

HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 March 2016

Membership:	* P Taylor (Chair)	J Breen	* L Jones
	* S Adamopoulos	* C Christofides	* M Prodger
	* J Adams	M Coleman	* B Spencer
	* N Allen	* A Durcan	* K Spencer
	* P Bartlett	* E Johnson	* P Whitehead
	* J Bedford		

* denotes present

In attendance: M Stokes, Deputy Principal
L Turner, Deputy Principal
D Morgan, Director of Financial Services (agenda item 1907 only)
D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation
R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation

1900 Apologies for absence and a welcome

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from J Breen and M Coleman.

1901 Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

1902 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Corporation approved the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2015 as a true and accurate record and they were signed by the Chair.

1903 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

1904 Governance Issues

1904.1 To receive the recommendations of the Search and Governance Committee

Governors were informed that R Locke has not renewed his term of office due to relocating to Scotland. The Corporation thanked R Locke for his commitment and support during his two terms of office. Governors noted that the Search and Governance Committee are considering replacements.

Governors noted that the Search and Governance Committee are awaiting nominations from Anglia Ruskin University and Pearson however discussions are already underway.

1904.2 To elect the two Vice-Chairs of the Corporation

M Prodger and P Bartlett were unanimously elected as the two Vice-Chairs of the Corporation for a period of one year.

1905 Governor Training and Development

1905.1 To report on recent training development events and contacts with the Executive and Pair Scheme

Governors were thanked for completing their on-line Safeguarding and Prevent training, with particular thanks going to E Johnson for completing the training whilst on holiday abroad. P Bartlett asked whether there is any more on-line training which Governors could undertake and the Clerk agreed to send details of the College's equality and diversity training.

R Lucas provided Governors with an update on the academy learning walks and asked Governors yet to participate in a learning walk to provide her with some convenient dates asap.

N Allen reported that his learning walk with Hospitality and Travel has been confirmed for 15 April.

T Durcan has his learning walk with Vocational Science arranged.

P Bartlett met with the Ofsted inspector and has attended an AMC working party meeting.

M Prodger attended two meetings with the Ofsted inspectors, has undertaken her learning walk with Visual and Performing Arts, attended the February open evening and attended the Health and Safety meeting.

E Johnson has undertaken a learning walk with the Employability, Innovation and Skills team.

B Spencer met with the Ofsted inspector and has attended an AMC working party meeting.

J Bedford is undertaking his learning walk with Engineering after this meeting.

S Adamopoulos has undertaken a learning walk with Construction and provided Governors with some information on a CPD course he is undertaking in Poland.

P Taylor met with the Ofsted inspectors twice and has attended an AMC working party meeting.

L Jones has undertaken his learning walk with Hair and Beauty.

1905.2 To receive a report on recent Student Ambassador activities

J Adams and L Jones provided the Corporation with an update on student ambassador activities.

Student ambassadors have met with the Principal however it was suggested that they are given the opportunity to meet with Governors and this could possibly have a positive effect on future student governor

recruitment. A mini student ambassador conference is being planned and the Corporation agreed it would be good to invite Governors to this event. It was also suggested that student ambassadors take part in governor learning walks.

S Adamopoulos reported that he is taking a group of students and student ambassadors on a visit to Europe House.

K Spencer informed the Corporation that a LGBT group has been set up and has held its first meeting. This group will provide a good support network for College students.

1906 Ofsted Outcome and Updated Quality Improvement Action Plan

1906.1 To receive and consider the Ofsted Inspection Report

The Corporation received and considered the Ofsted Inspection Report, presented by K Spencer, Principal. The Ofsted data dashboard for Harlow College was circulated and Governors noted the reported strengths and that no weaknesses were identified.

The Principal thanked L Turner, the Executive Team and all staff for their hard work throughout the inspection. She informed the Corporation that the inspection had been carried out under the new common inspection framework and that the “good” grading from the inspection matches the College’s own self-assessment grade.

The Principal highlighted the main points contained with the inspection report. Governors’ attention was brought to the English and maths targets which had been set as realistic and achievable by the Corporation as part of the College’s KPIs. The Lead Inspector questioned whether the target was sufficiently challenging, consequently the targets have been raised to 50%.

