MEETING OF THE FULL CORPORATION

OF FAREHAM COLLEGE

23rd March 2015

# M I N U T E S

**Present:** Mr K Briscoe

Miss E Champion

Mr N Duncan

Mr P Fielon

Mr P Grimwood

Mr R Kew (Chair)

Mrs J Lancaster

Mr M Mansergh

Mrs N Nageon de Lestang

Miss L Quelch

Mr A Ramsay

Miss K Smith

Dr C Thomas

Mrs P Tilt

Ms K Woods

**In attendance:** Mr S Dingsdale

Mrs J Eayrs (Clerk)

Mr P Marsh (Deputy Principal)

Mrs J Robinson (Head of Finance)

**04/15 Declaration of Interests**

Members were reminded of the need to declare any personal or financial interest in any items of business to be considered during the meeting.

The following interests were declared:

**Agenda item: 6(ii): SFA document: LEP’s – increasing their influence on skills budgets**

* Mr Kew, in his capacity as a member of the local LEP.

**Agenda item: 10(iv) Annual Review of Fees Policy:**

* Mrs Nageon de Lestang, in her capacity as a Governor of Chichester University.

**05/15 Apologies for absence and welcome to new members**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr Carter, Mr Hart, Mr Magee and Mrs Hinton. In addition, the Chair welcomed Mr Ramsay and Mrs Robinson to their first meeting of the Board.

**06/15 Update on the SEN Code of Practice**

Members of the Board received a presentation from Mrs Lancaster, Learning Support Manager which covered the following areas:

* **The reform vision**: Joined up support across education, health and care, from 0 to 25. Members were advised that the new legislation came into effect on the 1st September 2014;
* **The case for change** – A key driver was to increase the focus on life outcomes such as employment, community participation and independent living;
* **Children & Families Act 2014** – key changes and new legal duties for providers were outlined;
* **Reform in practice: The Local Offer** – Members were advised that the local offer must provide information to all children and young people with SEN or disabilities and the support that was available from the College’s own resources should be included. All colleges must continue to work closely with local authorities to develop and contribute to the local offer;
* **Reform in practice: EHC assessment and plans** – Members were advised that young people with EHC plans could ask for a college to be named in their plan. Colleges would need to consider how they would meet duties to use best endeavours to secure special educational provision and to take reasonable steps to ensure inclusion;
* **Reform in practice**: Personal Budgets – members were advised that a personal budget was an amount of money identified to deliver parts of the provision set out in an EHC plan;
* **Reform in practice**: Transition from learning difficulty assessments – Members were advised that young people in FE with an LDA would transfer to the new system by 1st September 2016. Mrs Lancaster confirmed that all those students with an existing LDA had received a letter asking if they wanted to convert it to an EHC. Members noted that staff training had already taken place on the staff development day at CEMAST;
* **Reform in practice**: SEN support – Under the new code a mainstream college **must** use its best endeavours to put appropriate support in place for any student with a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision;
* **What the reform means for Governors:  
  -** Corporations are responsible for ensuring that the new legal duties in relation to SEND are met by the College;  
  - Governors must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice, should oversee the implementation of the reforms and provide strategic support to the College Principal and Senior Leadership Team;
* **Questions for Governors:**  
  - Are young people with SEND being offered the best possible opportunities to progress into adulthood?  
  - Are young people with SEND being offered personalised study programmes and access to mainstream courses?  
  - Is the progress of young people with SEND adequately tracked?  
  - In future years, will the College’s data recording be sufficiently robust to evidence that outcomes have improved for young people with SEND?

The slides used by Mrs Lancaster are an **Appendix** to these minutes.

The Chair thanked her for her presentation and invited questions from members.

