

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation of West Thames College
Held on Wednesday 07 December 2016 in the Banks Room**

Members Present	Mr J Bolt (Chair)	Ms T Aust	Mrs M Harpley
	Ms A Patterson	Mr T White	Ms C Ajit Singh
	Mr M Michaelides	Dr B Armstrong	Mr T Karakaya
	Mr S Wilcox		

Also present	Mr J Allen	Mr M Cooper	Mr G Baker
	Ms K Lehmann		

The meeting commenced at 17.30

13 APOLOGIES & QUORACY

Apologies were received from Ms L Graves and Mr S De-Sousa.

The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

14 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declared interests against any agenda item.

15 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting of the Corporation held on 12 October 2016 (Paper 1).

16 SUMMARY ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING

The '*Summary Action List*' was received (Paper 2). It was confirmed all the outstanding action points from the last meeting are addressed through agenda items at this meeting.

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

17 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Due to the confidential items to be discussed, it was **RESOLVED** to declare this agenda item confidential and for the minutes to be recorded separately.

18 EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORT

The Executive Team Report (Paper 5) provided Members with updates on the following topics:

- Strategic Context – Area Reviews
- Technical & Further Education Bill
- Social Mobility
- Apprenticeship Update
- FE Commissioner
- English & maths
- Financial matters
- Leadership & Management Staffing Update
- Achievement Rates
- Skills + Logistics Centre Update
- Student and Events news stories.

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

19 MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

The College report '*Development Plan 2016/17: Key Objectives Progress Report*' was received (Paper 6). The paper provided Members with a summary progress update against each of the key strategic objectives from the College's Development Plan 2016/17, 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.

Attached to the report was the 'Data Dashboard' that summarised performance against those key performance indicators that governors have asked to be kept informed on.

A 'Red' assessment was noted for student attendance which was reported at 87.4%, against the target of 90%.

The other 'Red' assessment noted by the Corporation was in-house apprenticeship numbers. Against the target of 375, 58 have been recruited. Positive discussions have been held with the local NHS Trust where it is hoped to recruit additional apprentices.

The Corporation welcomed the positive reporting on EFA 16-18 numbers with confirmation given that the College should meet its allocation of 1,947 16-18 students. Achieving this will improve funding for next year due to the method of lagged funding on student numbers. The additional income expected for 2017/18 is thought to be in the region of £400k to £450k.

The Corporation also welcomed the strong HE recruitment, with 259 recruited against the target of 260; and the strong recruitment of High Needs Students with 150 recruited against the target of 141.

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

20 TEACHING & QUALITY FOCUS

The minutes of Quality & Equality Advisory Group meeting held 12 October 2016 were received and noted (Paper 7).

The notes of the Quality & Equality Advisory Group moderation meeting of the College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) that met on 09 November 2016 were received and noted (Paper 8). The Group received presentations from each Director on their proposed self-assessment grades for the curriculum areas under their charge. The Group questioned and sought assurances on each of the grades being proposed.

At the SAR validation panel meeting the achievement rates for each subject sector area were looked at in detail. The final overall position for 2015-16, was confirmed as follows:

- 1 year dip in achievement rates, against a strong period of a 5 year upward trend. This decrease in performance is primarily attributed to poorer performance than predicted in Functional skills results in both English and

maths, particularly at level 2.

- 16-18s - overall achievement rates have decreased by 2% in this 1 year period from 81% in 2014-15 to 79% in 2015-16. This decline in achievement is at levels 1 and 2 although both levels remain at or above national rates. In contrast, level 3 achievement has continued to improve and is now at 89% for 2015-16.
- 19+ - overall achievement rates have decreased by 2% in this 1 year period from 89% in 2014-15 to 87% in 2015-16. This decline in achievement is particularly at level 2 at 74%. In contrast, level 1 and level 3 achievement remains high at 91% and 86% respectively.
- Apprenticeships - Timely achievement rates in apprenticeships are very low and again, significantly impacted by the lack of timely achievement for functional skills.

There were significant staffing issues in English and maths during this period which were addressed but this did impact on achievement. It was confirmed detailed plans are already in place to drive up the much needed improvements. However, it was reported to governors that staffing in English and maths remains a significant challenge and this is one of the reasons stated in the SAR on why the College is not yet outstanding.

The College 'Self-Assessment Report 2015/16' was received (Paper 10). The Principal invited Members to discuss the proposed grading for overall effectiveness, outcomes for learners, personal development, behaviour and welfare and effectiveness of leadership and management.

After a thorough discussion and analysis of the range of data and information made available, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following self-assessment grade profile:

Overall Effectiveness	Grade 2
Outcomes for Learners	Grade 2-
Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment	Grade 2
Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare	Grade 2+
Leadership and Management	Grade 2

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the 'College Self Assessment Report 2013/14'.

In terms of why the College is good, the following key strengths were noted:

- Governors, managers and all staff have driven forward significant and sustained improvement. Challenging and ambitious targets for improvement, with students' learning at their heart, have led to an increased focus on performance management allied with effective staff development.
- Robust and effective Prevent and safeguarding arrangements ensure students are well informed, constructively engaged and feel safe at the College.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, and a significant proportion of lessons are outstanding.
- Students' achievement on their courses is often high. Students achieve good standards in their college work and develop valuable skills, including practical skills, which they can apply in further study and employment.

