

GOVERNING BODY
Minutes of the meeting held at 2.00pm on 24 March 2017

Present:

K Golding (Chair)	R Carter (Joint Chair)
S Daley (Vice Chair)	S Healey Pearce
J Winter	A Maltpress
C Higgins	S Clarke
K Heathcote	R Inman
D Wildridge	N Savvas, Principal

In attendance: S Jones, Vice Principal Finance and Resources
L Johnson, Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality
C Shaw, Vice Principal Students and Learning Support
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 K Points, J Gazzard, S Howard and W O'Reilly. Apologies for absence were also received from L Moody, Vice Principal Employer Engagement.
- 2 **Minutes of the meetings held on 15 December 2016**
 - i. **Part I – Confidential**
The minutes of the meeting (minute book pages H006-H007) were agreed as a correct record.
 - ii. **Part II – Main meeting**
The minutes of the meeting (minute book pages H008-H019) were agreed as a correct record.
- 3 **Matters Arising from the meeting held on 15 December 2016**
The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report (minute book pages H020-H022) and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.
- 4 **Governors' Conference Held over 19 and 20 January 2017**
The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H023-H025).
 - 4.1 **Summary**
The report summarised the activities of the two day conference and an overview of the feedback from governors from the evaluation form were also shared. Comments arising for improvement will be taken forward when planning for the next conference to be held in January 2018.
 - 4.2 **Matters Arising**
There were no further matters arising to report.
- 5 **Quality and Performance**
 - 5.1 **Key Performance Indicators**
The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H026-H038).

The Work Based best case overall achievement rate is more than 4% above national rate in all cases but Governors were mindful that detailed analysis has shown that the Achievement percentage rates for 16-18 year old apprentices are in decline compared with the previous year. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality confirmed that achievement has been impacted by a number of historical early withdrawals from apprenticeships where the learner's employment has ceased for a number of reasons. More support for employers has been put in place to ensure that the right learner is recruited to the right apprenticeship thus reducing the likelihood of withdrawal from the qualification. There is a downward trend on national rates so our achievement will be higher than the national rate but it is unlikely to be at the level above that of previous years.

Governors challenged if the profile of learning walks rag rated amber or red was high or low against benchmark at 18%. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality confirmed that this is an accurate picture of the position. Immediate support is offered to low performing teaching staff and further reporting and analysis will be undertaken at the next meeting of the Standards and Excellence Committee.

A review of our KPI reporting is to take place and a meeting of Committee Chairs is to be convened after Easter for this purpose. It was noted that KPIs to measure the performance of HE are to be discussed and incorporated.

It was noted that the Human Resources KPIs show a decrease in the number of stress related absence which is positive. The College is taking a proactive approach to improving the health and wellbeing of its workforce and a lot of work has gone into supporting and increasing the emotional resilience of staff.

5.1.1 Financial Performance

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H039-H042).

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources reported that at least two major income lines are expected to finish below target at the year end; full cost work and HE income, although cost savings will contribute to an anticipated improved performance against budget and the forecast surplus has been increased from £151K to £190K as a consequence.

5.2 SFA Financial Health

Confirmation has been received from the SFA that their assessment of the financial health of the College, based on our financial plan, remains as Good for 2015/16 (the latest outturn forecast year) and Outstanding for 2016/17 (the current budget year).

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources continues his consultation and discussions with the account manager at the Bank to discuss what changes need to be made to covenants to accommodate the impact of FRS102. Early proposals look encouraging and negotiations continue to take place.

5.3 Review of SLA with Suffolk Academies Trust

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H043-H048)

The Principal, Vice Principal Finance and Resources and Clerk registered their interest in respect of this agenda item as all three hold positions at the College and

for the Trust. It was noted that they are not beneficiaries under the terms of the agreement.

The Service Level Agreement between West Suffolk College and the Trust is required to be reviewed annually. This review has been undertaken and a number of changes were detailed in the agreement received by the Board. The Trust has approved these changes and they are now subject to approval by the Corporation of the College.

It was noted that as part of the budgeting processes for the Trust a subsequent review of the SLA will be undertaken in the summer term to align the timing of the annual review with the annual budgeting processes.

It was noted that a £40K reduction in income for the College and unrealised expenditure for the Trust has been reforecast in the respective accounts to take account of work that was predicted to be undertaken by A Whatley but her departure from employment at the College and within the Trust in December 2016 meant that this income would now not be realised and has been removed.

