

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Tresham Institute of Further and Higher Education held on Thursday 2 April 2009, at 16.00 hours in Room 170, Windmill Avenue, Kettering.

Present:

E R Baines (Chair)
J Bews
I Bray
J Dickinson
D Hayes
C Isham
M Lumsden
M Malin
A McGlynn
D Mills
M Silverman
A Schaeper
Dr C Sworn
A P M Waterfield
G Wooldridge

In Attendance: S Kind (Director of Finance)
S Wesselby(Vice-Principal)
K Wager (Marketing and Communications Manager)
C Robinson (Clerk to the Governors)

22/09 Apologies

1 A Dicks
A P Blunt
T Day
P Wardle

The Clerk informed the Board that K White has resigned from the Governing Body. Mr White has a new position and will not be able to continue to be a member. The Chair asked the Clerk to write and thank K White for his contribution to the Board.

23/09 Declaration of Interest

2 The Chair asked any member present to declare any interest they might have in items on the agenda. There were none.

24/09 Minutes of the meeting 5 March 2009

3 The minutes were agreed and signed.

25/09 Matters Arising

4 There were no matters arising.

27/09 Strategic

- 5 Rutland Learning Partnership

The Chair opened the item by saying that when the Institute took over Rutland College it was clear to him that the Institute would need to work with partner schools in Rutland, unfortunately at the time efforts to engage partners were not successful. He said that the scenario had now changed, particularly with the proposed new individualised curriculum for young people. This meant a new approach to post 16 provision in the area with co-operation between partners to meet the needs of learners. The Chair briefly reported on a meeting of the Chairs and Principals of Rutland schools that he had attended and said the meeting had been very positive.

The Principal, introducing Paper B, said that the paper sets out the context and the strategic aim is to provide sustainable 14-19 education in Rutland. He briefly reminded members of the background and context of Rutland learning provision. The curriculum offer at Rutland College is narrow with little vocational provision, there has been a serious decline in full time enrolments and a consequence is that the Institute is forecast to carry a deficit of £250,000 on its Rutland operations. The success rates were 7% below benchmark for those of sixth form colleges and shortly all colleges will need to deliver a 14-19 entitlement curriculum.

The Chair introduced Derek Robbins who has been employed by the LSC to oversee the review of 14-19 provision in Rutland. Derek Robbins briefly described his role to members and said that it was clear that the future for effective provision in Rutland is working in partnership. He said the numbers currently in year 11 were 483, by 2013 students must have an entitlement curriculum and co-operation and partnership would be the only way of achieving this. He also informed members that the review had undertaken feasibility surveys with regard to accommodation and there is a clear view concerning costs and affordability.

M Malin enquired about the funding for the proposals, D Robbins replied that regarding capital funding, Rutland County Council is prepared to fund a suitable project. The Principal explained the source of revenue funding once the LSC disappears, the sub regions would be responsible as purchasers of learning and in this case Rutland would join Lincolnshire to procure learning in their areas. G Wooldridge asked about the organisational and governance arrangements under the proposals, D Robbins replied that a trust model similar to others across the country was being looked at; he also said that there were some very creative curriculum proposals being discussed, two Universities were interested in co-operating with the trust and the local business community will be involved.

D Hayes said the paper made a good case but the governors had a duty to safeguard our assets, what were our options and what calls would there be on our land. The Director of Finance said that any land disposal needed LSC approval. The Principal made clear that the land issue needs to be clarified as land is a key asset of the Corporation; D Robbins said that at no time in the discussions has the Principal offered to gift land to the trust. D Hayes said she was re-assured. The Principal noted that the Institute had a duty to respond to the needs of young people and could not walk away from the proposals. Some members queried the status of the memorandum of understanding, Paper B, particularly page 22 of the document relating to "land and assets owned by the new Foundation Trust." D Hayes suggested the wording should be as in page 4 of the document, "Any transfer or sale of part of such assets will need careful consideration and advice and will need the agreement of the LSC or any successor organisation." this was agreed.

C Sworn asked whether students would be prepared to adapt to new travel patterns that would be involved in the proposed consortia; the Principal replied that these considerations have been taken into account. A P M Waterfield asked about the position of the existing Rutland College staff, the Principal said he had consulted monthly with staff and had discussed the options with them. TUPE arrangements would apply to all staff should the proposed arrangements be introduced. G Wooldridge said that he understood the Rutland staff were supportive of the proposals. J Bews queried the timing of the proposals saying there was a danger that students would drift away if they were not implemented quickly, The Principal agreed and said if the proposals were to happen it needed to be done quickly.

