



GOVERNORS' MEETING Minutes of the meeting on 16 March 2013

Present: Miss Katie Baker, Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mr Martin Churchward,
Mrs Carol Clapham, Mr Rob Doran, Mrs Diane Evans,
Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Mr Chris Hodson, Dr Ken Hopkins (Chair),
Mrs Heidi Macdougall, Mr James Miller, Ms Blair Friday, Mr Ravi Tandon,
Phil Tranter, Mr Fraser Williams, Miss Christine Wright (15)

In attendance: Dr Ruth Brinton and Mr Peter Cooper (Deputy Principals),
Mr Philip Eyles (Clerk), Ms Claire Hodson (Clerk Designate)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Neil Arlett, Katarina Blair, Charles Davies and Fraser Williams (4)
Ruth Jones, Finance Director, was also unable to attend

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2012

In Minute 7, the word 'provision' was changed to 'provisional' at the start of the second paragraph. The sentence now reads 'This year's Oxbridge applicants have achieved the highest ever number of provisional places'. Subject to this change, the minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None

5. CLERK'S REPORT

A letter will be sent to parents before the end of term to ask which parents are interested in becoming a Parent Governor

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal began by referring to Governor James Miller's letter to Mr Peter Lauener, Chief Executive of the Education Funding Agency, about deteriorating funding for sixth form colleges. The Board considered and applauded this letter, but were less impressed by Mr Lauener's reply. It was felt that he had exaggerated the savings to be made by reducing the audit burden and eliminating the annual Financial Management and Control Evaluation form.

The rest of the report covered staff changes, January Module results, Lesson observation, retention and attendance data, funding, risk management and national lobbying. One new item reported was Ofsted's new Learner View, which has been introduced to allow students to give their opinions on a variety of student issues prior to inspections. 514 College students responded when Hereford Sixth Form College tried out the questionnaire and their results were compared with those from another sixth form college that was recently graded as Outstanding by Ofsted. The Principal also reported on the launch of the new Sixth Form Colleges Association, which replaces the former Sixth Form Colleges Forum

7. THE COLLEGE'S MISSION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Discussion began with the correction of a typing error: in section (i)a, 'students choose to most appropriate course' should read 'students choose the most appropriate course'.

There was then a discussion of various aspects of the mission: how parents are supported by the College and how External Links are pursued.

The Board then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the College's Mission Statement and Strategic Objectives, subject to the correction of the typing error

8. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE & PREMISES COMMITTEE (of 7 March)

The Committee had reviewed its Terms of Reference and had recommended a minor updating of terminology, which the Board **AGREED TO APPROVE**.

It had also reviewed the Monthly Management Accounts for January, which showed the College's finances in a buoyant position. After a brief discussion, the Board accepted the Committee's recommendation and **AGREED TO APPROVE** them.

The Committee had also made brief reference to the Accommodation Strategy, which the Board had approved on 7 February – Board Minute 10iv refers. One of the lower priority improvements to the College is the revamping of the main entrance from Folly Lane. An architect has recently suggested that the main entrance would be better at first floor level. The Board **NOTED** this proposal.

The Committee's main discussion (and the main topic at the Board Meeting also) concerned the building project to extend the Business Studies Block eastwards.

The Board had already given this scheme its informed consent at its February meeting – Board Minute 10iv refers. The Committee's task had been to monitor the very early stages of the work (e.g. the preparation of detailed building plans) and to scrutinise the scheme's affordability as thoroughly as possible. To this end the Finance Director had prepared a detailed appraisal of the project, including more details of its cost and cash flow projections for the period to 2016-17.

These projections analysed three scenarios: no funding grant, 50% funding grant and a 100% grant. These analyses made the same financial assumptions as had the Mid-year Budget Update that the Board had approved in February.

The Committee's firm conclusion was that the scheme is fully viable, despite the College's progressively decreasing funding. It should go ahead, irrespective of whether the College receives any capital grant from the Education Funding Agency

The Board spent a substantial amount of time considering the scheme. One important aspect is its priority in relation to the other scheme approved by the Board in February: the creation of two more science laboratories by combining and remodelling classrooms. The Principal said that the Business Studies Block extension is the greater priority. Board then accepted that it is reasonable to decide whether to proceed with it *before* determining whether the creation of more science laboratories can go ahead. The key argument in favour of the Business Studies Block Extension is the urgent need for the additional accommodation it would provide

The Chair reminded the meeting that there is no guarantee of any Education Funding Agency grant and then asked the Board to address the Committee's proposal.

The Board of Governors then unanimously **AGREED TO RE-AFFIRM ITS INFORMED CONSENT** for the scheme to extend the Business Studies Block eastwards, at a total cost (including VAT) of £1.315 million.

The Committee's Minutes were then considered and **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS - None

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING
7.30pm on Thursday 23 May