

**HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE**  
**BOARD OF THE CORPORATION**  
**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015.**

**Present:** Mike Carver (Chair)  
Jan Wing  
Tony Medhurst (Principal)  
David Tweedie  
Warren Gordon  
George Robertson  
Patsy Spears  
Harvey Young  
Denni Morrison  
Ian Cowin  
Jonathan Brown

**In Attendance;**  
Desdra Kingdon (Dep. Principal Finance & Resources)  
Jane Clarke (Dep. Principal Curriculum & Quality)  
  
Andrew Clare (Interim Director of Finance)  
John Fowl (Clerk to the Corporation)

Prior to the meeting the Board received a briefing from Jane Clarke on the requirements for Governors under the new Common Inspection Framework. By way of example the Governors were shown the recent reports for two other colleges in the FE sector.

It was noted that the College auditors had recently been commissioned to review 'Safeguarding' in the college and had issued an opinion to give substantial assurance that this was well established in the College. The College SAR will form the basis of inspector's questions and Governors will be challenged on the issues identified to check that they are aware of the issues and what is being put in place to bring about improvement. Board members asked to see the Action Plan by which it was intended to bring about the improvement in Maths & English. It was stated that the Quality Improvement Plan will help Governors better understand the issues and the progress of them.

**1376. To receive Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies were received from Andrew Francis, Viki Cooper and Ricky Irons.  
The Chair welcomed Jonathan Brown the new student Governor.

**1377. Declaration of Interests and to Notify Part 2 Agenda Items.**

There were no declarations of interest or part 2 items not already on the agenda.

**1378. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and the EGM Minutes of the Board Held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015.**

The Minutes of both meetings were approved.

**1379. Matters Arising.**

There were no matters arising.

**1380. To Receive the Recommendations of the Search Committee.**

The Board was informed that the student governors for appointment to the Board are Jonathan Brown and Charlotte Booth.

It was **Resolved** that Jonathan Brown and Charlotte Booth be appointed as student governors for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016.

The Chair informed the Board that Barry Connelly had formally resigned as a Governor with immediate effect. It was hoped he would continue his work with the College in respect of Apprenticeships.

Given the changes to Board membership and the management team restructure in the College, the Chair stated that the Search Committee will be looking to review the allocation of Governors under the Link Governor arrangement.

### **1381. Chair's Report.**

The Chair outlined the range of activities he had been involved with during the past 4 months. At a meeting with Hertfordshire County Council the issue of devolution had been discussed but it had become apparent that HCC was inclined to wait to see what occurred on this issue elsewhere. Both the Chair and the Principal had attended the AOC Conference in November but little had been shared ahead of the Government Spending Review announcement.

It was intended to identify 3 additional dates for the Board to meet in both the Spring & Summer terms.

Members were reminded that Desdra Kingdon was leaving on 18<sup>th</sup> December and that Andrew Clare has been appointed as interim Director of Finance on a part time basis. There continues to be 2 vacancies on the Board and the Chair, Principal & Clerk are to meet to discuss how best to attract applicants for consideration to join the Board.

Season's greetings were extended to all governors and staff and the report was received.

### **1382. To Receive the Principal's Report.**

The report set out the main details of the recent Comprehensive Spending Review and despite recent government announcements on the ring fencing of certain funding streams, Colleges must still expect funding to be very tight in the years ahead.

Heads of Terms had been agreed between the 4 Hertfordshire colleges in respect of ESF funding bids and opportunities.

The College had recently held Open Evenings and these had been very well attended with approximately 950 potential students seen by staff.

In considering the expected Ofsted visit the Principal stated that in his view it was likely to be a full inspection.

A number of business development arrangements were noted by the Board.

With the departure of Desdra Kingdon the Board was told that Karen Fleet the Director of HR will report directly to the Principal for the foreseeable future.

Communication with staff is now via a Principal's Blog and Governors were shown an example of a recent message.

Harvey Young confirmed that the employer levy to be introduced in the sector the College was unlikely to receive funding for Adult Education & Apprenticeships. In view of this it was deemed to be essential that the College has a sound sales plan in place.

The Principal confirmed that the Strategic Aims of the College were being drafted with the intention of better placing the College to respond to the funding changes.

It was **Resolved** that the report be received.

