



# ShIPLEY College

## Establishing governance arrangements for a Centre of Excellence (COE)

ShIPLEY College is a small further education college based in the World Heritage site of Saltaire.

The COE is the ShIPLEY College governing body's response to the very competitive local 16-19 market and will help achieve their strategic objectives of:

- success rates in the top 25 per cent of colleges;
- meeting and exceeding enrolment targets on all courses; and
- generating a financial surplus of 2 per cent.

The development of a COE for Business is an example of a model being adopted in the Bradford area by the Bradford Metropolitan Council to transform the way that local businesses engage with 14-19 education in colleges and schools. The COE is a joint venture with ShIPLEY College and Titus Salt High School working together to deliver the vision. The COE board is composed of the major participants

developing and delivering the COE for Business and includes local businesses and members representing ShIPLEY College and the local High School. Bradford Metropolitan Council will attend COE board meetings in an observer capacity.

The COE board's ambition, as agreed by the governing body of ShIPLEY College and Titus Salt High School, is:

- to create an employer and education partnership that delivers an exceptional experience for 14-19 year olds who are interested in business services and entrepreneurship;
- to specialise in business studies, financial services, computing and digital media;
- to equip young people with knowledge, skills, motivation and experience to succeed at work; and
- to gain the active involvement of employers in creating opportunities to

develop existing and potential employees, with positive social and economic benefits.

## **What was the catalyst / driver for reviewing the governance structure?**

The main catalyst and driver is focused on the learner. The development of the COE is to enable local companies to take an increased role in the design and delivery of 14-19 learning and articulate the demand for skills. Local businesses consistently report that they need young people leaving full-time education who are more enterprising, with higher levels of achievement in core technical subjects, with transferable employment skills and with the right attitude. The objective is to provide young people with a set of in-demand and marketable qualifications and employability skills to help them secure decent work.

The clerk to the corporation of Shipley College governing body recognised that, to achieve an employer-led learner focus, the governance arrangements had to emphasise the creative and visionary aspect of governance without losing sight of the core role of ensuring compliance and performance improvement.

The Shipley College governing body was consulted during 2012 about the development of a COE and agreed to support the vision.

In drawing up the governance arrangements the clerk to the corporation has consulted a number of bodies and people such as a college governance advisor and a school governance advisor; legal, audit and insurance advice has also been sought. The proposals have evolved over a six-week period and have been presented to the Shipley College governing body (including its Search Committee) and the Titus Salt High School governing body.

## **What process is being used to carry out the review?**

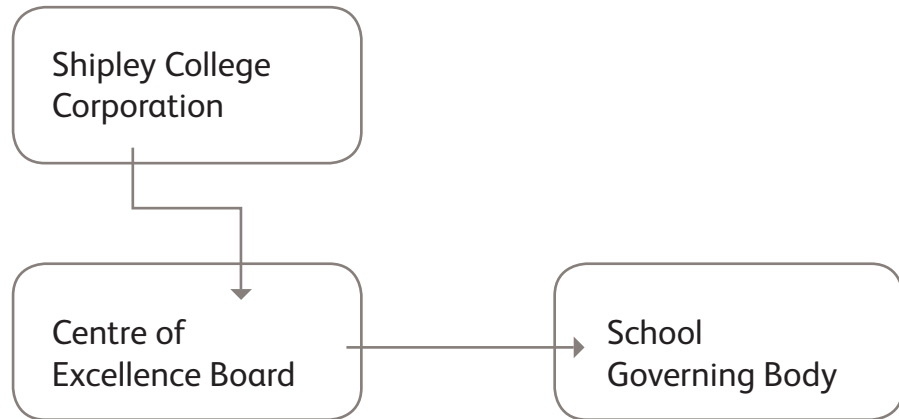
Members of the Shipley College governing body Search Committee, the Shipley College governing body and the Titus Salt High School governing body have been involved in the development of the governance arrangements.

The COE Board will have representation from Shipley College and the Shipley College governing body, the Titus Salt High School and the Titus Salt High School governing body and major local employers. Discussions with the local university are to take place about joining the board. The learner voice will also have a key involvement as the COE develops.

