

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation of West Thames College
Held on Wednesday 14 October 2020 in the Banks Room**

Members Present Mr S Wilcox (Chair) Mr T White Ms T Aust
 Ms C Ajit Singh Mr J Bolt Mr B Armstrong
 Ms B Sandhu Mr J Bryant Mr R Gallagher
 Ms L Weatherill Mr A Barke Mr A Luke
 Mr A Smith

Also present Mr J Allen Mr M Cooper Mr M Michaelides

The meeting commenced at 18.00

1. APOLOGIES, QUORACY & WELCOME

There were no apologies.

The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

At the close of nominations, the Clerk confirmed that Mr Andy Smith had been nominated to serve as the staff governor. Andy is a member of the teaching staff (lecturer in Performing Arts). The Corporation welcomed his appointment and introductions were made.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declared interests against any agenda item.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held 08 July 2020 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting (Paper 1).

4. SUMMARY ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING

The 'Summary Action List' was received (Paper 2). The following updates were made available against each outstanding action point from the previous meeting:

Ref & Date	Action	Review Update 16/10/2020
8	Governors were invited to feedback any comments that they may have on the proposed development objectives and strategic direction for 2020-21.	Agenda item
8	Governors asked that the Development Plan be more explicit on the risks of a second spike in Covid-19 and the planned actions to be taken to mitigate against this risk.	Agenda item
11	To task the Strategic & Business Committee, in conjunction with the Executive, to undertake further development work on the Strategic Risk Register for the Corporation to consider at a later date	It was confirmed this is still being progressed by the S &BD Committee.

MONITORING COLLEGE PERFORMANCE & STRATEGIC MATTERS

5. OFSTED INTERIM VISIT

The Principal updated Members on the outcomes of the 2-day Ofsted Interim Visit that took place this week.

Ofsted are making visits to providers during the autumn term to see how colleges have responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.

During an interim visit, the HMIs explore the following three themes:

- What actions are leaders taking to ensure that they provide an appropriate curriculum that meets the reasonable needs of learners and stakeholders and adapts to changed circumstances?
- What steps are leaders, managers and staff taking to ensure that the approaches used for building knowledge and skills are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of learners?
- How are leaders ensuring that learners are safe and well informed about potential risks, including from online sources?

The Principal confirmed that against each theme the College received positive responses with no areas of concern identified by Ofsted. The Principal summarised the main points received at the concluding feedback meeting and confirmed Ofsted's final evaluation of the visit will be summarised in a letter from Ofsted that should be available within the week. It was noted Ofsted will publish on their website copies of the letter sent to colleges.

The Corporation welcomed the very positive feedback received and placed on record its thanks to the Executive, staff and students who acted professionally during the visit.

In terms of the full inspection of the College that had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Principal confirmed representation will be made to Ofsted to prioritise the inspection when Ofsted resumes full inspections, hopefully from January 2021.