Governors discussed the Inspectors’ perception that the Corporation was strong on financial, audit, resources and property challenge and agreed to demonstrate evidence of quality and curriculum challenge.

The Principal reported on issues of English and maths success rates in inspection and agreed to feedback to Ofsted in the Eastern Region on the inspection process and in particular on issues of approach.

Following on from the inspection, the College is focusing on improving English and maths outcomes, improving timely success rates for apprenticeships, increasing the number of teaching staff moving from good to outstanding and ensuring students undertake work experience with a focus on work-readiness. A detailed discussion was held around English and maths, the changes in the gradings and the assessment processes and K Spencer informed Governors of how the English and maths team is managed and how it deploys resources.

In response to questions raised by the student governors, the Principal reported that teaching staff have focused on those students studying GCSE, Level 1 or Entry Level English and / or maths, however embedding these in some cases poses an issue. It is envisaged that this situation

could change with Government policy changes, particularly if Core Maths is offered by colleges. L Turner reported that on-line packages could be considered to address these identified issues however teaching support would also need to be considered.

Governors noted that some colleges do not allow students to study on any Level 3 programmes if they do not have GCSE English and maths.

S Adamopoulos informed Governors that there is a strategic guide for delivering GCSE English and maths which discusses Governors' role in setting the curriculum.

The Corporation congratulated the College on the positive outcome of the Ofsted inspection and noted the report on the Ofsted Inspection Report.

1906.2 To receive a report on English and Mathematics

The Corporation received a report on English and Mathematics, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

The Deputy Principal reported that there is a strong focus on English and maths across the College with data being scrutinised in detail and extra support being targeted where needed.

The Corporation agreed unanimously to appoint C Christofides as the named Governor for English and maths and agreed that English and maths will be reported on regularly to the Standards and Curriculum Committee and to the Corporation.

The Corporation noted the report on English and Mathematics.

1906.3 To receive and consider the updated Quality Improvement Action Plan

The Corporation received and considered the updated Quality Improvement Action Plan, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

Governors noted information regarding KPIs, that the Plan contains the English and maths target now raised to 50% and other information correlating to specific comments contained within the Ofsted report. Governors were informed that dashboards are being constantly used by teams for both study programmes and apprenticeships. Monitoring takes place at team level and that each team knows their students and has a clear focus on English and maths.

The Corporation agreed that the Quality Improvement Action Plan is a robust document and noted the progress being made by the College against the specific targets contained within the Plan.

1907 Finance Report

1907.1 To receive and approve the Management Accounts for the period 1 August 2015 – 31 January 2016

The Corporation received and considered the management accounts for the

period 1 August 2015 – 31 January 2016, presented by M Stokes, Deputy Principal.

A detailed discussion was held around the management accounts and Governors noted the following:

- The cash flow forecast is predicted to fall below zero arising from funding being claimed in arrears on the large capital project and the income profile for February and March. Following discussions with the Chair of Governors and the Resources Committee, a temporary overdraft facility was arranged with the bank. The cost of the overdraft is £1,700 for a two-month facility.
- M Stokes confirmed that the bank loan for the AMC project has not yet been drawn down as certified building work needs to have commenced before the bank will release their funding.
- Additional SFA funding has been secured by the College and this has been re-profiled.
- Governors asked if there was a risk that the overdraft would be required for additional months. The Deputy Principal confirmed that the end of year cash position is forecast to be healthy. All spend is being monitored and approved by the Principalship to ensure that only essential spend is incurred.
- Governors noted both banking covenants are being met and the current ratios.
- P Bartlett asked what the current percentage is for creditors being paid within 30 days. The actual, year-to-date figure is 69% and the target is 95%. Governors noted that it is not possible to forecast the end of year position.

The Corporation noted and approved the management accounts for the period 1 August – 31 January 2016.

