

## West Thames College Further Education Corporation

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation

held at 6.00pm on Wednesday 14 December 2022  
at the College

<b>Present:</b>	Mr S Wilcox (SW)	Chair
	Ms T Aust (TA)	Principal
	Mr A Luke (AL)	
	Mr A Barke (AB)	
	Mr A Smith (AS)	
	Ms B Sandhu (BS)	
	Mr S McGeoch (SM)	
	Ms A Cornish (AC)	
	Mr L McBirney (LM)	
	Mr A Rides (AR)	
	Mr B Armstrong (BA)	
	Mr J Bryant (JB)	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mr A Alimohamed (AA)	
	Ms C Callinan (CC)	
	Ms T Kaur (TK)	
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Mr J Bolt (JB)	Associate Member
	Ms C Ajit Singh (CS)	Associate Member
	Ms K Frost (KF)	Head of Governance
	Mr M Michaelides (MM)	Executive Director Resources and Student Experience
	Mr M Cooper (MC)	Executive Director Finance, HR and Development
	Ms M Gajewska-Kopczyk (MGK)	Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality
Ms M Greeves (MG)	Head of Careers and Work Placement	

#### 50/22 **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. JB, CS, BS and AB were attending the meeting virtually.

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from AA, TK and CC. KF confirmed the meeting was quorate.

KF confirmed that LM and TK had been appointed as the new Student Governors. LM was welcomed to the meeting by the Chair on behalf of the Corporation.

SW declared an interest in items 12 ii and 12 iii on the agenda, there were no other declarations from members.

## 51/22 **Careers Presentation**

MG gave a presentation about careers. Slides from the presentation would be circulated after the meeting.

MG reaffirmed that governors had a key role in ensuring the College met DfE Careers Guidance, Ofsted careers requirements and provided the best possible education, training and preparation for adult and working life. Governors discussed their role in Careers oversight. It was agreed to create a new link governor role for Careers.

**Action:** GSS Committee

Governors offered support with careers advice and job interviews.

Governors asked whether students were shown the holistic overview of careers provision that was available to them. MG said students were given a careers overview during induction and then were provided with careers information on an ongoing basis.

Governors said there were a number of curriculum areas that lent themselves to self-employment and entrepreneurship and they asked what the College was doing to support students in those areas. MG said there was an increasing need in terms of the gig economy and self-employment. The College connected students with those best placed to support them. Some of the organisations the College worked with had the knowledge and skills needed to support students with self-employment.

Governors thanked MG for the presentation.

*MG left the meeting.*

## 52/22 **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Minutes from the meeting of the Corporation held on 12 October 2022 (Paper 1) were received in advance of the meeting. IT WAS DECIDED they were a true record of the meeting and they were approved.

## 53/22 **Summary Action List and Matters Arising**

The 'Summary Action List' was received (Paper 2). The following updates were made available against each outstanding action point from previous meetings:

<b>Ref &amp; Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Review Update</b>
16 23/3/22  Open	In the longer term the aim is to agree on a framework for future pay awards and to delegate to the Executive the authority to operate the framework as agreed. Any deviation to the agreed framework would then be reported to the Corporation for review and approval.	TA	Jul 23	A draft to be produced and taken to the FRPC Committee in Spring 2023.
11/22  Closed	Add in information about the College Management Team ethnicity profile to the Data Dashboard.	MC	Oct 22	Added to the Data Dashboard for review by FRPC at the November 2022 meeting of the Committee.
14/22	Put in place a process to ensure that the necessary authorisation is	MC	Sept 22	Schedule of major financial contracts to

Closed	received for contracts due over the summer.			be reviewed as a standing item on the agenda of each FRCPC meeting so that the Committee may see which contracts are due for renewal and when. Renewal arrangements may then be discussed/agreed and necessary authorisation provided in accordance with the financial scheme of delegation.
38/22 Open	Ensure KPIs and the data dashboard are directly related back to the Strategic Plan. Update the finance section of the Strategic Plan to include information about the impact of the energy costs.	Executive Team	Dec 22	Annual review of KPIs used in line with the Development Plan and 3 year plan.
41/22 Open	Arrange a curriculum link visit for the spring term via the Head of Governance.	All Governors	Jan 23	In progress.

