

**Minutes of College/Council Strategic Liaison Group**  
**28 September 2009 – CWA, King's Lynn Campus**  
**10.10 am**

**Present**

***The College of West Anglia***

Peter Dixon	Chair
David Pomfret	Principal
Roger Ward	Governor
Arlene Clark	Executive Director

***King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council***

Councillor Nick Daubney	Leader of the Council
Ray Harding	Chief Executive
Councillor Zipha Christopher	

**In Attendance**

Hilary Reid

Clerk to the Corporation, CWA

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**1 Apologies**

None.

**2 Minutes of the Last Meeting – 15 May 2009**

The Minutes of the meeting of 15 May 2009 were agreed as an accurate record.

**3 Matters Arising**

None.

**4 College Corporate Issues**

The Principal reported on College issues, noted as follows:

**(i) Priority Objectives 2009/10**

Members were referred to the confidential paper circulated with the agenda setting out the College's Priority Objectives for 2009/10. The difficult financial environment and the potential for shared services were acknowledged.

The Principal highlighted the increased participation targets. AC explained that 3,900 16-19 full and part-time students had enrolled – an increase of around 1,000 full-time students compared with the same time last year. There had been an increase in student numbers across most of the College curriculum areas. Of note were 150 more 19+ learners than last year; increases in media, construction and medical access courses; and, a huge increase in demand for public services. The growth in student numbers would impact on the ability of the College to fund learners without new money becoming available.

RH enquired as to the continuing support from Anglia Ruskin University and was assured that HE courses at the College were strongly supported by the University.

The Principal expressed the view that government funding would continue to reduce at the same time as participation targets were being increased. The growth trend, with the quality of infrastructure of the College, was not sustainable.

The College aimed to continue to seek government approval and funding for its capital investment plans. RH suggested that this be taken back to the West Norfolk Partnership to contribute funding to develop a firm proposal.

Members noted the seven key priority areas for the College.

## **(ii) Organisational Structure Update**

Re-structuring of the organisation had taken place at the end of the academic year 2008-09. As a result of consultation, some changes had been made to the original proposals - the counselling service was rationalised rather than discontinued and the nurse/medical officer was retained with hours of work rationalised to meet the demands of users.

Thirty individuals left the organisation with only a small number of compulsory redundancies. The Senior Management Team had been reduced by one – the Director of Capital/Educational Developments. A list of key contacts, members of the Senior Management Team and their responsibilities would be attached to the Minutes. **Action: DP**

## **(iii) Revised Estates Strategy**

A capital summit meeting had been arranged for 13 November 2009 which was to bring together representatives from government office, EEDA, Norfolk County Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council and the Borough Council.

The College had gone to tender for a full condition survey on all sites – a report was expected within three months. A strategic planning day with the Board of the Corporation was to take place on 7 October 2009 to review the options on the development of the infrastructure.

The original option to develop brand new facilities on NORA was now out of reach but the Corporation had not ruled out some development on NORA. The key issue was about appropriate scale and size - something that might expand – or no development on NORA. These options had not been closed down.

Bond Bryan had been commissioned to do a new piece of work and the architect, Roger Newman, would be leading the governors' planning day. There were pressing issues around the current state of the College's buildings and in particular around technology and workshops.

EEDA and LSC still considered the College of West Anglia a priority, but they were not offering a substantive capital solution to that at the moment.

The assistance of the Borough Council in ensuring the College was able to move forward with planning matters was appreciated and acknowledged.

**The Principal's report was noted.**

## **5 Borough Council Corporate Issues**

The Chief Executive reported on Borough Council issues, noted as follows:

### **(i) Local Government Review**

The outcome of the Boundary Committee's appeal on 6/7 October to overturn the High Court ruling which went against them for Suffolk and Devon would be known by the end of October and this was the next milestone in the process. If the Boundary Committee won they would probably move the process along quickly. This would generate further High Court action.

### **(ii) Growth Plan**

The £2.5m for CLG for growth proposals had already been allocated. Subsequently, the government had clawed back 20% for early start housing. The Council was pushing ahead on work on the ground on the NORA scheme and utilities and infrastructure were being progressed.

MA were revising their proposal for the Enterprise Centre within the next few weeks.

A full review of the marina regeneration scheme had taken place and the scheme was likely to be delayed.

Two supermarket applications were being considered at the Hardwick, both of which were subject to traffic impact assessments for Highways.

English Partnership and the Housing Corporation were seeking a single communication link – the driver being housing.

A meeting with the Chief Executive from EEDA highlighted opportunities for securing funding in November/December/January when it becomes known which schemes are not going forward. EEDA had asked the Borough to produce a single document for the region primarily focussed on King's Lynn which was currently in draft form. It was important that the College's aspirations were built into that as an opportunity to access funding in 2011 would arise. EEDA were also re-structuring.

DP commented that, depending on the outcome of the elections next May, EEDA were likely to have a key influence over colleges in the future as they would take the lead on the proposed Skills Strategy.

The Principal accepted an invitation from the Chief Executive to join the Growth Partnership.

### **(iii) Credit Crunch**

A series of service reviews were taking place across the organisation. The Borough Council was also looking at shared services opportunities with North Norfolk and Yarmouth – Revenues and Benefits - which could save £250k each year. Joint procurement and management of street parking services were also being explored.

The service reviews were likely to lead to a withdrawal from some service areas. The financial position for 2011/12 projected a gap of about £925k. There was an expectation of funding cuts over the next three year period and a further £250k was needed together with savings of 10%. A leisure trust and some property rationalisation were being considered. The Council faced a difficult time ahead.

### **(iv) The Academy**

The Borough Council believed that they had overcome the hurdle on the use of the land creating employment opportunities and could now use the land for something else. MA, through the Trust, remained on board.

## **6 Any Other Business**

- (i) ND: Commented on the difficulties encountered over the last year and how the problems and challenges were faced together. He felt sure this would continue and thanked the College for their part in that action. DP reciprocated the view and thanked the Borough Council warmly.
- (ii) PD: Expressed his bitter disappointment in the outcomes over the year and assured the members that the Corporation remained committed to driving the College forward.

## **7 Date, time and venue for next meeting**

Monday, 26 April 2010 at 10.00 am, Council Offices.

**The meeting closed at 11.15 am**