

**HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
CORPORATION MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 19 October 2016

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

* denotes present

In attendance: M Stokes, Deputy Principal
L Turner, Deputy Principal
D Morgan, Executive Director of Financial Services
D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation
R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation

1949 Apologies for absence and a welcome

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from N Allen, J Breen, A Durcan and T Woodward.

1950 Declarations of Interest

E Johnson declared an interest in items and discussion relating to Essex County Council.

1951 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Corporation approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2016 as a true and accurate record and they were signed by the Chair.

1952 Matters Arising from the Minutes

1952.1 Principal's Report (minute 1938 refers)

The Principal informed Governors that the old Strategic Plan is being closed off and consultation is taking place on the new Strategic Plan. She confirmed that "human skills" will be replaced with "soft skills" in the Plan.

1952.2 Two Year Financial Forecast 2016-18 and the 2016-17 Budget (minute 1940 refers)

Governors were informed that the financial forecasts were submitted to the SFA in advance of the 31 July 2016 deadline.

1952.3 Resources Committee – 12 May 2016 and 30 June 2016 (minute 1946.3 refers)

The Principal provided Governors with a further update on Sir Charles Kao

UTC and the Corporation agreed that the College should continue its dialogue with the DfE, EFA and the UTC.

1953 Membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation

The Corporation approved the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee to appoint Ray Levy as a Governor to the Corporation for a period of four years from 19 October 2016 to 18 October 2020. The Corporation agreed that R Levy will become a member of the Audit Committee.

Mr Levy introduced himself and Governors noted his previous governance experience at a local secondary school.

1954 Election of the Chair of Harlow College Further Education Corporation

Paul Taylor was the only nomination for the position of Chair of Harlow College Further Education Corporation.

The Corporation unanimously elected Paul Taylor as Chair of the Corporation for the period 10 December 2016 – 9 December 2017.

1955 Sketch Management Accounts for the Period 1 August 2016 – 30 September 2016

The Corporation received and considered the sketch management accounts for the period 1 August 2016 – 30 September 2016, presented by M Stokes, Deputy Principal.

A discussion was held around the accounts and the following were noted or raised by Governors:

- The accounts provide an overview of the current situation and not yet finalised.
- The forecast income has been adjusted based on the increased high needs funding. The original budget included £426k for this however the current actual figure is £856k and there is a possibility that this figure will increase. Historically the College has under-claimed high needs funding, however this year claims totalling in excess of £1m have been submitted to Essex, Hertfordshire, Haringey and Waltham Forest local authorities. P Bartlett asked if the high needs funding secured would result in the College incurring additional costs. The Deputy Principal explained that the claims cover specialist staff support and administration costs. The College is unable to claim any funding until the cost exceeds £6k per learner. The Principal highlighted that the funding cannot be used to make a contribution towards the running of the College and that the College is working in partnership with Essex County Council on developing a new model for high needs funding.
- A higher surplus than that originally budgeted is forecast.
- The College has maintained its positive outcomes on both covenant tests and retained its good financial health rating.
- E Johnson asked if the accounts assume the full draw down of the £3m loan for the Advanced Manufacturing Centre. D Morgan reported that the College has started to draw down on the loan and the full £3m will be drawn down by the end of December 2016.

- M Stokes asked the Corporation to approve a £500k overdraft facility for February 2017 to April 2017. The current forecast does not predict the need for this however it would be prudent to have the facility in place. It is anticipated that the cost of the overdraft would not exceed £2k.

The Corporation noted the sketch management accounts for the period 1 August 2016 – 30 September 2016 and approved the £500k overdraft facility for February 2017 to April 2017.

