

THE CORPORATION OF THE COLLEGE OF NORTH EAST LONDON

Minutes of the Corporation meeting held at 7.00pm Thursday 23 October 2008 in the Boardroom at the Tottenham Centre of the College.

Present: Mr K Brown (Chair)
Dr M Wing
Mrs J Bax
Ms C Sullivan
Mr F Ellis
Mr S Mehmet
Mr H Patel (Staff)
Mr P Head (Principal)
Cllr E Santry (from item 4)
Mr L Brissett
Mr M Cooke

**Apologies:
(Absence)** Cllr D Goddard
Cllr G Meehan
Rev N Obunge
Ms A Rudkin
Ms G Ortanca (Staff)

**Apologies:
(Lateness)** Cllr E Santry

In Attendance: Mr C McCutcheon (Vice Principal Finance and Resources)
Ms Jane O'Neill (Vice Principal Curriculum and Learner Experience)
Mr D Mathieson (Secretary to the Corporation)
Ms P Gowan (Director of Work Based Learning)

Apologies: Ms C Wills (Director of Human Resources)
Mr H Jeffrey (Acting Director of Learner Experience)
Ms D Stylianou (Director of Skills for Life)

1080 Urgent Business and Announcements

The Chair welcomed Ms Jane O'Neill to the meeting.

ALS Issues

The Corporation AGREED to:

- i) Consider ALS Issues at item 9 Principal's Report**

1081 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1082 Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 14 July 2008 (CO1220)

The Corporation AGREED:

- i) To approve the minutes as a true and accurate record.**

1083 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Santry to the meeting.

1084 Chair's Action (CO1221)

Mr McCutcheon advised that an opportunity had occurred during the summer to take over premises formerly used by Laing's Training. He explained how this would provide a substantial resource for the college, through its subsidiaries, to deliver its targets.

The Corporation AGREED to:

- i) Approve Chair's Action in relation to the signing of a lease, and a land registry form in respect of Unocol House, 248 Montague Road; London, N18 2NZ**

1085 Use of Corporation Seal (CO1222)

The Corporation AGREED to:

- i) Note the use of the Corporation Seal in relation to the signing of a lease, and a land registry form in respect of Unocol House, 248 Montague Road; London, N18 2NZ**

108 Development Presentation – Framework for Excellence (CO1223)

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Learner Experience made a presentation that set out the nature of the Framework for Excellence (FFE), the implications for colleges generally and the impact on CONEL. Ms O'Neill described the involvement of CONEL in the pilot for the scheme and stated that this experience would be of considerable help to the college now the initiative has been implemented across the sector. The College was graded as 'Good' overall. As a result of CONEL having achieved the Training Quality Standard recently, the college is exempt from the employer survey for 2008-09. The college will automatically be rated as outstanding in relation to employer responsiveness. In response to questions the following points were noted:

- There are two key aspects to measuring learner responsiveness, the results of learner surveys, and destinations. Colleges generally experience difficulties obtaining destination data and strategies are being pursued to try and overcome this.
- LSC may use the data to determine contracts with providers so there are positive financial implications for the college.
- OFSTED will continue to be an important influencer in determining quality of teaching and learning in colleges.
- The importance of keeping the momentum going in terms of quality across the board is seen as essential in CONEL's journey to becoming outstanding.

The Corporation AGREED:

- i) **Note the report**

1085 Principal's Report (CO1224)

The Principal drew attention to a number of key points from the report: A summary of current policy drivers including; the public services reform process; service delivery priorities; and changes to the systems in which the sector operates was presented highlighting their implications for the Strategic and Development Plan. Members were advised that, due to the ongoing move towards merger with Enfield College, the intention had been to update the College's 2005-08 Plan rather than undertake a radical rewrite. However circumstances have changed considerably since the plan was written and it has been decided that this needs to be recognized. This will be addressed in a new plan 'Achieving Excellence' 2008-12, that will include more fundamental changes. The new plan will address these issues and provide the basis for a joint plan should the merger with

Enfield be completed. He went on to describe various other aspects of the plan including the nature of the provision and community focus.

