



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF WEST KENT & ASHFORD COLLEGE HELD AT ASHFORD COLLEGE ON 18 MARCH 2015

Present:	Mr P Dubrow	Chair & Governor
	Ms T Bruton	Governor
	Mr N Coffin	Vice Chair & Governor
	Mr P Hannan	Group Principal & Governor
	Mr H Guntrip	Governor
	Ms S Hart	Governor
	Mr C Porter	Governor
	Mr G Jessel	Governor
	Mr R Neil	Governor
	Ms K Richardson	Staff Governor (Tonbridge)
	Ms D Washer	Staff Governor (Ashford)
In attendance:	Mr J Allen	Clerk
	Ms L Brown	Group Vice Principal
	Mr M Lumsdon-Taylor	Group Director of Finance &
Resources		

The meeting commenced at 09.30.

APOLOGIES, QUORACY, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS & WELCOMES

68. Due to examinations, apologies were received from the two student governors – Ms P Ryton and Mr C Perkins. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate. The Clerk recorded the interests of those members who are also members of Hadlow Corporation and or the Hadlow Group Board. The interest of Mr Rob Neil was recorded against the LEP capital application for the Ashford Campus. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

MINUTES

69. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held 18 December 2014 and to authorise the Chair to sign.

MATTERS ARISING

70. There were no matters arising.

HADLOW GROUP BOARD MINUTES

71. The minutes of the Hadlow Group Board meeting held 29 January 2015 were received for information purposes. The Clerk confirmed the minutes were also to be made available to the Hadlow Corporation meeting to be held on 26 March 2015. The Clerk advised that the future arrangements for the circulation of Hadlow Group Board minutes would be discussed at the next Group Board meeting.

72. It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Hadlow Group Board meeting held 29 January 2015.

'DOMINANT INFLUENCE' & 'CONTROL ISSUES'

73. The report from the Clerk was received. Baker Tilly, the College's Financial Statement Auditor, have advised that because of the 'control' and 'dominant influence' of Hadlow Corporation over the Board of WKAC, the accounts for WKAC must be consolidated into Hadlow's accounts. Failure to 'consolidate' would result in the accounts of Hadlow College having to be 'qualified'.

74. The report from the Clerk outlined proposed amendments to existing governance arrangements to address the issue of 'control' and 'dominant influence' of Hadlow Corporation over the Board of WKAC. If the changes were agreed by the Board of WKAC and the Corporation of Hadlow College the auditors have confirmed the accounts for Hadlow College would not be qualified. The Clerk confirmed the same paper is an agenda item at the Hadlow Corporation meeting to be held on 26 March 2015.

75. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following:

- (i) To amend WKAC's Articles & Instruments to remove Hadlow Corporation being the appointing body for members to the WKAC Board;
- (ii) To amend WKAC's Instrument & Articles of Government to confirm that governor appointments will be overseen by a joint Hadlow College/WKAC College Search Committee;
- (iii) Membership of the Search Committee to be made up of equal representatives from both WKAC Board and Hadlow Corporation with no casting vote allowed from the Chair;
- (iv) Quoracy of the Committee to confirm that there must be in attendance at least one representative from each College;
- (v) Terms of Reference of the Search Committee to confirm that each College will inform the Search Committee of vacancies as and when they occur and of the skills set required for the filling of the vacancy;
- (vi) Terms of reference of the Search Committee to contain a 'deadlock' clause in the event of a tied vote in any appointment recommendation, with the 'deadlock' clause to confirm that in the event of a tied vote on any appointment recommendation, the appointment recommendation not to be taken forward;
- (vii) Terms of reference to confirm that the Committee can only make appointment recommendations;
- (viii) Appointment recommendations from the joint Hadlow College/WKAC College Search Committee to be approved by either the Hadlow Corporation or WKAC Board, depending on which governor appointment is being recommended to which College; and

- (ix) That any adoption by WKAC of similar operating/financial policies from Hadlow College is to be supported as one of sharing best practice rather than dominant influence by Hadlow College (i.e. WKAC could reject if they wish with no mechanism for Hadlow College to force it through).

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

76. The Principal provided an oral update on key strategic developments that have occurred since the last Board meeting.

77. The Principal confirmed the FE Commissioner would be returning to visit the College in December to further assess quality improvements. As West Kent & Ashford College has not merged with Hadlow College, WKAC is essentially still 'K' College and 'K' College is still under the remit of the FE Commissioner, following the failed Ofsted inspection and financial notice to improve issued by the SFA.

78. A progress update was made available on the issue of merger and the SFA clawback, details which were outlined in the minutes from the Hadlow Group Board meeting held on 29 January 2015. The Principal confirmed that no meeting has yet been arranged with the Minister following the request from the Chair of WKAC and the Chair of Hadlow for such a meeting. The Principal confirmed that the issue around merger and the SFA clawback is being dealt with by the Hadlow Group Board.