## 54/22 Review of Key Risks

A paper detailing the status of key risks to the College was received in advance of the meeting. (Paper 3).

It was confirmed that no risks had been added or removed from the register since the last Corporation meeting. The impact score for Risk 12, relating to the inability to control expenditure, had been increased for the financial impact due to the scale of energy cost increases, i.e. a worsening of expenditure by more than £500k. The score for likelihood was unchanged.

MC reported that the Governance, Search and Strategy Committee were in the process of a review of the risk management process.

Governors discussed the information they would like to see in future risk reports to the Corporation. At Board level, governors said they would like assurance that risk was being managed appropriately by the College and the Corporation would like to regularly review the status of key strategic risks and opportunities. Risk reporting to the Corporation needed to focus on high level risks that may impact or have a consequence on the College's strategy and would include external risks.

The Chair advised that the risk management review would be a topic for a strategy day later in the year. Part of the day would include a blank piece of paper exercise where governors would be asked to identify the top level strategic risks and discuss the Corporation's risk appetite.

## 55/22 Monitoring of College Performance – Data Dashboard Review

### i) Data Dashboard

#### a) Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The focus during the Autumn Term had been on Teaching Triangles. 90 teachers had been involved in 30 Teaching Triangles. Teachers were preparing key learning points from the activities that had been carried out which would then be shared with all teachers.

Governors said a number of staff had commented about how beneficial Teaching Triangles were during the SAR validation process but there were some staff who were more committed to the benefits of the approach than others. They asked what support was in place for those staff who were not so committed. MGK said staff feedback was being taken into account and acted upon.

#### b) Attendance

Attendance was currently slightly below target. A number of strategies were in place to support with and improve attendance.

Governors asked how attendance compared to the same point last year. MGK said the College was in a similar position but this year there had been more of a focus on avoiding the post Christmas drop in attendance.

#### c) Achievement

Overall, College achievement for 2021-22 was 90.3% which was above last year's results and 4% above national. Achievement in English and Maths was particularly strong. The achievement rates were in line with predictions.

Governors asked whether there were any new themes coming through for those students who didn't achieve. The Principal said there was an increased number of students who had entered into employment to help with the rising cost of living and there had also been a rise in the number of students with mental health issues.

Governors asked whether there had been an impact from the increased tutoring provision. MGK said there had been a very positive impact in Maths and English which were the areas most targeted by the funding.

Governors congratulated the College on the final results and all of the work done to achieve it. It was a great result for the College. Governors said it was also good to see that the predicted grades matched up with the actuals. Staff were doing a great job in terms of their assessments.

#### d) Finance

The projection for financial health was a score of 200 out of 300 which was a 'Good' grade, Governors welcomed the confirmation of the continued Good grade despite the challenging economic situation. The projected scores for the three components were:

Solvency: 100/100

Profitability: 40/100

Borrowing: 60/100

There had been a decrease in the profitability score due to the prediction of an operating loss for this year which had been caused by the significant rise in energy costs. The projected year-end operating result was an operating deficit of £272k compared with the budgeted surplus of £25k. MC confirmed that the College continued to evaluate all options to reduce costs in order to address the deficit. The Chair reminded the Corporation that an additional FRCP was planned for January 23 to allow for continued scrutiny of the management accounts and specifically the energy costs.

In terms of performance against allocations, MC confirmed that the College met its 16-19 numbers target at the end of November 22. The targets for adult education were challenging and there was a risk associated with the delivery but it also provided opportunities.

MC confirmed that the College remained compliant with both of the bank covenants. The current headroom was approx. £480k.

ii) **Energy Consumption**

An 'Energy Consumption Update' was received in advance of the meeting. (Paper 4).

The focus had been on reducing electricity consumption as this was the area in which the greatest impact could be made. The College had secured a reduction of 8% compared to the same period last year. The saving in October was 9.2%. Assuming the 9.2% reduction continued, there would be a £170k cost saving against a target of £329k. Other measures were also being introduced that would make further savings, such as the closure of College sites outside of term time.

The Department for Education had announced some capital funding that could be used as an investment for energy saving initiatives. The College would receive £195k in January 2023 and was considering using this funding to put in place some solar panels. This would reduce electricity costs and support with the sustainability strategy.

