

**HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
CORPORATION MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 March 2015

Membership:	* P Taylor (Chair)	* C Christofides	* D Palmer
	* S Adamopoulos	* M Coleman	* M Prodger
	* N Allen	* A Durcan	* B Spencer
	* S Banks	* N Garala	* K Spencer
	* P Bartlett	* E Johnson	* M Thorne
	* J Breen	R Locke	* P Whitehead

* denotes present

In attendance: M Stokes, Deputy Principal
P Marsh, Deputy Principal
A Phillips, Executive Director of Finance
W Allanson, Executive Director, Business Development (item 1834)
D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation
R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation

1826 Apologies for absence and a welcome

Apologies for absence were received from R Locke and L Turner, Vice-Principal.

P Taylor welcomed A Durcan and A Phillips to the meeting and they introduced themselves.

1827 Declarations of Interest

M Thorne declared an interest in agenda item 1832.2. There were no other declarations of interest.

1828 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Corporation approved the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2014 as a true and accurate record and they were signed by the Chair.

1829 Matters Arising from the Minutes

1829.1 Property Strategy (minute 1818 refers)

M Thorne asked if the College had received confirmation that FRS102 would not be held against the College when calculating the covenants. K Spencer reported that there has been no formal confirmation and that A Phillips will follow this up with the bank. M Thorne agreed to support the College with this and it was agreed that if the issue is resolved before the next Corporation meeting, Governors will be informed.

1830 Vice-Chairs of the Corporation

P Taylor nominated M Prodger and P Bartlett as Vice-Chairs of the Corporation, seconded by B Spencer, and they were duly elected.

1831 Governor Training and Development

1831.1 To receive an update on the Pair Scheme

R Lucas provided an update on the academy walk-throughs. Four have already taken place and seven are taking place in the next few weeks.

R Lucas asked governors who had not yet arranged a date for their walk-through to provide her with potential dates.

1831.2 To report on recent training development events and contacts with the Executive and Pair Scheme

M Coleman reported on his academy walk-through with plumbing and construction; M Prodger on her walk-through with Vocational Business and Vocational IT; D Palmer on her walk-through with Vocational Journalism, Media and Photography and P Whitehead on his walk-through with the English and Maths team.

All Governors were reported positively on their visits and a follow up visit will be organised for the Summer Term.

1831.3 To receive a report on recent Student Ambassador activities

S Banks and N Garala reported on recent Student Ambassador activities, including attending the Equality and Diversity Steering Group meeting, the Safeguarding Steering Group meeting, the open evening, MP visits and school council meetings. Student ambassadors have also been involved in updating the Harlow College website.

1832 Strategic Plan Update

1832.1 To receive and consider the summary report on the Strategic Plan

The Corporation received and considered the summary report on the Strategic Plan, presented by K Spencer, Principal.

The Principal presented an overview of the College's current curriculum development priorities, together with the challenges and opportunities relating to the following recruitment dimensions: reputation; new curricula; learners aged 14-16; learners aged 16-18; adults; apprenticeships and traineeships; higher education; partnerships, projects and full cost work; students with learning difficulties and disabilities and international students.

Governors noted the following:

- The College is developing more positive relationships with the local schools.
- ESOL has been reinstated for learners aged 16- 18 and this has been welcomed by schools and the wider community.
- Passmores is developing a construction centre for pupils aged 14-16 and will link with the College's provision.
- The College's 'market' for learners aged 16 – 18 years is relatively stable however, this is not the trend nationally.

- The College's Adult Single Budget will be cut by 24% next year. This is in addition to the 30% cut that has taken place over the previous three years. The College needs to build up apprenticeships, traineeships, and adults taking up 24+ loans.
- There is a need to establish demand for higher education with a view to re-focus the provision the College offers.
- The College has been awarded a contract direct with HEFCE to deliver Higher National Certificates and Diplomas.
- The College has fully met its targets for project and full cost work.
- A consortium comprising Harlow College, East Kent College and Sussex Downs College is being established to look at maximising funding opportunities and Harlow College will be a lead partner.
- £40k has been received from Essex County Council to work with schools and to provide services for students with learning difficulties.
- Links have been established with the Epping Forest Learning Consortium and the College will be training Chinese vocational teachers on the UK vocational learning system.
- The key challenge is to find the College's HE niche and to market it.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) were updated in February 2015. Governors' attention was brought to the indicators in red and governors noted the following:

