

GOVERNING BODY
Minutes of the meeting held at 2.00pm on 17 July 2014

Present:

R Carter (Chairman)	A Gordon-Stables
C Styles	C Manning
S Gerber	M Symonds
W Burrlock	A Maltpress
S Clarke	K Golding
J Bloomfield	N Savvas, Principal

In attendance: D J Howells, Deputy Principal
M Wagner, Vice Principal, Business and Community
L Johnson, Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality
A Head, FE Student (observer)
J Bridges (Clerk to the Corporation)

There were no interests relevant to items on the agenda declared by members.

Action
1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Finn, D Wildridge and C Newton.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2014

The minutes of the meeting (minute book pages G143-G149) were agreed as a true record.

3 Matters Arising
From the Corporation meeting held on 16 May 2014

The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report (minute book pages G150-G153) and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

It was noted that the Corporation, at the meeting held in May 2014, has approved the strategy to work in collaboration with Newmarket Upper School to develop Animal Care provision and no further approval will be required other than to approve a capital request, at some point.

4 Appointments

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G154-G155).

The Chair of Governors took the opportunity under this item to congratulate the Principal and Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality on the confirmation by governors of their appointments into post at the successful conclusion of their nine months probationary periods. Independent members had attended a meeting prior to this one to approve the recommendation of the Remuneration Committee to confirm the appointments of N Savvas and L Johnson.

The Corporation formally recorded its thanks to R Millea, who stepped down as a member in June 2014. His wise counsel and support over the years has greatly contributed to the success of the College and members extended their best wishes to him for the future.

The Appointments and Governance Advisory Committee, with the endorsement of the Audit and Risk Management Committee asked the Corporation to approve

the re-appointment of N Roberts as a co-opted member of the Committee for the 2014/15 academic year. The **approval** was **proposed** by K Golding and **seconded** by C Manning.

The nomination and election process of student governors has taken place. It is proposed that A Head will take the place of C Styles with effect from 1 August 2014. He had been invited to attend the meeting alongside C Styles to experience the meeting as an observer and to meet fellow members. His appointment was **approved** by the Corporation. **Proposed** by M Symonds and **seconded** by C Styles.

It was noted that T Lea-Hunter is no longer eligible to serve as a student governor due to a change in her personal circumstances. Due to the proposed changes in our governance structure, covered under item 8 of this meeting, members **approved** that the Corporation will not seek to appoint two student governors to the Board for the coming academic year.

A thank you note from C Newton, HE Student Governor, whose term of office expires on 31 July 2014, was shared with the Corporation. Thanks were also extended to C Styles, FE Student Governor, who has played a full role as governor in the year; participating actively with members on the Governance and Ofsted task and finish groups and involving himself with all students, not just at the Milburn Centre where he studied but also at the main campus.

5 Quality and Performance

5.1 Key Performance Indicators

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G156-G161).

Applications

The number of applications is over target but the College is looking to recruit more and is conscious of the need to maximise classroom sizes. The target is the assumed number of students that will be retained after the six week census point. Members asked that the KPI is RAG rated against the variance between the number of applications and the likely number who will convert to enrolments rather than the variance between the number of active applications against overall target.

DJHowells

Budget to Forecast

There is confidence that the projected financial outturn will be close to the reported forecast. This is above budget due to savings on staffing costs and additional ALS income from Suffolk County Council. It was noted that the yellow RAG rate used for the positive underspend against budget should be rated green and that the key for the total expenditure KPI should be amended to a more appropriate measure.

JBridges

Banking Covenants

In recognition that the Corporation is to approve the 2014/15 budget and two year financial forecast of 2015/16 and 2016/17 members asked that the same forecast year end period be expressed in the Banking Covenants KPI in the report. It was agreed that an additional column to show the impact on Banking Covenants in 2016/17 will be included and members acknowledged they recognised that in this year there would be a breach of covenant if as forecast the College fell into deficit.

JBridges

Lesson Observations – Final Gradings

The College target of Good or Better Lesson Observations is 100%. Members asked that the table for this KPI includes the target and were pleased to note that the outturn good or better profile has increased to 94%. As the College consolidates small fractional, multiple hourly paid contracts to either fixed term or permanent this will reduce the number of staff who, in the past, have not been subject to graded lesson observations or afforded the opportunity to be included in induction, appraisal and/or CPD programmes.

JBridges

Classroom Based Learning Attendance

The attendance rate for 2013/14 is 1% below the rate in 2012/13. It is anticipated that changes in the structure to support students in the next academic year will be realised and the attendance rate will improve. There is no comparative National Rate for attendance as Colleges calculate, define and measure student absence in different ways.