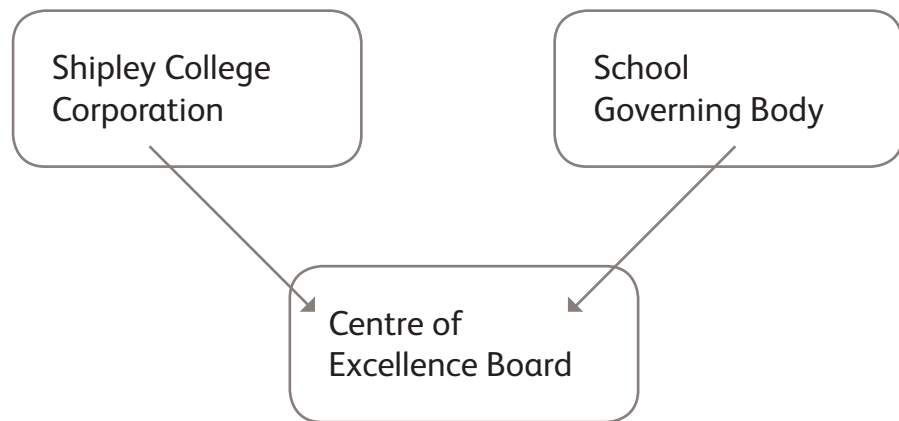
## **What questions have arisen for you throughout this process?**

A question over which body or bodies are responsible for the formation of the COE was raised. Initially it was felt Shipley College was the lead educational body responsible (Model A in the diagram below) but this has been clarified and the existing college corporation and school governing body will ultimately retain legal responsibility for the parent institutions and jointly for the COE (Model B).

## Model A



## Model B



In the latest governance arrangements, the COE board has allocated operational responsibility for performance of the COE to the principal of Shipley College and the head teacher of Titus Salt High School, acting within the respective remits of the Shipley College governing body and the Titus Salt High School governing body.

However, accountability and delegated powers for the COE and lead officers still need further consideration to ensure that these are clear, that the operation of the COE Board is legally compliant and does not operate outside the

remits of the Shipley College governing body and Titus Salt High School governing body.

Learner involvement in the COE for Business will be through Shipley College's well-established student consultation forums, for example learner representatives on course teams, the Media, IT and Business Sector Student Council and the Student Affairs Committee, membership of which includes two corporation members.

In an earlier version of the governance arrangements a learner was part of the

composition of the board. The latest thinking is that whilst there will be no learner member of the board, representatives from the Media, IT and Business council of full-time learners will attend for the first part of each board meeting to inform and provide feedback to the COE board.

## What conclusions or decisions have you come to so far?

At the first meeting of the COE board the governance arrangements were fully considered and further developed. These have been recommended to the Shipley College governing body and Titus Salt High School governing body and have been agreed, with the proviso that the arrangements are kept under regular review by the COE and both governing bodies in the first 12 months.

Membership of the COE board will be as follows:

- at least four members from local business;
- two members representing Titus Salt School (including 1 governor); and
- two members representing Shipley College (including 1 governor).

The Centre of Excellence Board will consider the appointment of new member companies (businesses or organisations who may be interested in contributing to the COE). Any new appointment will be reported and endorsed at the next meetings of Shipley College corporation and Titus Salt School governing body.

The COE board will report to each meeting of Shipley College governing body through a joint formal report from the Shipley College governing body member on the board and the principal. They will jointly report on the

identified 'critical success factors' to enable the COE for Business to be ready to open for young people by September 2013, including:

- achievement of at least five lead business partners;
- achievement of an appropriate number of associate partners engaged to provide work experience places from September 2013;
- refurbishment of Shipley College Salt Building to house the COE for Business; and
- identification and selection of fifteen 14-16 year old pupils and recruitment of sixty 16-plus learners for the opening in September 2013.

