

John Wheatley College

Board of Management

Executive Committee

Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday 28 March 2006 at 12.30pm in the Ballantines Room of the Teacher Building, 14 St Enoch Square, Glasgow.

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The meeting commenced at 12.30pm and was attended by:

Andy Woolley (Chair)
Desmond O'Brien; and
Ian Graham (Principal).

Also in attendance:

Alex Kirk (Depute Principal);
Alan Sherry (Assistant Principal);
James Gow (Chief Finance Officer);
Roger Stewart (Clerk to the Board); and
Mhairi McAdam (Recording Purposes only).

2 Apologies

Arthur Allison
Helen Ostrycharz;
Tom Burton;
Margaret Forsyth

3 Terms of Reference

Members noted the terms of reference of the Executive Committee. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate with 3 members in attendance.

4 Declarations of Interest

The Principal informed members of a declaration of interest at Item 12 AoC – Survey of Remuneration of Middle Manager and Senior Post Holders 2006 for all the College senior managers present.

5 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 December 2005

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting held on 20 December 2005.

6 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

There were no matters arising outwith the agenda.

7 Correspondence

a) CDU Limited - Clerk to the Board: Term of Office

Members noted the correspondence from CDU in relation to the Term of Office for the Clerk to the Board.

8 SFC Consultation: Developing a Needs-led Model for Funding the Activity of Students with Additional Needs for Learning in Colleges – College Response

The Principal reminded members that an earlier draft of the college's response had been discussed at the recent Board meeting and that the final draft was here for consideration. He reported that further changes have now been made to the response to take account of comments made at the Board. He further reminded members that the Board had delegated approval of the response to the Committee and that it required to be submitted by 31 March 2006.

The Principal informed members that the substantive points contained in the response (append 1) had not been altered from the document considered at the Board meeting. He proceeded to highlight a number of areas which were included in the response document in particular:

- the effectiveness of the current Personal Learning Support Plan system;
- the substantial costs associated with the proposed methodology;
- the failure to recognise the cumulative impact of a number of support needs on the learning experience;
- the subjective nature of the assessment instrument; and
- the concept that an additional learning need can be 'fixed'.

The Principal informed members that the college had grave concerns if the proposed methodologies were introduced to be introduced particularly the impact on the quality of the learner experience. In addition the college anticipated that if the new methodology was introduced it would cause a substantial financial burden as it would be very labour intensive with an estimated cost of circa £500,000 which could even lead to redundancies.

However the revised response document included the offer that the college would be willing to participate in a pilot project which sought to identify a methodology which was more appropriate for the FE sector than that proposed in the consultation document. He opined that such a project would require to be undertaken over a number of academic years and include a review of the likely impact on the funding methodology.

The Principal also made members aware of the linkage with Item 10 on the agenda in relation to The Scottish Executive's initiative to reduce burdens in FE Colleges in that it was the view of the college that the proposed changes would have the opposite effect.

Following discussion members of the Executive Committee agreed to:

- i) note the contents of this report and its appendix;

- ii) endorse the College's response (appendix 2) to the consultation exercise; and
- iii) request the Principal to submit the College response to the Scottish Funding Council by 31 March 2006.

9 Current and Developing Governance Issues

The Principal informed members that the report sought to apprise members of the detail of legal advice obtained by the Association of Scotland's Colleges (ASC) in respect of the possible development of issues related to the governance of Colleges. The Principal further informed members that the college has already addressed most of these issues. However he reminded members that it was good practice that the Audit Needs Assessment ensured that the Internal Auditors undertook a review of corporate governance annually.

In particular the Principal highlighted the current ongoing issues with the Charitable Status for Colleges and the steps the Scottish Executive are taking to ensure that this status was retained. In response to questions Roger Stewart confirmed that in his view that the college is currently complying with all legislation.

Members of the Executive Committee agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Principal's report;
- ii) note the contents of the advice on developing governance issues (provided by ASC's legal advisers); and
- iii) request the Board's Audit Committee to ensure that, for financial year 2006/07, the Audit Needs Assessment (ANA) ensures that the College's compliance with the governance agenda is reviewed (on the Board's behalf).

10 Reducing Burdens in Colleges of Further Education

The Principal informed members that the report sought to apprise the Committee of the contents of a paper produced by the UK Cabinet Office's Better Regulation Executive in respect of reducing the Audit and related Burdens on Further Education Colleges. The Principal opined that it was anticipated that this report will inform the Scottish Executive's Review of Scotland's Colleges exercise.

