

SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
held on 13 May 2015 at 4.00 pm

¹PRESENT Mrs E Bolton (S); Mr M Coombes (E); Mr R Fawcett (E); Mr B Holm (S); Mr N Hopkins OBE (E); Mr T Jackson (P); Ms M Kamara-Aspin (E); Mr P Lloyd (E); Mr S Morgan (E); Mrs J Venables (E); Mr S Ward (E).

In attendance: Mrs S Grant, Assistant Principal - Commercial
Mr S Horrobin, Director of Finance
Mr M Simmons, Vice Principal
Mrs S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

APOLOGIES

102. Apologies for absence were accepted from Miss E Freshwater-Blizzard, Dr R Palmer and Mr C Wilson.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

103. Declarations of interest were made by Mrs E Bolton and Mr B Holm (employees of Sparsholt College with posts potentially affected by the restructuring).

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

104. The Board had received an interim report from the Principal, providing an update on three aspects of the Strategic Plan which had progressed since the Board of Governors meeting on 26 March.

Staff Cost Saving Consultation Exercise

105. The Principal provided a verbal update on the staff cost saving consultation exercise, noting that the feedback received from members of staff had led to some minor changes to parts of the proposed restructure and to the commissioning of further research in relation to IT and Premises.

106. In response to a question about the timescales of the consultation exercise, the Principal confirmed that the majority of those whose posts were proposed to be deleted would know the final decision by the end of May. The consultation exercise had sought to balance ensuring sufficient time to seek the views of staff with minimising the period of uncertainty for everyone involved.

107. Asked whether the potential changes to the original proposals, which had resulted from the consultation exercise would change the total expected savings, the Principal explained that the College management's intention was still to be within the £600,000 deficit limit for 2015/16, although there might be some adjustments of savings between areas. The financial position would continue to be monitored by the Resources Committee.

108. Under confidential session, the Principal reported that further assessments of the finance forecast had resulted in the decision to launch a consultation exercise on restructuring

¹ (E) = External; (P) = Principal; (S) = Staff; (St) = Student

the Construction section of Andover College and discontinuing the full time Level 2 offer. The proposals were confidential until the consultation is launched on 15 May.

109. The proposals reflected the reality that the Level 2 full time offer did not perform well, with low recruitment and Level 1 students leaving to go into employment. The Level 1 provision would continue and Level 1 learners would be able to consider and be encouraged to move on to Level 2 apprenticeships. This was in line with industry requirements. There would be no change to 2015/16 funding income, which was paid in arrears, and staff could be recruited from 2016/17 as needed.
110. Members sought reassurance that current learners would not have their existing provision cancelled in the current year and that there would be early communication to potential Level 2 full time student applicants/progressors. The Principal confirmed that current Level 1 students would complete their 2014/15 course and have the option of continuing their development via the apprenticeship route.
111. In response to a question as to whether the College had an obligation to support the Construction section under the LEP funding for the new building, the Assistant Principal - Commercial confirmed that the College would still meet Level 2 obligations in 2015/16 via apprenticeship. She also noted financial encouragements provided to employers to take-on Apprentices as new employees.
112. The Board discussed the extent of the restructures and whether there would have been benefits in aiming for savings beyond those currently needed. Against the need for cost savings, it was acknowledged that too radical cuts to staffing could damage the reputation and growth of the College. College management had analysed all areas and concluded that further rationalisation of the curriculum at this time was not desirable.

Anaerobic Digester Project

113. The Principal reported progress of discussions with the proposed development partner for the Anaerobic Digester Project since the Board of Governors had agreed the Heads of Agreement to enter into an Option and Lease to be signed, subject to legal advice, at its meeting on 26 March.
114. The College had sought legal advice from Bond Dickinson's specialist lawyers, funded by the proposed partner, and the Heads of Terms were moving rapidly to the Options Agreement and Lease. The three main areas of ongoing discussion related to improvements to access, upgrading Equine facilities and the date of commencement of annual rent.
115. Members discussed the timing of the project and the planning process, noting that the future changes to Feed-in Tariffs provided an incentive for the development partner to build and start operating the anaerobic digester. The College was seeking a planning performance agreement with Winchester City Council, to include response times which took into account the Enterprise M3 LEP deadlines for spending the capital grant for the Hampshire Centre of Demonstration of Renewable Energy.
116. The Chairman affirmed the continued support of the Board for the Anaerobic Digester Project and offered the assistance of the Board with external communications.

Outsourced Catering

117. The Principal provided an update on the discussions with the outsourced catering contractor.

118. Confidential items were discussed and recorded separately.

REDEPLOYMENT POLICY

119. The Board had received a proposal from the Principal seeking approval of amendments to the salary protection element of the Redeployment Policy, which was also subject to the staff consultation currently underway.
120. Members sought an indication of the potential financial benefit of the proposed changes and the likely response from members of staff. It was explained that numbers of staff who might be redeployed as a result of the current restructuring exercise were not yet known but would be likely to be small. Members of staff had not raised any points about the proposed change during the consultation or at the ICE Group meeting. The change in policy was one of the measures the College management was taking to reduce costs in the next financial year and longer term, and reflected practice in the sector.
121. In response to members queries about the ways in which the proposed salary protection parameters were expressed, the Principal clarified that the salary protection was for a maximum of two grades above the redeployment grade in the same pay scale, or the broadly equivalent maximum protection for individuals redeployed from the management scale to the Lecturing or Curriculum leader scale, and that any travel allowance payable would also be reduced from 1 year to 4 months. The Principal confirmed the wording of the final Policy document would be revised to ensure these terms were clear.
122. **Resolved** – that, subject to consultation feedback from staff, the terms of the Redeployment Policy be amended as proposed and with the clarifications to wording discussed.
123. The meeting closed at 5.00 pm.