79. Following a thorough discussion, the following was **AGREED**:

- (i) To make available the FE Commissioners main findings from his initial visit with the Executive to respond against each of the points made by the Commissioner. It was confirmed all findings are already included in the College Action Plans in terms of finance, assessment and quality.
- (ii) To receive at the next Board meeting an update on where we are against each of the 9 red line issues identified as potential deal-breakers when the acquisition of 'K' College was agreed;
- (iii) To keep the day-to-day operational dealings with officers from the SFA on a positive footing, keeping the political issues 'separate' and discussed at a higher officer level;
- (iv) The 'threat' of merger, the impact and implications on both WKAC and Hadlow College, staff and students, to be included on the Risk Register for both Colleges;
- (v) Once clarity is confirmed on the SFA clawback, to make available at the next Board meeting a revised financial forecast.

80. The Principal circulated for information purposes the college structures for both WKAC and Hadlow College.

81. The Board welcomed confirmation from the Principal of the successful LEP capital grant of £9.8m for the Ashford new campus build, and the upfront grant of £5m from the SFA. The Board formally minuted thanks to the support given from key officers within Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council, and also to Kent FE Colleges who stepped back from making any LEP capital bid applications to enable the Ashford bid to go forward unchallenged. The Principal informed the Board of the next 'support and challenge' meeting with Ofsted is taking place on 20th / 21st April 2015.

82. It was **RESOLVED** to note the updates from the Principal and for future Principal updates to be made available in a report format.

STRATEGIC & OPERATIONAL PLAN

83. The report on progress to date against each strategic and operational objective for 2014-2016 was received. It was confirmed that progress to-date against the majority of objectives were RAG rated as either 'Amber' or 'Red'. It was agreed to review in detail each 'Red' assessment.

84. Objective 1.4.2 – To reduce Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP) in FE and work-based learning provision to under 10% by July 2016. The current MLP rate under new methodology is 31%. Curriculum planning has identified those areas where poor success rates will be subject to robust challenge and review.

85. Objective 1.5.3 – Conversion of 75% of applicants to interview and a further 75% of interviewed applicants to enrolment. The current rate is below the target and a summary was made available for each site. Ensuring that students are being placed on the correct course with the appropriate entry requirements being met is the priority. Ensuring learners are on the right course will help to improve retention and success. The College cannot continue with a 15% drop in student numbers in the first 6 weeks, as has been the case in the past. The strategic decision has been taken to run on lower student numbers and to build on the quality of provision. The Board fully endorsed this strategic approach.

86. Objective 2.2.3 – To meet the needs of industry, all courses to have appropriate work placement, practical activities and sector specific input. It was confirmed work placement audit is being conducted and is due to be completed in March. Work placement opportunities are being mapped to ensure compliance with the requirements of study programmes.

87. Objective 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 – To up skill and support managers to set challenging and meaningful targets and to train and support managers to address poor performance. It was confirmed that this is a major priority for the HR team and is being led by the recently appointed Assistant Director Human Resources, Jane Salzer. There are weak areas of target setting in some areas and staff development for managers has been put in place. Addressing poor performance is also a major concern. Poor performance is now being addressed by the new SMT and by tier 3 managers.

88. Objective 4.3.3 – To ensure that retention, achievement, and success for minority groups is within 3% of internal targets. It was confirmed all courses now have retention, achievement and success rate targets. Equality & Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) that were not in place for 2013/14 are now confirmed for all courses.

89. Objective 5.1.1 – to move towards a balanced portfolio of income with total SFA/EFA income not more than 70% within 5 years. Currently SFA/EFA income is 92% of turnover and this remains a high risk objective.

90. The Board welcomed the detail of the monitoring in the report and it was **RESOLVED** to note the report and to receive a further progress update at the next meeting.

SUCCESS RATE TARGETS 2014/15

91. The report that was considered by the Curriculum & Quality Committee was received. The report outlined the targets proposed by the Committee for the Board to approve.

92. It was confirmed the strategic objective was to achieve over the next 2 years success rates equal to national averages. This is an aspirational target but the College has to be ambitious in its aims of providing quality provision for all learners.

93. It was noted that if achieved, the success rates would position the college still under the category of 'Requires Improvement' as some success rates would still be below national averages. The Board accepted this direction of travel, with the aspirational target of achieving 'Good'.

94. The Board sought assurances on how staff were responding to the challenge of raising quality and improving success rates. The Principal replied of the need for a significant cultural shift. Targets have been set and staff are now being held to account for performance against targets. Teaching staff and assessors are now fully accountable on how every student under their responsibility is performing against their individually set targets. The Principal and Vice Principal stated that current retention is 88%, and their expectation is that all students currently on courses must pass, and this message has been made clear to all staff. All curriculum areas have to monitor in detail the progress of each individual student against their learning goals and remedial action has to be taken if the student's progress has fallen behind their learning goal and individual targets.

95. Staff governors confirmed this approach and the culture shift that has taken place. Governors also reported through their link visits the feedback received from students that they value the new 'rules' and more structured approach to learning that they are experiencing.

96. Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following Success Rate Targets for 2014-15:

Success Rate Target	16-18		19+	
	(Actual 2013/14)	2014/15	(Actual 2013/14)	2014/15
Entry Level	(90%)	92%	(89%)	91%
Long Level 1	(78%)	84%	(81%)	83%
Long Level 2	(73%)	82%	(79%)	81%
Long Level 3	(82%)	84%	(77%)	79%
All Functional Skills	(31%)	60%	(39%)	60%
Maths FS	(28%)	60%	(43%)	60%
English FS	(34%)	60%	(31%)	60%
ICT (FS)	(5%)	45%	N/A	
GCSE Maths	(11%)	40%	(30%)	40%
GCSE English	(24%)	50%	(37%)	50%

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT

97. The report that was considered by the Curriculum & Quality Committee was received and **NOTED for** information purposes.

GOVERNOR LINK VISIT REPORTS

98. Completed Governor Link Visit Reports were received and **NOTED**. An oral update was given on a governor visit recently conducted and it was agreed that in future all visits should be reported on through completion of the link visit form. One governor was not able to conduct their visit as they were still waiting on contact from the College manager concerned and the Principal agreed to take this forward. The Chair encouraged governors to complete their next visits in good time.

99. Governors received the college report '*Governor Learner Walk Protocols*' that provided on how governors can conduct learner walks. Governors welcomed and **NOTED** the guidance document.

LEARNER VOICE EVALUATION REPORT

100. The '*Learner Evaluation Report*' was received. The Learner Voice process has been introduced to West Kent and Ashford College during term 1 and a series of learner voice events and activities have taken place to date.

101. The Induction Survey questions were mapped to the questions used at Hadlow College and gives an overall summary of responses. It was noted and welcomed the Induction Survey results showed a positive overview with 90% of questions above 80%.

102. Term one and term two Learner Voice Forums with the executives have taken place at Ashford, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge sites. Students raised a number of points and issues at the Forums and these have been responded to in the format 'You said: We did'.

103. A Student Conference has been organised and will take place on the 25th March. The theme is Respect and will cover Behaviour Management, Safeguarding and Equality Diversity and Inclusion.

104. During term three students will be requested to complete an Exit Survey. Questions will be mapped to the Hadlow College Exit survey.

105. Areas for development based on the surveys will be transferred into the appropriate departments of the College.

106. Year on year trends and comparisons will be made based on these survey questions.

107. Curriculum areas are currently gathering Learner Voice views from the Course Representatives for each group and the "You said: We did" format will be used to feedback on the actions taken to address issues raised.

108. It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

TUITION FEE POLICY 2015/16

109. Following review from the Finance Committee at its meeting on 25 February 2015, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Tuition Fee Policy 2015/16.

MINUTES AND RESOLUTIONS FROM COMMITTEE

110. The Chair confirmed the 'principle' that it will be taken that Governors have read the minutes and Governors can seek further information and clarification on any issues arising from the minutes, but the debates that have already taken place at Committee level cannot be re-opened.

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE

111. The minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee held 04 March 2015 were received and **NOTED**.

FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

112. The minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee held 25 February 2015 were received and **NOTED**.

HADLOW GROUP AUDIT COMMITTEE

113. The minutes of the Hadlow Group Audit Committee held 12 March 2015 were received and **NOTED**.

MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

114. The College report '*Monitoring of College Performance*' was received. The Board at its meeting in December 2014 approved a monitoring framework covering a range of quality and finance KPIs to enable the Board to discharge its responsibility for providing an oversight on College activities. Having agreed the framework, the next stage is to agree at this meeting the KPI targets and at the July Board meeting, and subsequent Board meetings, to monitor performance against each of the targets.

115. KPI Targets for staff turnover and staff absence to be agreed at the July Board meeting.

116. It was **RESOLVED** to agree the KPI targets and to monitor progress against the targets at the next Board meeting in July.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

117. Tabled for information purposes was the College document '*Marketing, Communications, PR and Media Update March 2015*'. It was confirmed the success of the marketing campaigns outlined in the report would be assessed through the number of applications received.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

118. Wednesday 01 July 2015 @09.30 at the Tonbridge Campus.

The meeting concluded at 12.40.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

SUMMARY ACTION LIST

MIN	ACTION	REVIEW
79	(i) To make available the FE Commissioners main findings from his initial visit with the Executive to respond against each of the points made by the Commissioner; (ii) To receive at the next Board meeting an update on where we are against each of the 9 red line issues identified as potential deal-breakers when the acquisition of 'K' College was agreed; (iii) To keep the day-to-day operational dealings with officers from the SFA on a positive footing, keeping the political issues 'separate' and discussed at a higher officer level; (iv) The 'threat' of merger, the impact and implications on both WKAC and Hadlow College, staff and students, to be included on the Risk Register for both Colleges; (v) Once clarity is confirmed on the SFA clawback, to make available at the next Board meeting a revised financial forecast.	1/7/15
82	Principal Updates to be made available in a short written format	1/7/15
90	Strategic & Operation Plan Monitoring – to be a fixed agenda item	1/7/15
98	Governor Link visit reports to be made available instead of verbal updates	1/7/15
115	KPI Targets for staff turnover and staff absence to be agreed at the July Board meeting.	1/7/15