



8	Link visits to be conducted after the Corporation approves the College SAR in December, with visits to take place in the spring term and outcomes of the visits reported to the April Corporation meeting	April 2019
9	The College SAR will be an agenda item for approval at the December Corporation meeting.	Agenda item
10(ii)	To defer any decision on the pay award to the December Corporation meeting in order to get a better understanding on recruitment and any impact on the budget	Agenda item

It was **RESOLVED** to note the '*Summary Action List*'.

#### 17 CHAIRS ACTION

Received for information purposes was the '*Memorandum of Understanding*' (Paper 3) between the College and Ambitious About Autism that was signed by the Chair under 'Chairs Action'.

#### 18 EXECUTIVE REPORT

The report from the Executive was received (Paper 4). The following key points from the report were noted:

(i) Ofsted

The Ofsted Monitoring visit took place on Wednesday 28 November. The visit involved two Inspectors and lasted one day. Data was sent to the Inspection team in advance of the visit. The day focused on a series of meetings specifically relating to key themes that had all been identified by Ofsted in the last inspection as key areas for improvement. In addition to the meetings, there were 13 joint observations carried out alongside work scrutiny relating to the key themes.

The 5 key themes were:

1. **Level 2 outcomes, Level 3 high grades, timely apprenticeship outcomes** – they recognised the progress made in all 3.
2. **Attendance** – they recognised that progress had been made and that the College had already identified that there is still more to do. They were very clear that everyone knew what had already been done and what was still needed.
3. **English & Maths** – they recognised the improved outcomes and were confident that the College knew the areas that require further improvement. They saw some positive teaching, learning and assessment in English and maths lessons.
4. **Progress/High expectations** – they recognised the College has high expectations and this was reinforced by what the students said. They reflected back that the high expectations are clearly evidenced in the high grade achievement from last year.

The key area for improvement was high expectations in lessons – they did not see enough of this. The key area of focus moving forward will be the quality of

Teaching, Learning and Assessment, building on the good work that has already been done.

5. **Work Experience** – they recognised the progress made and suggested a more aspirational work experience target would be helpful.

They stated that the College was definitely on a journey and that progress has already been made. They fed-back that as a College we had a clear and accurate assessment of our Strengths and Areas for Improvement (Afls) and that we had in place a very clear action plan which was being rigorously monitored and challenged by the Corporation.

Their provisional judgement was that reasonable progress had been made in all 5 themes. Reasonable progress is defined as: actions taken are already having a beneficial impact on students and improvements are sustainable

The report on the monitoring visit needs to be quality assured so the draft feedback is provisional at this stage. The College can expect to receive the final report between the 10-12 January and this will be made available to Governors when published.

The Corporation welcomed the positive feedback and the good progress that has been made to date. The Corporation will continue to monitor the actions being taken to address the areas identified by Ofsted as requiring improvement through the monitoring of the Post Inspection Action Plan at each Corporation meeting.

(ii) Strategic College Improvement Fund

An update was made available on the successful bid through the Strategic College Improvement Fund (SCIF) on improving student attendance. The first meeting with the College’s improvement partner (East Kent College) has been held and a follow up session is planned for Friday 14 December. On the 14 December, the team from East Kent will test the strategies that are in place. They will meet with staff and students on the day and will feedback to ET at the end of the day on their findings. The purpose of the visit will be to both support and challenge.

(iii) Achievement

The final position (still to be validated) for 2017-18 was reported as follows:

Achievement by Provision Type	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
16-19 Programmes of Study	82%	82%	78%
Adults	89%	91%	87%
14-16	98%	62%	N/A
HNS	83%	87%	79%
Apprenticeships (timely)	51%	45%	23%

Within 16-19 study programmes, College achievement has remained strong and consistent with 2016-17, which was an increase of 4% from 2015-16. Adult achievement remains high at 89%. High Needs Student achievement remains high at 83% despite a slight dip in 2017-18 but still an improvement of 14% from 2015-16. 14-16 achievement is very high at 98%, an increase of 36% from 2016-17 figures.

Apprenticeships are following a 3-year improving trend for both timely achievement and overall achievement; however, further improvements are required.

Overall College achievement is above the National Rate by 1.7% at 85.4%. Within overall achievement, Level 1 (87%) and Level 3 (88 %), are both above the National Rate and account for 72% of the 2017-18 cohort.

Adult achievement at Level 2 (12% of the overall cohort) is equivalent to the National Rate at 84%. This shows a continual 3-year improvement trend (75%, 83%, 84%). 16-18 year old achievement at Level 2, which accounts for 16% of the cohort, is still the area that requires further improvement as it is below the National Rate (2%). This is largely due to Level 2 functional skills achievement which is no longer being offered in 2018-19. This is being replaced with GCSEs which have shown an improved position in 2017-18, particularly in terms of grades 4-9. Progress at Level 2 has been made and there is a positive 3-year improvement trend (74%, 77%, 78% for 16-18 year olds).

