

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

COLLEGE/COUNCIL STRATEGIC LIAISON GROUP

**Minutes of a Meeting of the above Group held on
Monday 4 April 2011 at 10.00 am in Meeting Room 1,
King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Councillor Nick Daubney, Leader (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs E Watson
Ray Harding, Chief Executive
Kathy Wagg, Democratic Services Officer

College of West Anglia
Peter Dixon, College Chairman
Roger Ward, Governor
David Pomfret, Principal

An apology for absence was received from Arlene Clark,
Executive Director – Curriculum and Learning

1 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 September 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

2 **MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor Daubney stated that the Council had, at its meeting held on 30 September 2010, formally agreed to offer financial assistance to the College.

- (iii) Strategic Update – In response to Councillor Watson's query as to whether any post graduate students came onto apprenticeships, David Pomfret advised that post graduate students are ineligible for apprenticeship funding.

3 **COLLEGE CORPORATE ISSUES**

D Pomfret, Principal provided a verbal update on college issues as set out below.

(i) Property/Strategy

D Pomfret advised that Norfolk County Council's Cabinet were meeting today and it was expected that it would confirm its decision to invest £1.5m into the College accommodation strategy. The College had also reflected on the scope of the scheme and therefore the College contribution would now be £2m. It was reported that the technology building was the worst with asbestos and structural issues. The £1.5m did not allow enough for

the building to be rebuilt but with the contributions from the Borough and hopefully County Council £5.8m would extend the facilities and enable the technology block to be vacated and rebuilt. D Pomfret advised that he had held discussions with Ray Harding and Dale Gagen regarding the proposals, however he considered that it would be useful to get formal confirmation from them regarding the extended scope. It was hoped to complete the project by Easter 2012.

In response to a question from Councillor Watson, it was explained that the new facility would not be rebuilt on the footprint of the existing building but would be located at the back of the workshop. He further explained that some of the workshop building had been demolished and several activities had been brought back onto the campus from other locations such as Austin Fields. He added that there was still some provision at Austin Fields but it was planned to bring that back onto the campus on completion of this building. He also explained that CWA Property Strategy Group had approved plans for backlog maintenance and essential health and safety issues.

(ii) Revenue Funding

D Pomfret explained that the College was looking at an income reduction in the region of £3m with every line of income taking a cut. Future years would continue to see reductions year on year which would impact on the scope and range of provision.

Councillor Watson asked whether the new buildings would cut down on maintenance costs. D Pomfret responded that the current heating system was very problematic and the new building would have a new heating system. It was hoped to eventually be able to replace the district heating system but for the present time it would have to be repaired. Maintenance and running costs would be reduced.

(iii) Transport Subsidy

D Pomfret advised that NCC had agreed to protect £1.5m pa of the current £2.5m post 16 transport subsidy. There would be a replacement scheme although the specific details had yet to be understood. It was understood that there would be a discretionary pot of less money but would allow more flexibility. Any new proposals would come into force in September 2012.

(iv) Academy

D Pomfret reported that the early indications from the Academy were quite positive and results were expected to be better than for Park High, and should exceed the national threshold of 35% 5 GCSE's at A*-C (inclusive of English and Maths).

Interviews were being held on Thursday and Friday of this week for a permanent Principal.

The Board was up and running which included Debbie Gates from the Council who was making a positive contribution and supporting the interview process. He advised that a further Committee would be established to deal with property allocations. Funding had been received and scoping was currently taking place.

(v) College Governors

D Pomfret advised that vacancies on the Board of Governors had been filled with the Chief Executive from the Hospital, Regional Director for Nat West Bank and the Vice Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University. This had been a good opportunity to be able to strengthen the Board

In response to a question from Councillor Watson regarding Open Road, D Pomfret explained that it was not a college led provision, but college students had accessed the facilities on a temporary basis.

The Chairman thanked D Pomfret for the update. He added that the early indications from the Academy were encouraging. Roger Ward added that he had the general feeling from talking to people that the impact of the academy was being felt. The Chairman highlighted that it was not just what the academy was achieving but the impact this would also have on other schools.

4 BOROUGH COUNCIL ISSUES

R Harding, Chief Executive, provided a verbal update on Borough Council issues as set out below.

(i) Government cuts

R Harding explained that £3.5m had been taken out of the funding this year equating to 20% of the Council's net budget. The Council had closed the cash offices and the pest control service, but all other service provision remained. Other changes included the Majestic cinema taking over the management of the Princess Theatre at Hunstanton and the Visual Arts service becoming a Trust. The Council had so far lost around 90 employees with 22 people having left the authority last week.

Employees had had a wage freeze, no PRP payments and no inflation increase. In relation to PRP, it was intended to combine this year and next year and reflect performance over 2 years.

There still remained a gap for 2013/14 and cuts were expected again. The Council was starting to look at ways in which further savings could be achieved now rather than waiting until 2013.

Expenditure had also been incurred in relation to the incinerator campaign. The Council had run a local poll, the results of which was a resounding 'no' vote.

(ii) Regeneration

R Harding explained that the Council was at an advanced stage of negotiation for the sale of the lorry park for a mixed use development on the NORA site. The Council had also received approaches for other parcels of land on NORA. He added that with EEDA no longer continuing, it was hoped that the Council would have more flexibility with its successor for development on the NORA site.

Also, the first phase of housing to be built on Council owned land had just gone out to tender, which was a joint venture with Norfolk County Council. The scheme would provide around 40 dwellings, most of which would be traditional houses, as part of phase 1.

Planning permission had been approved for two supermarkets in King's Lynn however both were taking the Council to judicial review at the High Court.

The Council was also in negotiation with the Conservancy Board regarding pontoons.

(iii) Accommodation at King's Court

R Harding explained that the Council had received interest from another public body in sharing accommodation at King's Court for 30 members of staff, which could help to generate further income.

(iv) Shared Services

The Council was still working on shared services including a Revenues and Benefits package with North Norfolk which would go out to tender next week. The Council had today taken over responsibility for North Norfolk's car parking.

The Council had to explore income generating options and shared services. He advised that Breckland District Council was merging its officer structure with South Holland District Council.

(v) Elections

R Harding reported that on 5th May there would be Borough Council and Parish Council elections and a referendum on the alternative voting system taking place.

5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Peter Dixon reported that the College could now see a strong way forward which was helpful for improving staff morale and to enable the College to offer the best teaching to students.
- D Pomfret stated that both organisations continued to work well together, the Council having dealt with funding cuts with little impact

on services. He added that he was not aware of other colleges that had the direct level of contribution, and considered that the early commitment of funding from the Borough Council had helped to influence the County Council position.

6 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed for Monday 26 September 2011 at 10.00 am, College of West Anglia

The Meeting closed 11.00 am