

**HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
CORPORATION MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 May 2016

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

* denotes present

In attendance: M Stokes, Deputy Principal
L Turner, Deputy Principal
D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation
R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation

1916 Apologies for absence and a welcome

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from P Taylor, S Adamopoulos, N Allen, J Bedford, M Coleman and E Johnson.

1917 Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

1918 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Corporation approved the minutes and the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2016 as a true and accurate record, subject to two typographical changes, and they were signed by the Chair.

1919 Matters Arising from the Minutes

1919.1 To receive an update on recent Student Ambassador activities (minute 1905.2 refers)

Governors asked if any progress has been made with Governors meeting student ambassadors and it was reported that this will be taken forward at the start of the next academic year. It was agreed that L Jones would liaise with L Turner and S Abdelmoula on this.

The Corporation noted that it is looking to appoint a student governor from higher education next academic year.

1920 Membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation

The Corporation considered the membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation and agreed the following recommendations of the Search and Governance Committee:

- To appoint Liz Laycock as a Governor to the Corporation for a period of four years from 19 May 2016 and member of the Standards Committee.

- To appoint Jon Bouffler from Anglia Ruskin University as a Governor to the Corporation for a period of four years and member of the Standards Committee
- To reappoint Neil Allen as a Governor to the Corporation for a period of four years from 22 March 2016.

Liz Laycock was officially welcomed to Harlow College.

1921 Governor Training and Development

1921.1 To report on recent training development events and contacts with the Executive and Pair Scheme

M Prodger attended the open evening and reported to Governors on the National Citizenship Service programme which the College is running for West Essex. K Spencer reported that the College is the best performing delivery partner for the programme in West Essex and that the College has received a lot of positive feedback, in particular around the member of staff leading the programme. M Prodger also attended the ACER English and Maths training session and the strategic planning event.

J Adams has undertaken a learning walk with the Vocational Business team and reported back on this. J Adams asked whether the AMEC would be open to the public and it was reported that it will be open to industry however as it is located on the campus, it will be part of the locked College campus.

B Spencer attended the strategic planning event and the ACER English and Maths training session. He has also been involved with reviewing the UTC lease for which K Spencer thanked him.

J Breen attended the Resources Committee meeting. She reported on an engineering apprentice recruitment scheme event on which Raytheon is working with the College. She also reported that when Raytheon moves to its new site, furniture and equipment from the old site will be donated locally and she will ensure the College finds out about the process for this.

P Whitehead attended the strategic planning event, the ACER English and Maths training session and was involved in the appointment of the external auditors.

P Bartlett attended the strategic planning event and was involved in the appointment of the external auditors.

1921.2 To receive a report on recent Student Ambassador activities

J Adams reported on student ambassador events and the open evening.

L Turner reported that the College had hosted a taster session for Year 6 pupils who are transferring to Passmores in September 2016. The session focused on inspiring the pupils to think about what they would like to do after finishing secondary school.

1922 Management Accounts for the Period 1 August 2015 – 31 March 2016

The Corporation received and considered the management accounts for the period 1 August 2015 – 31 March 2016, presented by M Stokes, Deputy Principal.

The management accounts were discussed in detail, Governors were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following points were noted / raised:

- A £1m overdraft was taken out by the College however only approximately £150k was needed for one day due to careful financial planning.
- The AMEC payments have been re-profiled due to the build work commencing slightly later than originally anticipated. This means that the College will not need to draw down on the loan until later than originally planned, therefore no fees have been incurred to date.
- A funding application has been submitted to Essex County Council for an additional £85k for adult work.
- Both bank covenants have been met and the April management accounts have been sent the bank who has confirmed that the covenants have been met. The College also needs to ensure that it does not break the non-financial covenant regarding sending the management accounts to the bank.
- The key ratios were noted, along with the forecast of a good financial health rating. There will be a new area review benchmark and the criteria for checking this will be updated when more information comes through.
- P Bartlett highlighted the £300k surplus which was originally budgeted against a current forecast of £189k, which is a big difference. K Spencer explained that the budget was set in June and then the SFA cut the adult budget by 2.5%. In addition, higher education income is less than originally budgeted due to a reduction in the number of applications. The College is in the process of reviewing its higher education offer.
- P Bartlett commented that even though the forecast surplus is less than originally budgeted, the College is in a good financial position.
- Governors were updated on the £342k gain.
- Staff costs are currently approximately 67% of the College's total income. This is above average for the sector however can be explained in part by the fact that the College does not have significant levels of sub-contracting.
- P Bartlett questioned why income from internal apprenticeships was £300k less than forecast. M Stokes informed the Corporation that the College had budgeted what was allocated, however the allocation was reduced. It is envisaged that the College will earn approximately £1m of this funding. There is a potential that this income stream will grow when the apprenticeship levy is introduced.
- P Whitehead suggested that a support staff to teaching ratio would be useful along with a comparison against last year.

The Corporation noted the report on the management accounts for the period 1 August 2015 to 31 March 2016.

1923 Quality Improvement Plan

The Corporation received and considered the report on the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

Governors noted that apprenticeships were currently on track to achieve the set targets: 69% is predicted for timely success against a 70% target, with an overall success rate predicted at 74% against an 80% target. Ofsted had reported that the

College should raise the aspirations of apprentices to take higher level maths and English qualifications and the College is implementing this. Pre-apprenticeship programmes are also under consideration.

Maths and English continues to be a crucial focus for the College. Attendance figures are lower than the College would like them to be. The College is currently focusing on getting GCSE exams. The College is predicting 26% English and 30% maths pass rates for grade C and above. These are realistic targets.

Cross-College focus groups on maths and English have been held to consider the delivery model and which GCSE the College will teach next year. A number of students had previously sat the English I-GSCE and are not used to taking controlled assessments. The new English GCSE does not contain controlled assessments however there is a higher level of grammatical understanding required. The College is working with other Essex colleges on joint training for the new syllabuses. The College must decide which GCSEs it will teach next year before the GSCE results are published in August.

L Laycock asked what the attendance figures for exams were and if this differs for apprentices. L Turner replied that the functional skills attendance rate is higher than the GCSE rate. K Spencer highlighted that functional skills exams can be rescheduled and that the success measure for the College is the number of students getting a grade C by the age of 18.

L Laycock asked if most staff preferred to teach GCSEs. K Spencer highlighted the big gap between functional skills and GCSEs and how this is a challenge for students and staff. Governors noted that the prediction for GCSE English grade C or above this year is higher than last year and maths is approximately the same.

Governors noted that a new entry has been added into the QIP under curriculum focusing on the supported studies offer and the preparing for adulthood agenda. An external review of this curriculum area has been undertaken and study visits have taken place. The College has a strategy in place, however this is dependent upon funding from Essex County Council. The Principal reported on 'high needs' funding and how the process has changed. Currently there are 27 'high needs' students in the funding agreement, however it is anticipated that there are in excess of 50 learners on roll with 'high needs'. The Principal reported on the implications for these learners and that the College would have to consider not accepting learners onto the courses without an Education, Health and Care Plan and the associated funding.

The Corporation noted the report on the Quality Improvement Plan.

1924 Strategic Planning

The Corporation received and considered the report on strategic planning, presented by K Spencer, Principal.

K Spencer informed Governors that a new strategic plan for 2016 – 2020 is being developed and the key themes discussed in the strategic planning event with Governors have been used to form the basis of an outline strategic plan. These are:

Stansted Technical and Professional Skills Centre:
Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH):
Anglia Ruskin University (ARU):

Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Centre (AMEC):

In addition to these themes, a bid has been submitted to invest in facilities to support the digital and creative industries.

The College will continue to focus on the preparing for adulthood agenda, work with unemployed adults and preparing to bid for ESF funding when it is released.