Members sought clarification on the following:

* Members sought clarification on the number of SEND students supported by the College. Mrs Lancaster confirmed this to currently be 267;
* Members sought clarification on how this area fitted into the reporting committee structure. The Principal confirmed that this was currently covered by the TSC&Q Committee and the Wellbeing Committee who both reported directly to the full Corporation;
* There was a brief discussion about the development of performance indicators for Governors to take assurance that all aspects of the new Code had been implemented;
* Mrs Lancaster confirmed that independent advice and guidance for these students required further development;
* Mrs Lancaster reported that there had been a significant increase of students with mental health issues this year;
* Governors acknowledged that colleges were being asked to do significantly more work for no further resource due to local authority cut backs;
* The Principal confirmed that ‘high needs’ students were funded but it was the more general support needs that could stretch the College to the point where those students on the periphery may fall out of the support range. He went on to say that many College Principals had written to the Local Authority to express their dissatisfaction at the way this was being managed.

**07/15 Annual Election of Chairman of the Corporation**

Nomination papers had been distributed to all members of the Corporation in advance of the meeting. Mr Kew had been proposed, seconded and had agreed to stand as Chair. As there were no other nominations, the Corporation formally elected Mr Kew as Chair to serve from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016, in accordance with the Corporation’s Standing Orders.

*Mr Kew took the Chair.*

**08/15 Annual Election of Vice-Chair of the Corporation**

Nomination papers had been distributed to all members of the Corporation in advance of the meeting. Mr Derek Hart had been proposed, seconded and had agreed to stand as Vice-Chair. As there were no other nominations, the Corporation formally elected Mr Hart as Vice-Chair to serve from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016, in accordance with the Corporation’s Standing Orders.

**09/15 Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th December 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10th December 2014 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising from them which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**10/15 Confidential &Strictly Confidential minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2014**

*There were no points of clarification, therefore, no members were required to withdraw from the meeting for consideration of the strictly confidential minutes.*

The confidential minutes and strictly confidential minute (for Governors who were not Staff and Student only) of the meeting held on the 10th December 2014 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising from them which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**11/15 Strictly Confidential minutes of the special meeting held on the 25th February 2015**

The strictly confidential minute (for Governors who were not Staff and Student only) of the special meeting held on the 25th February 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising from them which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**12/15 Correspondence**

1. **BIS/DfE brief on progress for FE Governors and Leaders – Implementing Rigour and Responsiveness** – Members of the Board received and noted the Implementing Rigour and Responsiveness briefing document from BIS/DfE. The Principal drew the following key points to members’ attention:

* All political parties had confirmed their commitment to continue with apprenticeships;
* Degree apprenticeships were being developed under the current Trailblazer process. Members were advised that the Digital sector was developing the first Degree Apprenticeship with first starts expected in September 2015;
* English and Maths would continue to be a focus;
* From September 2016, larger Technical Baccalaureate programmes would be eligible for a 10% or 20% uplift in funding;
* BIS continued to publish the FE Commissioner’s Summary Assessments detailing his findings and conclusions. Members were advised that, to date, the FE Commissioner and his team had carried out interventions in 23 institutions, including 19 FE colleges;
* The Principal outlined the plans for the creation of a new generation of National Colleges which would be employer-led institutions delivering specialist higher level skills training in key sectors of the economy to address identified skills gaps. These colleges were expected to be established over the next two years.

1. **SFA: LEP’s – Increasing their influence on skills budgets** – Members received and noted the SFA document which outlined details of how the Government and Skills Funding Agency would ensure that commitments made in the Local Growth Deals announced in July 2014 would be met through the skills funding system.

There was a brief discussion about the capacity for the LEPs to undertake this new role and members acknowledged that LEPs would evolve over the next Government.

**13/15 Principal’s Spring Term Report**

Members of the Board received the Principal’s Spring Term Report which was confidential to members of the Board and which highlighted the progress which had been made in taking forward the College Strategic Priorities and Quality Improvement Plan for 2014/2015.

Prior to presenting his termly report the Principal provided a verbal report to members on a health and safety incident which had occurred.

