

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation of West Thames College
Held on Wednesday 12 July 2017 in the Banks Room**

Members Present Mr J Bolt (Chair) Ms T Aust Ms S Wilcox
 Ms C Ajit Singh Ms A Patterson Mr T White
 Mr M Michaelides Ms L Graves

Also present Mr J Allen, Mr M Cooper, Ms K Lehman

The meeting commenced at 18.00

46 APOLOGIES, QUORACY & ANNOUNCEMENT

Apologies were received from Mr B Armstrong and Ms M Harpley. The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

47 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mr S Wilcox declared an interest against agenda item 7, the part of the Executive Team Report dealing with Heathrow Airport. It was agreed that Mr Wilcox would not take part in any discussion on this part of agenda 7.

There were no other declared interests against any agenda item.

48 MINUTES

- (i) It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting of the Corporation held on 16 March 2017 (Paper 1).
- (ii) It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the confidential minutes as an accurate record of the Strategy Corporation meeting held 17 May (Paper 2).

49 SUMMARY ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING

The following updates were made available in the 'Summary Action List' (Paper 3):

MIN REF	DETAILS OF RESOLUTION/ACTION POINT	COMMENTARY / UPDATE FOR MEETING 12 JULY 2017
25	It was reported that for the next meeting the Corporation will need to receive the sub-contracting fee charging policy for approval.	Agenda item
32	Skills Centre: It was confirmed the College's lawyers are reviewing the final draft of the Lease. If there are no issues arising from this legal review, it was RESOLVED to delegate approval and signing of the Lease to the Chair and Vice Chair, and any action taken under delegated authority to be reported to the Corporation.	Still in progress. The Principal confirmed she is soon meeting with the Director of Education where this matter will be raised again. It was AGREED to keep this on the Summary Action List
37	The new legal requirements on data protection - it was agreed to look into this further to ensure the College is fully compliant.	Support is being sought from the AoC and it was confirmed the College's data Protection Policy will have to be amended to

		<p>outline how the College will respond to requests for data.</p> <p>It was AGREED to keep this on the SAL and to receive at a future Corporation meeting a briefing on the Corporation's responsibilities arising from the new legal requirements.</p>
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50. GOVERNORS' AREA REVIEW GROUP (GARG)

The following minutes from GARG meetings were noted:

- (i) Governor Area Review Group meeting held 21 April 2017 (Paper 4)
- (ii) Governor Area Review Group meeting held 05 May 2017 (Paper 5)
- (iii) Governor Area Review Group meeting held 16 June 2017 (Paper 6)

Now that the Area Review process has finished, it was **AGREED** that the Group should continue and for the Group to continue to focus on strategic matters. It was suggested that the name of the Group should be changed to 'Governors' Strategy Group' and the terms of reference should be reviewed and amended to reflect the focus on strategic matters.

Clarification was sought on the scope of the work of the Group. It was confirmed that the Group would have authority to act on any matter delegated to it from the Corporation, and to make recommendations to the Corporation on any matters outside the scope of any delegated authority.

The need to recruit new governors was again reaffirmed as a priority. In particular, the following skills set was required - educational expertise, business expertise, and community expertise. Governors were asked to give consideration to any names they could put forward for consideration.

51 EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORT

The '*Executive Team Report*' (Paper 7) provided Members with updates on the following topics:

- Financial Matters
- Partnership Update
- Leadership & Management Staffing Update
- Quality
- Strategic Planning
- Events

(i) Financial Matters

One of the 4 strategic projects for 2017 agreed by the Corporation was the need to increase efficiencies in terms of staff costs. It was confirmed a consultation paper was issued in May which set out proposals for change. The consultation period ended on 17 June and the final paper was issued in early July. Staff savings were

made through deletion of unfilled vacancies; an increase in teaching contact hours from 22 hours to 24 hours per week and a cut in remission, leading to a reduced agency staffing requirement for 2017-18. There have been two voluntary redundancies which we have been accepted as part of this process and there were no compulsory redundancies. Total staff cost savings resulting from these changes are in the region of £265k.