The final plan will be consulted on with staff, students and stakeholders and will be presented to the Corporation for approval at its meeting on 14 July 2016. In addition, the Key Performance Indicators will be reshaped and discussed by the Corporation.

The Corporation noted the report on strategic planning and approved the outline plan for the Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020.

1925 Higher Education Institutional Review and Higher Education QAA Review

The Corporation received and considered the report on the Higher Education Institutional Review (IR) and the Higher Education QAA Review, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

The Corporation were informed that ARU undertakes an Institutional Review every five years and that the College had recently had its review. The format of the review included discussions with the student body followed by meetings with staff.

As a result of the IR, ARU approved the College's continuation of having associate college status for three years with some conditions attached, mainly around marketing and student recruitment, a written student communication policy and the staff induction process. Open discussions were held with ARU concerning the future direction of the College's HE provision. The College is awaiting ARU's final report and the College has six months to respond to the report.

The QAA Review will take place during 2016-17. It is a new process and there will be a greater focus on teaching and learning. Governors noted the letter received from HEFCE relating to this.

The Corporation noted the report on the Higher Education Institutional Review and QAA Review.

1926 Sir Charles Kao UTC

The Corporation received a verbal update on Sir Charles Kao UTC, presented by K Spencer, Principal.

The Corporation noted the verbal update on Sir Charles Kao UTC.

1927 Appointment of External Auditors

The Corporation received a verbal update on the appointment of external auditors by M Stokes, Deputy Principal.

The College went out to tender to procure its external audit services. The tender was advertised for three years and only two companies submitted a tender – RSM UK and Kingston Smith.

A panel of senior managers and Governors met to evaluate the tender and recommended the appointment of RSM UK as external auditors for three years, with a review after the first year.

The Corporation approved the appointment of RSM UK as external auditors for a period of three years, with a review after the first year.

1928 Governance Issues

The Corporation received and considered the report on developments in governance, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation.

The Clerk reminded Governors that the FE Commissioner's most recent letter was circulated at the strategic planning event and covered the strategic area review process.

Governors received and noted the letter from Nick Boles MP along with the brief on Implementing the Further Education and Skills Reform Programme. Information on special educational needs, English and maths, strategic area reviews and apprenticeships were included. The Principal reported that she has been invited to sit on the Principal's Group of the technical and education panel via BIS and the DfE.

M Prodger asked whether the College was delivering traineeships. K Spencer reported that the Employability, Innovation and Skills team are working with JCP and clients that are interested in apprenticeships without jobs are being recommended for traineeships. Currently the College has 30 learners on traineeships and is planning for 120 in 2016/17. P Whitehead reported that the College is engaging more with learners and identifying those eligible for traineeships along with bringing traineeships in line with work experience and apprenticeships.

L Laycock asked if there were synergies between study programmes and traineeships. K Spencer confirmed that it is better for learners to undertake study programmes with a large employment element and that it is not really possible for learners to progress from study programmes to traineeships. With shorter study programmes, learners can go onto apprenticeships and perhaps traineeships. It is also unlikely the apprenticeship levy could be used for traineeships.

P Bartlett asked if the College needs to apply for the special educational needs funding detailed in the report. K Spencer reported that it is likely that this funding will be channelled through the Education Training Foundation.

The Corporation noted the report on developments in governance.

1929 Reports from Committees

1929.1 Search and Governance Committee – 16 March 2016

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 16 March 2016 and M Prodger highlighted that Governors should not be satisfied with quorate attendance and should aim for higher attendance.

1929.2 Resources Committee – 12 May 2016

The Corporation noted that the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 12 May 2016 will be presented to the Corporation at its next meeting on 14 July 2016.

1930 Any Other Business

P Bartlett reported that Price Bailey has two Harlow College students working with them and they are brilliant.

Governors were invited to the Student Awards Ceremony on 20 June and the Wellbeing Day on 1 July. R Lucas will email out details of these events to all Governors.

1931 Dates of Future Meetings

Summer Term	Thursday 14 July 2016	08.30am
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