Members discussed the trust arrangements and D Robbins said that there was a movement across the country of schools coming together working in trusts, there were now about 130 and schools can access funding with trusts. A P M Waterfield asked whether the Institute had taken legal advice about the Memorandum of Understanding, D Robbins replied that it had no legal status and the Chair said that when we are in a position to consider joining a trust legal advice would be taken. The Chair summarised the lengthy discussions and contributions by D Robbins and the Principal and asked members whether they were in favour of the proposals. D Hayes questioned the governance arrangements of the proposed trust; the Principal stated that the trust would have its own Board of Governors and Tresham would have a representative on the Board. It was proposed by M Malin, seconded by G Wooldridge and unanimously agreed that ***Tresham Institute agrees in principle with the proposed new arrangements for 14-19 educational provision in Rutland and authorises the Principal to continue with discussions.*** The Chair reminded members that there would be a meeting in Oakham on the 19th May 2009 at 18.30 hours of the governing

bodies of all parties concerned in the proposed new arrangements. All members were welcome to attend.

26/09 Presentation on College Re-brand

6 Introducing the topic, the Principal said that after so much change at the Institute it was felt that there was a need for a rebrand. He introduced Karen Wager, Marketing and Communications Manager who briefly took members through the findings of the consultants the institute had used on the re-branding exercise. Karen Wager said that the surveys undertaken had raised some interesting communication and branding issues; for example many of the schools responses when asked of their perception of Tresham often contradicted what they said they wanted from the Institute, other findings showed a positive recognition of Tresham although there were some mixed messages concerning the Institute's core business. The Re-branding exercise had also considered Tresham's name and there was discussion by members on proposals to change the Institute's name. "Tresham" was suggested with a strap line of "The College of Further and Higher Education", with the Chair observing that many of the suggestions for re-branding did not have much to say about learning. The Principal said that after further consultation with stakeholders the results of the re-branding would be shown to members, he emphasised that the re-branding exercise was not merely about a name change or a different logo but an exercise to improve and project Tresham further into the community. The Chair thanked K Wager for her presentation.

28/09 Corporate

- 7 Principal's blog

The Principal introduced his blog and briefly highlighted the college leadership changes. Unfortunately the candidate appointed as Director of Quality did not take up the post, it will now be re-advertised. K Wager will be on maternity leave and will be covered by K Foster who will be joining from New College Stamford. He mentioned that there had been some good staff and learner meetings and the campus road shows had been a great success. The annual negotiations with the LSC concerning next years allocation is continuing and S Kind will report back at the next meeting.

29/09 Estates

- 8 Capital Project Update / Professional Fees

The Director of Finance introduced Papers D and E, saying that the two papers needed to be considered together. He briefly explained to members the current position regarding the planning of the Capital Projects noting that the Institute was pushing ahead where it could, in order that should monies be forthcoming the College could proceed with at least one development. A planning application has been submitted for the Corby development and some further design work has been done for the Wellingborough proposal.

Members were referred to a copy of a letter received from the Secretary of State for Further Education relating to the recent decision by the LSC to suspend approval of capital projects; the Chair and Principal said that all avenues had been explored to exert pressure on the necessary parties. The Principal said that the Institute will have to make a decision after budget day when a realistic appraisal can be made as to whether the capital funding will be forthcoming.

The Director of Finance said that the level of exposure that the Institute is facing relating to professional fees is now a major cause for concern, and potentially at risk. He referred members to the attached schedule to paper E showing the level of fees and costs incurred; there was discussion by members who agreed that in the current uncertain environment the projected level of fees and costs should be curtailed. The Director of Finance said that he recommended that in the light of the current position and given the uncertainty of the level of professional fees that may or may not be recovered, that all work relating to the Wellingborough project cease from 31 March 2009. In addition only essential costs will be incurred from 1 April 2009 relating to Corby and Kettering in order to progress the planning application process. The above recommendation was proposed by M Malin, seconded by C Sworn and unanimously agreed *that all work relating to the*

Wellingborough project cease and that only essential costs be incurred relating to Corby and Kettering.

S Kind reported that there was some good news, this morning he and the Principal had met with Corby Borough Council, the NNDC and other stakeholders concerned with the Corby project resulting in the Institute receiving £100,000 of funding.

30/09 Financial

- 9 Management Accounts – Period 7

The Director of Finance presented the period 7 management accounts noting that if the Capital Projects do not proceed this will affect the balance sheet, he would update members further at the next meeting; the Chair observed that all colleges were in the same position and that matters concerning the Capital projects were out of our hands.

- 10 Value for Money Report

S Kind introduced the first Value for Money Report saying that it would be a regular item on the Board agenda from now on, members discussed the report and agreed that it was a useful addition to the MIS data they are given.

31/09 Governors Self-Assessment

12 The Clerk gave members a brief presentation on Governance and Governors Self – Assessment. It was noted that with the emphasis being placed on self –regulation, members will need to adopt a challenging and demanding role with strong self-assessment, scrutiny of college data and reviewing progress against strategic/ improvement plans. After discussion the Clerk asked members to complete the Governors Self – Assessment questionnaire and return it to him by the next meeting.

32/09 Any Other Business

13 There was no other business.

33/09 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 7 May 2009