Also achieved has been substantial savings on non-pay expenditure budget through the introduction of better technology, which has resulted in reduced printing costs with more publications being produced in house, and there will be some improved printing and budgetary controls introduced in 2017-18 which will further reduce printing costs. Some contracts have been re-tendered which has resulted in significant savings and these include the cleaning contract and the plant and machinery contract. These, plus other agreed efficiencies, has resulted in net cost savings of circa £250k

Governors asked how staff reacted to the consultation paper and its proposals. It was reported that there was limited staff reaction as the 'whole' package was well presented with comparisons made against local colleges which showed that the 'whole' package was very favorable for West Thames staff. It was also reported there was a positive and good working relationship with the Trade Unions.

The Corporation congratulated the Executive on how well this has been handled and dealt with.

(ii) Partnership Update

The Executive report provided a detailed summary on current partnerships and on the various key strategic issues arising from them.

a) Ambitious with Autism (AaA):

The partnership with Ambitious with Autism (AaA) remains strong and both the steering and operational groups continue to work well and meet on a regular basis. The partnership to-date for this year has generated an income in excess of £50k. Discussions are currently taking place to discuss further opportunities for 2017-18.

b) Woodbridge Park Education Service (WPES):

The partnership with Woodbridge Park Education Service (WPES) remains strong and has well-established steering and operational groups. In the current year to-date, the partnership has already generated an income of £26k. The College is also currently engaged in discussions with WPES around an opportunity to provide fully managed services for IT, Estates and Security. Once finalised and agreed, the service is planned for launch in September 2017 and will provide yet further diversification of income.

c) Nursery:

In March 2017, the Executive reported to Corporation that the extended Nursery provision was in a strong position and running £43k positively ahead of budget. Through the improved utilisation of established staff and the better use of casual workers, the College has managed to reduce its reliance on agency/cover personnel. Better staff utilisation, more proactive nursery recruitment and the new extended

opening periods have all been contributing factors to improving the Nursery position. As at the end of April 2017, this picture has improved further with year-to-date income £89k ahead of budget. At £493k, full-year forecast income for the Nursery is £74k better than budget and £124k up on last year.

The Nursery is continuing to develop further opportunities with private applicants, and will be looking to take advantage of the new government bill of 30 hours of free childcare, as another opportunity to efficiently fill any remaining spaces and so deliver an all-time high income for the College.

d) Interim Education Centre

As previously alerted to the Corporation a request was received from the Interim Education Centre (IEC) on whether or not we would consider them sitting under the structure of the College and a series of meetings have taken place. There have been a number of other changes which will impact on the future of the IEC. One of the key factors is the changing nature of the Hounslow Education Improvement Partnership and the Hounslow Learning Partnership. As a result of funding cuts to the Local Authority and changes in their role, a new schools led partnership for Hounslow is currently being developed. This new partnership will need to determine whether it wishes to commission the services of an IEC or whether it wishes to establish its own IEC. There will still be a local authority requirement for provision of this type but who and how this will be managed, is not yet known.

At the same time, the College is also working with WPES through the Joint Steering Group to explore the right offer for Hounslow in terms of its Alternative Provision (14-16), the Pupil Referral Provision (PRU) and Special Educational Needs. There is a meeting scheduled with the Director of Education at LBH in July to take forward these discussions. As part of this area of work, a successful free school application has been made for a Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMD) school in Hounslow aimed at 11-19 year olds. This does present an opportunity for the College. However, the College may have to move quickly during the summer months to submit an expression of interest. It was confirmed submitting an expression of interest does not commit the College, it just confirms an 'in-principle' agreement to the proposal.