(i) **Incident Report** – The Principal outlined details of an incident which had taken place on the College campus on Saturday 21st March 2015. The incident had involved the removal of some hazardous waste related to the clearance of the science labs and a member of the public had notified the Police which had resulted in some press coverage. The Principal assured members that the substance had not been hazardous and there had been no health risk but, unfortunately, the waste had been put into a tin marked ‘radio active’ which had been spotted by a member of the public. He confirmed that a full report would be presented to the H&S Committee, the Wellbeing Committee and the full Corporation at its next meeting in the summer term;

The Principal referred members to the Principal’s Termly Report and drew members’ attention to the following:

(ii) **Teaching, Learning and Quality**

* Feedback and evaluation from the observation team indicated that approximately 80% of teaching would be rated as good or better in an inspection which would support a self-assessment grade of ‘Good’;
* The QAA Higher Education Review outcomes were reviewed and noted. The Principal confirmed that the College had a year to address the issues raised during the review;
* Members reviewed the 2013/2014 outcomes for leavers data provided on page 3 of the report. The Principal reported that, overall, the College success rates required improvement with the number of students being retained and achieving on their course having declined to be below national averages in many sector subject areas;
* Members reviewed the 2013/2014 Employer Responsive (apprenticeship) outcome data provided on page 5 of the report. The Principal reported that, overall, success across both levels was 69.6% and timely at 61.1% compared to the National Average of 54.8%.

(iii) **Curriculum:**

* **Overall College retention** was reported at 94.6% (in-year) compared to a strategic target of 89%. (BRC 95.7% and CEMAST 93.3%);
* **CEMAST** – Members noted that Automotive Engineering had experienced a decline in retention and a review of its programme structure and admissions had been completed to seek to address the number of withdrawals in the future.

(iv) **Business Development and Partnerships:**

* **CRM** – The Principal reported that a new system had been purchased that fully integrated with Microsoft Outlook for appointment and email set up and monitoring accessible to all users;
* **Apprenticeships** – The Principal reported that the College now had 657 apprentices enrolled on funded programmes.

(v) **2015-2016 FT Recruitment:**

* FT applications were reported as being over 25% up on the same time last year and were continuing to grow by approximately 35 applications a week;
* The College had set a target of 1800 FT applications. New entrant applications were reported at 1006 and, combined with progressing students of around 600 this suggested that the College was well placed to reach the target figure;
* Members noted areas of most significant growth:  
  - CEMAST;  
  - Gaming;  
  - Health and Social Care;  
  - Professional Catering.

(vi) **Sector Developments:**

* **Funding** – The Principal provided members with an update on funding cuts;
* **Capital Project Bid with HCC** – The Principal briefly outlined a potential capital project with HCC which would see an extension to the CEMAST development with a Solent Excellence Centre to develop Maths competence in the area;
* **Quality** – The Principal highlighted the fact that the dip in College success rates last year could attract some attention by OfSTED;
* **Counter-Terrorism** – The Principal confirmed that the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act received Royal Assent in early February 2015. He went on to explain that the Act required colleges to have regard to the ‘Prevent Duty Guidance’ which was in draft form. Members were advised that Gill Sommers, Director of Students and Recruitment, was currently drawing up a policy related to the PREVENT Duty.

**Members of the Board reviewed and noted the contents of the Principal’s Spring Term Report.**

**14/15 Review of Progress against Strategic Priorities 2014/2015**

Members of the Board received a paper which provided a progress review of the Strategic Priorities for 2014/2015. The Principal spoke to the paper and referred members to the objectives which had changed ‘rating’ since the previous progress update and which related to:

* **Internal Apprenticeship Programme** – The Principal reported 8 apprentices currently employed by the College (against a target minimum of 10);
* **Sustained growth in Adult Learner numbers** – The Principal reported classroom based adult learner numbers lower than expected;  
  **Sustained growth in HE student numbers** – Members noted that HE student numbers were circa 139 (compared to a target of 200). The Principal confirmed that this was a challenging market and a portfolio review was in train to refresh the offer;
* **Too high staff turnover** – Members noted that planned adjustments to staff had created some turnover in Estates, Communications and Marketing;
* **Sustained staff morale and wellness at work** – The Principal reported that there were still a number of issues associated with the pressures of increasing changes in the sector. He confirmed that staffing was very tight and cover arrangements could be stretched;
* **Annual operating surplus of 2% turnover** – The Principal reported that budgetary pressure suggested that this would not be met. However, a very small operating surplus or a small deficit was currently under review;
* **Functional Skills** – The Principal confirmed that English and Maths attendance continued to be a challenge and this was being closely monitored for performance;
* **Underdeveloped target setting through PLPs** – Members were advised that the new Learning Technology Manager had been appointed to start after Easter;
* **Extend learning within and outside the lesson** – The use of the iLRC had increased with directed independent study now being timetabled across all students.