- Highly productive work with an extensive and diverse range of partners ensures relevant and meaningful courses, to meet students' and employers' needs. A highly responsive approach to partnership activities leads to the development of highly inclusive provision that meets the needs of students.
- Students enjoy working in a productive environment and access an excellent programme of course enrichment and employability enabling them to make well-informed decisions regarding their next steps.
- High and improved achievement rates in a high proportion of vocational areas.

In addition to the issues around English & maths, the College is not yet outstanding because the successful completion of apprenticeship programmes are still too low, especially within agreed timescales; and student's attendance and punctuality are still not good enough.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the '*College Self Assessment Report 2015/16*'.

21 **AUDIT FOCUS**

The following reports were received:

- Minutes of the Audit Committee held 30 November 2016 (Paper 10)
- Audit Committee's Annual Report 2015/16 (Paper 11)
 - Internal Audit Service Annual Report 2015/16 issued by Macintyre Hudson
 - Post Audit Management Letter on the Accounts issued by Buzzacott and Letter of Representation
 - Post Audit Management Letter on Regularity and Letter of Representation issued by Buzzacott

The Chair of the Committee introduced the Annual Report 2015/16 from the Audit Committee. The Annual Report is a summary document explaining the work of the Committee during the course of the year. Appended to the Annual Report are 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 Financial Statement and Accounts for 2015/16. The Corporation is required to receive from the Audit Committee an annual opinion and the following opinion for 2015/16 was confirmed:

There are no matters that the committee wishes to bring specifically to the attention of the Corporation Overall, based on the information provided to them by the College; the work, reports and audit opinions of the College's Internal and Financial Statement & Regularity Auditors; and the opinions and assurances received from the Corporation Committees; the Audit Committee's opinion is that that the College's risk management, control and governance systems and its internal processes for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness at the College are adequate and effective and that the Governing Body should have confidence in relying upon them. The Committee is satisfied that where weaknesses are identified they have been responded to in an appropriate and timely manner.

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 30 November 2016;
- (ii) The Corporation approves the Annual Report 2015/16 from the Audit Committee for forwarding on to the Skills Funding Agency;
- (iii) The Corporation approves the Internal Audit Service Annual Report 2015/16
- (iv) The Corporation approves the Post Audit Management Letter on the Accounts and authorises the Chairman to sign the 'Letter of Representation'; and
- (v) The Corporation approves the Post Audit Management Letter on the Regularity Audit 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 2016 (Paper 12)
- Financial Statement & Year End Accounts 31 July 2016 (Paper 13)
- Management Accounts up to 31 October 2016 (Paper 16)

The Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2016 were subject to a thorough review by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 30 November 2016 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 2016.

It was confirmed the Management Accounts were subject to thorough review from the Finance Committee and were made available for information purposes.

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 2016;
- (iii) To approve the Financial Statements and Year End Accounts 31 July 2016 and authorises the Chairman and Principal to sign the Accounts; and
- (iv) To note the Management Accounts up to 30 October 2016.

23 BANK COVENANT

The College report was received (Paper 15).

The College has a long-term £8.9m fixed-term, fixed-rate loan to April 2037 which was taken out to part-finance the £69m redevelopment of the London Road site completed in 2011. This loan came with two covenants. Following implementation in

2015/16 of the new Financial Reporting Standard (FRS102) and new Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), subsequent changes to key reporting and accounting statements have rendered these covenants obsolete. Barclays are therefore seeking to replace the two original covenants with two new ones. They issued their new FRS102 compliant covenants last month for review and consideration.

The two covenants proposed are:

- Debt Service Cover
- Operational Leverage

Spreadsheet templates to model implications of the covenants were made available for review. To give an extended view of the impact of the proposed covenants these templates have been completed using figures taken from the College's 'Two-year Financial Plan' as compiled in June 2016 and submitted to the Skills Funding Agency.

The financial modelling within the spreadsheet template confirmed that the College would meet the covenants as proposed if the forecast to 2017/18 is met. The Executive Team recommendation to the Corporation is therefore to accept the new covenants as proposed.

Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the two new covenants.

24 HUMAN RESOURCE FOCUS

It was **AGREED** to defer the two reports under this agenda item to the next meeting – Annual HR report 2015/16 and the Annual H&S Report 2015/16.

25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was reported that for the next meeting the Corporation will need to receive a report on sub-contracting and the sub-contracting fee charging policy for approval.

There was no other business

26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Strategy Meeting Wednesday 01 February 2017 @ 16.00 at the Skills Centre
- Corporation meeting Wednesday 15 March 2017 @ 1800

Signed: _____ Date: _____

SUMMARY ACTION LIST

Min	Action	Review
24	It was AGREED to defer the two reports under this agenda item to the next meeting – Annual HR report 2015/16 and the Annual H&S Report 2015/16.	15/3/17
25	It was reported that for the next meeting the Corporation will need to receive a report on sub-contracting and the sub-contracting fee charging policy for approval.	15/3/17