

LEEDS COLLEGE OF BUILDING

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

Minutes of the special meeting of the Corporation held on Tuesday 22 November 2010 at 3.30pm in Meeting Room 1.

PRESENT:

C Harrigan (Chairperson)
I Billyard
Councillor G Driver
A Finn
M Himsworth
D Hutchinson
A Iveson
H Ramsden
P Rogerson
J Speight
R Vollans
M White

IN ATTENDANCE:

D Pullein (Executive Director - Finance)
R Scanlan (Clerk to the Corporation and Executive Director - Support Services)
D Whitehead (Deputy Principal and Executive Director – Curriculum and Quality)
N Fearnside (Secretary – minutes)

**ACTION
BY AND
TARGET DATE**

1. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from J Evans, A Gamble and M Joyce.

4. FEEDBACK

a) Record of main findings from Ofsted Inspection

I Billyard reported that headline grades had been communicated via email following the Ofsted Inspection on 8-12 November 2010. Overall the Inspection had been very positive.

D Whitehead reported that Inspection feedback was given by the Lead Inspector (Bob Busby) to the Senior Management Team, Chair of Governors and representatives from the Skills Funding Agency and Education Leeds; this presentation is available on the Governors' portal for information. D Whitehead gave a brief overview of this feedback.

4. FEEDBACK (continued)

a) Record of main findings from Ofsted Inspection (continued)

All five key areas received overall grade 2s, together with Safeguarding and Equality & Diversity (limiting grades). Each of the Sector Subject Areas also received grade 2; this will be reflected in the final report. Out of 17 aspects only one grade 3 was awarded by the Inspectors – Being Healthy; it was felt that much of what the College had in place was now the norm in the sector. Four grade 1's were awarded for governance, meeting the needs of users, partnerships and feeling safe and the remainder were grade 2.

The main findings confirmed that outcomes for learners are good and pass rates are very high on most courses. Learners felt safe. Teaching and learning overall is good, particularly in practical sessions. Inspectors felt that the arrangements for observing teaching and learning were well established; however they felt that a more systematic approach was required to move lecturers up a grade, although they recognised that work was taking place to support lecturers. Meeting the needs and interest of users was excellent, together with partnership arrangements. Care, guidance and support was good. Governance was outstanding and Inspectors commented that Governors provide excellent support to senior managers. The operational plans and quality improvement measures are closely aligned to the College's strategic plan. High quality resources and accommodation were noted. Arrangements for the promotion of equality and diversity were good.

Recommendations were made to improve the College's provision and the majority of these expanded and built on existing systems / procedures / strategies already in place, which was pleasing.

The learners' and employers' views were noted, together with suggestions on improvements which the College could implement.

The Inspection report is still subject to moderation by Ofsted and a draft will be sent to the College for factual accuracy checking this week. The final report will then be published within 15-25 working days after the last day of the Inspection; following which a Post Inspection Action Plan will be produced for implementation.

D Whitehead stated that Inspectors had commented that there were not a lot of negative comments received from staff, students or employers. Unfortunately no learner comments had been received via email; however feedback during the numerous planned meetings with learners had been very positive.

C Harrigan stated that Inspectors had commented that the nominee (Derek Whitehead) had been an excellent ambassador for the College; this was reiterated by Ofsted's Quality Assurance Moderator who was part of the team. Thanks were also passed to N Fearnside for her tremendous help and support in co-ordinating the administration of the Inspection.

M Himsworth, on behalf of the Corporation, thanked all members of staff for their hard work and support during the Inspection.

4. FEEDBACK (continued)

a) Record of main findings from Ofsted Inspection (continued)

P Rogerson felt that the whole process had been managed extremely well and the outcome was a great result for the College.

I Billyard stated that he had sent letters of thanks to the Executive Team for their commitment and support during the Inspection. He would also be visiting all sites to update staff on the Inspection result and thank them personally for their support.

b) Provider Financial Assurance (PFA)

D Pullein reported that an annual self assessment was required to be undertaken (Financial Management and Control Evaluation) every year for the Skills Funding Agency. However, PFA auditors carried out an actual Audit at the same time as the Inspection in line with Inspection protocol and in every aspect the Auditors agreed with the College's self assessment of Outstanding.

R Scanlan stated that the majority of the Audit was finance related, with aspects relating to governance, oversight and procedural elements.

C Harrigan reported that comments from the Auditors indicated positive feedback from staff, particularly relating to the recent redundancy process which had been undertaken. The Auditors were also impressed by the budget holder structure and the fact that budget holders were aware of the need for costs savings at all levels in the organisation.

