

THE CORPORATION OF THE COLLEGE OF NORTH EAST LONDON

**Policy and Resources Committee**

Minutes of the meeting held 7.00pm Wednesday 3 December 2008 in the Committee Room at the Tottenham Centre of the College.

**Present:** Mr M Cooke (Chair)  
Ms C Sullivan  
Mr P Head  
Mr K Brown

**Apologies:** Mrs J Bax

**In Attendance:** Mr C McCutcheon (Vice Principal Finance and Resources)  
Ms J O'Neill (Vice Principal Curriculum and Learner Experience)  
Ms C Wills (Director of Human Resources)  
Mr D Mathieson (Secretary to the Corporation)

**Apologies:** Mr H Jeffries (Director of Learner Support)

**800 Urgent Business and Announcements**

**The Committee AGREED to:**

- i) **Accept one item of urgent business 'Property Strategy' to be taken as item 7h.**

**801 Declarations of Interest**

Declarations were received from Mr P Head, Ms C Sullivan, and Mr K Brown in respect of Item 8 External Providers.

**The Committee AGREED to:**

- i) **Note the declarations.**

**802 Minutes of the Meeting held 15 October 2008 (PR631)**

**The Committee AGREED to:**

- i) **Approve the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.**

### **803 Matters Arising**

There were none.

### **804 Human Resources – Director’s Report (PR632)**

#### **a) Update Report**

Ms Wills presented the report drawing attention to the following points:

- The post of Director of 14-19 had been re-advertised following the failure to appoint at the first attempt. The competitive nature of the labour market for this type of post in the London area was noted. In response to questions Ms Wills advised other options were being explored in case the current recruitment round is unable to find a suitable candidate. Temporary arrangements are in place using CONEL staff. Agencies were approached regarding interim management but none had suitable persons on their books. The importance of getting the right person this key post was recognised as crucial.
- Regarding case work, it was reported that incidences of long term sickness would decrease with two staff leaving the college and two returning to work shortly.
- Ms Wills advised that following the recent spate of grievances, the issues relating to collective grievances had largely been resolved. She went on to clarify the legal issues in relation to collective grievances.
- An update on current case work was considered and the committee discussed strategies for dealing with cases that might proceed to Employment Tribunals. The Principal gave examples of how the college tries to resolve matters with staff before things reach the ET stage and consideration of cost benefit analysis applied to individual cases.
- The annual pay award together with any back pay will be paid in the current month. Attention was drawn to the operation of a staff benefits scheme operated through Messrs. P&MM.

#### **The Committee AGREED TO:**

- i) Note the report.**

**b) Additional Learning Support**

It was reported that a positive response had been received from ALS staff in response to a call for expressions of interest in voluntary severance. More staff came forward than required and it was agreed to accept 7.7FTE staff for voluntary redundancy which will permit greater flexibility of operation within the budget allocation without risking the securement £2.2million income for 2008-09. In response to questions the committee were advised about the current and future management arrangements for the service.

**The Committee AGREED TO:**

ii) **Note the report.**

**805 Finance and Related Reports (PR633)**

**a) Management Accounts**

Mr McCutcheon reported that, further to the previous item, overspend in ALS had been absorbed by other college accounts. Regarding Train to Gain (T2G) he advised that it would be difficult to hit £4million this year however, as the college allocates resources directly against enrolments there is minimal risk to the college in the current year. The main risk relates to the relationship with the LSC and future funding. He described how the college contracts work to other providers and, strategies for driving up income. Regarding ESF bids by the college in respect of provision due to start in July, this was delayed due to awaiting approval from the LSC. The College has taken a calculated risk to start this provision ahead of the LSC contract.

**The Committee AGREED TO:**

i) **Note the report.**

**b) Financial Outturn 2007-08**

Mr McCutcheon advised that the accounts were very much as predicted at the previous meeting. He highlighted a number of minor changes by management that took account of issues raised by the Audit Committee on the management letter. The Chair queried a typing error on page 62 relating to pensions. Mr McCutcheon agreed to check and amend this prior to the corporation meeting. The committee discussed issues relating to risks associated with potential future pension contribution increases. In response to questions Mr McCutcheon clarified the bad debt provision in

relation to Northumberland Park School, arrangements for outsourcing the operation of the Tottenham Green Enterprise Centre to the London Youth Trust, and comparative data with other colleges in respect of pay and capital expenditure.

