Minutes of the Corporation meeting
Monday 8 December 2014

Membership: Mehwish Ashfaq*, Zaf Aslam*, Mark Carroll, (Vice Chair), Lewis Coakley, Steven Crane (Vice Chair), Liz Daniels, Pat Edwards (Chair), David Hatchett, Katherine Hewlett, Jessica Kamara, Veronica Lewis*, Ian Rogers, Lukmaan Variawa, Kevin Watson, Gavin Williams*

In Attendance: Gill Burbridge: Vice Principal, Teaching, Learning & Student Achievement
Dawn Hamilton-Barrett: Vice Principal, Staffing, Resources & Infrastructure
Chris Price: Vice Principal, Wider Student Experience

Clerk: Val Bartlett

*Denotes apologies for absence

18. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CORPORATION
The Clerk to the Corporation informed Governors that, as is custom and practice, the President and Vice President of the Student Executive also become the 2 Student Governors.

18.1 The Corporation duly ratified the appointments of Lukmaan Variawa (President) and Jessica Kamara (Vice President) as the two Student Governors effective from 8 December 2014 to 31 July 2015.

18.2 The Clerk to the Corporation informed Governors that Lola Bello and Ian Gurman had tendered their resignations with immediate effect due to increased work commitments.

The Corporation thanked both Governors for their commitment, time and contribution to the College and agreed to accept their resignations with immediate effect.

18.3 The Corporation was reminded that the term of office for Mehwish Ashfaq will come to an end on 31 December 2014 and she was thanked for her contribution as a member of the Audit Committee and as a Governor.

18.4 The Vice Chair of the Search Committee informed the Corporation that the Committee had met on 8 December 2014 and considered an application to be a Governor from Liz Daniels. Some members of the Search Committee had interviewed this applicant who had subsequently attended a recent Audit Committee meeting as an observer.

Having considered the results of the most recent skills audit and taking into account the expertise and skills of this applicant, the Search Committee recommended the appointment of Liz Daniels as a Governor for an initial term of one (1) year, with immediate effect.

18.5 The Corporation approved the appointment of Liz Daniels as a Corporation Member for an initial term of one year effective from 8 December 2014.

18:50 LD joined the meeting

The Chair of the Corporation welcomed Liz Daniels to the meeting.
18.6 The Corporation noted that as from 1 January 2015 there will now be vacancies for 3 ‘Independent’ Governors in addition to the current vacancies for 2 Parent Governors. The Clerk informed the Corporation that on-going efforts are being made to attract nominations for two Parent Governors.

18.7 The Vice Chair of the Search Committee reassured Governors that there are ongoing and urgent actions being taken by the Committee to address the current vacancies.

19. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declaration of interests.

20. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received and accepted from:

- Mehwish Ashafq - family commitment
- Gavin Williams - work commitment
- Zaf Aslam - appointment
- Lukmaan Variawa - family commitment

21. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2014**

The Minutes were agreed as a true record.

22. **MATTERS ARISING**

22.1 - Minute 10 – Child Protection training. The Corporation noted the recent Ofsted headlines/issues regarding Governors in schools and Child Protection/DBS screening for Governors. Whilst it was acknowledged that DBS clearance for Governors is not a statutory requirement and that the Corporation had, therefore, previously agreed that it was no longer necessary for Governors at the College to undergo this check, it was agreed that DBS checks now be undertaken for all existing and new Governors who do not currently have a DBS clearance on file.

22.2 - In addition, all Governors who have not completed the on line Child Protection training were requested to now do so as soon as possible

22.3 - The Chair of the Corporation confirmed that he had recently undertaken the London Borough of Waltham Forest Child Protection course

22.4 - Minute 12- The Principal informed the Corporation that both Lammas and Norlington schools had now been given approval by the Borough to go ahead with their proposals to establish sixth forms as from September 2015

23. **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE – 2013/14**

The Corporation received the Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2013/14.

23.1 The report updated the Corporation on the work of the Audit Committee during 2013/14 including its membership, dates of meetings, Internal Audit reviews, Financial Statements review, Regularity Audit Review, Risk Management, the annual review of the performance of both audit firms and the audit arrangements for 2014/15.