During questions and discussions the following points were recorded:

- The pending demise of the LSC will see 14-19 funding of FE coming through local authorities, and adult funding through the Adult Skills Funding Agency. The latter will see colleges having greater autonomy within the framework. The Chair stressed the importance of the board being proactive in terms of planning under the new regime.
- The Principal clarified issues relating to current year enrolments reminding members that learners are not counted for funding purposes until they have been on program for 6 weeks. So far numbers have been encouraging however steps are in place for ongoing recruitment throughout the year both in the college and its subsidiaries. A key focus for KIST will be the progression of NEETs into mainstream education and training. The substantial demand for construction training in East London was reported.
- The college has identified the current economic climate as a major risk to its ESOL provision with a potential loss of numbers if the number of migrant workers substantially reduces.

Additional Learning Support. (ALS)

The background and underlying issues associated with an organizational review of the ALS service were reported by the Principal and Ms O'Neill. The complex range of contracts of staff delivering ALS and the present strategy is at odds with practice in other colleges. While there are significant financial issues to be resolved, there is no proposal to reduce the ALS budget. The service must operate within its budget and can no longer be allowed to overspend.

It was stressed that the issue is not simply about staffing and contracts but about the delivery model and the need to move to group support rather than individual support.

The Chairman and Ms Sullivan reported on their conversations with staff prior to the board meeting describing the issues raised. These seemed to be focused on three main themes: cuts in provision in an area of work where CONEL enjoys a good reputation; reduction in income and contractual changes for some staff; and procedural issues in relation to the consultation process.

In the following discussion the following points were raised:

- There have been no cuts to the funding allocation made to ALS. The service is already projecting an overspend due to uneconomic practices that fail to ensure the most effective staff utilization and delivery methods.
- Other London Colleges have cut back on this type of provision as it is no longer funded by the LSC, beyond the allocation made.
- Decisions on how support is allocated to learners needs to be a managed process and not determined on an ad hoc basis without regard to the costs of the support
- Learners are generally very positive in their comments about the service they receive at CONEL.
- Every effort has been made to find a resolution through both group and individual consultation meetings however there have been examples of misinformation from the unions and managers to staff that have been unhelpful.
- Support staff workers are not a homogenous group having a wide range of different grades and conditions of service. It is crucial that this issue is addressed. Some support staff are being paid as lecturers.
- Concern at the impact of these issues on both learners and staff.
- Additional management capacity, through an Assistant Director, will be in place after half term to facilitate the review process and ensure support is in place for learners within the agreed budget.

The Board was advised that changes to the contracts of staff, and different working practices were essential to enable effective and efficient working in ALS. This will lead to some reductions in staff numbers however every effort is being made to try and achieve this without compulsory redundancies. Issues relating to individual and collective negotiation processes were clarified. The key task is to get the job details prepared and then address with the individuals concerned. In response to a question Mr McCutcheon reminded members that the budgetary issues had been flagged in the management accounts.

The Chair recognized the complexities of the issue and expressed his confidence in the Senior Management Team in resolving matters and noted that detailed discussions will take place with staff at Friday's development day.

The Corporation AGREED to:

- i) **Note the report**

1086 College Merger (CO1216)

The Principal presented the report advising that delays in approving the merger consultation process in a number of colleges was due to the Minister requiring more time to gain a better understanding of the implications of each. Particular issues include; potential loss of community assets; costs of retirement package for principals; reduction in choice for learners. He advised that none of these were a factor in the CONEL/Enfield College merger as the intention is to use the joint assets to increase choice. A response is now expected by the end of November.

The Corporation AGREED to:

- i) Note the Report**

1087 Train to Gain (CO1228)

Ms Gowan presented a report requested by the Chair at the last meeting to ensure governors had an understanding of this increasingly important and complex area of work. After describing the background to, and purpose of Train to Gain, she described how CONEL operate this type of provision some of which is provided directly in the work place. Other points of note were the lead role taken by CONEL in the North London consortium, and how this work is delivered by both college staff and through subsidiaries. She responded to questions on quality issues, skills for life in the workplace, funding and targets.

The Corporation AGREED to:

- i) Note the Report**

1088 Minutes from Committees (CO1274)

The following minutes were received:

Joint Steering Group (merger)	23 September 2008
Policy and Resources Committee	15 October 2008

The Principal advise the Board that the national pay award of 3.2% effective 1st October 2008 for all staff (except senior post holders) had been accepted by all CONEL trade unions. It is proposed that this is paid in time for the December pay date.

Audit Committee
Standards Committee

6 October 2008
8 October 2008

The Corporation AGREED to:

- i) Note the committee minutes**
- ii) Approve the 2008-09 staff pay award of 3.2% effective 1st October 2008.**

Search Committee 23 October 2008

The Chair reported on the Search Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. Regarding corporation memberships, he advised that the issue of re-appointments in the lead up to merger had been considered. The terms of office of three governors were due to end before of the next board meeting.