It was recognised that at the appropriate time the College should look to recover its overheads in the agreement. This will be taken forward by the Vice Principal Finance Resources who also holds the post as CFO for the Trust.

SJones

The Corporation **approved** the changes detailed in the agreement and approved it be signed by the Chair. **Proposed** by D Wildridge and **seconded** by S Clarke.

KGolding

6

Strategic Matters

6.1 **Area Review Update**

The annual report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H049-H053).

So far there have been four meetings of the Area Review Steering Group and we are now at the point of considering the recommendations arising from the Review. The Corporation was asked to approve:

1) that the College remains as a stand-alone General FE College, focusing on the continued development of the offer to meet the needs of learners and employers. The College will further develop the Suffolk Academies Trust through work with local schools to establish a 16-19 free school, providing a coherent, high quality A level offer for learners in West Suffolk.

2) The Corporation was also asked to approve a recommendation that commits the College to working collaboratively with other members of the New Anglia Colleges Group to develop the higher education, adult and SEND offer across the area to provide coherent pathways and routes into sustainable employment for adults and those with additional needs.

3) The Corporation was also asked to pass comment on the Area Review and its concluding options assessment and recommendations overall. In summary the Area Reviews recommendations were detailed in the report and the Corporation was mindful of how the scope of work in FE for the Norfolk and Suffolk areas are set to develop in the future.

A fourth recommendation detailed in a tabled paper was circulated to the Board for consideration at the meeting. It is the intention of the government to invest in

creating Institutes of Technology and recently published guidance suggests that the majority of proposals are expected to emerge from the Area Review process as this has stimulated many local areas to consider how an IoT could best be established to meet their specific needs.

So far in what guidance exists Institutes of Technology refer to FE Colleges working collaboratively and innovatively across further and higher education and industry usually as part of a consortium. Bids for capital investment are submitted by the lead providers of the consortium, which could be either an FE College, HEI, Private Training Provider or Employer Consortia representing more than one employer; or by the LEP or Combined Authority.

West Suffolk College has registered its interest with the DfE to submit a bid for IoT status as the lead partner of a consortium comprising the College of West Anglia, East Coast College (Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft) and Suffolk New College and it is therefore proposed that West Suffolk College requests that the Area Review Steering Group recommends that a bid be submitted to the DfE for IoT status by the consortium of Colleges, led by West Suffolk College, comprising the College of West Anglia, East Coast College and Suffolk New College and other bodies as appropriate.

RCarter

The Corporation felt that the Area Review process has provided high-level intelligence about the FE/Sixth Form Colleges sector in Suffolk and Norfolk and also about the activities of other public and private competitors operating in the region.

The four recommendations of the Area Review were **approved** en bloc by the Corporation. **Proposed** by S Daley and **seconded** by C Higgins.

6.2 Principal's Briefing

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H054-H067).

The first part of the Principal's Briefing covered a range of activities and events celebrating success and national recognition since the last meeting of the Corporation held in December 2016. Governors asked that their congratulations and thanks were passed onto all staff involved for their exceptional work and effort.

KGolding

The Assistant Principal for Higher Education is currently recovering from surgery and her work has been overseen in her absence by T Locke, Head of HE, who has successfully seen this provision through the Institutional Review.

Work concerning the Vintens project continues and a number of surveys of the site have been undertaken including ground utilities, 3D topographical and building survey. The latter enabling the production of artist impressions being developed for the site. Initial indications from conceptual designs and draft rooming need data are that the project scope as it currently stands is not affordable and therefore either the scope needs to be reduced or more capital invested or probably both.

R Inman joined the meeting at 3.20pm.

Vitec have formally asked the College for an extension to the lease (3 months) in return for a modest rental increase on the existing rate and whilst this will delay the opening, it will generate more income for the project. Vitec's change of plans

to relocate have led to them conceding that they will need to remain on site until the end of the lease in January 2018 and possibly longer. They have a 30 week refurbishment and partial new build project. Governors discussed the impact on students and teaching if the site commissioning is delayed beyond September 2018. The worst case scenario is that Vitec stay in occupation for the total duration of the 3 months extension which would delay opening to early 2019. Governors were insistent that a 3 month extension would be the only extension of time offered and further terms would not be negotiable. The Corporation **approved** the three month extension of time.