The Corporation also received the unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 24 November 2014.

23.2 In response to a question regarding the Internal Audit findings from a review of Safeguarding, assurance was provided by the Director of Finance that all recommendations have now been implemented and that they will be also be subject to a follow up by the Internal Audit Service.

23.3 The Corporation was informed that the Audit Committee had scrutinised the Financial Statements at its meeting held on 24 November 2014.
23.4 It was acknowledged that Risk Management is considered at every meeting of the Audit Committee.

23.5 The Director of Finance reported that the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2014/15 reflects the challenges and risks being faced by the college including GCSE Maths and English requirements and associated funding issues.

23.6 The Corporation:
1. Approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2014/15
2. Approved the re-appointment of Scrutton Bland as the college Financial Statements Auditors for 2014/15
3. Approved the re-appointment of Baker Tilly as the college Internal Audit Service for 2014/15
4. Noted the recommendation from the Audit Committee that the Financial Statements for 2013/14 and Letters of Representation be approved.

24. DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013/14 AND AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT
The Director of Finance reported to the Corporation on the draft Financial Statements for 2013/14, which, as previously noted, had been reviewed by the Audit Committee.

24.1 It was acknowledged that the college is in a strong financial position with good cash reserves and operating position.

24.2 It was noted that Income has increased by £1,506,000 with the main changes being highlighted in the covering report.

24.3 The surplus for 2013/14 is £214,000 (£135,000 in 2012/13) which reflects the impact on income including an increase in the recurrent grant funding relating to student numbers and changes to the funding methodology.

24.4 The Balance Sheet is very strong with high cash/investment balances. It was acknowledged that the sector as a whole is experiencing financial difficulties, and, therefore, the college is well placed to face any future financial uncertainties.

24.5 The Corporation approved the Financial Statements and Letters of Representation for 2013/14.

25. RISK MANAGEMENT – ANNUAL REPORT AND RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY 2014/15
The Director of Finance reported on the above which had also been reviewed by the Audit Committee.

25.1 The Corporation noted that the college continues to use a structured approach to Risk Management and the summary, as indicated in the covering report, outlined the responsibilities of the Corporation in terms of Risk Management.

25.2 It was highlighted to Governors that the Internal Auditors review Risk Management within all audits rather than as a separate audit and the audit opinion confirming the college to have adequate and effective Risk Management processes in place was noted.

25.3 Attention was also drawn to the declaration in the Financial Statements that the college is fully compliant regarding Risk Management.

25.4 The Corporation noted that following an annual review of the Risk Management Policy no changes were proposed at this stage, however, the risk scoring methodology is to be reviewed in the New Year and will be reported upon back to the Audit Committee.

25.5 The Corporation approved the Risk Management Policy.
26. **MONTHLY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – OCTOBER 2014**
The Director of Finance reported on the above.

26.1 The Corporation was informed that there were no significant variations in the forecast for 2014/15 with the surplus being slightly above that of the budget figure as approved in June 2014.

26.2 It was acknowledged that as almost all of the college’s income is from the EFA, and funding is calculated on a ‘lagged’ approach, this may be seen as a potential risk. However, as the college over recruited its student numbers in September 2014 this will, in turn, positively affect the college income from the SFA for 2015/16.

26.3 A Governor queried the implications for class sizes and course offer with this increase in student numbers. The Principal concurred that there are implications, and that this increase may possibly be a ‘blip’ or, if not, then a view will need to be taken as to whether the college does intentionally wish to grow its student numbers in future years. At the moment the college has been able to absorb this increase without significantly affecting an increase in the staffing budget.

26.4 It was acknowledged that there is work to be done with regard to curriculum planning and further updates will be provided to the Corporation in due course.

26.5 The Corporation noted the Management Accounts for October 2014.

27. **INSURANCE RENEWAL**

27.1 The Director of Finance informed the Corporation that the Financial Regulations require an Annual Report to be submitted setting out the insurance renewal position for the college.

27.2 It was noted that the college is now in the second year of a three year long term agreement following a tendering exercise in 2013.