1956 Provisional Outturn 1 August 2015 – 31 July 2016

The Corporation received and considered the provisional outturn for the period 1 August 2015 – 31 July 2016, presented by M Stokes, Deputy Principal. The provisional outturn was discussed in detail. Governors were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following points were noted / raised:

- There is a significant deficit in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Essex LGPS has informed all Essex colleges that they must pay back the deficit faster or underwrite the deficit. This is a significant issue for all colleges and D Morgan is attending a Finance Directors' meeting which will focus on this. J Bouffler offered to provide the College with a contact at ARU as they are in a similar position. E Johnson highlighted that the College should not be forced into making a quick response.
- The key ratios and bank financial covenants were not breached throughout the year and the College's SFA financial health rating is good based on both the old and new measures.
- The College adjusts its expenditure to ensure that it matches the income it has earned.
- It was envisaged that there would be a dip in the cash flow in March 2016 in line with the funding profile, however the SFA released funds early and careful management by the Finance Team ensured this did not occur.
- A revaluation of the College's land has taken place The historic value was £1m and now this stands at £9m. This value will be added to the balance sheet and D Morgan is in discussions with the external auditors around how best to account for the revaluation in the annual accounts.

The Corporation noted the report on the provisional outturn for the period 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2016.

1957 Enrolment Report 2016/17

The Corporation received a verbal report on enrolment 2016/17, presented by M Stokes, Deputy Principal.

The College is on track to achieve its 16-18 target of 2,427, with 2,327 students currently enrolled. Enrolments will continue in year, especially 18 year olds into adult employability courses. The College will aim to exceed the 2,427 target. Adult recruitment is on target.

There has been an increase in 19+ learners taking out loans and the College is already above what has been allocated. A new process is being developed and the College is waiting for further information on this.

The College is looking to grow its HNC and HND provision.

The Corporation noted the verbal report on enrolment 2016/17.

1958 Strategic Area Reviews

The Corporation received and considered the report on Strategic Area Reviews, presented by the Principal. Governors' attention was brought to the Department for Education letter that sets out the process, lists the Colleges included in the Essex review and the Skills Funding Agency staff involved and the dates of the meetings.

The College is in the process of completing all the required paperwork and the College's visit as part of the process will take place on Monday 14 November 2016. A meeting with a small group of Governors, including the Chair of Governors is required by the area review team and the Clerk and Deputy Clerk will contact Governors to ascertain their availability for the meeting.

The Principal updated Governors on discussions that have been held with other colleges and that FEDEC is looking holistically at ways of working together and looking at apprenticeship provision across the county.

The Corporation noted the report on strategic area reviews.

1959 Government Consultation on FE College Insolvency Regime

The Corporation received and considered the report the Government consultation on an FE college insolvency regime, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation.

The Clerk provided Governors with some background information and informed them that a consultation took place over the Summer, to which the Association of Colleges provided a response. At present, the outcome of the consultation is awaited. Government is currently looking to find legislation to get it through Parliament so that it can come into force in 2018. The Clerk highlighted the risks arising from the Insolvency Regime and confirmed to Governors that the College continues to take out professional indemnity insurance that covers Governors.

E Johnson asked if the insurance will be enhanced if the Bill is passed. The Principal reported that this is not yet known and the Clerk highlighted that Governors are only personally liable if they acted recklessly or have been negligent. B Spencer reported that Governors will have different levels of comfort based on their own skills and experience.

The Principal reported that there was been some discussion around the size of Corporations and whether they should be smaller with trustees who are paid, however there is a lot of discussion still to be had around this. She highlighted the key issues contained on page 5 of the report, particularly around the LGPS.

B Spencer questioned the resource implication and whether the £62k in the report covers the whole College insurance. It was agreed that this would be confirmed.

R Levy highlighted that he had some questions on the insurance policy document which he will direct to the Deputy Principal after the meeting.

The Corporation noted the report on the Government consultation on an FE college insolvency regime and the insurance cover the College has put in place.

1960 Reports from Committees

1960.1 Audit Committee – 04 October 2016

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 04 October 2016. P Bartlett highlighted that two positive audit reports were presented at the meeting.

