

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation of West Thames College
Held on Wednesday 12 October 2016 in the Banks Room**

Members Present Mr J Bolt (Chair) Ms T Aust Ms C Ajit Singh Mr T White
 Mr M Michaelides Mr S Wilcox Mr B Armstrong

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

The meeting commenced at 18.00

1 APOLOGIES & QUORACY

Apologies were received from Ms A Patterson and Ms L Graves. The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declared interests against any agenda item.

3 MEMBERSHIP & DETERMINATION

Due to continuous non-attendance of over 6 months, it was **RESOLVED** to terminate the membership of the Corporation of Mr S Castle and Mr A Joshie with immediate effect.

It was **AGREED** not to seek new governors at this point in time due to the Area Review process. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to reduce the current determination of Corporation membership to 12 Members (previously was 15).

It was noted, and welcomed, that Ms M Harpley intends to re-join the Corporation in December, following her sabbatical period during the Area Review process.

4 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting of the Corporation held on 13 July 2016 (Paper 1).

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the minutes as an accurate record of the special meeting of the Corporation held on 05 October 2016 (Paper 2).

5 SUMMARY ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING

The '*Summary Action List*' was received (Paper 3). The following updates were provided:

Minute 58: Chairs Action. It was confirmed approval authority had been given by the Chair and Mr S Wilcox for the College extending its nursery provision by taking over the North Isleworth Children's Centre.

Minute 59 (ii): Development Plan 2016/17 is an agenda item.

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

6 EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORT

The '*Executive Team Report*' (Paper 4) provided Members with updates on the following topics:

- Strategic Context
- Area Review
- Apprenticeship Levy
- Devolution & Localism in FE
- Sainsbury Review
- HE Updates
- Changes to GCSEs
- Impact of the vote to leave the EU
- Financial Matters
- Recruitment Targets
- Leadership & Management Staffing Update
- Success rates 2015/16
- Skills Centre/LEP Update
- SFA Audit
- Partnerships
- Events

It was confirmed the three Principals from Uxbridge College, Harrow College, and West Thames College met last week and agreed the structure that was presented to governors at the special Board meeting held 05 October 2016.

The Principal confirmed there is need for each of the three colleges to instruct due diligence to commence. KPMG attended a meeting with the three Principals and a fee rate of £25k was proposed for each College.

The Principal outlined the proposed consultation process and confirmed a public consultation document would be published on 24 October 2016. Messages to staff and students at the three colleges have been agreed and will be released at the same time.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of KPMG to conduct due diligence at a fee rate of £25k.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Public Consultation Document and the consultation programme outlined to Governors.

It was noted that at the Steering Group 5 meeting held yesterday, Stanmore College announced the intention to form a strategic alliance with West Herts College.

The Executive Report provided an update on recruitment. Governors welcomed confirmation that the College is on track to achieve 16-18 income targets.

Recruitment of adults is higher this year than it was last year with particularly high demand for ESOL and English & maths provision.

Further updates were provided on 14-16 recruitment, HE recruitment, and Apprenticeship recruitment.

It was noted the analysis of the full impact of recruitment against the agreed College budget 2016-17 would be reviewed in more detail at the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

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

7 MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

(i) Development Plan 2015/16

The College report '*Development Plan 2015/16: Key Objectives Progress Report*' was received (Paper 5). The paper provided Members with a summary progress update against each of the key strategic objectives from the College's Development Plan 2015/16.

It was confirmed that there has been little or no movement from the position reported at the July Corporation meeting with the exception of the forecast financial out-turn. A surplus of £306k is being forecast against the figure of £233k that was reported to the July Corporation meeting.

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

(ii) Development Plan 2016/17:

It was confirmed that the '*Development Plan 2016/17*' (Paper 6) outlined the proposed objectives and milestones that can be measured in-year.

The three strategic goals were confirmed as:

- 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

Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the '*Development Plan 2016/17*'.

It was reported more work is in hand to further refine the Data Dashboard and on how this is presented to Governors. It was confirmed a revised Data Dashboard would be brought to the next meeting for review and comment.

8 GOVERNOR LINK SCHEME

The College report '*Governor Link Scheme*' was received (Paper 7). The report confirmed the allocations for 2016/17 and the agreed process to be followed for link visits. Governors were asked to conduct their link visits using the curriculum areas Self Assessment Reports as the guiding document.

Mr B Armstrong agreed to take on the curriculum area of Visual & Performing Arts & Media following the departure from the Corporation of Mr S Castle.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the governor link allocations for 2016/17.

9 QUALITY COMMITTEE

It was confirmed the Quality Committee had met immediately prior to the Corporation meeting.

The Chair reported that final success rates for 2015-16 are still work in progress and a final update would be presented at the November meeting of the Committee.