1907.2 To receive the report on the revised financial forecasts 2015-17 and
1907.3 To receive the letter from John Burdett of the Skills Funding Agency

The Corporation received and considered the revised financial forecasts for 2015-17 and the letter from John Burdett of the Skills Funding Agency, presented by M Stokes, Deputy Principal.

Governors were reminded that the College had to submit monthly management accounts to the SFA as part of their monitoring arrangements due to the College's financial health being rated as satisfactory in its financial plan. A revised financial forecast for 2015-17 was submitted to the SFA that forecasts the College's financial health as 'Good'.

The SFA has re-assessed the College's financial health and has confirmed that this is now 'Good'. This outcome is based on their review of the monthly management accounts and not the revised financial plan which was only recently submitted. In consequence, the SFA has ceased monitoring the College's monthly management accounts. Once the SFA has analysed the revised financial plan, the SFA dashboard will be re-issued.

The Corporation noted the revised financial forecasts for 2015-17 and the letter from John Burdett of the Skills Funding Agency.

1908 Report of the FE Commissioner and Strategic Area Reviews

1908.1 Annual Report 2014-15 of the FE Commissioner

The Corporation received and considered the Annual Report 2014-15 of the FE Commissioner, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation. Governors noted that the report had been reviewed the Search and Governance Committee at its meeting on 16 March 2016.

Governors were reminded that they receive all the reports issued by the FE Commissioner and this annual report is the Commissioner's second annual report. Governors noted that the report contains a growing list of issues faced by colleges and there is a growing number of colleges subject to interventions by the FE Commissioner and his team.

Governors' attention was brought to the page 7 which details key actions undertaken as a result of intervention by the FE Commissioner and page 22 which details a list of common issues faced by colleges requiring intervention and a list of indicators that are warning signals that intervention may be required. Governors also noted that Annex B – table of recommendations made - provided useful information for all colleges.

The Principal highlighted that the work of the FE Commissioner and information contained within the Annual Report are linked with the strategic area review agenda.

The Corporation noted the Annual Report of the FE Commissioner 2014-15.

1908.2 To receive and consider the AoC Structures document and the updated guidance on strategic area reviews from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills

The Corporation received and considered the AoC Structures document and the updated strategic area review guidance issued by BIS. Governors were reminded that the strategic area review for Essex is scheduled for November 16.

Governors agreed that the AoC Structures document is a helpful guide and noted the information on benchmarks in the BIS document. The Clerk reminded that Board that the aim of the reviews is to produce stronger, more financially resilient institutions. A key message coming from solicitors working with colleges going through the strategic area review process is that colleges need have an in-depth knowledge of their data.

The Corporation noted the AoC Structures document and the updates guidance on strategic area reviews from BIS.

1909 Reports from Committees

1909.1 AMC Working Party – 25 January 2016

The Corporation received and noted the notes of the AMC Working Party meeting held on 25 January 2016.

1909.2 Standards and Curriculum Committee – 9 December 2015 & 9 February 2016

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meetings held on 9 December 2015 and 9 February 2016.

Governors discussed how to make governor challenge stand out in the minutes. K Spencer reported that Governors receive a greater amount of information than governors of other colleges therefore making it harder to challenge the data. Governors need to challenge in all areas and impact of challenge also needs to be documented.

1909.3 Audit Committee – 1 March 2016

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 1 March 2016.

Governors noted that there is a risk on the risk register around VAT liability and questioned whether the College has a VAT strategy. Governors were informed that there are some elements of VAT and the College's approach to VAT included in the Financial Strategic Plan. The Corporation agreed that the College's Treasury Strategy should include the College's VAT position. RSM UK has provided the College with a report on its current VAT position with joint tenants and recommendations in the report are being pursued.

1909.4 Resources Committee – 3 March 2016

The Corporation noted that the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 3 March 2016.

1909.5 Search and Governance Committee – 16 March 2016

The Corporation noted that the minutes of the Search and Governance Committee held on 16 March 2016 will be presented at the next Corporation meeting to be held on 19 May 2016.

1910 Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business.

1911 Dates of Future Meetings

Summer Term	Thursday 19 May 2016	08.30am
	Thursday 14 July 2016	08.30am