

BOSTON COLLEGE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION ON 30 OCTOBER 2019

1. PRESENT

Peter Cropley (Chair), Andy Atkins, Jo Maher, Helen Mather, Chris Pett, Michelle Sacks, Ann Savage, Gerry Tawton, Nick Worth and Helen Wright.

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Craig Gosling (Head of Quality), Debbie Holland (Director of Finance) and Rob Barlow (Chief Executive of East Lindsey District Council - part of item 3 only)

Meeting attendance: 81.25%

Apologies for absence were received from David Earnshaw and Ben Webb.

2. MEMBERSHIP

Members were advised that David Hanson, Stephen Brown and Terry Moore had left the Corporation and it was agreed that the Chair should write to them thanking them for their services.

The Search and Governance Committee had interviewed two potential members, Heather Lee and Kate Folling. Members noted the broad experience which Heather would bring to the Corporation and noted that she would be able to extend the Corporation's links with the Colleges Health and Safety management. Kate Folling's experience and background with a large local employer was also discussed. The Corporation agreed to appoint, as the committee recommended, Heather Lee for a 4-year term and Kate Folling for a 2-year term commencing with the December meeting of the Corporation.

Members were given information about the staff and student nominees who were being put forward for appointment. Jo Maher gave some background on Ruth Catlett, the staff member, and information was also provided on Mollie Plummer and David Rudnyanszky, the student nominees. It was agreed that Ruth Catlett should be appointed for a 4-year term as a staff governor, Mollie Plummer for a 2-year term as a student governor and David Rudnyanszky for a 1-year term as a student governor since he would only be attending college for a maximum 1 year.

Mollie Plummer and David Rudnyanszky joined the meeting.

3. PROPERTY PRESENTATION

Jo Maher gave a presentation on a number of property initiatives.

Rob Barlow the Chief Executive of East Lindsey District Council joined the Corporation whilst consideration was given to the development of provision in Horncastle.

Rob Barlow explained to members the geographic considerations and back-ground to the proposal and advised that the College and the Council were working to starting provision in September 2021. East Lindsey District Council has approved the development subject to planning, LEP funding and partnership arrangements being in place. GLLEP is being asked for funding relating to the College provision. Peter Cropley asked about the minimum number of students this development would need to be viable and Jo Maher explained the numbers at which provision would break even and it was noted that these were quite modest. In response to a query from Ann Savage it was confirmed that the College would be able to provide evening services in Horncastle. It was noted that if the College went into this arrangements there would be a break clause with no conditions. Ann Savage asked about public transport servicing this provision and Rob Barlow advised that there was some public transport but that there was also

good car parking at the site. Michelle Sacks asked about the LEP implications of a break clause and it was confirmed that LEP outputs should be satisfied before that possibility occurred. The Corporation discussed the background to this proposal and the benefits of making provision in Horncastle for businesses and individuals. Members confirmed their support for this development with a suitable break cause and asked the Finance and Resources Committee to pick up oversight of this.

Heather Lee joined the meeting at this point

Jo Maher's update included further information on the EMAT development where it was confirmed that the contractors snagging should be completed by 8 November to enable students to move into the building on 11 November. An official opening is likely to be in January 2020 but there will be a Corporation tour of the meeting prior to the next meeting. Information was also provided about the status of the DTLA and Institute of Technology developments.

Jo Maher presented information about potential development of the property strategy and in particular the Rochford site. A discussion took place about how the College's plans might be developed looking at the longer term and it was suggested that there was a link with the Borough Council's plans for the town which might make the Council able to offer support to the College developments. The Corporation was asked whether the plans should be progressed so that they were ready for implementation as required and this was approved. Members agreed that a property sub-committee should be created to oversee this and members were asked to submit their names if they wish to join this committee. The committee would look at property developments including sustainability.

The Corporation considered how possible acquisitions might fit into the College's future plans and it was agreed that the possibilities identified should be pursued.

4. **ACTION LOG**

Members reviewed the progress made against items identified on the action log.

Members were advised that a sponsorship plan for EMAT equipment by the Borough Council was being considered and was likely to be decided in the next 2 – 3 weeks.

5. **MINUTES**

a) Corporation – 3 July 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2019 were reviewed and approved as a correct record.

b) Standards Committee – 2 October 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2019 were reviewed.

c) Search and Governance Committee – 7 October 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2019 were reviewed.

d) Finance and Resources Committee – 7 October 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2019 were reviewed.

Michelle Sacks left the meeting at this point.

e) Audit Committee – 20 June 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2019 were reviewed.

It was noted that funding will be picked up as an issue in Governor Development. In response to a query about modern slavery statements it was confirmed that the College was not big enough to need a statutory statement.

6. REPORTS

a) Principal's

Members received a report from the Principal on a number of sector and College issues.

Jo Maher advised that 'no deal' Brexit preparations were being dealt with by a task group from College Management team. In terms of the election, the college had connections with appropriate policy group.