The focus of the discussions at the meeting was on English & maths results. As has been previously reported to the Corporation, the inclusion of functional skills and the need for students to gain a grade C or above in GCSE maths and English, has had a significant impact on success rates. It was confirmed this issue has had a major impact on national averages with most Colleges reporting a decline in success rates due to English & maths results. However, regardless of the national picture, the College, staff and governors have a responsibility to improve English and maths outcomes for the students of the College. To this end, Members sought explanations on what were the problems and what are the actions being taken to ensure a better performance in 2016-17. The following points were noted:

- Changes in assessment methods and a shift in qualification types at a national level – were students and staff prepared for these changes?
- College predictions and forecasts were not accurate
- Significant increase in volumes in English & maths due to the funding requirement for students to gain a grade C or above in GCSE maths and English
- Language issues with some ESOL students not understanding what the exam questions were asking of them
- Lack of appropriately qualified and experienced maths teachers
- Curriculum management and staffing issues, particularly in Health & Social Care
- Accountability at curriculum level – Directors need to take responsibility for all aspects of the curriculum, including English & maths
- A separate English & maths panel has been held where staff analysed their results and reported on the actions they were taking. These action plans will inform quality improvement plan for each curriculum area.
- The SAR validation panel meeting to be held in November was critical. This meeting needs to be used by the Committee to unpick the issues in each of the curriculum areas and to ensure the proposed curriculum quality improvement action plan is fit for purpose to address areas identified for improvement.
- It was agreed for the SAR meeting that it would be useful to present success and achievement results in two formats, one reporting on results including functional skills and GCSE and the other reporting on results excluding functional skills and GCSE.

Following review of the issues, the Chair of the Committee confirmed two new risks were identified and added to the Risk Register, these being:

- A separate risk for English & maths
- Staff turnover and appropriately qualified staff. To inform the Committee if there is any impact on curriculum delivery arising from any of these potential staffing issues

The Corporation noted the update given by the Chair of the Quality Committee.

10 FINANCE & ESTATES FOCUS

The Corporation received the following:

- Draft 2015/16 Results (Paper 8)
- 16/17 Pay Award Recommendation (Paper 9)
- Skills Centre/LEP Capital Project Update (Paper 10)

The draft management accounts and commentary for year-end July 2016 were presented for information with confirmation given that the final audited accounts for 2015/16 will be presented to the December Corporation meeting for approval.

The projected year-end performance is an operating surplus of £306k compared with the budgeted surplus of £25k. Key variances against the budget are:

Favourable

- EFA funding exceeding budget by £178k through 14-16 direct recruitment
- Higher HE student numbers with fee income exceeding budget by 169k
- Increased High Needs Student numbers leading to Local Authority funding exceeding budget by £195k
- Under-delivery of subcontracted provision leading to saving of £209k on payments to partners
- Unspent non-pay expenditure contingency budget of £68k

Adverse

- Adult Skills Budget shortfall of £369k (of which £281k Adult Apprenticeships)
- Total pay costs unfavourable variance of £238k

Much of the overall positive I&E variance against budget was reported in the previous full-year forecast of April. The revised projected surplus of £306k compares favourably with this previous full-year forecast surplus of £195k. Key movements since the last full-year forecast are:

Favourable

- Unspent non-pay expenditure contingency funds of £60k
- £39k saving on consultancy and professional fees
- Estates projected outturn costs reduced by £29k
- Staff training and development expenditure reduced by a further £29k
- Favourable net pay cost movement of £13k

Adverse

- Reduction of £57k in ASB funding due to subcontractor underperformance
- Additional exam fee expenditure of £59k

Fixed assets in the Balance Sheet reflect the in-year additions of circa £3m at the Skills + Logistics Centre and the year-end cash position is a balance of £4.8m.

Cashflow is forecast to average around £4.4m between August 2016 and July 2017 with the projected low of £2.8m falling in March 2017

The SFA financial health grade as at 31st July 2016 is 'Good'.

Governors welcomed the positive performance for the year and the stable financial position that the College is in. Governors asked for the minutes to record thanks to the Executive Team for the excellent financial out-turn.

Governors were reminded the College's bank is seeking to replace the current two covenants associated with the bank loan with two new ones following the new SORP applicable from this financial year. Discussions are still on-going and the outcomes of these discussions will be reported to the Finance Committee.

The College budget 2016-17 approved by the Corporation included within pay costs provision for a pay award of 1%, effective from 01 August 2016, subject to affordability.

The AoC has recommended a pay award of 1% to all pay points or a flat-rate increase of £250 where this is more beneficial, backdated to 01 August 2016.

The Executive is confident that the general contingency of £77k is sufficient for the College to deliver a surplus outturn in line with the budget forecast. Therefore, the Executive recommends the Corporation approves the pay award proposed by the AoC.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a pay award of 1% to all pay points or a flat-rate increase of £250 where this is more beneficial, backdated to 01 August 2016

The report on the Skills Centre Development Project confirmed the project was completed within the set budget and within the agreed timescale. Governors asked for the minutes to record thanks to all staff involved in delivering a high quality project which will make a significant impact on the Skills + Logistics Centre.

It was **AGREED** for the spring Corporation meeting to be held at the Skills + Logistics Centre.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 07 December 2016 @ 1800.

The meeting closed at 19.45.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

SUMMARY ACTION LIST

MIN	ACTION	REVIEW
7	A revised Data Dashboard would be brought to the next meeting for review and comment.	7/12/16
10	The College's bank is seeking to replace the current two covenants associated with the bank loan with two new ones – update to be made available to the Finance Committee	7/12/16
10	The spring Corporation meeting to be held at the Skills + Logistics Centre.	7/12/16