



**Minutes of the Board meeting  
held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011 at 4.15 pm**

**Present**

Ms Susan Carmichael	)	External Governors
Mr Tony Cearns	)	
Mr Tony Cobain	)	
Mr Peter Grieve	)	
Cllr Nick Small	)	
Ms Vivienne Tyler (Chair)	)	
Mr David Wilson	)	
Ms Martha Harris		Staff Governor (Teaching)
Mr John Nolan		Staff Governor (Business Support)
Ms Elaine Bowker		Principal

**In Attendance**

Ms Marie Allen, MBE	Vice Principal Curriculum
Mr Mike Doyle	Assistant Principal Resources
Ms Nancy Jenkins	Clerk to the Board
Ms Christine Lenderyou	Secretary to the Clerk
Ms Alison Moore	Enrichment Team Leader
Mr Brendan Ruane	Vice Principal Finance and Resources

**11.117 Welcome**

Mr J Nolan was welcomed his first Board meeting. Ms A Moore was welcomed to observe the meeting to enable her to support the Student Governors when appointed.

**11.118 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Ms L Barry, Ms S Carthy, Ms C Crowther, Ms C Dove, Professor G Pillay and Ms I Loh Lynn.

**11.119 Declarations of Interest**

Mr Grieve declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of the advice he had been providing to the College in relation to investigation of the water ingress in the Learning Exchange.

**11.120 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2011 were agreed as true record.

**11.121 Matters arising from the Minutes**

The Clerk's report on outcome of actions from the previous meeting was noted. All actions had either been completed or were being progressed.

**11.122 Principal's Report**

The Principal reported on a range of developments and initiatives affecting the College.

Governors asked why the University Technical College (UTC) bid had been unsuccessful. The Principal informed them that initial feedback indicated that arriving late to the process had impacted as there had not been sufficient consultations with parents and students. However she was confident that the bid was inherently strong and a positive response to the resubmission was expected.

Governors felt the upcoming meeting between the Principal and the Chief Executive of Liverpool Vision to discuss ways in which the College could be better integrated with the regeneration of the city was a positive move.

#### **11.123 Performance Dashboard**

Achievement against key performance indicators in 2011/12 to date was noted.

#### **11.124 College Name**

In her report the Principal proposed that Liverpool Community College be re-named 'The City of Liverpool College'. This followed on from discussions at the previous meeting and at strategic planning events about the need to reposition the College, and the potential benefits of changing the name both in consequence and as an aid to doing so.

Feedback from key partners was that businesses struggled to see past the 'community college' label to the College's expertise in business and the work it did with employers. The College also had a relatively low profile within both the city and City Region. The College was extremely proud of the work it did with and for the community, and would continue to work for the good of the people of Liverpool; this must, however, involve adapting to a more competitive environment in order to engage effectively with employers and provide the opportunities students needed.

A number of alternative names had been examined but were either unsuitable or already registered. Including 'The' in the name was important as it underlined the fact that the College was the only Further Education (FE) college in Liverpool. There were other factors to be considered; the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) had some restrictions and the emergency services needed to be able to easily locate College sites so the name had to be distinct from other institutions.

The Board approved the change of name from 'Liverpool Community College' to 'The City of Liverpool College' with effect from January 2012. In accordance with the Articles of Government the Principal was asked seek approval for the name change from the Secretary of State. **Act: EB**

#### **11.125 College Mission and Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Summary and 2011-14 Delivery Plan were tabled, alongside the Outline Strategic Plan 2011/14 which had been considered at the previous meeting.

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting so that governors had sufficient time to digest the papers, in particular the changes to the mission statement. The Clerk was asked to email the existing and proposed mission statement to governors. **Act: NJ**

#### **11.126 University Technical College Resubmission**

The Principal reported that the College's initial bid to establish a University Technical College (UTC) had been unsuccessful. The timetable for the second round of bids was expected to be announced later in the year, and would provide an opportunity for the College and its partners to strengthen the bid and resubmit in accordance with feedback received from the Government and the Baker Dearing Educational Trust. College open evenings would provide an opportunity to canvass opinion from students and parents.

