

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation of West Thames College
Held on Wednesday 15 March 2017 in the Banks Room**

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

Also present	Mr J Allen	Mr G Baker	Ms K Lehmann
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The meeting commenced at 17.30

27 APOLOGIES & QUORACY

Apologies were received from Mr M Cooper, Ms M Harpley, Mr T Karakaya, and Mr S De-Sousa.

The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

28 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declared interests against any agenda item.

29 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting of the Corporation held on 07 December 2016 (Paper 1).

30 SUMMARY ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING

The '*Summary Action List*' was received (Paper 2). It was confirmed the HR Annual Report and Health & Safety Annual Report are agenda items at this meeting. The remaining action point, on sub-contracting, to be deferred to the next meeting and to remain on the '*Summary Action List*'.

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

31 MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

The College report '*Development Plan 2016/17: Key Objectives Progress Report*' was received (Paper 3). 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 84.8%, against the target of 90%. As reported at the last meeting, raising attendance remains the key curriculum priority. It was confirmed attendance is monitored weekly through CGEQ to support the College attendance strategy. A new attendance initiative for the summer term is to be launched after the Easter holiday.

A 'Red' assessment was noted for in-house apprenticeship numbers. Against the target of 375, 110 have been recruited to date but with more in-year enrolments expected.

The third 'Red' assessment reported to the Corporation was on the EFA 14-16 direct recruitment, with 30 enrolled to date against the target of 44.

In terms of positives, the Corporation welcomed the positive reporting on EFA 16-18 numbers with confirmation given that the College has met its allocation of 1,947 16-18 students with 1,995 enrolled. 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.

Retention at 97% remains above the College target of 95%.

The operating surplus is forecast at £200k, above the budget target of a surplus of £75k.

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

32 EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORT

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

- Strategic Context & Update
- FE Developments
- Financial Health
- Apprenticeships
- Leadership & Management Staffing Updates
- Achievement Rates 2015-16
- Skills + Logistics Centre Update
- Partnerships

The Principal provided an update on the meeting held last Friday with officials from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) following the decision not to proceed with the recommendation arising from the Area Review. The SFA wanted to understand the reasons why the decision was made and sought assurances on the option of the College to stand-alone. The SFA have requested a five-year financial plan and work has already commenced on this.

The Principal confirmed that the SFA were informed that the College would continue to work towards a sustainable clear strategic direction of remaining a stand-alone College whilst working in partnership with key stakeholders, and would continue to focus on quality and Ofsted inspection preparation. The Corporation endorsed the approach outlined by the Principal.

For the Skills Centre, it was confirmed a further meeting with the LBH has taken place and the outcome was that the Reversionary Head Lease is to be extended for 20 years as requested by the College and not the 15 years as proposed by the LBH.

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.

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

33 TEACHING & QUALITY FOCUS

The minutes of Quality & Equality Advisory Group meeting held 08 February 2017 were received and noted (Paper 5).

The Corporation reviewed final achievement rates 2015-16 and the following points were noted:

- 1 year dip in achievement rates to 82%, 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. However, the College timely achievement rates remain 1% above the provider group rate of 81%.
- 16-18 timely 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 the 16-18 timely achievement rate is at the provider group rate of 79%. In contrast, level 3 achievement has continued to improve and is now at 89% for 2015-16.
- 19+ timely achievement rates have decreased by 2% in this 1-year period from 89% in 2014-15 to 87% in 2015-16 against a provider group rate of 85%. This decline in achievement is particularly at level 2 at 74%. In contrast, level 1 and level 3 achievement remains high at 91% and 85% respectively. 19+ timely achievement rates remain above the provider group rate by 2%.
- Apprenticeships timely achievement rates are very low at 23% against a provider group rate of 60%. Poor timely achievement in functional skills has contributed significantly to this.

As previously reported to the Corporation, there were significant staffing issues in English and maths during this period which were addressed but this did impact on achievement. Detailed plans are already in place to drive up the much needed improvements in the areas identified above. However, it was noted that staffing in English and maths remains a significant challenge.