- Success rates – teams predict a lower success rate at this time of year and then drive their students to achieve the targets. Success rates however will no longer exist as a national measure and it is not yet clear how colleges will be measured in the future.
- Attendance – attendance at English and maths lessons needs to be addressed and attendance trends are being analysed. Students recognise the value of undertaking English and maths qualifications.
- Teaching and Learning – grade 3 teaching is being prioritised as the main focus for improvement.
- Satisfaction – the College is in the process of completing the latest student satisfaction survey and currently the largest reported dissatisfaction is the requirement to study English and maths.
- E-technology – the College aims to be at 100% for use of Pro-Monitor by August.
- Punctuality – there has been an issue with the way in which the data is collected and handled. This will be addressed by the Executive.

Governors were given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues.

The Corporation noted the paper.

1832.2 To receive an update on the Manchester Airport Group Partnership at Stansted Airport

The Corporation received and considered the update paper on the Manchester Airport Group (MAG) Partnership at Stansted Airport, presented by K Spencer, Principal.

1833 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Strategy

The Corporation received and considered the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Strategy, presented by P Marsh, Deputy Principal.

P Marsh informed governors that performance measures nationally have been changed and that the emphasis is now on Level 3 academic and vocational qualifications. The College's A-Level results are significantly higher than other providers in the area and that Harlow College students are studying a higher percentage of subjects. The College is ranked second nationally for FE and tertiary colleges for A-Level value added and sixth nationally for vocational value added.

Governors noted that: there is rigorous monitoring of apprenticeships and the predicted success rates; the College has been 100% compliant with funding body rules concerning the delivery of English and maths; innovative approaches to develop employability skills are being implemented; e-learning projects are being successfully delivered and there has been a slight decline in student satisfaction arising in the main from the compulsory study of English and maths.

The monitoring and risk assessment process of delivery teams was explained and the quality team works closely with the teams most in need.

A further discussion was held with the Board; governors asked a number of questions and further noted the following:

- The E-Learning Strategy is in draft form and it will be presented to governors at the next Corporation meeting.
- A review of fixed technology is being undertaken and the College has produced a "Bring Your Own Device" policy.
- N Garala provided governors with an update on the i-pad initiative that has been implemented in the Vocational Business team.
- FELTAG (the Further Education Learning Technology Action Group) has lobbied for 10% of study programmes to be delivered via e-learning.
- E-learning could enable the campus to become a 24 hour campus, however much work has to be undertaken before this can be achieved.

The Corporation noted the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Strategy,

1834 Property Strategy and Advanced Manufacturing Centre (AMC)

1834.1 To note the Corporation approval of the Property Strategy by written resolution

The Corporation noted that the Property Strategy was approved by governors by written resolution in January 2015.

1834.2 To receive the report on the key stages of the construction of the Advanced Manufacturing Centre

The Corporation received and considered the report on the key stages of the construction of the Advanced Manufacturing Centre, presented by K Spencer, Principal, M Stokes, Deputy Principal and W Allanson, Executive Director, Business Development.

Governors received a background paper on the AMC which included a timeline for the build and the five key areas of curriculum development included in the funding applications for the AMC. A curriculum development project team has been established and the first employer advisory panel meeting has been scheduled for after Easter.

Governors noted that due to the nature and timings of the funding applications, the professional team was mobilised quickly, using professional consultants who had worked previously on capital projects at Harlow College. Their existing knowledge of the campus and local planning issues resulted in total costs below SFA benchmark figures for such services. The College recommended that this existing professional team be appointed to ensure the SELEP timescales are met. Governors were provided with a breakdown of costs for the professional team and noted that value for money comparisons had been undertaken. Governors also noted that a full tendering exercise will be undertaken for the building contractors.

A detailed discussion was held around profiling and the drawing down of funds. Payment models are currently being explored with the funders and A Phillips confirmed that the College will only be charged interest from the bank on the money that has been drawn down, however loan fees are payable up-front.

A Durcan and E Johnson offered to make a joint approach to help resolve any potential issues with the drawing down of Essex County Council funding. The Principal agreed to provide A Durcan with further information on the profiling of the Essex County Council funding if required.

In response to governor questions, A Phillips confirmed that he will ascertain the position on the issue of VAT and report back to the Board.