The Chair said the College was behind in terms of making the target savings. This would be monitored by the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee.

Governors asked whether building closures outside of term time would impact on the student experience. MM said that generally students weren't present during the College holidays but if necessary, a building would be opened.

Governors asked whether there was anything that could be done during particularly cold periods to keep energy costs down. MM said consideration had been given to reducing the temperature in the College which was usually kept at between 20 and 21°C but it was decided this wasn't an option.

iii) **Development Plan 2022-23**

The Corporation received the 'Development Plan 2022-23 – Dec 2022 Update' (Paper 5) in advance of the meeting. The Development Plan was acknowledged. The Board agreed no further action was required at this stage.

## 56/22 Strategic Matters

### i) Executive Report

The 'Executive Team Report – Dec 2022' was received in advance of the meeting (Paper 6). The Principal highlighted some key areas in the report.

The ONS had decided to reclassify colleges and their subsidiaries into the central government sector for financial and accounting purposes. It was still early stages in terms of trying to understand the short, medium and long term implications to the sector but it was known that there would be greater financial interventions, regulations and controls and the powers of the Corporation would be different moving forward.

MC explained one of the immediate changes was a restriction in borrowing but confirmed that there would be no impact on the Barclays loan and the College had no need for short term capital borrowing.

Governors would be kept updated as further details emerged through the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee. Governors suggested the reclassification should be added to the strategic risk register.

**Action:** MC

The Executive Report included details about Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). A joint governance event on the topic would be arranged with other local governors in the spring term which would be followed by a session about LSIPs at the Corporation's summer term strategy day.

In terms of the positive impact of partnerships, a group of students had taken part in a photography project as part of the Creative Enterprise Zone partnership. The photos were entered into a Getty Photo Competition and some of the students had won prizes.

The Board acknowledged the Executive Report, its contents and welcomed the opportunity to review it. The Board agreed no further action was required. The Committees would follow up on relevant topics.

## 57/22 Student Voice

A 'Student Governor Report' (Paper 7) was received in advance of the meeting. LM summarised key areas in the report including the quality of canteen food, lack of enrichment activities at the Skills and Logistics Centre and inequality in the standards of Fresher Fayres at both College sites.

Governors thanked LM for his report which had raised a number of interesting points, particularly in terms of the difference in student experience at both sites. They said it was important there was greater equity between the campuses. It was agreed MM would take suggested actions forward including:

- Checking that the new food menu was being served at the Skills Centre.
- Following up on the idea to introduce a Breakfast Club although it was acknowledged that students who couldn't afford to eat at home could access a bursary which would cover the cost of breakfast.
- Looking into the possibility of introducing more enrichment activities at the Skills and Logistics Centre, such as trade clubs.
- Looking at whether more could be done in terms of provision of mental health activities at the Skills and Logistics Centre. This was particularly relevant for the students there as males in the construction industry had a higher rate of suicide.

Governors asked for a briefing about College mental health provision and student support services to be an agenda item at the next meeting of the Corporation.

The link governor for the Skills and Logistics Centre said he would pick up on the issues raised during his visit in the spring term.

## 58/22 **College Self-Assessment Report 2021-22**

The 'Draft College Self-Assessment Report 2021-22' (Paper 8) was received in advance of the meeting.

The Principal explained the process that had been undertaken to produce the College Self-Assessment Report. Overall, the self-assessment was that the College was 'Good' in all areas.

Governors asked whether there were any greens that were at risk of sliding back. The Principal said Ofsted had graded Behaviour and Attitudes as Outstanding but the College had graded it as Good due to the attendance rates which the College has set a high bar to achieve.

Governors asked whether the SAR had picked up any differences in standards between the two sites. MGK said it had, the only areas of provision to be graded as a 3 were at the Skills Centre. The College team were providing support to these areas and a robust development plan was in place.

Governors said every subject area had said they weren't meeting attendance targets but this wasn't reflected in the core text in the SAR and asked whether a change of wording was needed. The Principal said she would look at the wording but that attendance needed to be looked at holistically, as one aspect of behaviour and attitudes. There were no national targets for attendance, it was the College who set high expectations.