The Corporation received for information purposes a governor Ofsted briefing document (Paper 6) in preparation for the inspection, which is expected to take place between now and the end of the summer term.

Also received for information purposes was the latest summary reports on governor link visits (Paper 7) conducted during the term.

34 FINANCE & ESTATES FOCUS

The following reports were received:

- Minutes of the Finance & Capital Advisory Group that met on 22 February 2017 (Paper 8)
- Management Accounts (Paper 9)
- Tuition Fee Policy 2017-18 (Paper 10)

The reported YTD operating result for the 5 months to December 2016 is a surplus of £43k compared to a budgeted surplus of £132k, a negative variance of £89k. However, the year-end position is forecast for an operating surplus of £200k against the budgeted surplus of £75k. The full-year forecast contains a contingency for non-

pay expenditure of £40k (0.5% of total expenditure). If his contingency is not required the year-end surplus would increase accordingly.

The Committee requested that each year a schedule of forecast capital expenditure is prepared, which is split between asset renewals and maintenance costs, plus any planned specific project costs. The view of the Committee was that there needs to be a specific focus from the Committee on proposed capital projects and capital expenditure to ensure sufficient investment on the strategic options, as discussed at the recent Corporation strategy meeting. To this end the Committee agreed:

- (i) To seek Corporation approval at the March meeting to approve a capital budget of £1m, for 2017-18; and
- (ii) For the Finance Committee to receive a detailed breakdown of the proposed capital and planned maintenance programme for review ahead of the next Corporation Strategy meeting in May, at which this should be included as an agenda item for discussion and approval.

The Tuition Fee 2017-18 Policy sets out the key guidelines in respect of fees charged to students based on funding eligibility factors such as:

- Status
- Age
- Prior attainment
- Type of learning programme(s) studied
- Level of learning programme(s) studied

It was confirmed prices increases of 1.5% are proposed as against last year's fee levels.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) To approve a capital budget of £1m, for 2017-18; and
- (ii) To approve Tuition Fee Policy 2017-18

35 AUDIT FOCUS

The minutes of Audit Committee meeting held 01 March 2017 were received and noted (Paper 11). The Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed there were no issues of concern to bring to the attention of the Corporation.

36 HUMAN RESOURCE FOCUS

The Corporation received for review the Annual HR Report 2015/16 (Paper 12). 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 2016/17

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Annual HR Report 2015/16.

The Corporation reviewed the Annual Health & Safety Report 2015/16 (Paper 13). The report provided an overview of the management of health and safety during 2015/16. 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 2016/17. There were no serious Health & Safety concerns to report to the Corporation.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Annual Health & Safety Report 2015/16.

37 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The new legal requirements on data protection were discussed and it was agreed to look into this further to ensure the College is fully compliant.

There was no other business

38 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Strategy Meeting 17 May 2017 @ 4pm
- Corporation meeting Wednesday 12 July 2017 @ 1800

39 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the confidential minutes as an accurate record of the Part III meeting of the Corporation held on 07 December 2016 (Paper 14).

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the confidential minutes as an accurate record of the Part III meeting of the Corporation held on 05 January 2017 (Paper 15).

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the confidential minutes as an accurate record of the Part III meeting of the Corporation held on 01 February 2017 (Paper 16).

40 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

41 STRATEGIC OPTIONS ACTION PLAN

Made available was the '*Strategic Options Action Plan*' updating progress on the agreed outcomes from the Governors Strategy meeting held in February. It was confirmed that the Area Review Group meeting held 8 March 2017 reviewed in detail the action plan and it was agreed at this meeting to make the action plan available to the Corporation at the strategy meeting to be held in May. It was confirmed the Group was very satisfied with the good progress made as outlined in the Action Plan.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the '*Strategic Options Action Plan*'.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

SUMMARY ACTION LIST

Min	Action	Review
25	It was reported that for the next meeting the Corporation would need to receive the sub-contracting fee charging policy for approval.	12/7/17
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.	12/7/17
37	The new legal requirements on data protection - it was agreed to look into this further to ensure the College is fully compliant.	12/7/17