Classroom Based Learning Retention

Overall retention is 3% above the National Rate and Level 3 in particular has improved greatly. There has been concern with retention in some areas of 19+ provision, essentially Access to HE, where large cohorts of adults have left the intensive programme due to the time commitment required, family issues or changes in their personal circumstances which have led them to decide not to continue with their studies. IAG and course content is being reviewed as a consequence.

Apprenticeship Success Rate - Timely

Apprenticeship best case success indicates that current success rates should increase and exceed the previous year's outturn.

Staff Sickness Absence

Governors commented that applying a 12 month rolling period calculation for absence management should be used by the College in order that comparisons with Educational and Regional benchmarking can be drawn. This will be taken back to the Head of HR to implement for future reports.

JBridges

5.1.1 Financial Performance

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G162-G164).

The savings on staffing have been maintained and the year-end saving is predicted at just under £300K. The College is anticipating a higher than budgeted spend on non-pay in the second half of the year largely due to payments to sub-contract providers. Overall, the College is anticipating a surplus on operations for the year of £385K and, in addition to this, there may be some prior year adjustments increasing the published surplus for the year. The College is in good financial health, down slightly from the previous outstanding rating but members recognised that this is to be expected given the recent investment in capital facilities and the reductions in funding.

5.2 Operational Plan 2013/14 Update

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G165-G166).

Members acknowledged that a high proportion of the operational targets in the year remain incomplete. The Chair of Governors suggested that due to changes

in responsibilities in the year coupled with the fact that these plans were determined 18 months ago under a different regime and strategic direction this explains why targets have been closed, are incomplete or remain ongoing. The Principal confirmed that there will be a different approach to operational planning in the future and gave assurance to the Corporation that the remaining targets will be completed to close the plan for 2013/14 and in future target completion will be reported by exception as part of the College's Quality Improvement Plan and Key Performance Indicator reporting formats.

6 Strategic Matters

6.1 **Budget 2014/15 and Financial Forecast 2014-17**

The budget and forecast were received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G167-G203).

The schedules received show both a summary of the budget for 2014/15 and the financial forecast required by the SFA for 2015/16. The College has also indicated a third year for 2016/17. The budget shows a surplus of £93K planned for 2014/15. The subsequent two years indicate a projected deficit. In response to the financial deficit forecasts, members received a confidential paper to outline the opportunities to increase income and/or reduce costs during 2015/16 and 2016/17 in order to balance the budget or produce small surpluses.

The Corporation recognises that it is not acceptable for the College to forecast deficits in 2015/16 and 2016/17 and approval of the Corporation is only provided on the proviso that income and expenditure in the period is constantly under review and progress against strategies to increase income and/or reduce costs is closely scrutinised.

Confidential item under paragraph 18(2) of the Instrument and Articles of Government

As recommended by the Finance and Property Committee the Principal has been authorised to negotiate a staff pay increase. The financial plan includes a provision for a 2.1% pay increase spread equally over three years, which has been included in a contingency line in the 2014/15 budget and 2015/16 and 2016/17 forecasts. This provision, however, does not mean that a pay increase will be awarded as it is subject to negotiation with the recognised unions and any consideration of a pay award is based on the financial affordability and will require specific approval by the Corporation.

Members **approved** the College Budget 2014/15 and **approved** the submission of the financial forecast 2014-17 to the SFA by the 31 July 2014. **Proposed** by S Clarke and **seconded** by S Gerber.

6.2 **Property Strategy**

The strategy was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G204-G213).

The Property Strategy was endorsed by the Finance and Property Committee for approval by the Corporation. It was noted that the intended relocation of Engineering to the Milburn Centre will not take place due to money being required to spend on equipment therefore a more modest buildings improvement programme is now planned. The Property Strategy was **approved** by the Corporation. **Proposed** by A Maltpress and **seconded** by M Symonds.

6.2.1 **Engineering Update**

The report was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G214-G215).

As indicated above the College had identified the need to improve the Engineering facilities and had proposed this would be achieved by moving the machining and welding facilities to the Milburn Centre during the summer 2014. Having established the cost and logistical challenges a number of advisors have assisted the College in the decision to postpone the move and invest funds to aesthetically improve the workshop and entrance areas and to refurbish or replace some machinery and equipment that has either been deemed as unsafe or needs refurbishments and/or to be upgraded to industry standard. The net saving of the change in plan is likely to be between £100K and £200K.

The issues with the equipment having not gone through a regular service or maintenance cycle have become evident following investigations into the management of this area and the Principal provided assurance to the Corporation that steps have been taken as a result of this process to minimise the risk of poor standard equipment not being addressed in all other relevant parts of the College. The issue is not widespread. An annual programme of service and maintenance for the equipment is to be put in place so that an inventory and programme is managed centrally.

6.3 **2014-16 Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G216-G227).

