

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation of West Thames College  
Held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011 in the Banks Room**

<b>Members Present</b>	Mr J Bolt (Chair)	Ms M Semple	Ms K Roche
	Dr D Ashton	Ms C Ajit Singh	Ms L Graves
	Mr S Castle	Mr T White	
<b>Also present</b>	Mr B Elliott	Mr M Hesketh	Ms J Clifford
	Mr J Allen		

The meeting commenced at 1800

**37 APOLOGIES & QUORACY**

Apologies were received from V Gautam and A Patterson. The absence of Mr N Sharma was noted. As Mr Sharma has now been absent from meetings over a consecutive period of 6 months, his continuing absence will be referred to the Search Committee as required by the Instrument & Articles.

**38 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declared interests against any agenda item.

**39 MINUTES**

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting of the Corporation held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011 (Paper 1)

**40 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising

**41 BRIEFING**

A briefing '*Facing the Future*' (Paper 2) was made available from the Principal on the current restructure required to address the financial and quality challenges facing the College. With a reduction in funding of £2m for 2011/12 there is a need to reduce the College's cost base whilst investing in quality improvement.

The briefing outlined the approach being followed with confirmation that the 30 day consultation is in place up to 8<sup>th</sup> April. The proposals maintain the educational character of the College but changes are proposed to some elements of the curriculum to better position it to meet market needs (learners, employers and funding agencies).

It was confirmed that requests for voluntary redundancy, changes to contracts and not filling of vacancies have result in a reduction of circa 30 posts to date.

Following the presentation there took place a detailed and thorough question and answer session.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the briefing update.

**42 EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORT**

The Executive Team Report (Paper 3) provided Members with updates on the following topics:

- Facing the Future

- Strategic Options
- Wolfe Report on the Review of Vocational Qualifications
- Partner provider Report
- Investors in People
- Good News Stories

Main points to note were:

The outcome of the review of Engineering has supported the planned move of Engineering to the Skills Centre as it will bring together Motor Vehicle, Manufacturing Engineering and Electrical Installation in one location and under one manager. The planned curriculum offer will include a new qualification - Performing Engineering Operations – which is more practical and which offers a more direct route into Apprenticeships.

Talks are in progress with a private training provider around a partnership which will enable the College to develop its Apprenticeship offer. Talks are also ongoing with other local colleges in terms of shared services and joint projects. Meetings have taken place to map the curriculum offer between the College and the LBH Adult Education service. A meeting with the Heads of Longford Community College and Feltham Community College has explored potential further developments for the Skills Centre in partnership with these two schools. These strategic options will be subject to further discussion at the forthcoming Governors' Strategy session.

The College works with three partner providers (reduced from four in the last academic year) to deliver ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) to people in the community who might not otherwise access education. Enrolments are just about at target for this with 176 enrolled against the target of 180. Announced and unannounced visits are carried out so that the College can check on the quality of the provision and also verify the numbers attending. The overall success rate in 2009-2010 for the partner providers improved from the previous year at 56% but was still considerably below benchmark. Progression onto main College provision is still low.

At the recent re-assessment for Investors in people (IiP) the College met 36 of the 39 criteria but the assessor judged that there was not enough evidence for the remaining 3 criteria. The assessor will be returning to the College in July to re-evaluate these 3 criteria.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the '*Executive Report*'.

#### 43 **MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE**

The College report '*Development Plan 2010/11: Key Objectives Progress Report*' was received (Paper 4). The paper provided Members with a summary progress update against each of the key strategic objectives from the College's Development Plan 2010/11. A total of 18 objectives were reported against, under the three key headings of:

- Goal 1: To provide an OUTSTANDING learning experience for all our learners
- Goal 2: To be INNOVATIVE and RESPONSIVE to current and future needs
- Goal 3: To provide an EXCELLENT environment and resources.

One red assessment was reported on lesson observations following the 2-week period of observations conducted by an external team. Only 54% of the lessons observed were assessed as good or outstanding, with 10% assessed as inadequate.

Actions being taken to address the quality of teaching and learning were reported on in some detail at the Quality & Equality Group meeting.

All 'Amber' assessments were due to timing issues as year-end results are required before any movement towards a 'Green' assessment can be confirmed. No significant risks have been identified for any of the 'Amber' assessments.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

#### 44 **TEACHING & QUALITY FOCUS**

The unconfirmed minutes of the Quality & Equality Group meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 were received (Paper 5). Also made available was the Group's agreed 'Quality Monitoring Framework' (Paper 6)

Following the Ofsted inspection in November 2010, it was agreed that the Quality & Equality Group will monitor progress in key areas which were identified for improvement in the Inspection report. The quality monitoring framework agreed by the Group incorporated the following elements

- Synthesis of termly Performance Review meetings
- Outcomes of the two week lesson observations planned for February/March
- Project Plans with milestone dates
- Monitoring of agreed targets covering student experience, teaching and learning.

It was confirmed that the annual Development Plan had already prioritised some of these areas for improvement, and as such there are already targets in place which the Corporation monitors at each meeting. The Quality & Equality Group will analyse progress against these in more depth.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the unconfirmed minutes of the Quality & Equality Advisory Group meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 and the Groups 'Quality Monitoring Framework'.