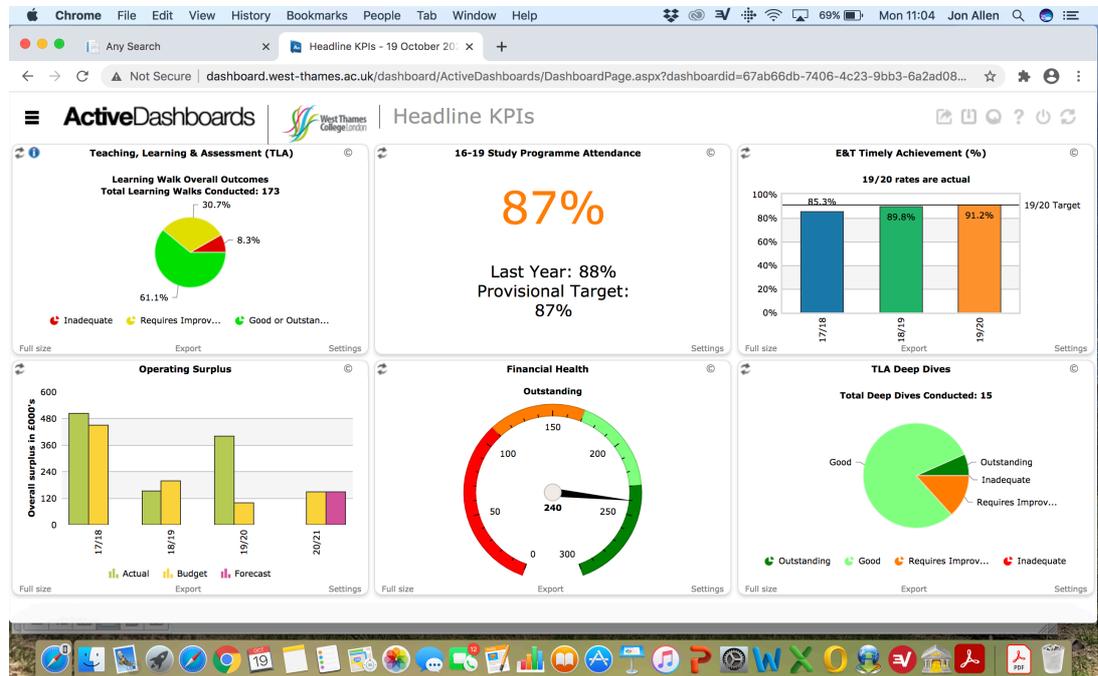
6. MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

Under this agenda item, the following approach was noted:

- (i) Review of KPI/Data Dashboard
- (ii) To receive, for information purposes, the College's final position for the 2019-20 Development Plan (Paper 3)
- (iii) To receive, for information purposes, the College's final position for the 2019-20 Post Inspection Action Plan (Paper 4)
- (iv) To receive, for approval, the College's Development Plan 2020-21 (Goal 2 & Goal 3) (Paper 5) and the Post Inspection Action Plan 2020-21 (Goal 1) (Paper 6) - These were reviewed and discussed in detail at the recent meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee. Governors were referred to the minutes of this meeting, Paper 11.

'Live' Review of the Data Dashboard:

The Data Dashboard was presented as follows:



(I) Data Dashboard

For the year 2019/20, it was noted that the year-end position for Learning Walks, Deep Dives and attendance was reported in detail at the June meeting of the Committee and at the July Corporation meeting.

On current attendance, as is always the case in the first six weeks, there is some movement in terms of enrolments and this has had an impact on attendance. However, assurances were given that attendance continues to be a strategic focus for the College and is being very closely monitored with a clear College Attendance Strategy in place.

Attendance is currently at 87%, in line with the set target. To provide some local context, Governors were informed the attendance across Hounslow schools is currently at 85%.

On timely achievement, additional results have been confirmed giving the current College position as follows:

- Overall College Achievement Rate: 90.6%
- 16-18 Achievement Rate: 89.6%
- 19+ Achievement Rate: 91.5%

It was reported Ofsted will not be using 2019-20 achievement rates as they have not been subject to national validation. Instead, for inspections conducted Ofsted will refer to 2018-19 achievement data.

The forecast year-end financial health score is 'Outstanding', an improvement on the 'Good' score for 2018-19.

A detailed review took place on recruitment performance against 2019-20 funding allocation contracts covering 16-18, Adult Education, Higher Education, 14-16 Direct Recruitment, and 14-16 Alternative Provision.

It was reported, and welcomed, that there will be no in-year clawback on the Adult Education Budget (both ESFA and GLA).

16-18 recruitment fell short of the 2019-20 funding contract and, due to lag funding, this will impact on the 2020-21 funding allocation.

As reported in the 12-month draft Management Accounts (a later agenda item), the projected 2019-20 year-end performance is an operating surplus of £400k compared with the budgeted surplus of £100k and actual surplus of £151k in 2018-19.