Further areas of focused improvement include English and maths, but with a particularly focus on Level 1 FS English, along with specific vocational areas (Visual Performing Arts and Media, Health, Care and Science). This will include identified courses within these particular curriculum areas.

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

## 19 MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

### (i) Development Plan 2018/19

The College report '*Development Plan 2018/19: Key Objectives Progress Report*' was received (Paper 5). The paper provided Governors with a summary progress update against each of the key strategic objectives from the College's Development Plan 2018/19, under the two key headings of:

- Goal 2: To be INNOVATIVE and RESPONSIVE to current and future needs
- Goal 3: To provide an EXCELLENT environment and resources.

It was noted that there was little to report following the last monitoring of the Development Plan that was done by the Corporation at its last meeting held 16 October 2018. Many of the action points were still assessed as 'Amber' due to the time of the year and that it was far too early to be able to form a firm judgement. Members sought assurances on any concerns that the Executive may have on performance and it was confirmed there were no issues of concern to report to the Corporation.

### (ii) Post Inspection Action Plan 2018/19

The College report '*Post Inspection Action Plan 2018/19*' was received (Paper 6). The paper provided Governors with a summary progress update against each of the action points from the '*Post Inspection Action Plan 2018/19*' that focused on Goal 1 - '*To provide an OUTSTANDING learning experience for all our learners*'.

The Ofsted inspectors who conducted the monitoring visit were complimentary on the College's learning walks and viewed the process as a positive strength. Joint observations with the Ofsted inspectors were conducted and the feedback received was that College staff were accurate in their observation judgements. The staff who were involved in the joint observations are now using this as a basis for the training of other college staff.

Student attendance in December was at 88.5%, an increase from the 87.4% recorded for October. It was confirmed that interviews have been held for the six attendance mentors roles and an Attendance Steering Group has been set up. The Group will meet every 3 weeks. Target groups and individual students 'at risk' have been identified and will be subject to close monitoring from the Attendance Steering Group.

The current target for the % of students who have access to work placements is 75%. The feedback from the Ofsted inspectors was that the College should have a target of 100%. Current performance against the College target was 70%. Members asked if the current statistic includes all related work activities. In reply it was confirmed the 70% was actual attendance at work placements and did not include the work-related activities that all students undertake in their curriculum subjects. Whilst noting the views of the Ofsted inspectors, Members agreed to keep the target at 75% but to work towards 100% as an aspirational target.

It was **RESOLVED** the monitoring reports.

## 20 EDUCATION FOCUS

The following reports were received:

- College Self Assessment Report 2017/18 (Paper 7)
- Quality & Equality Advisory Group that met on 10/10/18 (Paper 8)
- Quality & Equality Advisory Group that met on 07/11/18 (Paper 9)

It was confirmed the College Self Assessment Report (SAR) was made available to Ofsted in advance of the monitoring visit. Their judgment was that it was an accurate assessment of where the College was, but they did not comment specifically on the proposed grade of 'Good' for Overall Effectiveness.

A key focus of the SAR was on addressing the weaknesses identified at the last College inspection.

The Chair of the Quality & Equality Committee asked if Governors were content with the approach taken in the validation of the SAR that involved two meetings of the Committee this term, and were Governors comfortable with the proposed grading? It was thought holding the first validation panel meeting in October may have been too early but the timing of the validation meeting was driven by the expected Ofsted monitoring visit. Governors agreed the College was in a much better position now than compared with 12 months ago and that there is a strong evidence base in place to support the judgements and proposed grades.

Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) Approve the College Self Assessment Report 2018/19;
- (ii) Note the minutes of the Quality & Equality Advisory Group that met on 10/10/18; and
- (iii) Note the minutes of the Quality & Equality Advisory Group that met on 07/11/18.

## 21 AUDIT FOCUS

The following reports were received:

- Minutes of the Audit Committee held 27 November 2018 (Paper 10)
- Audit Committee's Annual Report 2017/18 (Paper11)

- Internal Audit Service Annual Report 2017/18 issued by MHA MacIntyre Hudson
- Post-audit Management Report on the Accounts and Regularity Assurance issued by Buzzacott
- Letter of Representation issued to Buzzacott by the College

The Audit Committee's Annual Report 2017-18 was a summary document explaining the work of the Committee during the course of the year. Appended to the Annual Report were the various reports from the internal audit service and the financial statement and regularity auditor that need to be approved by the Corporation. The Annual Report from the Audit Committee should be considered before the Corporation approves the Report and Financial Statements for 2017/18. The Corporation is required to receive from the Audit Committee an annual opinion and the following opinion for 2017/18 was confirmed:

*The Audit Committee, through review of auditors' reports and discussion with auditors and college managers, has arrived at the opinion that West Thames College has adequate and effective assurance frameworks, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the effective use of resources, solvency of the institution and the safeguarding of its assets.*

*The Committee is satisfied with the financial reporting of West Thames College and the performance of the internal and financial statement & regularity auditors.*

*The Audit Committee considers that the Corporation's responsibilities have been satisfactorily discharged and recommends this report to the Corporation.*

Following a thorough review of all the reports presented under this agenda item, It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Corporation notes the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee meeting held on 28 November 2018;
- (ii) The Corporation approves the Annual Report 2017/18 from the Audit Committee for forwarding on to the Education & Skills Funding Agency;
- (iii) The Corporation approves the Internal Audit Service Annual Report 2017/18; and
- (iv) The Corporation approves the Post-audit Management Report on the Accounts and Regularity Assurance and authorises the Chairman to sign the 'Letter of Representation'.