The COE board will also report to the respective governing bodies on progress and achievement of their terms of reference, namely:

- Agree and monitor a strategic plan for the Centre of Excellence.
- Influence curricula developments and standards to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and experience they need to succeed in life and work.
- Promote the aims and activities of the centre to potential learners, local businesses and potential sources of support and finance.
- Consider and monitor management responses to learner feedback in relation to the Centre of Excellence.
- Consider sources of further funding after the initial phase.

The principal and head teacher have been given delegated operational responsibility for the achievement of the critical success factors

and terms of reference of the COE board. The Shipley College governing body through regular reports from the COE board will be able to hold the principal to account by monitoring and challenging the principal on progress and achievement of the targets.

The work so far on the promotion of the COE will enable the pilot to run from January 2013 with 20 learners and 10 pupils participating in a 15-week 2 days a week paid work experience programme alongside their qualification. This will be closely monitored by each institution and the COE board prior to the full launch of the COE for Business in September 2013.

Every attempt will be made to resolve any disagreement between Shipley College corporation and Titus Salt School governing body, by discussion and compromise. In the unlikely event of a stalemate, Shipley College corporation and the Titus Salt governing body will have the right of veto.

The arrangements for the termination of the COE by the respective governing bodies are still under consideration.

## **How has ‘New Challenges, New Changes’ impacted on this review?**

One of the key elements of the reform plan described in New Challenges, New Chances (BIS, 2011) is “learners at the heart of the FE and skills system”. In addition the BIS consultation encourages us to place employers at the heart of skills delivery. The development of the COE will formalise this process. With the removal of restrictions and controls New Challenges, New Chances paves the way for a flexible governance arrangement that has three distinct partners (the college, school and local employers), working to enhance the job prospects of young people under the ultimate responsibility of the college corporation and the school governing body.

## **What will be the impact on learners?**

There is a view that young people in Bradford reach higher educational attainment levels and engagement through a curriculum approach that blends practical experience of work and business in their learning programme. The COE will be a way of better preparing young people for the future jobs market as it will have direct business involvement in curriculum design and careers support, ensuring that the learning provision is relevant for business needs.

## **How will you know the new model is successful?**

The COE for Business is planned to open in September 2013 with approximately 50 young people enrolled. By September 2015 the target is that 200 learners will be studying and taking part in work experience placements. The governance arrangements through the board are key to this success by ensuring that each stage of the implementation plan is carefully monitored and reviewed, risks are assessed and managed and the development is delivered as planned.

The model will be successful:

- if by 2015/16 the Centre of Excellence meets all its enrolment targets and has on board enough associate employers to provide the paid work experience to run alongside their qualification. Associate employers are employers who have agreed to provide work experience placements but are not Board Members of the COE);
- if there are improved educational outcomes for both young people and the institutions involved;
- if there are improved employment and educational progression routes for

young people who choose this style of learning; and

- if it results in a higher-skilled workforce that is able and motivated at the point of recruitment.

## Next steps

2012/13 is a pilot year whereby 20 college learners and 10 school pupils will participate in a programme of learning at the college / school, with paid work experience with employer partners.

The COE board will be carefully monitoring the pilot and reviewing the governance arrangements to ensure they are legally compliant and that they are flexible and responsive, allowing the COE to develop and grow without bureaucratic barriers.

## What three lessons learned would you share with other governing bodies considering a similar change process?

1. The involvement of relevant people from the outset in the development of the governance arrangements may have allowed the development team to avoid the number of drafts produced. As the governance arrangements progressed, the number of people consulted increased, resulting in more changes to the arrangements to take on board their comments. A meeting of all interested parties in the first few weeks rather than conducting the consultation by email would have arrived at a model sooner.

2. There is a lot of goodwill around the table with all parties wanting the project to be a success. However, as the COE is the joint responsibility of the college governing body and the school governing body, there is a need to identify a clear resolution process if there is a disagreement over the strategic planning of the COE.
3. There is more competition in the FE and skills sector but also greater freedoms. Whilst maintaining key legal responsibilities, a college governing body can adopt a proactive approach to governance in order to better their position in a competitive market.

**For further information please contact:**

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