

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation of West Thames College  
Held on Wednesday 18 October 2017 in the Banks Room**

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

**Also present**            Mr J Allen, Mr M Cooper, Ms K Lehman, Mr G Baker

The meeting commenced at 18.00

**1        WELCOME, APOLOGIES, & QUORACY**

The Chair thanked governors for electing him to the post of Chair and placed on record his appreciation that the previous Chair is continuing to serve as a governor.

The Chair reaffirmed that the focus of the work of the Corporation has to be on strategic matters to deliver the agreed strategic objective to remain as a stand alone College supported with a more commercial and partnership focus.

The Committees of the Corporation will review the 'detail' enabling the Corporation to focus on strategy.

Apologies were received from Tommy White. The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

**2        DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declared interests against any of the agenda items.

**3        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 July 2017 (Paper 1).

**4        SUMMARY ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING**

The following updates were made available in the 'Summary Action List' (Paper 2):

MIN REF	DETAILS OF RESOLUTION/ACTION POINT	COMMENTARY / UPDATE MADE AVAILABLE AT THE MEETING
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 <b>RESOLVED</b> 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.	A meeting has been arranged for early November with key officials and officers from the Borough. A progress update to be made available at the December Corporation meeting.
37	Data Protection: To receive at a future Corporation meeting a	To be an agenda item at the

	briefing on the Corporation's responsibilities arising from the new legal requirements.	December Corporation meeting
50	Governors' Area Review Group:  It was <b>AGREED</b> 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.	Agenda item
50	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.	Recruitment process is in place with interviews scheduled to take place in November with any appointment recommendations being put to the December Corporation for approval
51 (ii) (d)	Free School Application: 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	This is covered in the Principal's report.
52(ii)	Development Plan 2017-18: Specific objectives and measureable targets to be approved	Agenda item
55	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.	This will be an agenda item at the November Finance Committee with recommendations going to the December Corporation meeting for approval

## 5 EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORT

The '*Executive Team Report*' (Paper 3) was received.

In presenting the report on behalf of the Executive, the Principal made the assumption that governors have read the report in detail. Instead of covering all sections of the report, the Principal proposed to focus discussions on strategic developments, and, in particular, the free school - Social Emotional Mental Health School. The proposal is for the school to be based in Hounslow aimed at 11-19 year

olds. Further information has been made available since the July Corporation meeting when governors were briefed on this development. The deadline date for submitting an application is 24<sup>th</sup> November.

As this was an identified and agreed strategic option approved by the Corporation for the College to pursue, the Principal sought approval for the process to follow for submitting the application. The following was agreed:

- For the Strategy Group to meet to review the Free School application documentation;
- For the completed application documentation to be emailed to all governors when available; and
- For a special meeting of the Corporation to take place on Wednesday 22 November at 17.30 to consider the application and to make a decision on whether to approve submitting the application.

The Principal reported that Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College (EH&WLC) has made an approach to see if West Thames College would like to work in partnership to set up an Institute of Technology with a focus on digital. Expression of interests have to be submitted by 31 October. As an expression of interest does not commit the College to anything at this point in time, it was agreed to give approval for the Executive to work with EH&WLC to submit an expression of interest.

The Principal reported that exploratory conversations have been held with external parties on the possibility of establishing a Careers College (Logistics) and any outcomes from these discussions would be reported to the Corporation.

Governors asked if there was a template available against which decisions could be made on whether or not to approve strategic proposals as and when they are proposed. In essence, the template would provide a link to the agreed Strategic Plan and would make available a business case evaluation. It was agreed that this was required to provide a consistent framework and approach for considering strategic options/partners. The Chair volunteered to make available an example of such a template that is used at his place of work.

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

## **6 MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE**

### **(i) Development Plan 2016/17:**

The College report '*Development Plan 2016/17: Key Objectives Progress Report*' was received (Paper 4). 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%.
- In house apprenticeship numbers of 166 is below the target of 375.
- HE students at 244 against the target of 260.
- 14-16 recruitment at 21 against the target of 44.

