

HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE
BOARD OF THE CORPORATION
Thursday 24th September 2015

Present: Mike Carver (Chair)
Tony Medhurst (Principal)
Ian Cowin
Denni Morrison
David Tweedie
Patsy Spears
Ken Ayling
Harvey Young
Ricky Irons
Warren Gordon
George Robertson

In Attendance;
John Fowl (Clerk to the Corporation)
Desdra Kingdon (Deputy Principal Finance & Resources)
Jane Clarke (Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality)

1361. To receive Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Andrew Francis, Viki Cooper and Jan Wing.

1362. Declaration of Interests and to Notify Part 2 Agenda Items.

There were no declarations of interest.

There were no other confidential items notified other than that already shown on the agenda.

1363. To Receive the Recommendation of the Search Committee held on 24th September 2015.

The Chair informed the Board that the committee had met with George Robertson the ex-Chief Executive of East Herts District Council. Governors were given a brief account of his background and experience. The Search Committee recommended him for appointment as a Governor and for him to serve on the Resources Committee.

It was **Resolved** that George Robertson be appointed to the Board with immediate effect for the 4 year period ending 23rd September 2019 and that he serve on the Resources Committee of the Board.

(George Robertson was invited to join the meeting at this point)

1364. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9th July 2015 and the Confidential Minutes of the same date.

The Minutes were approved.

1365. Matters Arising.

- (i) The Board was told that the liquidation of HRC³ is completed and the paperwork was signed by the Chair and Warren Gordon. The liquidation of Trans2Ed is expected to be finalised shortly.
- (ii) Members were told that he together with Ian Cowin and David Tweedie had met to review the Financial Regulations and the issues previously raised had been fully resolved.

1366. Chair's Report.

The Chair welcomed Tony Medhurst to his first meeting with the Board and expressed the view that he would be able to take the college forward and improve as was hoped.

Jane Clarke the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality was also welcomed and the Chair confirmed that she was already working hard to improve and update the course offering at the College.

On a less happy note the Chair that Desdra Kingdon the Deputy Principal Finance & Resources had tendered her resignation to return to the private sector. She will be leaving at the end of December 2015.

The Chair expressed the view of all Governors that her input and support during her time at the College had been invaluable. The announcement will be made to staff on 28th September 2015.

The Board was informed of the Government inspired changes that will impact on FE Colleges, Schools and 6th Form Colleges with reduced funding levels, Area Reviews and a revised inspection regime. Whilst the AoC has pointed out that Colleges are autonomous organisations funding comes from mainly from the Funding Agencies and so it will be difficult not to follow government dictate.

Mike Carver had been working with Andrew Clare with the aim of drawing the Saudi Arabia issues to a close as beneficially as possible for the College.

A number of one to one meetings had taken place between the Chair and governors and those yet to meet with him were asked to agree a convenient date to meet with him as soon as possible.

It was **Resolved** that the Report be Received.

1367. To Receive the Principal's Report.

Members were informed that Full Time enrolled students currently totalled 2067 which is below the target of 2362. Steps are being taken to encourage in-year enrolment to improve this situation.

The marketing department is looking at ways to attract more students during a time when there is a demographic decline in 16-18 year olds.

In response to a question by governors the Principal explained how the in-year enrolment could work and the effect it may have on funding. Jane Clarke mentioned that short apprenticeships were an area that is being considered.

Success Rates.

For 2014-15 based on the results available at this time the overall Success Rate was just 71.4% which is not good enough. Governors were told that within the college there are areas of excellence but that the emphasis now is to ensure greater consistency. Members asked for an explanation of what steps have been put in place to achieve this and Jane Clarke outlined the systems put in place for 2015-16 with ownership being firmly placed with the Head of Department.

Denni Morrison confirmed that staff now feel part of things and understand the issues being raised.

Notice of Concern.

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) has announced that in future such Notices of Concern will be made public. The College is working to improve standards without external intervention.

Ofsted.

Jane Clarke explained the new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework and how this will impact on Colleges in future with the potential for short inspections being escalated to a full inspection. The Board was told that an Ofsted readiness plan was to be put in place in the college and Governors will be involved with this.

Local Area Reviews.

Members were told that whilst colleges are free to do as they wish the SFA can still exert pressure via funding in order to get colleges to do what they want.

Harvey Young report back on a meeting he had attended where it was stated that the Government was considering revoking the 1992 Education Act so that it would be able to liquidate Colleges should it wish to.

The Principal explained how the Area Reviews could impact on the College and Members considered the role of LEPs in this.

Governors expressed their concern that external bodies were able to impose changes on a college irrespective of the wishes of the Governors.

It was agreed that an update on Area Reviews will be discussed at the EGM on 19th October.

It was **Resolved** that the Report be Received.

1368. To Receive the Management Accounts July 2015.

The accounts show that the College is currently on target to achieve a surplus for the year in the sum of approximately £1m although this may change slightly once the final Individual Learner Return (ILR) is produced and submitted in October.

A proposal had been unanimously supported by the Board to give a 1% non-consolidated payment to all staff in recognition of this and to raise morale at a time when staff had not received a pay increase for a number of years.

It was noted that whilst the surplus was to be welcomed it did hide shortfalls in some income areas.

Governors asked whether there was anything in the budget setting process that might be changed due to the outcome and were told of the work the Deputy Principal Finance & Resources has undertaken with the departments regarding this.

The Board was informed that the Capital receipt for the sale of the land at Ware was not expected until after the end of October 2015 when the contract with the developer will be finalised.

Governors wished to record their appreciation of the work done by the Estates Manager, John Corbett.

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

1369. To Receive the Draft Year End Accounts for CK assessment – July 2105.

The accounts were received and noted. Governors were pleased to see that a dividend of approximately £185,000 (subject to audit) had been recorded.

Another unit had become available where CK is based and the college has taken this lease on to enable CK to take on more students as they have more applications for September than could be accommodated in the original premises.

It was **Resolved** that the Board receives the draft accounts for CK Assessment to July 2015

1370. To Receive the Annual Report on Health & Safety 2014-15.

Ricky Irons presented the report which showed a very positive improvement over previous years. A recent risk audit of the area had judged the controls in place to be Good.

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

1371. HRC cubed and Trans2Ed.

As previously mentioned earlier in this meeting the liquidation of HRC cubed has been finalised and Trans2 Ed is close to also being liquidated.

It was **Resolved** that the Report be received

1372. To Receive a Report on the Use of the College Seal 2014-15.

The Clerk presented the report to show the use of the Seal during the past year. It was noted that the descriptor of the document that had been signed under seal should in future be more detailed to avoid doubt as to what was involved.

It was **Resolved** that the Report be received

1373. To Receive and Approve the Updated Standing Orders of the Board.

Following the recent legislative changes affecting FE Colleges, the new Joint Audit Code of Practice (JACOP) and the review of Terms of Reference undertaken by each Committee the document had been updated accordingly.

It was **Resolved** that the Revised Standing Orders be Received and Approved.

1374. Any Other Business.

There was no other business.

1375. Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting will be held on Thursday 17th December 2015, with an EGM of the Board on 19th October 2015

(The meeting moved into the Part 2 Agenda at this point and Andrew Clare joined the meeting)

Signed.....
Chair

Date.....