(ii) Development Plans & Post Inspection Action Plans:

It was noted, and welcomed, that the majority of objectives listed in the 2019-20 Development Plan and Post Inspection Plan had been met, and where there were 'Amber' assessments, performance was just short of the agreed targets.

In light of Covid-19, the approach taken for the setting of targets for 2020-21 was not to make any significant changes. However, new targets covering E-learning and staff well being are proposed in the Development Plan 2020-21. The approach adopted for target setting, and fully endorsed by the Corporation, was not to make any radical changes to existing targets, but instead, to build and strengthen what has already been achieved.

One area of risk was drawn to the attention of the Corporation. Achievement rates for apprenticeships in logistics are at risk due to the volume of apprentices who have either been furloughed or made redundant following the decline in passenger numbers at Heathrow. Whilst apprenticeship numbers are small compared to overall College numbers, there is a significant risk that apprenticeship rates will be negatively impacted due to Covid-19. It was confirmed this risk will be recorded in the Risk Register.

Following review, it was **RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note the Data Dashboard;
- (ii) To note the College's final position for the 2019-20 Development Plan that was made available for information purposes;
- (iii) To note the College's final position for the 2019-20 Post Inspection Action Plan that was made available for information purposes; and
- (iv) To approve the College's Development Plan 2020-21 (Goal 2 & Goal 3) and the Post Inspection Action Plan 2020-21 (Goal 1)

7. STRATEGIC MATTERS INCLUDING THE REVIEW OF THE EXECUTIVE REPORT & COVID-19 OPERATIONAL PLANS

Under this agenda item, the following approach was noted:

- (i) To receive, for review, the Executive Team Report (Paper 7)
- (ii) To receive, for information purposes, the minutes of the Strategy & Business Development Committee meeting held 23 September 2020 (Paper 8)

(i) Executive Team Report:

The Executive Team Report provided Governors with updates on the following topics:

- Strategic Context - Ofsted, Covid-19 & economic recovery, AoC news, vocational & technical assessment 2021; skills announcements.
- Financial Matters - Recruitment & income targets, budget monitoring & control, pay award.
- Leadership & Management Staffing Update
- Achievement Rates
- Partnerships
- Student News & College News

The Corporation welcomed the details of how effective the Principal has been in positioning the College to respond proactively to the local economic recovery in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Corporation agreed this was a critical area for the College to be involved in which tied in with the strategic objective for the College to meet local community needs. Also welcomed was the updates made available on securing funding for a range of projects to support economic recovery.

The Executive report provided the Corporation with an update on enrolments to date against the funding allocation. It was reported that reaching the 16-18 allocation will be a challenge but recruitment is still taking place. Governors asked about student withdrawals and if this was being effectively monitored. In response it was confirmed any proposed student withdrawal has to be approved by both the curriculum director and the interim Vice Principal. This ensures an effective management oversight on withdrawals.

It is still early in the academic year for adult enrolments but there are excellent opportunities arising from economic recovery plus the recent announcement from the Prime Minister on reskilling adults.

The impact of Covid-19, and the intense competition for higher education students, has resulted in HE recruitment numbers being down against the target.

Both 14-16 direct recruitment and 14-16 alternative provision have lower numbers than planned. Governors asked if there was any specific reason why numbers are falling for Freshstart. In response, the Principal stated that Ofsted's review of 14-16 provision has resulted in schools now having to make more of an effort to keep students who they otherwise would have excluded. Students are now being encouraged to stay in school and schools have made more of an effort to keep students who otherwise would have left to join Freshstart.

There is also an impact arising from Covid-19 where delays have occurred with some schools in the required process of discussing, and seeking agreement, proposed transfers to the College with parents and carers.

Governors agreed recruitment against funding allocations in all funding streams represents a risk to budget and the Principal confirmed the risk has been identified as a high risk on the Strategic Risk Register.

To ensure that recruitment targets and financial objectives are met the Principal confirmed there is the need to deliver not only on the planned in-year marketing and recruitment identified in the Development Plan but also improve on effective budget management and control through thorough review and rebasing of budgets. The Principal confirmed work will commence this month to revise budgets based on actual course provision and enrolments in order to redistribute and reduce these where appropriate so that cost savings may be realised against original budgeted expenditure.

