members confirmed that they had no declarable interests in relation to any of the items on the agenda.

The meeting was preceded by a briefing from Ann Williams on the Ofsted inspection of the College which was to take place in week beginning 24 May, and the likely involvement of the Governors.

#### **1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Dickie and Mr K Golding.

#### **Action**

## **2 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2010 were confirmed and signed, subject to the correction of item 4, to read 'had been requested by a number of Governors'. (Minute book pages D65-D70).

## **3 Matters arising**

- i West Suffolk Educational Trust – it was noted that a meeting to promote the Trust was to be held on 8 June and all Governors would be welcome to attend. Members were asked to put forward names of people who might be invited to attend the event to Alan Gordon-Stables.
- ii Foundation Degrees – it was confirmed that an explanation of the progression routes available on completion of Foundation Degree courses would be included in the induction programme of new students.
- iii Student Car Sharing – it was reported that the College would be willing to promote car sharing arrangements between students but that it would not be appropriate for the College to run a scheme in view of its safeguarding responsibilities.

## **4 Members' reports on Representational Activities**

Rob Millea reported on a meeting that he had attended of the West Suffolk Heads and also a seminar held by LSIS following the consultation on Governance in the sector, on the possible content of a Code of Governance.

## **5 Principal's Report**

The Principal's report was received (Minute book pages D71-D79) and the following issues arose:

- i Honorary Graduate – the Governors were delighted to note that the award of Honorary Degree at this year's graduation ceremony would be made to Betty Milburn.
- ii Thetford Academy – the Governors were very encouraged at the rapid progress made towards the implementation arrangements for the new Academy, which was to open in September.
- iii Equality and Diversity/Safeguarding – it was noted that an on-line handbook on Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding was nearing completion, and it was expected to be available next week.

- iv CRB Checks for Governors – the Governors reaffirmed their decision that it was not necessary or appropriate for members to undergo CRB checks, since they would not be undertaking unsupervised or one to one contact with students.

Confidential Item under para 17(2) of the Instrument of Government.

## **6 Item Relating to a Student**

A confidential report outlining the circumstances relating to the death of a student was received and noted. (Minute book pages D82-D84).

## **7 Governance Issues**

A report on a number of issues relating to governance was received: (Minute book pages D85-D88).

- i Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair – it was noted that nominations for the appointments of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors would be invited in the next few weeks, and that the appointments to take effect from 1 August 2010 would be confirmed at the July meeting.
- ii Instrument and Articles - The Governors formally adopted revised Instrument and Articles of Government with effect from 1 April 2010 to reflect the replacement of LSC by the Skills Funding Agency.
- iii Meetings Schedule - The draft schedule of meetings for the Governors and Committees in 2010-11 was received and approved.

## **8 Operational Plan Progress Report**

An exception report outlining progress made to date against incomplete action items in the 2009/10 Operational Plan was received; (Minute book pages D89-D91). Governors were pleased to note that there were no items of concern arising from the report.

## **9 Accommodation Strategy Committee**

The minutes of the meeting of the Accommodation Strategy Committee held on 25 March 2010 were received and noted. (Minute book pages D92-D94).

## **10 Accommodation Update**

A report outlining issues relating to current building matters was received. (Minute book pages D95-D97).

### **i CML Building**

The Chair of the Committee updated Governors on the proposed purchase of the CML building, and particularly with regard to the consultants' reports and independent advisor's assessment of them, which dealt with the condition, treatment or removal of asbestos from the building. Having considered the options available, it was agreed that the recommendation of the independent advisor for entombment should be accepted.

The issues and risks of proceeding with the purchase had been considered in depth by both the Accommodation Strategy and Finance Committees and both were satisfied that subject to the conditions detailed in the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 28 April 2010, and the addition of a further condition that structural and M and E surveys were satisfactorily completed, the purchase should proceed.

The Governors agreed that subject to:

- i. the conditions listed in item 7 ii a – I of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of 28 April 2010 being satisfied,
- ii. the satisfactory completion of structural and mechanical and electrical surveys of the premises and,
- iii. the satisfactory resolution of the conditions listed in item 28 of the minutes of the meeting of Governors held on 11 December 2009,

authority should be delegated to the Finance Committee to formally approve the purchase of the premises known as CML Innovative Technologies at Anglia Lane, at a price of £1.8 million, should a decision be needed before the next meeting of the Governors.