It was **AGREED** to delegate a decision on whether to submit an expression of interest to the Governors Area Review Group (GARG) and to report the use of any delegated authority to the Corporation.

e) Heathrow

A discussion took place on Heathrow and Simon Wilcox declared an interest and it was agreed he would not take part in the discussions and any decision-making on this matter.

Heathrow is becoming an increasingly important partner for the College and the plan is to continue to build upon this partnership. The Executive have requested that the Corporation makes a decision as to whether or not the College can publically state support for Heathrow, and in particular, the expansion of the airport?

After a thorough discussion it was agreed to give full Corporation support to the current partnership between the College and Heathrow as the partnership aims to enhance the student experience. The College is working in partnership with Heathrow on workforce development and to provide training and support for West Thames College students. It was agreed there is no need to make any statement on

expansion plans, as the partnership is about workforce development and student enhancement.

(iii) Strategic Planning

The Executive submitted plans to the Education and Skills Funding Agency with respect to the longer term strategic plans for the College which included a 3-year financial plan. This information was requested by the ESFA post the Area Review process so that they could assess whether or not in their view, the College was a viable standalone option. It was reported that the ESFA has stated that they are satisfied with the plans and have discussed these with the Deputy FE Commissioner.

The Corporation welcomed this development which meant that the Executive can now put the Area Review process behind them and to fully focus their efforts on the required leadership and management and strategic direction of the College.

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

52 MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

(i) Development Plan 2016/17:

The College report '*Development Plan 2016/17: Key Objectives Progress Report*' was received (Paper 8). The paper provided Members with a summary progress update against each of three key goals 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.

The following 'Red' assessments were noted:

- 'Outstanding' grade profile for lessons observed is at 39% against the target of 47%. The number of 'Outstanding' and 'good' lessons was at 90% against the target of 97%. Inadequate observations were at 7% against the target of 0%.
- Attendance is 84% against the target of 90%.
- Retention is at 94% against the target of 93%.
- In house apprenticeship numbers of 131 is below the target of 375.
- HE students at 244 against the target of 265.
- 14-16 recruitment at 21 against the target of 44.

Governors sought assurances on the actions being taken to address the 'inadequate' and 'requires improvement' lesson observations.

Of the four teachers graded 'requires improvement', it was reported two were agency staff and the other two were established staff – one has since resigned and the second member of staff is being re-observed following support interventions. The agency staff are not being used.

Of the seven teachers graded 'inadequate', four were agency staff and the other three were established staff – one has resigned and the other two are being re-observed following support interventions. The agency staff are not being used.

The final attendance rate for 2016-17 is 2% lower than at the same point last year; 84% compared to 86% in 2015-16 and governors sought assurances on the actions being taken to address retention issues.

It was confirmed improving attendance remains a key curriculum priority monitored weekly through CGEQ to support the College attendance strategy. Curriculum Directors are currently working with their teams to re-enforce the importance of high attendance and punctuality for 2017-18 to ensure consistency of approach across the College.

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

(ii) Development Plan 2017/18

The College report '*Development Plan 2017/18* was received (Paper 9). The 2017/18 Development Plan is being prepared against an economic, political and educational backdrop, which is significantly changing. Cuts in public spending, allied with policy changes, mean that the College faces several more years of uncertainty and volatility.

In light of these issues facing the sector, the proposal is to retain the three goals already in place, these being:

- 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.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the three strategic objectives and the broad objectives proposed in the report, with final approval of specific objectives and measurable targets to be an agenda item at the Corporation meeting in October.