The biggest growth areas for Liverpool over the next 20-30 years were anticipated to be the Low Carbon Economy and the SuperPort and there was a very real risk of a skills gap. North Liverpool was a focus of development. The proposal to establish the Liverpool

Environmental Technologies and SuperPort Academy would open up social, economic and green opportunities for the young people of Merseyside and underpin the College's mission.

The Board approved the submission of a revised bid for the award of University Technical College status.

#### **11.127 Free School**

*Confidential minute held by the Clerk.*

#### **11.128 Executive Restrictions: 2010/11 Compliance Monitoring**

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

Alison Moore left the meeting for the duration of the following item.

#### **11.129 Acquisitions Strategy Progress Report (Confidential Item)**

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources (VPFR) presented a confidential report on various initiatives underway as part of the College's acquisitions strategy. The College was at various stages of discussions with four training providers. The report provided background information on each provider and what stage discussions had reached with each.

*[5 paragraphs of this minute are excluded from the public record at present for reasons of confidentiality – held by the Clerk]*

It was suggested that the College ensure that the accreditations each company had were those required by the relevant industries within which they operated.

Governors queried whether there were any back up plans, should the College decide not to proceed further with any of the four companies. In response, the Principal said that she was exploring a different approach with a further organisation; there were also some other companies listed in the confidential KPMG report on acquisitions which had been made available to governors.

The report was noted. An update would be brought to the next meeting. Due diligence reports would be brought to the Finance, Estates & General Purpose Committee. **Act: BR**

Alison Moore then rejoined the meeting.

#### **11.130 Adult Skills Budget and Funding Changes**

The VPFR reported on changes to the funding methodology for Adult provision which had come into force after the end of July 2011. The SFA had changed their fee waiver rules after the start of the academic year so that, firstly many more adults than originally planned for could now receive full fee remission, and secondly the College was now unable to charge exam fees to many categories of students to whom it did previously. These changes were very significant and were beneficial in as much as adult recruitment had been buoyant because many more adults were eligible for fee waiver than before. However, administering the changes had been difficult because the agreed fee policy had been in place since March and planning had been based on this. The College had had to alter its fee policy in line with the changes, including the removal of exam fees for many programmes and the repayment of fees to students where these had already been collected. Putting in changes during the enrolment period had been far from ideal.

There might be further changes which potentially carried the risk of costing the College about £200k in lost revenue from examination fees.

In addition, the College was unable to calculate the funding attracted by Adult Learner Responsive enrolments because the SFA software for this purpose was not working. Until

funding information could be calculated it was not clear whether the recruitment of Adults should be further promoted or restrained.

Governors noted the report with great concern that such significant changes should be made so close to the start of the academic year.

#### **11.131 The Bribery Act 2010**

The VPFR presented a report on the Bribery Act 2010 and its implications. The College had issued an Anti-Bribery policy statement; existing policies and procedures were being updated to include reference to the Act, and staff had been made aware of the policy statement and resultant changes.

It was queried what controls were in place for the College's dealings with foreign agents or new markets. It was stressed that the College only dealt with foreign companies that were on the British Council's approved list and that the Association of Colleges' Code of Practice was followed. The VPFR would bring a report to the Audit Committee to show the safeguards that were in place.

**Act: BR**

#### **11.132 Staff Survey 2010/11: Human Resources Action Responses 2011/12**

The report from the Principal and Vice Principal Corporate Services provided an action response as requested at the June Board meeting in relation to the staff survey that had been carried out in May 2011.

At 28.2% the poor response rate was well below the national average of 44.6%. This needed to be raised significantly and the Principal had already implemented a series of initiatives aimed at engaging staff; the Principal's Surgeries were fully booked and a full College address had been held at the Philharmonic Hall on 7<sup>th</sup> October. Whilst feedback had been largely positive, the Principal acknowledged that there was further work to be done, in particular with regards to having more serious dialogue with staff while the College was going through a period of change. It was anticipated that the appointment of the Human Resources (HR) Director would assist this.