Arising from the Governors' Strategic Conference held in January 2014 the Principal was tasked to determine a new College Strategic Plan. Members commented that the document complemented the mission, vision and values document presented to them at the Corporation meeting held in March and this was an impressive document which confidently expressed the College's ambitions for the future. The 2014-16 Strategic Plan was **approved** by the Corporation. **Proposed** by A Gordon-Stables and **seconded** by S Clarke.

6.4 **Digital Strategy**

The Strategy was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G228-G231).

This is an area that is an increasingly important strategic need for all Colleges to have in place. The paper received is a summary of the detailed strategy and action plan to address the impact of how the use of technology will support and enhance the student learning experience and how the College is placed to meet the changing needs of curriculum and staff development in the next few years.

One of the challenges will be to meet the expectations of the FELTAG (Further Education Learning Technology Action Group) report and to develop the future teaching and learning strategy that complements the technological status of the College while also providing a platform that meets online and/or virtual teaching and learning technologies. Investment will be concentrated in CPD, technological competencies and connectivity solutions rather than investment in new software or hardware items.

The cost implications will need to be determined sooner rather than later and a phased programme of investment, it was agreed, will be considered by the Finance and Property Committee in the new academic year. Further to questions raised by A Head specific to the School of Computing and implementation of Office365 in this academic year the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality will arrange to meet with him to discuss the concerns raised.

7 Information, Discussion and Decisions

7.1 Horizon Scanning

The report was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G232-G237).

The paper provided the Corporation with an overview on some of the political debates and policy that are shaping the FE, Apprenticeship and HE in the FE and Skills Sector at this time. The new linear GCSE will be available from September 2015. Current GCSEs will be available for a final resit in November 2016. New grading scale numbers will be introduced as scale 9-1 (9 being the top grade and 1 being the lowest grade). The change in grading produces an overlap at grades 4 and 5 between Foundation (grades 1-5) and the higher tier (grades 4-9). Maths GCSE will become double weighted (i.e. double Maths course, worth two GCSE qualifications).

The government has been reshaping the vocational and technical offer for young people in order to align it more closely to market needs by adopting specific criteria that includes clear employer recognition. The provision of 'substantial vocational qualifications' at level 2 for 16-19 year olds will be available for teaching from September 2015 and counted in performance tables for 2017. Described as "rigorous intermediate Level 2 qualifications for post-16 students wishing to specialise in a specific industry, occupation or occupational group" will therefore add a further pathway for 16-19 year olds alongside the traditional academic route, Applied General Qualification and Tech Levels, let alone Traineeships and Apprenticeships.

It was noted that point 11 of the paper referred to Leadership of Teaching, Learning and Assessment by Governors and M Symonds, Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee, confirmed that the "three-point-plan" for improvement will be picked up by the proposed Standards and Excellence Committee in the new academic year. Over the summer members will be invited to attend the Sector Subject Area (SSA) SAR meetings. The dates of which will be circulated to members by the Clerk.

7.2 EDF Update

The report was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book page G238).

The paper has been prepared for EDF Energy as part of a programme of work supporting the production of a Workforce Development and Education Strategy for the Sizewell C project and is shared with the Corporation for information. A working group consisting of the Principals of four Colleges in Suffolk working in partnership with the Skills Team at Suffolk County Council prepared the paper. This group has the support of the LEP, SCC and the East of England Energy Group.

7.3 *Ip-City and Develop Anglia Update*

The report was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G239-G241).

The new Ip-City facility will enable the College to grow and develop its income in the Ipswich and eastern part of the county under the banner of the Develop Anglia Brand. The brand has been redesigned as the previous iteration seen by the Corporation did not present well with the established College logo particularly on websites and in print. The Corporation felt strongly that the use of the WSC logo in conjunction with the Develop Anglia brand should be considered carefully and its use dependent upon the audience by which it is received.

7.4 *Appointment of Internal and External Auditors for 2014/15*

Confidential Item under paragraph 18(2) of the Instrument and Articles of Government.

The recommendation was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G242-G243).

In accordance with the Financial Memorandum the College should reappoint external auditors formally each year. The Audit and Risk Management Committee, at the meeting held on 17 June 2014, has confirmed its satisfaction with the performance of Baker Tilly and recommends to the Corporation that their reappointment be approved. While not entirely happy with the services of the internal auditors, Scrutton Bland, the Committee also recommends their appointment on the basis that improvement in their performance in 2014/15 must be seen. The recommendation to reappoint Baker Tilly as external auditors and Scrutton Bland as internal auditors was **approved** by the Corporation. **Proposed** by S Gerber and **seconded** by J Bloomfield.

7.5 *Risk Management Update*

The report was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G244-G247).