SJones

The pay review project, discussed at the Governors' Conference, has been commenced and the College Management Team has started to consider the various options that may be possible to reward staff appropriately in terms of both pay and non-pay benefits. There has been an overwhelmingly positive agreement that this review of pay and reward is the correct decision and way forward.

The current HR software (ClearVision, provided by Access) which has been in place for the past 12 years is no longer fit for purpose. A new software provider (Cintra) has been sourced to replace ClearVision and the project to implement the software is underway.

The "With Strength of Character"; Three Pillars cross College initiative is being continuously developed and promoted across all areas of provision. Materials have been developed to support a CPD course which has been rolled out to managers for them to disseminate with their teams and we're working with the University of Birmingham to develop the Character Strengths programme.

Planning for the next Festival of Learning has taken place. The event will be titled "The Suffolk International Festival of Learning" and will be held at the College on 16 April 2018.

The College has been working closely with King Edwards VI school to engage primary schools in Science. During February and March, the Head of Science from King Edwards and students from the College have undertaken 4 Science Road shows with local primary schools which cumulated in a Physics Challenge competition at King Edwards on 15 and 16 March 2017.

The College is working in partnership with the Institute of Physics to have a joint presence at the Suffolk Show this year. The World's tallest jelly competition final will be held on the afternoon of the first day with prizes, sponsored by the College, going to the winning school and pupils.

The Principal outlined a number of opportunities open to the College including Institutes of Technology, as discussed above, the early discussions held as RAF Mildenhall prepares to close and significant investment is planned for USAF Lakenheath. The College is already involved in proceedings, and discussions continue alongside the DWP and Pensions, at USAF Lakenheath next month.

Opportunity Areas are identified by the Government as places which are the most challenged when it comes to social mobility. The College is involved with the delivery and coordination of this support as FE and Sixth Form Colleges work with schools, training providers, Suffolk County Council, MPs and organisations such as the NALEP, East of England Co-op and the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce.

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

6.3 Update on Multi Academy Trusts (SAT and SENDAT)

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H068-H073).

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

7

Information, Discussion and Decisions

7.1 **Financial Regulations**

The regulations were received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H074-H075).

There are a number of proposed highlighted changes to the Financial Regulations as a consequence of the annual review. In summary the document is only being modified so that it remains current and allows the College to operate effectively which is why in some cases it is being proposed that in the absence of the Vice Principal Finance and Resources that the Head of Finance can authorise certain transactions. It was also noted that subsequent to the endorsement of the Resources Committee the Financial Regulations now reference the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice which replaces the JACOP (Joint Audit Code of Practice).

The Corporation **approved** the Financial Regulations as amended. **Proposed** by S Clarke and **seconded** by D Wildridge.

7.2 Committee Chair's Summary Reports

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H076-H084).

Standards and Excellence

It was noted that all Governors are invited by the Standards and Excellence Committee to attend a Briefing session facilitated by the Director of Maths and English to talk about the GCSE qualification reforms and the impact on the FE Sector and specifically for West Suffolk College. The briefing precedes the meeting of the Committee to be held on Tuesday 18 April 2017.

Audit and Risk Management

There were no further items to discuss in addition to the report received by members.

Resources

The Ip-City centre lease comes to an end in April 2017 and after a combination of sourcing alternative sites and negotiating the details of a further lease at Ip-City over the last 3 months it is proposed to enter a new 3 year lease at Ip-City that contains annual break clauses for maximum flexibility. Alternative opportunities in Ipswich will continue to be sought in order to optimise the College's operations in Ipswich. The Corporation **approved** to renew the terms of the lease and delegated authority to the Chair to sign and approve the relevant legal documentation.

KGolding

7.3 Safeguarding Board Update

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H085-H086).

The Vice Principal Students and Learning Support was pleased to report that further to the visit of the Chair of Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust to the College recently, a Primary Care Worker has been assigned to the College to

support the work of the Student Welfare team and triage the support needed for students. The Chair of the Trust was surprised by the lack of support available to the College and the level of support needed by students on this visit. The Trust is also keen to help the College support the recently recruited asylum seeker students and it was noted that a further small cohort of learners are soon to join the College.

7.4 Health and Safety Update

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H087-H088).

The Governor Representative for Health and Safety, A Maltpress, reported that a good meeting of the Committee had been held earlier this month and although not reported in the summary paper Governors should be assured that the statutory obligations are being met, reported upon, measured and discussed.

7.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Update

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H089-H091).