The Support Staff governor wished it to be noted on behalf of Unison members and the staff in general that the Principal's initiatives had been extremely well received and that staff felt confident in her leadership.

The action responses outlined in the report addressed major areas of concern identified in the survey: career progression, opportunities for development, lack of consultation with management during change processes, and happiness working in the College.

Governors noted that response levels from staff aged under 30, staff employed less than two years and Academic-Fractional staff were among the lowest and suggested that the way their responses were captured might need adapting. It was queried whether it was a logistical problem or whether it might be symptomatic of those staff feeling disconnected.

The comment was made that the staff survey needed a strong HR focus but also needed to be driven by managers. The Vice Principal Curriculum confirmed that this had been discussed in appraisals with Equality staff and Heads of Faculties and was a set objective to encourage a better return rate.

The style and methodology of the survey would be reviewed. For optimum value, the questions needed to be clear and precise, however, some staff appeared to be concerned about anonymity as a number of answers together could identify the responder. Whilst certain questions were necessary to allow benchmarking, it might be possible to broaden other questions to minimise identification of individuals.

Feedback had implied that not all staff were aware of the significance of the report and were not aware it was presented to the Board and used as a tool for generating changes. It was important to work on this perception. It was suggested that a 'You said/We did' style report could be produced, as was the case for students, and that the survey could have room for questions on the best/worst things about working for the College and suggestions for improvement. Perhaps having a designated time slot for completion might improve response rates, although it was acknowledged there might be logistical difficulties with such an approach.

The report was noted.

#### **11.133 Current Significant Risks**

The VPFR's report set out the most significant risks currently facing the College.

Governors discussed the format of the report. It was suggested that it might be more helpful if the report defined what levels of risk the Board was prepared to accept in certain areas and whether the College was beyond or approaching that risk appetite. What issues kept College managers awake at night? The Senior Management Team would review the format.

**Act: SMT**

Alison Moore left the meeting at this point.

#### **11.134 Learning Exchange Flooding Incident (Confidential)**

The VPFR updated governors on investigations into the cause of the flooding that occurred to the lower ground floor of the Learning Exchange over the weekend of 26/27 August 2011.

*[Two paragraphs of this minute are excluded from the public record at present for reasons of confidentiality – held by the Clerk]*

Mr Grieve offered to advise the project managers about progressing the situation and was thanked for his ongoing assistance.

The report was noted.

#### **11.135 2010/11 Internal Audit Annual Report.**

The Board noted the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2010/11. Clean opinions had been given on overall arrangements for risk management, corporate governance and internal control. There were no high priority recommendations raised during 2010/11 reviews.

#### **11.136 Draft minutes of Committee Meeting**

##### **11.136.01 Audit Committee - 29 September 2011**

The Audit Committee minutes were noted.

##### **11.136.02 Finance, Estates and General Purposes Committee - 22 September 2011**

Notes of the FE&GP Committee meeting were noted.

##### **11.136.03 Search & Governance Committee – 12 September 2011**

The Search & Governance Committee minutes were noted.

#### **11.137 Confidentiality of Items**

The following items, or parts thereof, were deemed confidential:

- Item 5 Reference to the Free School in the Principal's report
- Item 10 Free School
- Item 12 Acquisitions Strategy
- Item 17 Learning Exchange Flooding Incident
- Item 20 Confidential item of Other Business
- Item 23 Remuneration Committee Minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Item 24      Confidential Item

**11.138 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November at 4.15pm.

All staff other than the Principal and Clerk left the meeting at this point.

**11.139 Other Business**

*Confidential minute held by the Clerk.*

**11.140 Remuneration Committee Minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011**

The minutes were noted.

**11.141 Confidential Item**

*Confidential minute held by the Clerk.*

The meeting closed at 6.55pm.