The Principal highlighted the key conclusions as follows:

- planning and funding processes do not always appear to be coherent;
- data collection was often 'uncoordinated, duplicative and poorly timed as well as not appropriately shared for other purposes';
- audit and inspection regimes were a significant 'time bandits' for the sector which detracted from the provision of services with no identifiable benefit on their quality; and

- there was not adequate consultation in respect of policy change and the reason for such changes were not always adequately explained.

In response to questions the Principal opined that the reports conclusions highlighted the need for 'joined-up' thinking both from the Scottish Executive and the Funding Council.

Members of the Executive Committee agreed to:

- note the contents of the Principal's report; and
- note the contents and conclusions of the Better Regulation Executive's Report on Reducing Burdens on Colleges.

11 Capital Formula Funding for 2006-07 and 2007-08

The Principal informed members of the College's allocation of formulaic capital funding for financial/academic years 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Members should note that the College is obliged formally to accept the offer of capital made in the attached Scottish Funding Council's circular (circular: SFC/14/06).

The Principal reminded members that the Board had previously agreed to commit this funding to the cost of constructing the new campus. However he reported that the alteration to the payment profile of this grant (a quarterly system rather than the one-off payment which had previously been employed) had the potential to cause cash-flow issues related to the payments which would be required in respect of the new East End campus. In these circumstances the college was seeking approval to write to the Chief Executive of SFC requesting a single payment of this grant

Following discussion, members of the Executive Committee agreed to:

- note the contents of the Principal's report and its appendices;
- note that the College has already committed these resources (in its full business case and subsequent iterations of the East End Campus project) to the Haghill project; and
- endorse the College's formal response to the SFC's offer of capital grant for 2006/07 and 2007/08.

The Chair suggested that Item 12 be placed at the end of today's meeting, members agreed to the proposal.

13 Disclosure Checks for Board Members

A Kirk spoke to his report informing members that under the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003, it was now proposed that Board Members be included within the Management of Criminal Records Information Policy and Procedure. The college existing policy would remain but with the modification to include Board Members. He reminded members that Board policy ensured that all teaching and support staff complete a Criminal Records Disclosure Form prior to employment as part of the recruitment process.

General discussion followed on the legislation and the importance of ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable adults. In response to questions the Depute Principal confirmed that the policy would be amended to reflect the requirements of the Scottish Vetting and Barring Scheme.

In response to further questions the Principal reminded members that the Child Protection Policy had been produced following discussion with Glasgow City Council Education Services.

Being no further discussion members agreed to:

Following discussion, members of the Executive Committee agreed to:

- i) note the contents of this report and its appendices;
- ii) note the draft Management of Criminal Records Information Policy and Procedure particularly the information relevant to members of the Board of Management;
- iii) agree to members of the Board of Management being included in the Management of Criminal Records Information Policy and Procedure; and
- iv) request the College to forward this report to the Board of Management for information.

14 Mandate Project – Library of Congress Visit

The Principal asked members to recall that the College had received funding from Joint Information Services Council (JISC) to develop a digital repository system as part of the national Mandate Project. He also informed members that this project was led by the Learning and Information Services Manager.

The Principal highlighted that as part of this project there has been a request for a delegation, which was intended to include the Learning and Information Services manager, from Britain to attend an event at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, USA in May 2006. In these circumstances the Principal had agreed to the participation of the Learning and Information Services Manager in this event and that under the Scheme of Delegation was seeking the approval of members to that decision.

After discussion members agreed to:

- a) note the contents of the report; and
- b) endorse the decision of the Principal to use his delegated authority to agree to the Information and Learning Services Manager being a member of the JISC delegation to Washington, DC, USA.

I Graham, A Kirk, J Gow and A Sherry formally declared an interest in this item as of being senior staff postholders and left the meeting at 1.35pm. As a result of the departure of the Principal the Clerk informed the chair that the meeting was now aquorate however members agreed to discuss item 12 for information purposes.

12 AoC – Survey of Remuneration of Middle Managers and Senior Postholders 2006

There followed general discussion of the Survey of Remuneration of Middle Managers and Senior Postholders 2006 with members noting its contents.

15 Closure

The meeting closed at 1.45pm with the Chair thanking all members for their attendance.

16 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.