**Action:** TA

The Chair thanked governors who had attended the recent SAR validation process. BA said it was a good opportunity to meet with staff and see their dedication to the student experience and how well they knew the curriculum. Governors were working with the Executive Team to review the SAR process, including the involvement of governors in it.

**Action:** BA/JP/MGK

Following the recommendation from the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee, IT WAS DECIDED to approve the College Self-Assessment Report 2021-22.

## 59/22 **Governance Self-Assessment Report 2021-22**

The 'Corporation Self-Assessment Report 2021-22 (Paper 9) was received in advance of the meeting.

The Chair thanked Governors for their input in the self-assessment process. Overall, the assessment showed the Board was in a strong place. Areas of development highlighted during the review had been added to the Board Action Plan. The action plan would be overseen by the Governance, Search and Strategy Committee.

IT WAS DECIDED to approve the 'Corporation Self-Assessment Report 2021-22.

## 60/22 **Audit Committee Annual Report and Financial Statements Year Ended 31 July 2022**

- i) **Audit Committee Annual Report**  
The 'Audit Committee Annual Report' (Paper 10) was received in advance of the meeting. IT WAS DECIDED to accept the Annual Report from the Audit Committee.
- ii) **Post Audit Report and Letter of Representation**  
The 'Post Audit Report' (Paper 10a) and the 'Letter of Representation' (Paper 10b) was received in advance of the meeting. On the recommendation of the Audit Committee, IT WAS DECIDED to approve the Post Audit Report and the Letter of Representation.
- iii) **Financial Statements for Year Ended 31 July 2022**  
The 'Draft Report and Financial Statements for Year Ended 31 July 2022' (Paper 11) had been received in advance of the meeting. The Report and Financial Statements had been reviewed by both the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee and the Audit Committee. Since the review by the committees, there had been one amendment following the ONS reclassification which had been to add a statement as a post balance sheet event.

On the recommendation of the Audit Committee and the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee, IT WAS DECIDED to approve the Report and Financial Statements for Year Ended 31 July 2022; and to authorise the Chair and the Principal to sign the Report and Financial Statements on behalf of the Corporation.

## 61/22 **Governance**

- i) **Election of the Chair**  
IT WAS DECIDED to elect SM as Chair of the Corporation to start from 1 January 2023.
- ii) **Extension of Term of Office**  
IT WAS DECIDED to extend the term of office for SW for a further 6 months, to end on 31 July 2023.
- iii) **Election of Chair of Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee**  
IT WAS DECIDED to elect SW as Chair of the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee from 1 January 2023. SW would also take on the role of Chair of the Remuneration Committee.
- iv) **Election of Chair of Governance, Search and Strategy Committee**  
IT WAS DECIDED to elect SM as Chair of the Governance, Search and Strategy Committee from 1 January 2023.
- v) **Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference**  
The 'Scheme of Delegation and the Committee Terms of Reference 2022-23' (Paper 12) was received in advance of the meeting. IT WAS DECIDED to approve the Scheme of Delegation and Committee Terms of Reference.
- vi) **Corporation Membership**  
The Chair reported that Laura Weatherill had stepped down from the Corporation. Charlotte Callinan had indicated that she would be resigning from the Board as soon as a suitable replacement had been found. Thanks were passed onto both for all of their support and help.



## 62/22 **Property Strategy**

The 'WTC Property Strategy' (Paper 13) was received in advance of the meeting. The Property Strategy had been reviewed in detail by the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee. MM drew attention to key points:

- The condition surveys had identified that 84% of college buildings were Condition A or B. 16% were Condition C. A set of capital works had been devised for those buildings that were Condition C. The majority were at the Skills and Logistics Centre.
- A utilisation exercise had been carried out, showing that utilisation was slightly lower than the sector average but this wasn't unusual for the curriculum areas the College had. There were opportunities to increase the utilisation rate at the Skills and Logistics Centre.
- Opportunities for capital funding were being explored.
- An analysis of space used by each curriculum area had been undertaken. The next step would be to add information about the income generated to the analysis.

On the recommendation of the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee, IT WAS DECIDED to approve the Property Strategy.

## 63/22 **Report from the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee**

### i) **Committee Report**

The report from the committee (Paper 14) was received and acknowledged. The Board agreed no further action was required.