Mr Leslie Brissett: His term of office ends 28 November 2008 and he is not seeking to serve for a further term. In view of the pending merger with Enfield College the Search Committee recommended that the resulting vacancy is not replaced and that with effect from 29 November 2008, the membership is deleted and the constitution amended from 18 members to 17 (to be reviewed in event of the merger not proceeding).

The Corporation AGREED to:

- iii) Reduce the Composition of the Board by one External Member following the end Mr Brissett's term of office 29 November 2008.**

Mr Brissett's departure leaves the position of Vice-Chair of the Corporation vacant along with a vacancy on the Policy and Resources Committee. Mrs Judy Bax was nominated by Ms Sullivan and this was seconded by Mr Mehmet. Mrs Bax withdrew from the meeting while the position was considered. The Chair advised that he would welcome the appointment of Mrs Bax as Vice Chair as she would bring a broad range of knowledge and experience to the office.

The Corporation AGREED to:

- iv) Appoint Mrs Bax as Vice Chair of the Corporation, and Member of the Policy and Resources Committee with immediate effect until 31 July 2009**

Mrs Bax rejoined the meeting and was advised of the decision to appoint her as Vice Chair which she accepted.

Cllr G Meehan: His term of office ends 28 November 2008 and he has indicated his wish to continue for a further term. The Search Committee recommends that he be appointed and made specific reference to his role as Leader of Haringey Council. It was felt that strong links with Haringey were important in view of both the merger, and the future funding arrangements for 16-19 year olds.

Rev Nims Obunge: His term of office ends 12 December 2008 and he has indicated that he would like to stand for a further term. The Search Committee noted his contribution to the college particularly in relation to his community activities and work with young people in trying to reduce violent crime. It was recommended that he be appointed for a further term.

The Corporation AGREED to:

- v) **Appoint Cllr G Meehan as an External Governor to a four year term of office 29 November 2008 to 28 November 2012.**
- vi) **Appoint Rev N Obunge as an External Governor to a four year term of office 13 December 2008 to 12 December 2012.**

1089 Issues from Committees (CO1218)

Audit Committee

The Corporation welcomed the positive report of the Internal Auditor and progress made during the year. Attention was drawn to the key points in Audit Plan.

The Corporation AGREED to:

- i) **Receive the Annual Report 2007-08 of the Internal Auditor**
- ii) **Approve the Audit Plan 2008-09**
- iii) **Receive the Annual Report 2007-08 of the Audit Committee**

Policy and Resources Committee

The Chair advised that an independent review of health and Safety would be undertaken. This has been initiated to ensure that CONEL operates outstanding health and Safety procedures that comply with best practice. Ms Sullivan as lead member for health and safety has agreed to assist by reviewing the specification for the review.

Mr McCutcheon presented a report on the financial status of the college that indicates CONEL is currently outstanding and will continue to be so if projections are met.

The Corporation AGREED to:

- iv) **Receive the Annual Health and Safety Report 2007-08**
- v) **Approve the College Financial Status as LSC Grade 'A'**

Standards Committee

It was noted that the internal self assessment processes had been supported by the external validation of OFSTED and the LSC auditors during the inspection in May 2008.

The Corporation AGREED to:

- vi) **Determine a grade of 'Outstanding' for Governance**
- vii) **Approve the text on Governance for inclusion in the College SAR.**

1090 Date of Next Meeting

7.00pm Tuesday 16 December 2008

The Secretary drew attention to the Special meeting scheduled for the 5th February 2009 to approve the merger subject to the timetable being adhered to.

He also reminded members to keep their diaries clear for the Annual Corporation Conference 13 March 2009.

Dates for Joint Steering Group. The next meeting will take place 7.00pm Wednesday 14 January 2009 at Enfield College. No date has been set for the proposed meeting in March.

1091 Urgent Business

The Chair expressed his thanks and appreciation to Mr Brissett on the occasion of his last meeting as a Corporation Member. He spoke of the substantial support and commitment he had given during his 12 years as a Governor of the College through difficult and challenging times. A gift was

presented to Mr Brissett in recognition and appreciation of his exemplary service.

The Corporation AGREED to:

i) Record a vote of thanks to Mr Brissett

Mr Brissett replied describing how much he felt he had personally developed in his time as governor and his pleasure in the distance travelled by the College in recent years.

Signed:.....
(Chair)

Date: 16 December 2008