#### 45 **FINANCE & ESTATES FOCUS**

The following reports were received:

- Minutes of the Finance & Capital Advisory Group that met on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011 (Paper 7)
- Management Accounts up to 31/1/11 (Paper 8)
- Progress update on the Capital Project (Paper 9)
- Bank validation letter (Paper 10)
- Fees paper (Paper 11)

#### 45a Unconfirmed Minutes of the F&C Advisory Group

The meeting covered the following:

- Capital Projects Progress Update
- Management Accounts
- Skills Centre
- Indicative Budget 2011/12

It was **RESOLVED** to note the unconfirmed minute of the meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011

45b Management Accounts

It was noted that the forecast for year-end is for an operating surplus before pension and property related costs for the full year of £34k against a budgeted surplus of £16k.

45c Capital Project Update

It was noted that the capital project is on schedule against agreed milestone dates and is within the agreed budget.

45d Bank Validation Letter

Barclays bank had agreed to the request to advance up to £17 million during the property development period at both Isleworth and Feltham. With the Feltham site project not going ahead as planned, Barclays are now seeking to formalise the actual position by bringing the revolving loan limit into line with what has been previously agreed by the former LSC (i.e. £14m) by a letter of variation. This letter of variation has been reviewed by the College solicitors Mills & Reeve in conjunction with the original agreement and subsequent variations. The Corporation is therefore asked to accept the decrease in the limit. For this purpose the letter from Barclays needs to be signed to confirm agreement to this.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) The College accepts the amendments set out in the attached letter of variation
- (ii) The letter from Barclays Bank PLC now produced is approved and Marjorie Semple (Principal) and Martin Hesketh (Deputy Principal –Resources and Corporate Planning) be and are hereby authorised to sign the acceptance of the said facility letter on behalf of the College and to bind the College to the terms and conditions stated therein.
- (iii) The College authorises the Bank to accept instructions and confirmations in connection with the facility signed in accordance with the Bank's signing mandate, current from time to time.

45e Fees Policy

A 5% fee increase is proposed for 2011/12 that should enable the College to collect a total fee income of approximately £250k in 2011/12. Such an increase is in-line with the fee increase agreed for 2009/10.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) To approve an overall average increase of 5% on fees charged to students in 2011/12 compared to 2010/11; and
- (ii) To agree a fee of £7k for international students.

**46 AUDIT FOCUS**

The unconfirmed minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> March 2011 were received (Paper 12).

Following review it was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) To appoint the College's auditors Buzzacott and MacIntyre Hudson for a further year up to 31 July 2012 with the option of a further year (up to July 2013) if all parties are in agreement; and
- (ii) To note the unconfirmed minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> march 2011.

#### 47 PEOPLE & HR FOCUS

The 'Annual Human Resources Report 2009/10' was received (Paper 13).

The following key points were noted:

- Female employees make up 65% of the College workforce which is in line with the national FE sector profile.
- The largest proportion of staff employed by the College fall within the 46-55 years age group. The number of employees within this age group has remained at the same level as the previous two years.
- The BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) representation among the College workforce has continued to increase from 34% of all staff in 2008/09 to 36% in 2009/10 with representation among teachers increasing from 32% in 2008/09 to 34% in 2009/10.
- Much positive work has been conducted over the past year through the Creative Excellence programme to promote better communication across the organisation, in particular delivering training to managers to encourage confidence when speaking about equality and diversity.
- The disability profile of the College workforce remains unchanged with 4% of all employees declaring a disability. The College retained its 'Two Tick' status for the continued use of best practice recruitment criteria in 2009/10.
- The policy of encouraging best recruitment practice continues throughout the organisation. Whilst recruitment significantly decreased during the year there was a significant increase in the number of applications received per advertised post.
- The College attracted a wide range of job applicants with the proportion of applications from underrepresented groups (BME and males) exceeding those from white and female applicants. Similarly the profile of those appointed also ran counter to the current profile with 44% of appointees being male (current profile 35%) and 43% being BME (current profile 36%).
- There was a significant decrease in the number of grievances raised by members of staff and disciplinary cases decreased from 22 to 14. The number of incapability cases also decreased significantly in 2009/10 compared to the previous year. Action taken relating to underperformance during the probationary period was also significantly reduced. This is thought to be attributable in part to the work carried out by the Personnel team and management training programmes such as *Creative Excellence* which have ensured closer performance management.
- The College experienced a marginal increase in sickness absence during 2009/10, but in comparison to benchmark data the sickness absence rate still remains low.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the 'Annual Human Resources Report 2009/10'

During discussion it was **AGREED** to make available in the next Governance Handbook scheduled to be published in September 2011 an explanation for governors on when they may be asked to participate in an appeal.

**48 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was noted that the Governor Link Scheme has been subject to review and will be re-launched at the next meeting with an implementation date of September for the academic year 2011/12.

There was no other business

**49 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May @ 1800

The meeting closed at 19.50

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY ACTION LIST**

<b>Min</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
47	To make available in the next Governance Handbook scheduled to be published in September 2011 an explanation for governors on when they may be asked to participate in an appeal.	09/2011