### ii) **Minutes from the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee**

The minutes from the meeting of the committee held on 23 November 2022 (Paper 15) was received and acknowledged. The Board agreed no further action was required.

### iii) **Presentation from AoC Quality and Curriculum Chairs Meeting**

Information from the meeting of the AoC Quality and Curriculum Chairs meeting (Papers 16a and 16b) was received and acknowledged. The Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee would review the papers in more detail at their next Committee meeting to decide if further actions were required.

## 64/22 **Report from the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee**

### i) **Committee Report**

The report from the committee (Paper 17) was received and acknowledged. The Board agreed no further action was required.

### ii) **Minutes from the Committee Meeting**

The minutes from the meeting of the committee held on 23 November 2022 (Paper 18) were received and acknowledged. The Board agreed no further action was required.

### iii) **Human Resources Annual Report 2021-22**

The 'Human Resources Annual Report 2021-22' (Paper 19) was received and acknowledged. The Board agreed no further action was required.

### iv) **Health and Safety Annual Report 2021-22**

The Health and Safety Annual Report 2021-22 (Paper 20) was received and acknowledged. The Board agreed no further action was required.

v) **College Governors' Dashboard**

The updated 'Governors Financial Dashboard report' (Paper 21) was received and acknowledged. The Board agreed no further action was required.

65/22 **Report from the Audit Committee**

i) **Committee Report**

The report from the committee (Paper 22) was received and acknowledged. The Board agreed no further action was required.

Governors asked where responsibility for oversight of Data Protection compliance sat. MC confirmed it sat with the Audit Committee.

ii) **Minutes from the Committee Meeting**

The minutes from the meeting of the committee held on 30 November 2022 (Paper 23) were received and acknowledged. The Board agreed no further action was required. MC was thanked for taking the minutes from the meeting.

iii) **Internal Audit Plan 2022-23**

The 'Internal Audit Plan 2022-23' (Paper 24) was received and acknowledged. The Chair of the Committee reported that the Audit Committee had approved the Plan at their meeting on 30 November 2022.

66/22 **Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no other urgent business to be discussed.

67/22 **Farewell**

Thanks were passed onto AL who was attending his last meeting of the Corporation. Governors thanked AL for his contribution to the College.

Thanks were passed onto SW who was stepping down from his role as Chair of the Corporation. SW was congratulated for all he had done in his time as Chair.

68/22 **Confidential Item**

A confidential item was discussed.

69/22 **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meetings of the Corporation was:

- Corporation Strategy: Wednesday 8 February 2023. 2.00pm to 6.00pm.
- Corporation Meeting: Wednesday 22 March 2023. 6.00pm.

## Summary of Actions

No.	Action	Lead	Target Date
16 23/3/22	In the longer term the aim is to agree on a framework for future pay awards and to delegate to the Executive the authority to operate the framework as agreed. Any deviation to the agreed framework would then be reported to the Corporation for review and approval.	TA	Jul 23
38/22	Ensure KPIs and the Data Dashboard are directly related back to the Strategic Plan. Update the finance section of the Strategic Plan to include information about the impact of the energy costs.	Executive Team	Mar 23
41/22	Arrange a curriculum link visit for the spring term via the Head of Governance.	All Governors	Jan 23
51/22	Create a link governor role for Careers.	GSS Committee	Jan 23
56/22	Add the ONS reclassification to the strategic risk register.	MC	Jan 23
57/22	<p>Take forward suggestions from the Student Governor report including: It was agreed MM would take actions forward including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checking that the new food menu was being served at the Skills Centre.</li> <li>• Following up on the idea to introduce a Breakfast Club although it was acknowledged that students who couldn't afford to eat at home could access a bursary which would cover the cost of breakfast.</li> <li>• Looking into the possibility of introducing more enrichment activities at the Skills and Logistics Centre such as trade clubs.</li> <li>• Looking at whether more could be done in terms of provision of mental health activities at the Skills and Logistics Centre. This was particularly relevant for the students there as males in the construction industry had a higher rate of suicide.</li> </ul>	MM	Mar 23
58/22	Check to see whether a change of wording is needed in the core text of the College SAR to reflect issues with attendance.	TA	Mar 23
58/22a	Review the SAR validation process including the role of governors in the process.	BA/JB/MGK	July 23