The Board discussed temporary accommodation along with the plans the College has in place to minimise the disruption to learners until the centre is open. Governors noted that the College has secured town centre premises with a five-year lease on favourable terms.

The Corporation noted the update on the AMC, the project implementation chart and the overview of costs.

The Corporation approved the appointment of the professional team for the AMC and the decision matrix.

1834.3 To approve the formation of the AMC Capital Project Steering Group

The Corporation agreed to the formation of a Capital Project Steering Group and approved P Taylor, P Bartlett and B Spencer to be the Corporation's representatives on this group.

1835 Management Accounts for the Period 1 August 2014 – 31 January 2015 including proposed adjustments to the current College budget

The Corporation received and considered the management accounts for the period 1

August 2014 – 31 January 2015, presented by M Stokes, Deputy Principal.

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

- The College is on target to achieve the full amount of funding forecast by the end of the academic year.
- There is potential to earn a maximum of £1.867m in higher education funding, however it is more realistic that £1.72m will be earned.
- Pay expenditure is lower than budget and staff costs are approximately 65% of the College's total expenditure. The July 'spike' in the budgeted pay costs is a balancing figure which has been included in the period 12 figures.
- There is a non-pay expenditure saving target of £500k.
- The College is forecasting a £630k surplus, providing that potential income is fully achieved.
- A six-weekly cash flow has been included in the management accounts.
- Concern was raised at the low percentage of creditors being paid within 30 days. It was agreed that the College needs to emphasise and accelerate the in-house processes of paying invoices. The new finance software for invoice processing has yet to be rolled out across the College and once this has been done, an improvement should be seen.
- Both bank covenant tests have been passed.

The Corporation noted and approved the management accounts for the period 1 August – 31 January 2015.

1836 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – Funding Update and Review 2015/16

This agenda item was minuted separately.

1837 Governance Issues

1837.1 To receive the report on the Corporation's response to the consultation for the English College's Code of Good Governance

The Corporation noted that the proposed English College's Code of Good Governance was considered by the Search and Governance Committee and noted the response to the consultation that was submitted to the AoC on behalf of the Board. Governors noted that the final version of the Code will be published by 31 March 2015.

1837.2 To receive the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills assessment of the impact of governance reform in further education colleges

The Corporation noted the BIS publication "An Assessment of the Impact of Governance Reform in Further Education Colleges" which explains how governing bodies have responded to the changes introduced since 2010, based around six key themes.

1837.3 To receive the letter from the Minister of State for Skills and Equalities and the BIS / DfE brief on progress on Implementing Rigour and Responsiveness

The Corporation noted the letter from the Minister of State for Skills and Equalities and the BIS / DfE brief on progress on implementing rigour and responsiveness, which explains how colleges are implementing policies such as traineeships, English and maths, greater use of on-line learning, increased pressure on financial health and the Prevent agenda.

1838 Reports from Committees

1838.1 Audit Committee – 3 December 2014

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 3 December 2014.

1838.2 Joint Audit and Resources Committee – 3 December 2014

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Joint Audit and Resources Committee meeting held on 3 December 2014.

1838.3 Resources Committee – 3 December 2014

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 3 December 2014.

1838.4 Search & Governance Committee – 3 February 2015

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 3 February 2015.

1838.5 Standards Committee – 10 February 2015

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 10 February 2015.

Governors noted that all outstanding Health and Safety Procurement Standards (HASPS) have been completed.

1838.6 Resources Committee – 26 February 2015

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 26 February 2015.

1838.7 Audit Committee – 13 March 2015

The Corporation noted that the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 13 March 2015 would be presented at the next Corporation meeting.

1839 Any Other Business

1839.1 UTC Fence

The order for the fence around the UTC has been signed and will be installed in the near future.

1839.2 NatWest Bank Account

A Phillips reported that a new mandate is required for the College's NatWest bank account.

The Corporation agreed the following resolution:

"It was resolved that:

- The signing rules in the current mandate, for the account detailed in section 2, be replaced in accordance with section 4; and*
- The authorised signatories in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in section 2, be changed in accordance with section 5 and 6 and the current mandate will continue as amended."*

The Corporation approved K Spencer, M Stokes and A Phillips as new signatories to the bank account, replacing those previously stated on the mandate.

1840 Dates of Future Meetings

Summer Term	Thursday 14 May 2015	08.30am
	Thursday 02 July 2014	08.30am