Governors sought assurances on the actions being taken to address attendance matters. The Chair of the Quality & Equality Advisory Group confirmed attendance is subject to on-going robust monitoring from the Committee. 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 5). The 2017/18 Development Plan was 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 Development Plan 2017/18, along with the targets listed against each objective.

It was further **RESOLVED** to approve the targets proposed in the 3 Year Strategic Plan.

**7 GOVERNANCE FOCUS:**

The report from the Clerk was received (Paper 6). Also received for review and approval were the Terms of Reference for the Strategy Group (Paper 7), governor link allocations 2017/18 (Paper 8), and the DfE publication 'A Competency Framework for Governance' (Paper 9).

Following review it was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) Subject to the amendments agreed at the meeting, to approve the terms of reference for the Strategy Group;
- (ii) Subject to the changes made at the meeting, to approve the governor link allocations for 2017-18; and
- (iii) Subject to contextualising for FE, to adopt the 'Competency Framework for Governance' and to use the framework for the basis of the annual self assessment for governance.

It was confirmed governor interviews have been arranged for 29 November.

The College has engaged with a Partner to work together to produce an initial design / storyboard of what the Governors Portal and the Data Dashboard may look like. The Governors' Portal will be an area on the College's website where governor papers will be made available as well as other key governance documents. Ultimately, if successful, the Corporation could move towards conducting paperless meetings.

The Data Dashboard will be a critical tool for governors to monitor college performance against a range of agreed KPIs.

Development work is on-going and a further update will be made available at the December Board meeting.

To avoid unnecessary duplication of work and papers at both Committee and Board meetings, a Scheme of Delegation is being developed that will clearly spell out the responsibilities and powers of the Board, and of the Committees that serve under the Board.

This will be a critical key governance document and a progress update will be made available at the December Board meeting.

## **8 TEACHING & EDUCATION FOCUS**

The Corporation received an updated from the Quality & Equality Advisory Committee meeting held 11 October 2017.

The Committee received headline information on achievement rates for 2017-18 and the following key points were reported to the Corporation:

- Classroom based education and training achievement for 2016-17 is 86% which is 4% above the achievement rate in 2015-16 and is 4% above the National Rate (NR) of 82%. This places the college achievement rates for 2016-17 in the top 20% of 29 London colleges for all ages and 16-18 students and in the top 25% for 19+ students.
- These results show an increase in achievement rates and a return to the high achievement results recorded over the past five years. The most significant increases are at level 1 (5459 leavers) now at 89% compared to 85% in 2015-16 and at level 2 (2526 leavers) now at 78% compared to 74% in 2015-16. For most Directorates the achievement rates are in-line with, and in some areas above the predictions that were made in May, although a detailed analysis at individual qualification aim will be carried out to ensure a rigorous process for calculating predicted achievement in 2017-18.
- For 16-18s, the college achievement rate is 82% which is a 3% increase compared with achievement rates in 2015-16 and 3% above the NR of 78%.
- For 19+ students the college achievement rate (4470 leavers) is 90% which is an increase of 3% compared to achievement rates in 2015-16. This compares favourably with the NR of 86%.
- Results in English and maths have improved for both functional skills and GCSE when compared to 2015-16.
- The current timely apprenticeship achievement rate as at 2nd October 2017 is 35% which is 14% above the timely achievement rate for 2015-16. Although this shows a significant improvement it is still below the NR of 59%.

The Committee noted and agreed the following key areas for improvement in 2017-18:

- Further improve achievement rates for English and maths for all ages.
- Increase Timely Achievement rates for Apprenticeships.
- Bring underperforming areas up to required standards including Health and care, Construction, Travel, sports and public services, Work and study courses for 19+, particularly at level 2.

It was confirmed the impact of lower 16-18 recruitment would feature in the Risk Register for both the Quality & Equality Committee and the Finance Committee.