## **22 FINANCE & ESTATES FOCUS**

The following reports were received:

- Minutes of the Finance & Capital Advisory Group that met on 23 November 2018 (Paper 12);
- Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2018 (Paper 13);
- Management Accounts up to 30 September 2018 (Paper 14)
- Pay Award 2018-19 (Paper 15)

The Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2018 were subject to a thorough review by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 28 November 2018 and

there were no internal control issues arising from their review. The accounts were also subject to thorough review from the Finance Committee that met on 23 November 2018.

It was confirmed the Management Accounts were subject to thorough review from the Finance Committee and were made available for information purposes. Given the projected operating deficit for this year, it was clear to the Committee the Executive will need to take urgent remedial action to improve the position by reducing costs and, where possible, increasing net income. To this end it was confirmed all expenditure lines are subject to a thorough review in order to make savings. However, as staffing costs are now forecast at over 69% of income, the Executive has prioritised this area of expenditure. The following areas, activities and posts have already been identified for detailed review and targeted overall cost reduction of at least £150k.

- Logistics AEB courses
- Business Development and Apprenticeships – vacant establishment posts/alteration to posts
- Small group sizes, particularly in HE – merging of groups and reduction of teaching hours
- Vacant posts across the board
- Improved established staff utilisation and reduced agency staffing across all areas

It will be challenging to make the changes necessary to balance the budget, but the College has a good track record over the last couple of years of being able to adapt quickly to reduce costs to mitigate shortfalls in income.

Discussed in some detail was whether or not a pay award could be confirmed and agreed for 2018-19. Based on the review of the financial forecasts, and the risks of being in breach of its bank covenants should the additional pay costs and any other unforeseen factors take the College close or over a deficit of £330k, the Committee agreed a pay award is not affordable.

The Board and Committee do want to offer a pay award to reward staff for all their hard work, but based on current financial forecasts, it would not be the right decision to make an award. The increase in staff costs arising from a 1% pay award would be very difficult to manage in the current year, but the increase in the staffing cost base would impact on subsequent years when the budget forecasts are set to be even more challenging.

An alternative approach to remunerate staff was discussed by the Committee should the year-end position be positive which could include a review of the WTC 'benefits package', rather than a traditional pay award. This is something for the Executive Team to explore during the course of the academic year.

Following a thorough review of all the reports presented under this agenda item, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) To note the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee meeting held on 23 November 2018;
- (ii) To approve the Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2018 and authorise the Chairman and Principal to sign the Accounts;
- (iii) To note the Management Accounts up to 30 September 2018; and
- (iv) Not to offer a pay award for 2018-19.

Due to the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, it was agreed to defer these agenda items to the strategy meeting in February.

## **24 HUMAN RESOURCE FOCUS**

The Corporation received for review the Annual HR Report 2017/18 (Paper 17). The following was reported on:

- Staff Profiles
- Recruitment Strategies
- Utilisation Restructures and Redundancies
- Casework
- Absence
- HR Strategy and Development Planning
- External Accreditation
- Professional Development
- Staff Survey
- Safeguarding
- Development Plans 2017/18

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Annual HR Report 2017/18.

The Corporation reviewed the Annual Health & Safety Report 2017/18 (Paper 18). The report provided an overview of the management of health and safety during 2017/18. The report provided a summary on significant developments in health and safety arrangements; provided a review of incidents and reported accidents; and the health & safety plan for 2018/19. There were no serious Health & Safety concerns to report to the Corporation.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Annual Health & Safety Report 2017/18

## **25 DATA DASHBOARD - MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE**

A 'live' demonstration was given on the current Data Dashboard that Governors can now access through the Governors' Portal. Governors were asked to review the Data Dashboard and to feedback any comments they may have directly to Mr M Michaelides.

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

## **26 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Received for information purposes was a copy of the draft of the '*WTC Commercial Plan 2018-19*' that will be subject to further review from the Finance Committee.

There was no other business

## **27 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Strategy Meeting Wednesday 13 February 2019 @ 16.00 at the Skills Centre
- Corporation meeting Wednesday 03 April 2019 @ 1800

The meeting closed at 19.45



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

**SUMMARY ACTION LIST**

<b>Min</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Review</b>
8	Link visits to be conducted after the Corporation approves the College SAR in December, with visits to take place in the spring term and outcomes of the visits reported to the April Corporation meeting	3/4/19
22(iv)	An alternative approach to remunerate staff was discussed by the Committee should the year-end position be positive which could include a review of the WTC 'benefits package', rather than a traditional pay award. The Executive Team to explore this during the course of the academic year.	July 2019