

Minutes of College/Council Strategic Liaison Group
27 September 2010 – CWA, King's Lynn Campus
09.55 am

Present	<i>The College of West Anglia</i>	
	Sharon Cambridge	Acting Chair (on behalf of Peter Dixon)
	David Pomfret	Principal
	Roger Ward	Governor
	<i>King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council</i>	
	Councillor Nick Daubney	Leader of the Council
	Ray Harding	Chief Executive
	Councillor Elizabeth Watson	
In Attendance	Rochelle Woodcock	Clerk to the Corporation, CWA

1 Apologies

Peter Dixon Chair
Arlene Clark Arlene Clark, Executive Director Curriculum & Learning

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting – 26 April 2010

The Minutes of the meeting of 26 April 2010 were agreed as an accurate record.

3 Matters Arising

The Principal confirmed the following:

- (i) Page 2 Section 3 (ii) – Accommodation Strategy – all actions progressed.
- (ii) Page 3 Section 4 (iv) – Mini Reviews – formal agreement has been reached with the Borough Council regarding the use of Lynn Sport car park by college staff and students.

EW asked whether a large number of students used cars.

DP confirmed that this was the case, and that the parking situation needed to be actively managed, both through promoting the car parking facility at Lynn Sport and through an arrangement with Euro Car Parks, which would issue parking charges for incorrect parking on campus.

4 College Corporate Issues

The Principal provided a verbal update on College issues, noted as follows:

(i) Accommodation and Capital Funding

This remains the single biggest challenge to the College. Condition surveys have identified that £21m is needed over the next five years, for

backlog maintenance alone. Priorities have been developed to ensure continuation of provision. The ongoing support of the Borough Council is much appreciated, notably with the capital investment grant, being considered at its meeting on 30 September.

Recent successes have included a £225K capital funding grant from the Skills Funding Agency (£30m distributed across 125 colleges). A further bid was submitted to the SFA, and the College was one of only twenty-one colleges successful in securing a further top up in funding to £1m overall. This funding will help to develop a small technology project on site (approx £3m). This will allow some of the off-site provision to be brought back onto the main site. This funding represents an external recognition by the SFA that the College needs support and it is hoped that this will encourage Norfolk CC to also invest.

The Board approved the new Property Strategy in the summer. A further priority identified was the Tower Block, where a number of fire safety issues had to be resolved. £3m funding has been earmarked for development work on the King's Lynn campus.

SC asked if there was a problem with funding from Norfolk CC.

DP advised that there was currently a debate as to where capital funding should sit, and that the County Council would have two issues to resolve in balancing direct investment in a college against spending cuts it would need to make in other areas.

ND commented that he believed Norfolk CC would want to invest but are not sure how to currently.

RH advised that a paper prepared by Norfolk CC Children's Services was supportive.

DP advised that both Fenland DC and Cambs CC have both stated publicly their intent to invest in Isle campus. The College is borrowing heavily to step up backlog maintenance and contribute to the new projects.

(ii) Academy Update

This was a fast-track project, which took six months to become live. The Academy opened at the beginning of this term. There are two funding streams: revenue funding, confirmed through a Funding Agreement and capital funding, which is not yet in place and is awaiting the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

It was proposed that the new Academy relocate to NORA, but this is not possible without confirmed capital funding. Further discussions will take place in the near future.

ND advised that he has been in regular contact with Henry Bellingham who is supportive of the project.

DP confirmed that 24 February 2011 is the cut off date for the capital funding position to be clarified.

ND asked about the governance arrangements for the new academy.

DP advised that the Board of Governors has been established, with Governors proposed by both sponsors. A full Board meeting will take place after half term. New branding has taken place along with some accommodation refurbishment and the introduction of a new curriculum. The signs are very positive.

RW commented that, from feedback he has received, it seemed to be going well and that the new uniform had proved to be a key feature of the change.

(iii) Strategic Update

There is no doubt that cuts to the public sector will impact on FE. The College is completing the second organisational restructure in two years which, inevitably, will have an impact on service provision moving forward. The College has continued to perform well against targets and, as the lead provider for Apprenticeships in the county, has received some growth in funding for this area.

SC highlighted a recent court case, clarifying the status of apprentices, which established that they were employees and, as such, had the same status and rights, which may have made some employers more reluctant to take on apprentices.

DP advised that the College has a good relationship with employers, but many are finding it difficult to take on more apprentices in the current climate.

ND enquired whether the Apprenticeships offered are more technology and engineering biased.

DP confirmed that, in volume, most were electro-technical, engineering and construction.

EW enquired whether any post-graduate students came onto apprenticeships.

DP advised that this occurred only very occasionally.

The Principal's report was noted.

5 Borough Council Corporate Issues

The Chief Executive gave a verbal update on Borough Council issues, noted as follows:

(i) Public Funding

The Borough Council's work is currently dominated by cutting £17m over the next 4 years, equating to approximately a quarter of revenue

expenditure. This will inevitably result in a significant number of redundancies. The Council is reviewing all its activities, which is not always popular with the public. The final position will not be known until December, after the Comprehensive Spending Review has taken place. Cuts will take effect from 1 April 2011.

The Council is also looking for opportunities to expand and to share services. Recent changes have included taking on responsibility for procurement in South Norfolk, off street parking in North Norfolk. The Council is also working towards merging some services to offset overhead costs and deliver services for other parts of the public sector. It has also recently out-sourced the management of the Princess Theatre to the Majestic Cinema.

The Chief Executive advised that there may be changes in how services are offered, but quality will be maintained. Overall it will be a leaner organisation but retaining the capacity to represent the area on things that matter.

(ii) NORA

Commercial interest in this development is currently very strong and it is expected that the remaining commercial land, after the Academy allocation, could be sold within the next 18 months – two years.

RW commented that the College must be seen as a core component of the area and its regeneration.

The Sainsbury and Tesco planning applications have moved forward, with Sainsbury likely to proceed in the near future. If Tesco can overcome traffic objections, it is likely that both supermarket developments will go ahead. Both will make a contribution to the town centre, and Sainsbury will remain in the town for at least 10 years.

EW enquired whether Sainsbury might be a potential funding source for the College.

DP advised that the College is part of the Skillsmart retail sector network, so may well be involved with training staff, and agreed that it might be useful to approach them regarding funding.

(iii) Local Enterprise Partnerships

The Council has been involved with 3 submissions recently:

- Norfolk;
- Greater Peterborough and Greater Cambridgeshire;
- Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex (submitted by Suffolk CC).

DP advised that the College has supported an alignment with the Greater Peterborough and Norfolk CC submissions.

The Chief Executive's report was noted.

6 Any Other Business

- (i) DP commented on how these meetings continue to evidence the support for the college that arises from the joint involvement of the Borough Council, which is much appreciated. ND also affirmed the importance of joint working.
- (ii) RH asked a question regarding the merit of involving someone from Norfolk County Council in the meetings, if they were to provide funding for the College. It was generally agreed that this would be useful.

7 Date, time and venue for next meeting

Monday, 4 April 2011 at 10.00 am, Council Offices.

The meeting closed at 10.55 am