27.3 The premium for 2014/15 was noted and that the levels of cover are considered to be appropriate and in line with the sector.

27.4 The Corporation noted the insurance renewal to 31 July 2015.

28. **AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE 2014/15**

28.1 The Corporation was informed by the Clerk that following a thorough review of the Audit Committee’s Terms of Reference in October 2013, the Audit Committee had concurred that no further changes are required for 2014/15.

28.2 The Corporation approved the Audit Committee’s Terms of Reference for 2014/15 for immediate application.

29. **FUNDING UPDATE**

The Director of Finance reported on the above.

29.1 Governors had been provided with a report from Julian Gravatt (AoC) indicating that whilst there is more clarity about next year’s funding for colleges there is less certainty than ever about the three years that follow.

29.2 The Corporation acknowledged that the May 2015 General Election will be followed by a spending review, and, therefore, at the moment forecasting becomes difficult but it is palpable that savings will need to be made.
Governors recognised that the college is currently well placed to meet these challenges but that more information will be needed in due course to enable any longer term decisions to be taken.

The Chair thanked the Director of Finance, his team and the Audit Committee for their hard work in producing and reviewing the Financial Statements and relevant reports.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**30. COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR)**
The Vice Principal (Teaching, Learning and Student Achievement) reported on the above.

30.1 It was acknowledged that the draft SAR had been thoroughly considered at the ‘Round Table’ meeting on 4 November 2014 and that following feedback from this meeting some minor amendments had been made as indicated in the covering report.

30.2 The Corporation was informed that the SAR and associated Action Plans will continue to be monitored closely by the SLT and will be brought to the Corporation for a half year review and update in March 2015.

30.3 **The Corporation approved the College Self-Assessment Report.**

**31. CURRICULUM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**
The Principal reported on the above.

31.1 It was acknowledged that much time had been spent discussing how Governors should most usefully monitor the progress of the college and the role of performance indicators (PI’s) in facilitating that process.

31.2 The Principal provided Governors with a Power point presentation which outlined the various indicators by which student outcomes may be measured.

31.3 The overall assessment of the college is a direct reflection on the perceived quality of the Curriculum Programme Areas with their evaluations being based predominately according to student outcomes.

31.4 The Principal reported that whilst standards of teaching and learning, tutorial support, enrichment opportunities and other key educational components are also given due attention their impact is, ultimately assessed in the light of students’ results.

31.5 It was concurred, therefore, that the most credible indicators the Corporation may use include:
- Attendance- studies suggest there is a strong correlation between attendance and end results
- Retention
- Prior attainment – GCSE performance is used (this information is to be broken down by Programme Area) with the college’s MAG system informing projected grades
- Teaching and learning – reports will be qualitative to include learning strategies
- Predictions of final outcomes
- Student experience/student voice

31.6 Governors had been provided with:
- Retention analysis as at 1 December 2014
- Retention data over a 7 year period
- Attendance analysis by Department as at 4 November 2014 (further, more in-depth information is to be made available on the Corporation Sharepoint site)
- Results from a Student Induction Survey 2014/15
31.7 Governors then debated the above in further detail and the following was noted in particular:
- Those Programme Areas which self-assessed as Grade 3 (Business, Humanities and Science) have large student numbers compared to areas such as I.T. (grade 1) and whilst progress has not been quick enough in the Grade 3 areas, they are moving in the right direction
- As the I.T. area moved from a grade 3 to a grade 1 the strategy adopted by the I.T. Programme Manager to achieve this in a relatively short time span, has been shared with others
- The step up from GCSE to A Level is, in some subjects, quite large, and Governors noted that the college does ensure that students are well supported to make this transition including second year students acting as mentors to first years
- The results from the Student Induction survey have been analysed and Tutors have discussed them with their tutees. Further analysis will be undertaken to ensure any relevant actions are put in place
- The college has, in the past, used “off the shelf” student surveys, but as these did not necessarily capture the meaningful information the college was seeking, they are not currently used
- It was noted that there are a number of different, national comparative student surveys which the college may wish to consider using in the future if comparisons and benchmark information is thought useful
- Feedback from the student to the teacher is amongst the most powerful influences on student achievement
- The Chair requested the dates of Student Focus Groups so that he may attend

31.8 Governors requested that the Programme Managers from the Grade 3 areas be invited to attend a future Corporation meeting where an update on the actions being taken in their respective areas may be shared.