It was noted that the ESFA were taking a very firm line on the use of sub-contracting and that generally levels of regulation were increasing. Members noted that the anticipated inspection of residential provision was taking place whilst the meeting was proceeding and that outcomes would be known shortly.

b) Finance

Members received a report from the Director of Finance on the final accounts position for 2018-19.

Debbie Holland advised members that pre-audit figures indicated Outstanding financial health. She reminded members that they all have access to Management accounts and confirmed that the College had no identified incidents of fraud or inappropriate expenses. Members were pleased to note the forecast year-end position. It was also noted that the Finance and Resources Committee would welcome better attendance at the pre-budget meeting next year.

c) Governance

Members received a report from the Clerk to the Corporation on a number of governance issues. Having considered the contents of the report members agreed that Michelle Sacks and Helen Wright should be appointed as members of the Audit Committee. It was agreed that new members of the Corporation would be given an option to visit committees to see which they were interested in with a view to making firm choices by February 2020. The Clerk to the Corporation will circulate the list of meetings to these members.

Janet Hemmant advised members of committee and Corporation performance against 2018-19 targets which were noted and members agreed to approve the proposed targets for 2019-20 for the Finance and Resources Committee and Standards Committee as suggested.

It was agreed that the Corporation itself should have as its targets for 2019-20:

- 80% attendance
- All governors to make at least one curriculum or business support visit during the year
- Oversight of the quality of teaching and learning assessment, learner progress, progression and destinations
- Oversight of the IoT, DTLA and Horncastle developments
- Monitor OfS compliance
- Oversight of overseas expenses
- Maintain £1m cash reserve.

Members reviewed a suggestion from the Search and Governance Committee for the adoption of software for the management of board papers and it was agreed that this should be purchased. ●

Members also reviewed decision making processes, which were confirmed as satisfactory, and the release of confidential papers. It was agreed that, from a list presented, one Principal's report and HR reports with individual information redacted should be released from confidentiality.

d) Human Resources

Members received a report from the Head of HR and Organisational Development which was presented by the Principal.

Having reviewed the information presented Peter Cropley asked about National comparisons for performance and it was confirmed that AoC had not yet shared this information. A query was raised about an increase in absence by month in the latter part of the year and Peter Cropley queried whether this was a trend. Jo Maher offered to check on this and to get the Head of HR and Organisational Development to provide an update on this. ●

Members noted that health care costs had gone up but that there was some success in getting staff to work back to work earlier after illness.

Jo drew members attention to additional workload for the HR team arising particularly from new recruitment requirements. The HR team would be introducing a new management information system and the College was looking at providing additional support for the team through this busy period. Jo advised members that potential changes to the staff survey to improve its meaningfulness were being reviewed. She confirmed that some costs of implementing the living wage had been modelled into budgets and that 9 staff need to have settled status confirmed.

Peter Cropley asked why absence in Learner Services is particularly high. Jo explained the background to this and how the issue was being addressed.

e) Health and Safety Annual Report

Members received a report from the Health and Safety advisor which was presented by the Principal. Members reviewed the contents of the report and noted the information provided. It was suggested that Heather Lee should have Health and Safety as a link area. ●

Jo Maher confirmed that the College had made significant investment in training in Health and Safety and highlighted the College's successful migration to the new ISO 45001:18 Health and Safety management standard.

f) Risk Management

Members received a report from the Director of Finance on risk management. Debbie Holland presented information on how the Risk management process operates and identified the top risks as well as providing a full list of identified risks.

Gerry Tawton asked about business continuity and it was confirmed that Rachael Baker was working on an integrated business continuity plan. Peter Cropley asked how the grading for risks is arrived at. Debbie confirmed that this is to some extent subjective but that any major discrepancies would be picked up through audit.

7. OfS REGULATION AND COMPLIANCE

Members received a report from the Principal on OfS compliance.

It was noted that the College had received a letter which had gone to hundreds of providers about compliance issues. The specific issue which had been raised at Boston College had been dealt with but Jo confirmed that the Executive team needs to have oversight of compliance. It was agreed that the Standards Committee would also oversee this and that it should be added to the committee's agendas. ●

Andy Atkins left the meeting at this point.

Jo advised that AoC had raised a complaint about the way in which minor compliance issues had been dealt with by OfS. In agreeing that the Standards Committee should assume a monitoring role in respect of this compliance, members agreed that the Standards Committee membership should be increased to 8 to allow for better scrutiny. ●

8. SAFEGUARDING

The Principal advised that Safeguarding reports now need to be given at each meeting and she advised that one prevent referral had been made. ●

9. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

It was confirmed that the next meetings of the Corporation would take place as follows:

Corporation 11 December 2019
CPD/Planning 26 February 2020
Corporation 26 February 2020
Corporation 13 May 2020
Corporation 1 July 2020

It was agreed that the Corporation meeting on 11 December 2019 would be preceded by a tour of the EMAT building and that the CPD session and Corporation meeting on 26 February 2020 would take place at Spalding.