M Himsworth reported that the Auditors were impressed with the report on potential bidding opportunities which was shared with the Governors and also the Risk Management system. The Auditors had also commented that the redundancy exercise was transparent and the College was proactive, not reactive, in addressing important issues.

5. PURCHASE OF LAND AT HUNSLET, LEEDS

R Scanlan presented a paper outlining the College's proposal to purchase land at Hunslet, Leeds.

R Scanlan and I Billyard had met with the land agents and two possible sites had been viewed at Black Bull Street, one was 3.18 acres and the other 4.84 acres. The College's preference was the western site (3.18 acres), which fronts on to Black Bull Street and Hunslet Road. Both sites were available on a freehold basis and an informal valuation suggested the cost would be between £400k and £600k per acre.

The land was previously owned by Yorkshire Chemicals and a contaminated land agreement is in place; further surface cleaning would be required. Both sites contain cellars which would also need to be dealt with.

5. PURCHASE OF LAND AT HUNSLET, LEEDS (continued)

A brief overview was given of further considerations to be taken into account, including the need for planning permission for education / training use, contributions to Agreement 106 and 278 costs etc.

R Scanlan outlined the next steps which would need to be undertaken.

The Corporation was asked to consider the proposal to proceed with the purchase of the land at Black Bull Street.

P Rogerson asked if the preferred site was less contaminated than the eastern side; this was not known at the current time. He also asked for clarification on what fees had been expended pursuing the Regent Street site. It was noted that a land valuation had been undertaken, together with the cost of a planning workshop.

Councillor Driver declared an interest as a member of the Planning Committee. He stated that lots of changes were in the pipeline across the south part of the city centre, including a city centre park. Concerns were noted regarding pedestrian access and it was agreed that this would need to be investigated.

I Billyard reported that he had attended the recent Leeds Integrated Transport Strategy meeting and various developments were being planned over time for the area.

Councillor Driver stated that the city centre loop may extend to this area in time. He also stated that the City Architect had creative ideas regarding land space and opening this out from the city.

P Rogerson stated that the road network may eventually change, although currently the eastern side may be more accessible.

The longer term plans for the area looked very exciting.

It was noted that the site was just within the Aire Valley Development boundary and some funding may be available.

A Finn asked for clarification on how much land the College required; R Scanlan confirmed that 3.18 acres would be suitable for the College's second campus.

It was noted that the College had reached the final stage in the National Skills Academy bid for Environmental & Sustainable Technologies and the site would provide a good opportunity to include such technologies into a new build, linking with Universities and ALMOS as appropriate.

R Scanlan reported that once the land was acquired the site would be developed on a phased basis. Some capital money may be available from the Skills Funding Agency, but not a significantly large amount.

5. PURCHASE OF LAND AT HUNSLET, LEEDS (continued)

D Pullein emphasised that land prices would never be as low as they are now and it was a good time to purchase.

A Finn asked if the site was part of the original search carried out. R Scanlan stated that it was not, a second search had been carried out by GVA Grimley.

C Harrigan stated that the College currently had large reserves and did need to start moving the property strategy forward to make good use of these reserves.

I Billyard felt that it would be advantageous if all M&E courses could be brought together on one site as previously proposed. There would be more consistent quality and it could also impact favourably on retention. A new build may also impact positively on recruitment.

H Ramsden felt that the proposed site was in a good position and would be very prominent for the College. Councillor Driver concurred that the site was very close to one of the major gateways into Leeds and the College would be highly visible.

D Hutchinson emphasised that remediation costs could be an issue with regard to the contaminated land.

Councillor Driver advised that discussions with the Planning Department should be instigated as soon as possible and R Scanlan would progress this.

A Finn felt that a more robust estimate of the costs involved in securing the site was required; R Scanlan would progress this.

RS
14 Dec. 2010

The Corporation approved the following:

- The continuation of discussions to secure an agreement with the land owners at a purchase price not exceeding £500k per acre (+ VAT).
- To expend fees (up to £75k) as required in the process of securing a contract to purchase; such fees would be reviewed on an on-going basis as required.
- To delegate the on-going financial monitoring of the purchase to the Finance and General Purposes Committee; within the conditions laid down by the Corporation.

R Scanlan stated that a progress update would be given at the next Board meeting in December.

RS
14 Dec. 2010

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 14 December 2010 at 3.30 pm.

A Governors' Away Day is scheduled for Monday 31 January 2011 at Weetwood Hall.

Signed for Distribution:
(Chair)

Date:

Approved:
(Chair)

Date: