

West Thames College Further Education Corporation

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation

held at 6.00pm on Wednesday 12 October 2022
at the College

Present:	Mr S Wilcox (SW)	Chair
	Ms T Aust (TA)	Principal
	Mr A Luke (AL)	
	Mr A Barke (AB)	
	Mr B Armstrong (BA)	
	Mr A Smith (AS)	
	Ms B Sandhu (BS)	
	Mr A Alimohamed (AA)	
	Mr S McGeoch (SM)	
	Ms A Cornish (AC)	
Apologies:	Ms C Callinan (CC)	
	Ms T Kaur (TK)	
	Mr L McBirney (LM)	
	Mr A Rides (AR)	
	Mr J Bryant (JB)	
In Attendance:	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 S Louisy (SL)	Head of Student Experience

33/22 **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

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

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from CC, JB, AR, TK and LM. It was noted that the meeting was quorate.

There were no declarations of interest relating to the items on the agenda.

34/22 **Safeguarding Training**

SL attended the meeting to provide safeguarding training for governors covering an overview of changes in the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022. A copy of part two of the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 was distributed at the meeting.

Governors said it was clear the team did a tremendous amount in terms of safeguarding and asked if there was anything more they would like governors to do. SL said students had asked for everyone involved in the College to use the new pronouns. It would be good for governors to become more visible so governors were invited to visit the College to meet the team and the students. Governors could let SL know if they had any contacts who could come and discuss safeguarding issues with students from an employment perspective.

Governors thanked SL for the presentation.

SL left the meeting.

35/22 **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

- i) Minutes from the meeting of the Corporation held on 13 July 2022 (Paper 2a) were received in advance of the meeting. IT WAS DECIDED they were a true record of the meeting and they were approved.
- ii) Minutes from the meeting of the Corporation held on 24 August 2022 (Paper 2b) were received in advance of the meeting. IT WAS DECIDED they were a true record of the meeting and they were approved.

36/22 **Summary Action List and Matters Arising**

The 'Summary Action List' was received (Paper 3). The following updates were made available against each outstanding action point from previous meetings:

Ref	Action	Review Update
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.	A draft will be taken to the spring term meeting of the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee.
11/22	Add in information about the College Management Team ethnicity profile to the Data Dashboard.	To be added to the Data Dashboard for the October Corporation meeting.
12/22	Send in any comments about the proposed KPIs for the Strategic Plan to the Head of Governance.	No comments received.
14/22	Put in place a process to ensure that the necessary authorisation is received for contracts due over the summer.	This was completed for energy costs. Insurance was also up for renewal but extended for a further year (within the parameters of the revised scheme of delegation). MC will prepare a written update for Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee, setting this out by the end of September.
23/22	Looking into what additional steps are needed for governor safeguarding training to meet the requirements in the updated	Annual safeguarding training will be an agenda item at the first Corporation meeting of each academic year.

	Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.	
31/22a	Email members of the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee to confirm if the additional gas and electric costs would impact on the loan covenants	Covered in the papers for the additional Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee meeting held on 14 September 2022.
31/22b	Arrange an additional meeting of the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee.	An additional meeting of the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee has been arranged for Wednesday 14 September 2022.

37/22 Monitoring of College Performance – Data Dashboard Review

i) Data Dashboard

a) Finance

The projected overall Financial Health Grade score as at 31 July 2022 was 230/300, which would result in an ESFA financial health rating of 'Good'. This compared to the score of 230/300 for the previous year. Projected scores for the three components of financial health were:

Solvency: 100/100

Profitability: 80/100

Borrowing: 50/100

The projected year-end operating result was a surplus of £253k compared with the budget of £100k surplus and the £446k surplus in 2020-21.

In terms of 16-19 student numbers, the College had exceeded the allocation. For adult skills funding it was a mixed picture. There had been some under delivery against the ESFA allocation, due in the main to the end of Subcontracted Provision and a decline in the number of JCP referrals. There had been over delivery against the GLA funding allocation. The College would receive funding for the over delivery which would help offset the under delivery of the ESFA allocation.

b) Attendance

Current attendance was 87.2% which was expected to increase in the next few weeks.

c) Achievement

The final position for 2021-22 would be confirmed by mid October 2022 as the results were still coming in but it was expected that the results would largely be in line with predictions.

d) Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The cycle of classroom visits had been revised for 2022-2023. In the autumn term it would now include short drop-ins by managers and a series of peer classroom visits, Teaching Triangles. Learning walks and deep dives would start in the spring term and continue into the summer term.

Governors said the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee had discussed the changes. Teaching Triangles had been rolled out following a successful pilot last year which was pleasing to hear.

Governors noted that the figures and data showed it had been a successful year and that it was a great achievement for the College.

ii) **Development Plan 2021-22**

The Corporation received for review the final position for the 'Development Plan 2021/22' (Paper 4).

The majority of the items on the Development Plan had been achieved. Four items remained amber at the end of the academic year so these had been rolled forward to the Development Plan for 2022-23.

Governors said there had been steady progress over the course of the year, building on the foundations that were in place. COVID had a significant impact on the College for the last two years so to get incremental growth in a number of areas was an achievement. Staff and students had to make changes in the way education was delivered and they rose to the occasion.

IT WAS DECIDED to sign off the Development Plan 2021-22.

iii) **Development Plan 2022-23**

The 'Draft Development Plan 2022-23' (Paper 5) was received in advance of the meeting.

The Development Plan was the culmination of work carried out throughout the course of the year, involving governors, the college management team, staff and students. The plan had been aligned to the Strategic Plan and in terms of driving through improvements, it included narrative about getting to 'Outstanding' from a quality point of view.

Governors suggested adding in some intermediate steps for the year, particularly for finance. It was agreed to discuss this further at the next Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee.

Governors asked about objective 3.1 and why the target for raising the proportion of staff appraised as 'role model' was only 1%. The Principal said the figure was still to be confirmed, the team were looking at what an aspirational figure would be.

Governors said the plan was clear and ambitious.

IT WAS DECIDED to approve the Development Plan 2022-2023.

38/22 **Strategic Matters**

i) **Executive Report**

The 'Executive Team Report – Oct 2022' was received in advance of the meeting (Paper 6), providing updates on:

- Strategic Matters
- Financial Matters
- Leadership and Management
- Achievement Rates 2021-22
- Partnerships

- Student News

In terms of recruitment, adult numbers were looking healthy and the College was expecting to meet or exceed allocation. Despite the slow start, there were 1,611 16-19 students enrolled which was where the College needed to be at this point in time.

Governors asked why the 16-19 recruitment had been slower this year. The Principal said it was a similar picture in other colleges. The Association of Colleges were carrying out a survey to identify the reasons. Initial thoughts were that it was due to later enrolments, students staying on at school and students going to work rather than staying in education.

Governors asked whether particular areas of the curriculum had seen an increase in numbers. The Principal said the College had seen high volumes of ESOL students, including large numbers of students who were currently based in hotels. There had been a decline in the number of adults taking full time courses, possibly due to the cost of living crisis. Governors asked whether the College had enough staff to cope with demand. The Principal said it did and was continuing to recruit students and staff.

There had been an increase in the number of organisations seeking to work in partnership with the College. Governors asked whether the College had enough capacity to cope with the enquiries. The Principal said it did at the moment. Governors asked why there had been an increase. The Principal said she thought it was the result of College staff attending community events, building relationships and word of mouth.

Governors asked whether the new specialism in low carbon and electric vehicles would be based in Feltham. MGK confirmed it would. As part of the Strategic Development Fund work, the motor vehicle workshop would be upgraded to be able to run courses for low carbon vehicles. The College was planning to start a range of courses later this academic year.

IT WAS DECIDED to note the Executive Report.

ii) **Strategic Plan 2022-25**

The draft 'Strategic Plan 2022-25' (Paper 7) was received in advance of the meeting.

The Chair explained that the Corporation had set out an ambition to develop a longer term plan for the direction of College. The draft Strategic Plan was the result of this ambition and had been developed with input from governors, staff and managers.

Governors said they liked the structure of the plan. It gave clear direction to move the College forward. The KPIs and data dashboard would be directly related back to the Strategic Plan. The finance section may need to be updated to include information about the impact of the energy costs.

Action: Executive Team

The plan would be reviewed each year. The Governance, Search and Strategy Committee would have oversight of the plan.

Governors said there was an opportunity to link the strategic plan to risks. The current risk register didn't address external risks. If external risks were included, they could be reviewed during the annual review of the plan to assess whether any risks had been triggered and whether there was a need to update the plan as a result.

IT WAS DECIDED to approve the Strategic Plan 2022-25.

39/22 **Safeguarding Report 2021-22**

The 'Annual Safeguarding Report 2021-22' (Paper 8) was received in advance of the meeting. The report had been considered in detail by the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee.

Governors said the report reinforced that staff were doing an excellent job in terms of safeguarding. In a recent survey 93% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the College provided a safe, disciplined and positive environment for them to learn. The College had also received positive feedback about safeguarding in the last Ofsted inspection:

"The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and managers have successfully created a culture of mutual respect and tolerance across the college. Learners feel safe and are safe. All staff know and look after their learners exceptionally well. The well-qualified and experienced safeguarding team provides very effective care and support for learners. The designated safeguarding lead liaises appropriately with a wide range of welfare organisations" - OFSTED Inspection Report - October 2021

Governors said there had been an increase in the areas of safeguarding focus over the last few years to include themes like mental health and peer on peer abuse. COVID had also had an impact.

The report gave assurance that although there had been an increase in the areas of safeguarding focus, the level of College focus on safeguarding hadn't reduced and there was still good quality controls and processes in place.

Governors said there used to be 4 Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) but currently there were only 3, were any other staff being trained up? MM said a member of staff was in the process of being trained so there would be 4 DSLs. The College would continue to grow the number of trained staff as the number of cases increased. To respond to increased need this year, the College had doubled the number of counsellors.

Governors asked how the College compared to other colleges in terms of the number of safeguarding incidents. MM said he wasn't sure how the College compared in terms of numbers but other colleges were seeing similar emerging themes.

40/22 **Finance**

The 'Draft Management Accounts for July 2022' (Paper 9) was received in advance of the meeting and noted.

41/22 **Governor Visits Guidance and Link Allocations**

The draft 'Governor Visits Guidance and Form 2022-2023' (Paper 10) was received in advance of the meeting. The guidance had been reviewed in detail by the Governance, Search and Strategy Committee.

BA said the guidance had been updated with the aim of making governors more visible and increasing contact with staff and students. The structure for curriculum link visits had been formalised. Governors would be asked to visit their curriculum link area in the spring term and to include the following activities in the visits:

- Review of the department's SAR results.
- Review of the department's action plan.
- Meeting with staff.

- Meeting with students.

A template form was included as part of the guidance. Governors were asked to complete a form following the visit and to return it to the Head of Governance. An overview of feedback would be provided to the Corporation meeting in the summer term.

Governors were asked to arrange their curriculum link visit for the spring term via the Head of Governance.

Action: All Governors

IT WAS DECIDED to approve the Governor Visits Guidance and governor link allocations for 2022-2023.

42/22 **Governor Handbook and Standing Orders**

i) **Governor Handbook**

The 'Governor Handbook 2022-23' (Paper 11) was received in advance of the meeting. It had been reviewed in detail by the Governance, Search and Strategy Committee.

IT WAS DECIDED to approve the Governor Handbook 2022-23.

ii) **Standing Orders**

The 'Standing Orders 2022-23' (Paper 12) was received in advance of the meeting. It had been reviewed in detail by the Governance, Search and Strategy Committee.

IT WAS DECIDED to approve the Standing Orders 2022-2023.

43/22 **Remuneration Committee Membership**

IT WAS DECIDED that the membership of the Remuneration Committee would be: SW, AL, SM and BA.

44/22 **Report from the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee**

i) **Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee Report**

The report from the committee (Paper 17) was received and NOTED.

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

The minutes from the meeting of the committee held on 5 October 2022 (Paper 18) were received and NOTED.

45/22 **Report from the Governance and Search Committee**

i) **Governance and Search Committee Report**

The report from the committee (Paper 15) was received and NOTED.

ii) **Minutes from the Governance and Search Committee Meeting**

The minutes from the meeting of the committee held on 28 September 2022 (Paper 16) were received and NOTED.

46/22 **Report from the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee**

i) **Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee Report**

The report from the committee (Paper 13) was received and NOTED.

Since the last meeting of the Committee, the College had received information about the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. This would give 40-41% off the contract price for gas and electricity for the period between October 2022 and April 2023 which would mean a reduction of £630k on the expected spend for energy for the year. This would result in an operating deficit of £300 - £350 k for the year and a Financial Health Grade of 'Good' with a score of 190 or 200 out of 300.

Governors said the energy costs increase would still impact the College despite the Government help. Two years ago, the energy bills were approximately £450k a year, now they were over £2million and that was assuming a 15% reduction in energy consumption, which would be a challenge. The Government help put the College in a better position but there would still be a big deficit.

Governors asked what plans the College had to achieve the 15% reduction in energy. MM gave an update, saying it included actions like raising awareness, changing equipment and moving evening provision to one building. The College had access to online dashboards with energy providers so would be able to track usage. It was an ambitious target, but the College was working hard on it.

ii) **Minutes from the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee**

The minutes from the meeting of the committee held on 14 September 2022 (Paper 14) were received and NOTED.

47/22 **Any Other Urgent Business**

Governors gave an update on the Faith Leaders Project. Yesterday, a governor had been interviewed by media students for the project. The students had already visited two places of worship which they had found interesting.

48/22 **Confidential Item**

A confidential item was discussed.

49/22 **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting of the Corporation was Wednesday 14 December 2022 at 6.00 pm.

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
11/22	Add in information about the College Management Team ethnicity profile to the Data Dashboard.	MC	Oct 22
14/22	Put in place a process to ensure that the necessary authorisation is received for contracts due over the summer.	MC	Sept 22
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	Dec 22
41/22	Arrange a curriculum link visit for the spring term via the Head of Governance.	All Governors	Jan 23