The Corporation approved the self-assessment questionnaire which forms part of the Regularity Audit and agreed that it should be signed by the Chair of Governors and the Principal.

1960.2 Search and Governance Committee – 11 October 2016

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Search and Governance held on 11 October 2016. M Prodger highlighted that the Corporation is still failing to meet its 80% attendance targets at Corporation and Committee meetings and urged Governors to attend the meetings wherever possible. Dial in facilities have been activated so Governors that cannot attend in person will be attend the meetings remotely.

1961 Any Other Business

The Corporation were informed that this was Martin Coleman's last meeting after in excess of 20 years as a Governor at Harlow College. Paul Taylor thanked and praised Martin Coleman for his commitment and dedication to the College and the support he provided to Paul Taylor as a new Chair.

The Corporation presented Martin Coleman with a gift and card as a token of thanks and appreciation.

P Taylor asked what the College's results for GCSE English and Maths were. Maths results were approximately 30%, a slight increase on last year's results, and English were approximately 10%, broadly in line with last year. The most successful students were those on Level 3 programmes and taking one subject, English or maths. 0% of Level 1 students and 1% of Level 2 students achieved their resit grade.

R Lucas highlighted that it is the College's Open Evening on Thursday 3 November, 5.30pm – 7.30pm and asked if Governors would be able to attend. M Prodger endorsed the value of Governors attending the open evening.

1962 Dates of Future Meetings

Autumn Term	Thursday 08 December 2016	08.30am
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Spring Term Thursday 16 March 2017 08.30am

Summer Term Thursday 18 May 2017 08.30am

Thursday 13 July 2017 08.30am

1963 Harlow College Self-Assessment 2015/6

Introduction:

The Principal introduced this item and explained the format for the remainder of the meeting. The Principal informed the Corporation that they have a responsibility to sign-off that the College has rigorous and robust processes for its higher education provision and for monitoring its academic standards.

In order to meet the timescales set by HEFCE, the Corporation delegated this responsibility to the Standards and Curriculum Committee and asked the Committee to confirm that they have seen process and procedures in action and that actions arising from the quality processes are being followed through.

The Principal reported that the College will finalise the data in the SAR as late as possible to ensure that it is accurate and up-to-date and a final version of the SAR will be presented to the Corporation at its meeting on 08 December 2016.

Sessions:

Governors and members of the College Executive were divided into three groups to focus on individual team SARs and test the validity of the judgements.

Following on from these sessions, feedback was given by each group to the Corporation.

Group 1:

M Stokes, S Adamopoulos, J Bedford, R Levy, P Taylor

Apprenticeships:

- There was a good paper on action undertaken since the Ofsted inspection, linked to the QIP.
- There is positive use of ProMonitor, frontloading maths, English and IT qualifications, and a dedicated member of staff following through all processes.
- Whether all processes all fully embedded and followed through by all teams is a concern. Heads of Academies needs to play a strong role in this.
- More needs to be done around the communication and engagement with employers. The process for engagement with employers was explained.
- Standards are currently being developed.
- It is proposed to hold sessions in the College and invite employers in to attend them. J Bedford highlighted that employers need more education on apprenticeships.
- The overall apprenticeship numbers are slightly lower than in previous years, due to a reduction in the number of subcontractors the College works with, however the College has grown its own apprenticeship provision.

Sport:

- The team is taking on new challenges and last year introduced a HNC and a HND.
- The team is now looking to develop apprenticeships.
- A good work experience model has been developed and the team work well with the STAR Agency.

- The AAM knows her learners well.
- There has been a drop in success rate this year.
- A gym facility is being developed.
- The panel agreed a self-assessment grade of 2 – good with outstanding features.