**The Committee AGREED TO:**

- ii) Recommend the Corporation approve the annual accounts 2007-08, and receive the management letter of the Financial Statements Auditors.**
  
- c) Annual Risk Management Report 2007-08 and Risk Register**

Mr McCutcheon explained the reduction of risk regarding health and safety due to progress made in carrying out risk assessments. In response to questions concerning how risks associated with joint ventures are transferred to the college, he advised that this area would be subject to an audit during the year. The committee requested that a report on audit arrangements for college subsidiaries be brought to the next meeting.

**The Committee AGREED TO:**

- iii) Note the report and recommend the Corporation receive the Annual Risk Management report**
  
- d) Fees Policy 2009-10**

The fees policy is little changed from last year and takes account of inflation & new LSC fee assumptions. Mr McCutcheon clarified the fee assumptions from the LSC and how this had changed over time. In response to questions he advised that the college operates a policy on debt recovery in respect of fees, and that CONEL has relatively low fee income relative to other colleges due to the nature of its clientele.

**The Committee AGREED TO:**

- iv) Recommend that the Corporation Approve the Fees Policy 2009-10.**

## **e) LSC Financial Management and Control Evaluation**

The background to the document and its link to Framework were explained. It was noted that it had been considered and approved by the Audit committee in line with LSC requirements.

### **The Committee AGREED:**

#### **v) Note the Report**

## **f) ILT Strategy**

The committee were advised that the ILT strategy only applies to the college as it currently stands and would require substantial change should the merger with Enfield College go ahead. Mr McCutcheon advised that the costs of establishing a high speed data link between Enfield and Tottenham was being investigated early as the lead in time is lengthy. Regarding costs identified in the ILT strategy, Mr McCutcheon advised that these were only agreed for the current year. Expenditure identified for future years is, at this stage, indicative.

### **The Committee AGREED:**

#### **vi) Note the ILT Strategy**

## **g) VAT Liability**

Mr McCutcheon clarified a number of points of detail relating to the financial implications of the outcomes of the settlement with HM Revenue and Customs.

### **The Committee AGREED TO:**

#### **vii) Note the Report and agreed that the leases be terminated**

## **h) Property Strategy**

### **The Committee AGREED:**

#### **vii) Approve the terms of reference for a Joint Property Strategy Group with Enfield College subject endorsement by the Merger Joint Strategy Group**

#### **viii) Endorse the appointment of Turner and Townsend as Project Managers**

## **806 External Providers (PR634)**

### **a) Franchises and Partnerships**

The report described a number of revisions to the plan and a detailed breakdown of providers, targets and forecasts. Mr McCutcheon drew attention to specific issues including the non renewal of the contract with the Bernie Grant Centre, and the increasing element of college provision subcontracted out.

#### **The Committee AGREED TO:**

**i) Note the report and confirm the revised plan.**

### **b) Joint Ventures**

Members considered how staffing issues might be dealt with in the event of a joint venture being terminated. It was felt that while this is a management issue, any strategy significantly different to standard college procedures should be considered by the committee.

#### **The Committee AGREED TO:**

**ii) Note the report**

## **807 Health and Safety Monitoring Report (PR635)**

The discussion focussed on the review of college health and safety procedures proposed to occur early in the new year and how this will help to ensure compliance with HSE requirements. The audit will include a review of the management of health and safety, and ensuring competence in carrying appropriate levels of risk management. Ms Sullivan confirmed that she would advise the committee as necessary and suggested that there are a number of good health and safety consultants around who might provide a better service than a larger organisation.

#### **The Committee AGREED TO:**

**l) Note the report**

**808 Freedom of Information Act (PR636)**

Members requested that the listing of information be checked to ensure that it contains only information that is actually available.

**The Committee AGREED to:**

- i) Approve implementation subject to further consideration by management regarding the information details.**

**809 Compliance with, and Review of Terms of Reference (PR6637)**

**The Committee AGREED:**

- i) That the committee had complied with its terms of reference and no changes were required.**

**810 Date of Next Meeting**

**The Committee AGREED the following dates:**

- Monday 19 January 2009 7.00pm** (Special meeting to consider outcomes of due diligence on Enfield College).
- Friday 13 March 2009 3.30pm** Theobald's Park

**The following meetings are cancelled:**

**Wednesday 21 January 2009  
Wednesday 18 March 200**

**811 Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business other than that taken at item 7.

**Signed:**.....  
**(Chair)**

**Date:** 19 January 2008