Should this authority be exercised, it was also agreed that the Chair and the Principal be authorized to confirm the application of the College seal to formalize the purchase. (Proposed Jan Bloomfield, seconded by C Manning).

ii **Edmund House**

It was noted that the specification for the major refurbishment of Edmund House had now been agreed, and that tenders for the work would be received in the first week in June. There was some urgency to award the contract quickly so that parts of Edmund House would be ready for re-occupation in September and the Governors agreed that following evaluation of the tenders by the Chairman of the Accommodation Strategy Committee, authority to award the contract would be delegated to the Finance Committee subject to the value of the contract not exceeding £1.5million inclusive. (Proposed by B Smith, seconded by R Windsor).

(It was expected that an extra meeting of the Finance Committee would be arranged on 7 or 8 June).

11 **Finance Committee**

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 February 2010, 30 March 2010 and 28 April 2010 were received and noted. (Minute book pages D98-D100, D101-D103 and D104-D108).

12 **Finance Report**

The Finance Report for March 2010 was received, and the Governors were pleased to note that a surplus in excess of budget was currently anticipated at year-end, and also that first indications of the budget for 2010-11 were that a satisfactory level of surplus could be achieved, albeit less than in recent years. (Minute book pages D109-D114).

13 **Preliminary Overview of Main Funding Implications for 2010-11**

A report was received that provided clarification of the funding now expected under each of the main funding streams in 2010-11. (Minute book pages D115-D118).

The Governors were pleased to note that the College was likely to avoid the significant reductions in some funding streams that were being reported elsewhere in the sector.

**14 Curriculum Issues**

A report outlining a number of current issues relating to curriculum and quality was received (Minute book pages D119-D122) and the following points arose:

- the retention rate for students of ethnic minorities had now been confirmed at 93% which was in line with the overall College rate. It was noted, however, that the rate for students of mixed race was below the average at 85% and the reasons for this underperformance would be investigated further.
- The Governors were pleased to note that very good progress had been made with the completion of impact assessment of College policies.
- It was agreed to defer the item on Factors for Curriculum Change to the next meeting.

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**15 Student Welfare**

An interim report on provision of student welfare in the year to date was received. (Minute book pages D123-D126).

The apparent higher incidence of bullying reports within foundation studies was recognised and this area would have particular attention to seek to overcome the situation. The Governors suggested that the availability of benchmarking data from other colleges should be investigated and the Student Governors agreed to consider the issue at the Student Council, to seek ways in which the students might encourage improvements.

MW

**16 Employer Responsiveness**

A report of current activity in Apprenticeships and Train to Gain was received and noted. (Minute book pages D127-D130).

**17 Fees Policy**

The proposed fee policy for 2010-11 was approved as presented. (Minute book pages D131-D135). (Proposed by R Millea, seconded by S Gerber).

**18 Student Governors' Report**

A report was received that described recent initiatives of the Student Governors to meet students informally to provide them an opportunity to pass on their views. (Minute book pages D136-D139). The Governors were pleased to note that similar events would now be held on a termly basis.

Proposals from the Student Council for arrangements for the election of a Student Governor to represent FE were considered and agreed. It was noted that HE students could stand for the role provided that they were nominated by FE students, and that voting would be limited to the FE students.

It was agreed that issues raised by the students relating to the timetabling of courses in the HE section of Suffolk House, and the provision for refreshments in the HE Common Room would be investigated.

EAW

**19 HR Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2010 were received and noted. (Minute book pages D140-D141).

**20 Risk Management**

A report outlining progress towards a new system for recording and reporting of risks, which would develop mitigating actions to lessen the likelihood or impact of the risks, was received and noted. (Minute book pages D142-D143).

**21 Performance Indicators**

The performance indicators of student numbers and associated funding were received and noted. (Minute book pages D144-D148).

**22 Health and Safety Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2010 were received and noted. (Minute book pages D149-D151).

**23 Representational Activities**

There were no reports of representational activities since the last meeting.

**24 Any Other Business**

It was noted that a 'Principal's Blog' was now being maintained on StaffNet to provide information and updates to staff and Governors regarding the forthcoming inspection.

The meeting closed at 5.15pm