31.9 The Corporation noted the information on the PI’s; that it should also fit in with the 6 month review of the college SAR and stressed that there be no duplication of any existing information.

31.10 The Chair acknowledged that there is much positive activity and thanked staff for their sterling work.

20:30 DH & AL left the meeting

32. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN
32.1 The Corporation was informed by the Clerk that following completion of an on-line questionnaire by all Governors, feedback from individual 1:1 meetings with the Chair and a ‘Round Table’ discussion, a draft self-assessment of Governance Action Plan had now been drawn up for approval.

32.2 Governors were requested to contact the Chair or the Clerk by 12 December if they had any further comments on the Action Plan which was duly approved subject to this feedback.

33. AoC CONFERENCE
The Chair reported that he had attended the annual AoC Conference where there was no ‘good’ news with a particular focus being on potentially more financial cuts to the F.E. sector. As a new Chair, attendance at the conference had been very helpful for networking.

34. STRATEGIC DEBATE
34.1 The Chair reminded the Corporation that one of the agreed actions in the Self-Assessment of Governance Action Plan was to focus more on strategic direction and the need to think broader and longer term.
In order to provide a starting point for ongoing strategic debate regarding the future of the college, Governors had been provided with:
- The college Mission Statement
- 10 Key Features
- The college’s Strategic Plan
- Notes from the summer conference where debate was had regarding local and national issues

Governors then debated the future of the London Borough of Waltham Forest Post-16 Partnership which is now in its third year and that the Principal will cease to be its Director as from July 2015.

The following observations were noted in particular:
- It may be beneficial that the Partnership does not cease but has a different form of leadership
- It may be that other schools with 6th forms be approached to join the Partnership
- Schools in the Borough are to band together to form a model of the London Challenge (a general improvement strategy for Secondary Schools) and this may, therefore, solidify any school alliances
- The Partnership could become more college focussed
- The Principal of Waltham Forest FE College is to retire on 31 December 2014 and an interim is to be appointed. This college is a key partner and the biggest Post-16 institution in the Borough. It was recently judged to be ‘requires improvement’ by Ofsted and, therefore, a closer working relationship with WFC may be an area for consideration
- There is currently a ‘collective agreement’ for the Partnership whereby all institutions agree to be actively engaged in improving progress including staff development activities and the sharing of expertise

20:45 JK left the meeting

- All of the institutions have different priorities in what they are seeking from the Partnership; be it an Ofsted focus or the emergence of embryonic sixth forms and there is still competition
- Collaboration will benefit students across the Borough and should be sought where feasible with an attempt to find common ground with no political edge
- A Partnership based around teaching and learning is to be applauded and a good start has been made in a very difficult landscape. It may be useful to explore the Partnership with other sectors e.g. H.E and Industry
- The work of the Partnership is very worthwhile and is positively received, particularly within the college.
- The Borough is very well aware of the Partnership and some of its methods could be used as a possible model in local Secondary schools
- There may be a risk to the college if the Partnership ceases and this risk, therefore, needs to be managed to ensure that the value of the work already undertaken is safeguarded and not lost if this happens
- There is no consensus yet as to who will next lead the Partnership

It was agreed that further debate be had at the Corporation meeting to be held on 2 February 2015, by which time the Principal will have met again with the members of the Partnership and may be in a better position to provide a steer regarding its future.

21:00 CP left the meeting

FOR INFORMATION ONLY
- The Corporation received and noted the Sixth Form Colleges Association Manifesto
- The Chair reported that he is to attend the AoC London Region Reception at the House of Commons on 15 December 2014

21:06- KW, IR, GB & DHB left the meeting
CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

36. REPORT FROM REMUNERATION COMMITTEE
This is a confidential Minute.

The meeting closed at 21:25

These minutes have been agreed as a true record.

Signed

Date

Date of next Corporation meeting: Monday 2 February 2015