### **1383. To Receive the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2014-15.**

The report was received and the assurance given was noted.

Warren Gordon outlined the work of the Committee and the auditors. Attention was drawn to the recommendations made by the audit firms.

The assessment of the Internal Auditor was noted along with the unqualified opinion of the Financial Statements auditor.

It was noted that the Learner numbers audit had been undertaken at the request of the College on areas that were a concern and despite a number of recommendations from the Internal Auditor there had been no threat to the funding claim of the College.

It was **Resolved** that the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2014-15 be received and that it be forwarded to the SFA together with the College annual accounts for 2014-15.

**1384. To Receive the Management Accounts October 2014 & the Consolidated Financial Statements and Management Letter 2013-14.**

The Draft Consolidated Financial Statements & Management Letter had been previously circulated to all Governors. It was noted that the Resources Committee had recommended that they be approved. Unfortunately the Financial Statements Auditor had been unable to sign off the accounts until it had received a response, from Saudi based staff, to a questionnaire in respect of the Saudi Arabia project. If this is not received in time for the accounts to be sent to the SFA by the 31<sup>st</sup> December deadline, the College would send as much as possible pending the signed accounts following.

In explaining the accounts Desdra Kingdon advised that the College and CK Assessment had made a surplus of £1.5m in 2014-15. By releasing certain accrual sums it was possible to show a small surplus even after allowance is made for the loss incurred with the Saudi project so far.

A view was shared that in future the Board should be shown the consolidated accounts including Saudi project costs and that the management accounts should also include a statement in respect of the Saudi project.

Members noted that content of the Management letter.

It was **Resolved** that the Financial Statements & Management letter 2014-15 be approved.

In reviewing the Management Accounts for November 2015 attention was drawn to the variations for both Income & Expenditure during the month.

The Board was informed that the projected outturn showed a deficit of approximately £2.115m which included the costs of the current restructure.

Attention was drawn to the Income & Expenditure for subcontract & partnership working during 2015-16 and the predicted funding for 2016-17.

It was **Resolved** that the Management Accounts November 2015 be received.

**1385. To Receive the Management Accounts for CK Assessment to October 2015.**

The Management accounts for October 2015 were received and Governors were reminded of the Gift Aid arrangement between CK Assessment and the College.

Due to her leaving the College Desdra Kingdon has resigned from the Board of this company and the Chair and Principal are considering who might be appointed as her replacement.

It was **Resolved** that the Management Accounts for CK Assessment October 2015 be received.

**1386. To Consider and Approve the College Self -Assessment Report (SAR) 2014-15.**

Within the SAR the overall effectiveness had been graded as 'Requires Improvement'.

Members were given an outline of the areas of strength and those that required improvement. Whilst Success rates had improved by 2% they were still lagging behind the national rate and the rate of improvement is too slow. The SAR identified that the quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment requires improvement.

The College is now using a software product, 'Pro-Monitor' to better monitor learner progress. Members received the Departmental SAR summaries & judgements by programme area.

Governors expressed a view that there did not appear to be a strategy in place that will bring about a speedy improvement to the outcomes for Maths & English. It was stated that this was in part due to staff not being specialists in these subjects. Steps have been taken to recruit specialist staff but these are in short supply. Whilst accepting this Governors still did not see why as a college we are below the national average.

Jonathan Brown as student Governor stated that there was a lot of resentment amongst students in being required to do Maths & English. Timetabling was an issue and he set out what he saw as the problem for the College. The Principal and Governors welcomed his assessment of the situation.

It was **Resolved** that Board approves the SAR 2014-15 and authorises it to be loaded on to the SFA Portal.

**1387. To Receive the Unconfirmed Minutes of the Sub-Committees.**

a) Audit Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

The Minutes were received and the resolutions noted.

b) Quality & Standards held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

The Minutes were received and the resolutions noted. There had been a disappointing enrolment but numbers attending the open evening were up on previous years.

c) Employer Engagement held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015.

The Minutes were received and the resolutions noted

d) Resources Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015.

The Minutes were received and the resolutions noted.

**1388. Any Other Business.**

There was no other business.

**1389. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

*(The meeting moved into the Part 2 Agenda at this point and Desdra Kingdon, Jane Clarke and the student Governor withdrew from the meeting at this point.)*

Signed.....  
Chairman

Date.....