The 'Heat Map' is provided as a graphical representation of the risks on a grid in relation to each other. Members' attention was drawn to the two red RAG rated risks (R002 and R005) on the register. Movement of these risks remain unchanged since the last report to the Corporation. The risk register will be reviewed over the summer to ensure that emerging risks are identified on the register for 2014/15. The College Secretary has developed a Board Assurance Map that identifies the principal risks to the College of not delivering on its vision and values and not achieving its strategic goals.

7.6 *Risk Management Procedure*

The procedure was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G248-G249).

The Risk Management Procedure is subject to an annual review and approval by the Corporation. There is a direct link between the Risk Management procedure and the College's Strategic Plan. The only changes to the procedure therefore relate to section 13 (page 8) to reflect the eight new College strategic goals. The Corporation **approved** the changes. **Proposed** by S Clarke and **seconded** by C Manning.

7.7 **Committee Chairs Summary Reports**

The reports were received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G250-G259).

The Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee commented that although the results of the parent/guardian survey were not as favourable as the student survey results this is the first time that the results had been analysed in this way. This has revealed that the main issue relates to poor or a lack of information and communication by the College and this will be addressed to ensure that student information is comprehensively communicated to parents in September and there will be improved parent engagement through the launch of a Parent Portal that will enable parents to review their son/daughter's eILP, targets, reports and MarkBook in real time.

Members noted that the report from IMI is now finalised resulting in a Level 2 sanction. The College has received instruction from IMI on the required action and is supporting the College to address the recommendations made. The College is working to resolve the recommendations within one month.

It was noted that the claim of unfair dismissal made by a former employee has failed and was dismissed by the Tribunal Judge who said that none of the actions taken by either the College or by individuals constituted a breach of contract.

There were no additional comments or concerns arising from the reports presented by Chairs.

7.8 **Safeguarding Policy**

The Policy was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book page G260).

The Safeguarding policy is subject to annual review and approval by the Corporation. It has been subject to extensive review in the year and rewritten to align with the Suffolk School Safeguarding policy from Suffolk County Council. The Clerk was tasked to ensure that this new procedure aligns with the Whistle Blow procedure for students. The Corporation **approved** the policy. **Proposed** by A Gordon-Stables and **seconded** by C Manning.

JBridges

7.9 **Health and Safety Policy**

The Policy was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book page G261).

The policy is subject to annual review and approval by the Corporation. All references to HASS on page 5 of the policy have been removed further to a change in UK employment Law. Further amendments of page 3 detail the correct structure of Health and Safety responsibilities and the responsibilities of every member of staff. The Corporation **approved** the policy. **Proposed** by K Golding and **seconded** by S Clarke.

It was noted that the structure and membership of the Health and Safety Committee is currently under review.

8 **Governance**

8.1 **A New Approach to Governance**

The recommendation was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G262-G264).

Further to the work completed by the Governance Task and Finish Group in the year the Corporation received the recommendation to change governance arrangements. Agreement has been sought from members to recommend that the Corporation approves the changes as documented in the report. The Corporation **approved** the recommendation. **Proposed** by S Gerber and **seconded** by W Burrlock.

Subsequent to the Governance Proposal meeting held on 2 July 2014 members were invited by the Clerk to express interest in taking up designated roles and Committee membership under the new structure. It was confirmed that the Corporation in future will approve the appointment of Committee Chair and Vice Chair roles as opposed to the Committee nominating and electing these posts from among its membership.

The tabled paper received by members confirmed the following appointments:

K Golding	Vice Chair of Governors
M Symonds	Chair of Standards and Excellence Committee
J Finn	Vice Chair of Standards and Excellence Committee
S Clarke	Chair of Resources Committee
D Wildridge	Vice Chair of Resources Committee
K Golding	Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committee
R Carter	Chair of Appointments, Governance and Remuneration Sub Group
K Golding	Vice Chair of Appointments, Governance and Remuneration Sub Group

Designated roles and Committee membership were **approved** by the Corporation by a unanimous show of hands.

9 Governors' Reports and Information

9.1 Representational Activities

Governors have attended a range of representational activities since the last meeting of the Corporation that include the ACER Chair and Governors Network meeting, The Suffolk County Ball, EADT Business Awards together with Suffolk New College to sponsor the Young Business Person of the Year Award, Suffolk Show, UCS Annual Court, Build a Bungalow, Art and Design Show, eFair, Marketing and PR visit and the Prizegiving Ceremony at St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

9.2 Training, Development and Faculty Link Activities

Nothing to report.

10 Any other business

Nothing further to report.

11 Review of meeting

The Chair of Governors extended thanks on behalf of the Corporation to the Senior Management Team for supporting the new Principal and Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality into post, building new relationships, ensuring financial viability and driving governance forward. This has been a team effort and a challenging year.

Date of next meeting

Friday 12 December 2014 at 2.00pm. Room TG1.16

Meeting ended at 5.10pm