## 9 FINANCE & ESTATES FOCUS

The following reports were received:

- Draft July 2017 Management Accounts (Paper 11)
- 2017/18 Budget pay Award Recommendation (Paper 12)

Paper 11 presented the draft management accounts and commentary for July 2017 and was presented for information purposes as the final accounts, together with the audited Financial Statements for the Year to 31 July 2017, will be presented at the next Corporation meeting on 13th December.

The Executive Director – Funding & Finance informed the Corporation that there would be a late adjustment to the accounts as presented in Paper 11, being recognition of a provision in the sum of £150k in respect of repair and maintenance costs for the air-conditioning system. The impact of this adjustment on 2016/17 financial performance would be to reduce the projected operating surplus for the year to £305k and to lower the expected ESFA financial health grade outturn.

The Corporation noted and welcomed the projected positive year-end outturn against the budget, and the likely financial health grade assessment of 'Good'.

Overall, the draft Management Accounts record as positive performance for the year and a very stable financial position for the College.

In terms of the pay award recommendation for 2017-18, the College has in the past agreed to implement the AoC pay recommendation. The AoC is proposing a 1% pay award or the sum of £250 where this is more beneficial, backdated to 01 August 2017.

The Executive team confirmed they were fully aware of the risk this presents to delivering the budgeted operating surplus and meeting ESFA expectations in relation to the College's published three-year financial plans. Specifically, it is recognised that if the pay award recommendation is implemented it will require the College either to operate with no general contingency or to set aside a much smaller amount (one third of the original budget) and reduce the full-year forecast of operating surplus by £50k to £400k.

Having considered the risks associated with the recommendation, and taking into account the positive financial position that the College is in, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt and implement the AoC pay recommendation for 2017-18, this being: a 1% pay

award to all salaries or the sum of £250 where this is more beneficial, backdated to 01 August 2017.

**10 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**11 Date of Next Meetings**

Wednesday 22 November 2017 @ 17.30 - Special meeting

Wednesday 13 December 2017 @ 1800 - full Corporation meeting

The meeting closed at 19.50.

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

**SUMMARY ACTION LIST**

<b>MIN</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>REVIEW</b>
4	Skills Centre: A meeting has been arranged for early November with key officials and officers from the Borough. A progress update to be made available at the December Corporation meeting.	13/12/17
4	Data Protection: To receive at a future Corporation meeting a briefing on the Corporation's responsibilities arising from the new legal requirements.	13/12/17 agenda item
5	Free School Application:  For the Strategy Group to meet to review the Free School application documentation;  For the completed application documentation to be emailed to all governors when available; and  For a special meeting of the Corporation to take place on Wednesday 22 November at 17.30 to consider the application and to make a decision on whether to approve submitting the application.	13/12/17
5	The Principal reported that Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College (EH&WLC) has made an approach to see if West Thames College would like to work in partnership to set up an Institute of Technology with a focus on digital. Expression of interests have to be submitted	13/12/17

	by 31 October. As an expression of interest does not commit the College to anything at this point in time, it was agreed to give approval for the Executive to work with EH&WLC to submit an expression of interest.	
5	The Principal reported that exploratory conversations have been held with external parties on the possibility of establishing a Careers College (Logistics) and any outcomes from these discussions would be reported to the Corporation.	13/12/17
5	Governors asked if there was a template available against which decisions could be made on whether or not to approve strategic proposals as and when they are proposed. In essence, the template would provide a link to the agreed Strategic Plan and would make available a business case evaluation. It was agreed that this was required to provide a consistent framework and approach for considering strategic options/partners. The Chair volunteered to make available an example of such a template that is used at his place of work.	13/12/17
7	Governors Portal & Data Dashboard: Development work is on-going and a further update will be made available at the December Board meeting.	13/12/17
7	Scheme of Delegation: This will be a critical key governance document and a progress update will be made available at the December Board meeting.	13/12/17