The Executive report provided an update on the pay award and it was noted outcomes have yet to be confirmed on discussions that are currently taking place between the Unions and the AoC. As agreed in the budget, 1% has been set aside for a pay award. As has been the case over the last couple of years, any pay award will only be made if it is affordable in light of confirmed enrolments. This will be subject to review at the November meeting of the Finance Committee.

Governors asked if there was any evidence of students struggling with their planned learning as accusations have been made that some schools inflated grades for their students. In response, it was stated that there is no evidence of this but individual student progress against their learning goals is subject to regular on-going monitoring. Therefore, if there are any issues arising it will be dealt with quickly.

Governors asked in what way was the College responding to Black Lives Matter (BLM)? In response the Principal confirmed the College is currently being very proactive in celebrating Black History Month as it has done over previous years. The College is also working with the AoC on how the sector has responded to BLM.

The Chair thanked the Executive for the detail contained in the report and re-affirmed that this is a key strategic document for Governors. The Chair reminded committee Chairs to follow up, where required, on those sections of the report that fall under their committee's remit

(ii) Strategy & Business Development Committee minutes (23/09/2020):

The Chair confirmed the Committee is being used to start the work on a new Strategic Plan and, at the meeting held in September, the Committee started the review of the Values, Mission and Principles that are currently in place. A follow-up meeting was arranged for this week but was deferred to a later date, yet to be confirmed, because of the Ofsted monitoring visit.

The Chair confirmed outcomes of the review Values, Mission and Principles are to be reported to the Corporation.

Of particular value for the Committee was the presentation made by one of the College's partners - Viv Berkeley, Ambitious about Autism - who spoke very positively about the benefits arising from the partnership between the two organisations. The Chair reported that other partners are to be invited to subsequent meetings.

The minutes of the meeting were **NOTED**.

NON-DELEGABLE DUTIES (ARTICLE 3.1) AND STATUTORY AND OR COMPLIANCE DUTIES

8. FINANCE FOCUS

The draft July 2020 Management Accounts were received (Paper 9) for review and information. It was noted the Management Accounts, Reconciliation Statement, and audited Financial Statements, following review from both the Audit Committee and Finance Committee, would be made available at the December Corporation meeting for approval.

The projected year-end performance is an operating surplus of £400k compared with the budgeted surplus of £100k and actual surplus of £151k in 2019-20.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the draft July 2020 Management Accounts.

9. GOVERNOR LINK ALLOCATIONS 2020/21

The proposed Governor Link allocations for 2020/21 were received (Paper 10).

Governors were asked to conduct their link visit/learning walk after the SAR validation meeting held in November and before the end of February, to enable a summary report (to be collated by the Chair of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee) of all visits to be presented to the March Corporation meeting.

It was confirmed the Principal's PA will organise the visit schedule for governors.

COMMITTEE REPORTING

10 Report from the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee

The report and minutes from the Committee covering the meeting held 07 October 2020 were received and **NOTED** (Paper 11).

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 16 December 2020 @ 1800.

Meeting closed at 19.30

Signed: _____

Date: _____ -

SUMMARY ACTION LIST

Ref & Date	Action	Review
11 - 8/7/20 meeting	To task the Strategic & Business Committee, in conjunction with the Executive, to undertake further development work on the Strategic Risk Register for the Corporation to consider at a later date	16/12/2020
7(ii) - 14/10/20 meeting	Outcomes of the review Values, Mission and Principles are to be reported to the Corporation.	16/12/2020
9 - 14/10/20 meeting	Governors were asked to conduct their link visit/learning walk after the SAR validation meeting held in November and before the end of February, to enable a summary report (to be collated by the Chair of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee) of all visits to be presented to the March Corporation meeting. Principal's PA to organise the visit schedule for governors.	16/12/2020