Hospitality:

- The team presented with passion.
- The team has an excellent OLTA grade profile. All staff are grade 1.
- Success rates have slightly declined to 86%, however the College is no longer measured against success rates.
- There has been a drop in enrolments however the team is good at merging smaller groups.
- There is a 64% male, 36% female gender split.
- More effort is required with learner voice.
- The team has a good attendance monitoring system and attendance last year was 94%.
- The results for the student satisfaction survey are good.
- The team make good use of i-pads.
- E Johnson asked if apprenticeships were an issue and K Spencer reported that a strategy needs to be worked on with the team and maybe there is a gap in higher apprenticeships in this area.
- The panel agreed a self-assessment grade of 2 – good with outstanding features.

Group 2:

L Turner, B Jones, J Bouffler, E Johnson, L Laycock, B Spencer

Higher Education:

- The panel were comfortable that processes and procedures are in place.
- A HE timeline document was reviewed and the associated document that is produced following HE reviews.
- Sample actions were seen, along with the HE dashboard and benchmarks.
- The College is now looking to bring all of the above aspects together into one process for ARU and our own HE provision.
- The statement that needs to be signed off by the Corporation was discussed.

Access and Early Years:

- HE Early Years has now been integrated with the FE team.
- The panel commended the team on the HE Early Years provision.
- The team has the highest student satisfaction ratings.
- There is a high percentage of high level degrees being obtained.
- Access is growing the number of pathways offered.
- The offer is being aligned to specific HE courses.
- A more contextualised SAR would be useful.
- Having a compact agreement with a university is not necessary but would be useful and is being kept of the team's radar.

Group 3:

K Spencer, S Abdelmoula, P Bartlett, L Jones, M Prodger, P Whitehead

English and Maths:

- The key issues for English and maths and actions put in place were reviewed.
- Staff like the centralised approach to delivery of English and maths. A-Level and GCSE staff are integrated and share expertise. This is having a positive impact of their own development.
- English:
 - The controlled assessments last year were a key weakness. There was been a move away from controlled assessments this year.
 - A clear vision around academic standards and assessment is required.
 - An assessment strategy will be presented to the Standards and Curriculum Committee.
 - A literacy strategy to improve reading is also being developed.
 - Early intervention is needed for non-attendance.
 - Success needs to be celebrated.
- Maths:
 - There is a centralised staff team.
 - 300 students are resitting their maths GCSE in November 2016.
 - Half term sessions are being planned.
 - There are concerns around the future curriculum.
 - Staff are focusing on particular challenging topics rather than the whole syllabus.
- 90% of vocational staff are bringing their students to and collecting them from the maths lessons.
- Staff are looking at positive mindset to English and maths.
- There is a lot of energy and enthusiasm in the staff teams.
- Constant monitoring of academic standards is required and English and maths will be a standing item at the Corporation and Standards and Curriculum Committee meetings.

Engineering:

- There has been a significant increase in quality and success rates.
- There a rigorous monitoring, follow up and catch up procedures in place.
- A Young Engineers' Club has been established.
- From the pre-apprenticeship programme, 91% secured an apprenticeship.
- Staff have applied skills and are looking to build up their practical skills.
- All Level 3 students have undertaken work placements.
- More females have been recruited than historically.

Going Forward:

Key, critical areas for improvement are English and maths, improvements in apprenticeship success rates, ensuring process and procedures are consistently used across the College and Level 2 value added.

M Prodger asked if the College has inspirational teachers. The Principal reported that the OLTA observation profile has improved and The Deputy Principal highlighted that there are pockets of inspirational teaching, however teachers' concerns about

“ticking all the boxes” can get in the way. The quality team is sharing good practice and this is being built on. The Principal reported that when staff have been part of the Employability, Innovation and Skills academy for a period of time, they come back to their curriculum area with a better skills set. Work is being undertaken to expose managers to other teams and on developing managers’ broader experiences.

Luke Jones reported that students who are considering university should also investigate higher level apprenticeships.

Next Steps:

The SAR will be updated and then presented to the Standards and Curriculum Committee and the Corporation at their meetings in November and December 2016.

The Principal thanked Governors for their time and taking part in the self-assessment reviews.