53 TEACHING & EDUCATION FOCUS

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Quality & Equality Committee meeting held 21 June 2017 (Paper 10). The Committee focused in detail on predicted achievement rates and the following points were noted:

- The College timely predicted achievement rate including Functional Skills is currently at 85%, which would represent a 3% increase when compared with the results for 2015-16. However this is below the College target of 88% for timely achievement.
- The College timely predicted achievement rate excluding Functional Skills is currently at 88%.
- Based on the final predictions, 7 out of the 8 Directorates are predicted to secure achievement rates above their 2015-16 achievement rate. These areas are:
 - Business, ICT and Travel
 - Core Skills including ESOL and English and maths
 - Subcontracted provision
 - Inclusion and Progression
 - Skills and Logistics Centre
 - Visual, Performing Arts and Media
- Only the Directorate of Hair, Beauty and Specialist Makeup predict a small decline in achievement rates.
- Cohorts for whom there remains the potential for failing to improve achievement rates for 2016-17 include; ESOL courses for adults, Work and Study courses for

adults, Public Services, Sports, Science and Health Care courses for 16-18s and Construction courses for adults and 16-18s. Strategies are being implemented to support the at risk students.

- Predictions for Functional Skills (FS) remain low, especially for maths at levels 1 and 2. The achievement rate for Functional Skills is predicted to be 65% compared to 63% in 2015-16 and below the target of 70%.
- Improvements are predicted at Entry level and for FS English at levels 1 and 2, however predicted achievement in FS maths at levels 1 and 2 are lower than in 2015-16.
- Predicted grades for GCSE English and maths show an improved position compared to 2015-16: GCSE English grades A-C or 9-4 are predicted to be 35% compared to 20% achievement in 2015-16 but below the target of 40%. GCSE Maths grades A-C or 9-4 are predicted to be 35% compared to 20% achievement in 2015-16 but below the target of 40%.
- Predicted achievement for apprenticeships is expected to show an improved picture for 2016-17 with timely achievement predicted to be 46%. This would represent an improvement from 2015-16 when timely achievement was 23%. This covers all ages, all levels and covers West Thames College provision as well as subcontracted provision. Overall achievement for apprenticeships is predicted to be 66% which is below the target of 70% but slightly above the overall achievement rate of 57% in 2015-16.

The key areas of concern in this current year remain English and maths. This is particularly functional skills maths as predicted achievement at levels 1 and 2 are lower than in 2015-16. Timely success for apprenticeships also remains a concern because timely achievement is only predicted to be 46%. Although this would be a 24% increase from 2015-16, it remains below the national rate of 60%.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Quality & Equality Committee meeting held 21 June 2017.

54 FINANCE & ESTATES FOCUS

The following reports were received:

- Unconfirmed minutes of the Finance & Capital Advisory Group that met on 28 June 2017 (Paper 11)
- Latest Management Accounts (Paper 12)
- College Budget 2017/18 (Paper 13)
- 2-Year Financial Plan 2018/19 and 2019/20 (Paper 14)

It was confirmed the Management Accounts, College Budget 2017-18, and Two Year Financial Plan were subject to a thorough review from the Committee.

Management accounts forecast a year-end operating surplus of £355k.

The Corporation reviewed in detail the assumptions made in the commentary in the College Budget 2017/18 and the Two-Year Financial Forecasts, the sensitivities and key risks identified, and the impact of the risks. The following headline summaries were noted on key financial performance indicators and ratios:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Operating Surplus	£450k	£590k	£690K
Surplus/income%	2.1%	2.7%	3.1%
Pay costs/income ratio	64.8%	64.9%	65.3%

Impact on ESFA Financial Health Category	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
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Governors sought assurances that there was some flexibility to reduce costs in response to any recruitment issues that could impact negatively on the proposed budget for 2017-18. In response it was confirmed there was flexibility as efficiency savings can be achieved through timetabling and combining smaller classes into larger classes, reduction in the use of agency staff, and a reduction in the use of part-time tutors.

After careful scrutiny and review of the assumptions behind the budget, it was **RESOLVED** to approve:

- (i) The College Revenue & Expenditure Budget 2017/18 and;
- (ii) The Two Year Financial Forecasts 2018/19 and 2019/20

It was further **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) Note the latest Management Accounts; and
- (ii) Note the unconfirmed minutes of the Finance & Capital Advisory Group that met on 28 June 2017.

