

THE CORPORATION OF THE COLLEGE OF NORTH EAST LONDON

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held 8.00pm Wednesday 11 March 2009 in the Boardroom at the Tottenham centre of the College.

Present: Mr M. Cooke (Chair)
Ms C. Sullivan
Mr K. Brown
Mrs J. Bax
Mr P. Head

In attendance: Mr D Mathieson (Secretary to the Corporation)
Ms C. Wills (Director of Human Resources) (Items 1-6)
Mr P. Head (Principal)
Mr C. McCutcheon (vice-Principal Finance and Resources)
Ms J. O'Neill (Vice-Principal Curriculum and Learner Experience)
Mr W. Pitumpe (Director of Finance)

820 Urgent Business

There were items of urgent business

821 Declarations of Interest

Mr K. Brown and Mr. P Head in respect of item 8 External Provision

822 CONFIDENTIAL Minutes of the Meeting held 19 January 2009 (PR643)

The Committee AGREED:

- i) To approve the minutes as a true and accurate record**
- ii) That the minutes remain 'commercial in confidence' and that this is reviewed at the first meeting of the committee in the new college year.**

823 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

824 Human Resources Report (PR462)

Ms Wills presented the report highlighting a number of key points.

Performance Management

Five further cases of long term sickness are being addressed through capability procedures. Miss Wills clarified the nature of issues and processes involved.

Employment Tribunals

It was noted that, as the college does not have a collective grievance agreement, a claim by 15 part-time lecturers could not be treated as such. It is understood that those concerned have submitted the matter to an employment tribunal. In response to questions Ms Wills explained the background to the issues and clarified the different categories of part time teaching staff.

Redundancies

The increase in redundancies was a consequence of the ALS issues previously reported.

Employment Policies

Ms Wills advised that a number of college employment policies were no longer fit for purpose or compliant with changing legislation and good practice. She spoke of the unwieldy nature of current processes that distract from more proactive work in the HR service. Revised policies aim to facilitate dealing with employment issues at the lowest possible level. It is also intended to reduce the probationary period from one year to six months with tighter and prompt management intervention to address performance during the early months. Ms O'Neill noted that this will have an impact on the classroom observation policy. It was clarified that the policy changes would be subject to consultation with staff and unions. The Committee was asked to recommend that the corporation approve the immediate reduction of the probationary period to six months.

Right to Work

A number of staff have failed to provide evidence of their right to work as required by legislation. Action is being taken to address this. Failure to provide this information may result in dismissal.

CRB Checks

With the exception of 19 staff, all have now either completed CRB checks or sent off their forms to the CRB. The remainder will be pursued to comply and failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.

Health and Safety

The committee received a copy of the terms of reference for an independent review of health and safety. Ms Sullivan as lead governor for health and safety has been consulted about the remit.

The Committee Agreed:

- i) To note the report**
- ii) Recommend that the Corporation approve a reduction in the staff employment probationary period to 6 months with immediate effect**

825 Finance and Related Reports (PR643)

a) Management Accounts

Mr. Pitumpe summarized key points from the accounts advising that an operating surplus of £270k is projected for the year. In response to questions Mr. Pitumpe and Mr. McCutcheon described how the college was dealing with challenges of operating its Train to Gain (T2G) provision in the current economic climate. It is unlikely that the consortium of colleges will achieve its target of £5million for the year but strategies are in place to maximize delivery of the CONEL's T2G provision.

The Committee AGREED to:

- i) Note the report**

b) Risk Management Update

Mr. McCutcheon summarised minor changes to the risk register.

The Committee AGREED to:

- ii) Note the report**

c) Accommodation Strategy

The report summarized the background to the joint property strategy with Enfield College and described progress to date. Attention was drawn to a review of the feasibility study being undertaken by newly appointed professional advisors, and a series of scoping workshops involving both colleges. Revised figures emerging from a more detailed assessment of accommodation requirements have identified a potentially higher project cost of £163million. A consequential effect of this is higher AIP fees. The extra cost may however be offset against an LSC grant of £250k (or £500k for both sites if perceived as separate projects). The Principal clarified the position regarding the capital funding issues recently emerging from the LSC and described the potential impact on CONEL and the merged college. He advised of a possible opportunity for a joint building development with Enfield Primary Care Trust at the Enfield College site.

The Committee AGREED to;

- i) Note the report**

826 External Providers

A) Franchises and Partnerships

The Committee AGREED to:

- i) Note the report**

B) Joint Enterprises

Mr. McCutcheon advised of the need to appoint additional governors to the boards of college subsidiary companies to fill director vacancies. He described the difficulty in finding members to take on these duties. Due to other commitments it is proving difficult for Ms Sullivan to attend board meetings of KIST and has indicated her intention to step down when a replacement is found. It was noted that Mr.Cooke as Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee was willing to serve as director on college companies. This was welcomed however it was noted that the same two governors would be on several boards. In view of the difficulties in finding others willing to take on director roles it was felt that at the present time there was no alternative. The Principal recommended that the Audit Committee be notified of the directorate position and the lack of breadth of governor involvement.

The Committee AGREED to:

- i) **Note the resignation of Ms C. Sullivan as a Director of KIST Ltd;**
- ii) **Approve the appointment of Mr. M Cooke as a Director of the following college subsidiary companies;**
 - **Keeping it Simple Training Ltd (KIST)**
 - **CONEL Innovation Services Ltd**
 - **Monument Equity Employment, Enterprise, and Training Services Ltd**
- iii) **To advise the Audit Committee of the director positions in college subsidiary companies.**

827 College Merger (PR645)

The committee considered the draft 'Heads of Agreement', and draft merger resolutions. It was noted that these issues would be considered in detail at the Joint steering Group meeting on 18th March 2009.

The Committee AGREED to;

- i) **Note the report.**

828 Date of Next Meeting

7.00pm Wednesday 13 May 2009

829 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

Signed
(Chair)

Date: 13 May 2009