It was noted that the Director of Learning Support, C Marshall, has been working with Suffolk County Council with a Supported Internship Programme. Each young HNL person has an individualised learning plan which takes into account their ability and the employer needs. This project has been held up by the County Council as a flagship project with the aim to get High Needs Learners (HNLs) into gainful employment.

The Corporation was pleased to learn that a number of toilet facilities across the campus have been identified to be altered to become gender neutral toilets.

7.6 Risk Management Update

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H092-H100).

The Risk Register has been reviewed and updated since the meeting of the Corporation held in December 2016. One Risk (R090) has been removed as the application to achieve registration through HEFCE to recruit HE students at WSC was not achieved and therefore is no longer a risk. Three new risks have emerged and entered the register; R098 pressure to pay staff/fallout from modernising the workforce pay; R099 capacity if a merger should be proposed; and R100 preparation of the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). The Corporation agreed that as a recommendation seeking a merger had not been proposed arising from the Area Review risk R099 is to be removed from the register.

JBRidges

8 Governance

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages H101-H108).

8.1 Student Engagement

In the absence of the Student Governor, the Vice Principal Students and Learning Support reported that there has been lots of activity for student engagement going on at a range of different levels; student, course, curriculum area, College, Management and Governor level.

The appointment of an HE Representative is working really well and more social events are being arranged as a consequence giving a more university feel and experience for students.

It was noted that the proposal to create a Young Persons Round table forum further to the discussion the Student Governor had when he met with Jo Churchill MP recently is something that the Vice Principal Students and Learning Support will take forward.

8.2 Governance Improvement Plan Update

The Corporation approved the Governance Improvement Plan at the meeting held in July 2016 further to the findings reported from the Learning Board Programme undertaken by Mike Snell. Some progress against the plan has been made since the last report to the Board in December 2016. Three of the six improvement areas have been completed, two continue as work in progress and one is still to be progressed.

Evaluation of the Learning Board programme was suggested could be included within this years' annual review of governance effectiveness and this will be taken forward by the Clerk to incorporate.

JBridges

8.3 Governors' First Hand Programme

Governors' First Hand week takes place from Monday 24 to Friday 28 April 2017 and the programme of activities for the week has been released. Activities include opportunities for governors to see the work of the IT services, the Bursary process through the Finance Department and take part in practical vocational classes in Edmunds Restaurant plus there is a mix of adult and 16-18 classes as well as Maths and English, Functional Skills, GCSEs and ESOL classes. Governors are asked to make their selections and notify the Clerk of their choices by no later than Tuesday 18 April 2017.

Governors

8.4 2017/18 Calendar or Meetings

The Corporation **approved** the calendar of meetings for the 2017/18 academic year and noted the intended schedule of meetings for the year after (2018/19).

9 Governors' Reports and Information

10.1 Representational Activities

The Joint Chair reported that he had attended and represented a range of events during the Spring term including representing the College at the Area Review Steering Group meetings, the screening of the College cinema advertisement, Governors' Conference, attended the Mayor's fundraiser event, the AoC Governance Summit, College Open Event and hosted guests at the Conservatoire EAST production of 'Lillies on the Land'.

10.2 Training, Development and Governor Link activities

The Clerk reported that she had attended the Curriculum Forum meeting today to encourage Directors to re-establish and make contact with their Governor Links. Each governor should receive an invitation as a minimum once a term to join in on team meetings and other directorate activities.

Governors were assured that the College is implementing a GDPR preparation plan to ensure compliance with the new regulations that come into force on 1 April 2018. It is recognised that the College may have to adapt its direct marketing communication as a consequence of the changes to the regulations.

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Any other business

The Chair confirmed that the Corporation has received the resignation of R Inman. Due to increased work commitments and demands upon his other voluntary roles he is to step down from the Corporation with immediate effect. The Joint Chair expressed the thanks of the Corporation for his valued contribution to the work of the Board and of the College during his term of office.

The Clerk reminded members that the date for the Governors' Dinner in Edmunds Restaurant has changed to Tuesday 6 June 2017 and the Corporation meeting in July is to be held on Friday 7 July 2017 at 2.00pm, a week earlier now than planned.

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Review of meeting

The Chair confirmed that the Joint Chair will resign from the Board at the end of July 2017. R Carter confirmed that it is not his intention to seek a further term of co-option and will stand down at the meeting to be held in July 2017.

Date of next meeting

Friday 7 July 2017 at 2.00pm. Room TG1.16

Meeting ended at 5.00pm