

# BUSINESS COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2014



**Report:** Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9 October 2014

GATESHEAD COLLEGE

**Author:** Clerk

**Action:** Approve

**Status:** Open

**Present:** Robin Mackie (Chair)  
Judith Doyle  
John Holt  
Paul Gough  
Mick Brophy  
Chris Toon  
Nadine Hudspeth

**In attendance:** Clare Sample (Clerk)

## **B/1 Chair's Welcome, Apologies, Introductions**

Robin Mackie welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Ivan Jepson and David Mitchell.

## **B/2 Scene setting for the Business Quadrant**

The Chair recognised that this was a new Committee and still in the developmental stage. His view was the Committee should focus more about what will happen in 2015/16 (which he referred to as 80/20, being 80% business already secured and 20% to secure in year). The Committee may be limited in what they can do for '14/'15, but more importantly should concentrate on what they can do in '15/'16. There are many opportunities out there and it is the job of the Committee to shape the College to be in a position to take these opportunities.

The Principal, Judith Doyle, agreed with the fact that the College needs to move forward and do things differently. However, she pointed out to the Committee that there is still plenty of opportunity to do work in year to improve the figures.

Director of Marketing, Nadine Hudspeth said that she believed the message from the College is still the right message. There are other competitors out there saying similar things, but not as clearly as Gateshead. She felt that the message needed to have more depth, that the College needed to have opinions on things that matter and to make sure that these are heard.

Members discussed the fact that Colleges often operated as public sector organisations in a private sector environment. A change in mind set and language was going to be needed in order to start thinking like a business and securing the future.

The Chair commented that rather than worrying about whether the College is public or private sector, it should concentrate on who it is, yet being more agile. Improving the student experience is more important than just concentrating on increasing the numbers as this in itself builds on the reputation.

### **Agenda No: 3**

There was some discussion about the next big push starting in March 2015 through to September. The Director of Business Development, Paul Gough raised the point that there was plenty of opportunity for in year sales and they don't need to wait until March. There is a tendency for Colleges to concentrate on the period of March through to September recruiting students. However, Gateshead is a flexible provider with lots of short term provisions making them more agile. They are in a good position to react to changing demand so there is no reason why it cannot be pushing all year round. The Principal agreed with this and offered to provide planning and support for Paul's team.

The Chair concluded by saying that the College runs a number of subsidiary businesses. The purpose of the Committee would be to review these, not just in terms of finances, but in terms of "fit" and their ability to increase bottomline or reach new students. Once the Business Committee had identified suitable businesses, these can be taken back to the Corporate Services Committee to get the broader financial picture.

#### **B/3 The Composition and Membership of the Business Quadrant**

The Clerk told the Committee that the draft terms of reference were to be put to the Board for approval next week. The Committee comprises up to 11 members with up to 4 elected members of the Corporation as part of that number. The Committee currently has 8 members, namely Robin Mackie, Judith Doyle, Ivan Jepson, David Mitchell, John Holt, Paul Gough, Mick Brophy and Chris Toon. The Principal confirmed that Nadine Hudspeth would also be a member of the Committee.

#### **B/4 Business Development Strategy**

**The report and the record of discussion 'are closed to the public' until such time as it is considered to be no longer commercially sensitive**

#### **B/5 International Update**

**The report and the record of discussion 'are closed to the public' until such time as it is considered to be no longer commercially sensitive**

#### **B/6 Gazelle Update**

**The report and the record of discussion 'are closed to the public' until such time as it is considered to be no longer commercially sensitive**

#### **B/7 Future Meeting Agendas**

The Chair set out that he wanted the following items included in future agendas:

- KPI's and where we are against our target on a monthly basis (John Holt to provide).
- Who is the Business Development Team behind Paul, what they do and who they are. The purpose being that the team should know they are visible at this level (Paul Gough and Mick Brophy to provide).
- Thoughts about messaging and how this can be put out to the team and the wider College (Nadine Hudspeth to provide).

### **Agenda No: 3**

- The need to be more agile, he would like to find a way to have a product development team, possibly around the e-learning team (Chris Toon and team to provide).

The Deputy Principal: Curriculum and Quality explained he had a dialogue with the Heads of Group around a product development team. In his view each team needs to design the products and it is not just the responsibility of the e-learning team.

The Chair commented that the Committee also needed to look at the contracts in more detail before they are entered into and get more sense around this. He acknowledged that the guidance on contracts provided by Bond Dickinson have been very helpful. Paul Gough needs to be involved in this process.

The Chair also said that in the future it would be good to see workshops or away days to get the message right through the Business Development Team. It is important that they feel part of a team and also realise that they are accountable. Paul Gough to action this.

Nadine Hudspeth said that, in relation to KPI's it would be helpful to have targets around advocacy and monitoring who would recommend the College.

Paul Gough raised two issues that could form part of future agendas:-

1. Undertaking market research, where appropriate, on new product development.
2. The Committee needs to discuss and agree 'how' we execute the growth strategy and the KPI's within for 2014-15.

The Principal concluded by saying that this is not just about the Business Development Team, but about the whole organisation embracing organisational change. She said it was important to get the message out to everyone within the College so that they understand the business strategy and everyone needs to know what part they play in it.

### **B/8 Any Other Business**

Mick Brophy presented a paper on Z-Plant Nissan.

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### **B/9 Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 13 November 2014 at 4.30pm