55 BANK CONVENANTS

An update report was received (Paper 15). It was reported that in subsequent conversation with Barclays, after the paper on this was presented to the Finance & Capital Advisory Group, it became evident that Barclays were open to negotiate further on the covenants. The reason quoted was that the facility is an old existing one. They had not made this indication previously.

The Executive had therefore taken the opportunity to try to moderate the breach conditions by requesting if the Bank can consider to amend the proposed covenants' and the proposed amendments were summarised in the report.

Based on past experience, the process of Barclays approval and subsequent legal due diligence takes about 7 – 9 weeks. In view of this time frame, it was **AGREED** to give delegated authority to Chair of the Finance & Capital Advisory Group to approve the covenants, and when approved, for these to be presented to the Corporation meeting on 18 October 2017.

56 SUB-CONTRACTING FEES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the 'Sub-Contractor Fees' proposed for 2017-18 and to publish the fees on the College website (Paper 16).

57 AUDIT FOCUS

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held 14 June 2017 (Paper 17).

It was noted the Committee approved the Financial Statement & regularity Audit for the year-end accounts 31 July 2017 and the Internal Audit Strategy & Plan 2017-18.

The Committee reviewed receipt of internal audit visits reports and no issues of concern were being reported to the Corporation.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held 14 June 2017.

58 GOVERNANCE FOCUS

Following John Bolt's decision not to seek to serve another term of office as Chair of the Corporation, the Clerk sought nominations from governors. Nominations for Mr Simon Wilcox were received from several governors. No other nominations were received.

Nominations were also sought for the position of Vice Chair and nominations were received for Tommy White.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (i) To appoint Mr Simon Wilcox to be the Chair of the Corporation for the period 01 August 2017 to 3 July 2018; and
- (ii) To appoint Tommy White to be the Vice Chair for the period 01 August 2017 to 31 July 2018.

The Corporation placed on record sincere thanks to the leadership provided by John during his period of being Chair to the Corporation. In particular, his leadership during the Area Review process was very much appreciated.

59 Any Other Business

The Principal provided an update on a 'Prevent' matter that involved a previous student of the College.

There was no other business.

60 Date of Next Meetings

Meeting dates for 2017-18 were circulated and **NOTED** (Paper 19).

The meeting closed at 20.15.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

SUMMARY ACTION LIST

MIN	ACTION	REVIEW
32	Skills Centre: It was confirmed the College's lawyers are reviewing the final draft of the Lease. If there are no issues arising from this legal review, it was RESOLVED to delegate approval and signing of the Lease to the Chair and Vice Chair, and any action taken under delegated authority to be reported to the Corporation.	18/10/17
37	Data Protection: To receive at a future Corporation meeting a briefing on the Corporation's responsibilities arising from the new legal requirements.	18/10/17

50	<p>Governors' Area Review Group:</p> <p>It was AGREED the Group should continue and for the Group to focus on strategic matters. It was suggested that the name of the Group should be changed to 'Governors' Strategy Group' and the terms of reference should be reviewed and amended to reflect the focus on strategic matters.</p>	18/10/17
50	<p>The need to recruit new governors was again reaffirmed as a priority. In particular, the following skills set was required - educational expertise, business expertise, and community expertise. Governors were asked to give consideration to any names they could put forward for consideration.</p>	18/10/17
51 (ii) (d)	<p>Free School Application:</p> <p>To delegate a decision on whether to submit an expression of interest to the Governors Area Review Group (GARG) and to report the use of any delegated authority to the Corporation</p>	18/10/17
52(ii)	<p>Development Plan 2017-18:</p> <p>Specific objectives and measurable targets to be approved</p>	18/10/17
55	<p>To give delegated authority to Chair of the Finance & Capital Advisory Group to approve the covenants, and when approved, for these to be presented to the Corporation meeting on 18 October 2017.</p>	18/10/17