**Members reviewed and noted the progress of the Strategic Objectives 2014/2015 achieved to date.**

**15/15 QAA HE Review Outcomes**

Members received a copy of the QAA Higher Education Review letter which provided an agreed outline of the draft report and findings. In addition, members were provided with the related action plan which had been developed to address the issues arising from the review. Members acknowledge that this item had been discussed under the Principal’s Spring Term Report (agenda item 7(i)).

**Members of the Board reviewed and noted the contents of the letter and related action plan.**

*Miss Smith left the meeting at the end of this item (6.00 pm)*

**16/15 Inspection Ready ‘Pocket Brief’**

Members of the Board had been provided with a Facts, Figures and Actions Briefing document which had been developed for Governors as a ‘pocket guide’ of ‘inspection ready’ information. The Principal confirmed that the document had been reviewed by the TSC&Q Committee and further refinement was required prior to publication. He advised members that the document would be updated on a termly basis.

**Members reviewed and noted the contents of the Inspection Ready ‘Pocket Brief’.**

**17/15 Student Governors Spring Term Report**

Members of the Board received the Student Governors Spring Term Report. Miss Quelch, Student President, spoke to the paper and outlined the key events and experiences which had taken place during the term.

**Members of the Board reviewed and noted the contents of the paper.**

*Miss Quelch left the meeting at the end of this item (6.15pm)*

**18/15 CEMAST Project Update**

Members of the Board received a paper on the CEMAST Project and Programme Update. The Deputy Principal spoke to the paper and provided a progress update on the following:

* The progress achieved with the agreed snagging list;
* The issues raised on ESAV, the Bouygues post occupation quality system which enabled the College to raise issues;
* The progress with the post occupancy defect rectification;
* The IT project update. Members reviewed and noted the projects to be finalised before signing off the full IT implementation plan;
* Financial update – The Deputy Principal sought Board approval for the allocation of the remaining budgets as outlined in section 4 of the report;
* The Deputy Principal advised members that CEMAST had been shortlisted for a Civic Trust Award and had also got through to the RIBA regional finalists stage. He confirmed that judges would be visit the site shortly.

**Members of the Board reviewed and noted the contents of the paper and formally approved the allocation of the remaining budgets as outlined in section 4 of the paper.**

*Mr Ramsay left the meeting during this item (6.30pm).*

**19/15 Bishopsfield Campus Redevelopment Programme Update**

Members of the Board received a confidential paper on the Bishopsfield Campus Redevelopment Programme Update. Due to the confidential nature of the contents of the paper and the related discussions, this item is recorded as a separate confidential minute for Governors only.

**20/15 Management Accounts at 28th February 2015**

Members of the Board received a confidential paper on the Management Accounts for February 20145

Members reviewed the contents of the paper and noted the following:

* The Management Accounts for February (period 7) report a trading deficit of £40k;
* The year-end trading forecast was approximately on plan at £31k surplus;
* Members were advised of a potential release of £95k traineeship claw-back which had been prudently provided for within the 2013/2014 final account. Members were advised that it now looked like the under-achievement would be off-set against over delivery on classroom based learning for 2013/2014;
* The forecast provided did not account for any delivery of the extra classroom (£200k) and apprenticeship (£511k) allocations requested previously and confirmed at the beginning of March;
* Bank Covenants – members noted that all were compliant;
* Staff to income ratio year-to-date of 55.3% compared to budget of 57.7%;
* Actual cash - £2m per cash flow statement (plus £1.5m lent to project to save interest costs) which totalled £3.5m;
* Balance sheet (reconciled cash excl. CEMAST) - £1.7m (46 cash days in hand).

**Members of the Committee reviewed the contents of the paper and the related appendices in detail and noted the current position**.

**21/15 The Outline Budget Strategy 2015/2016**

Members of the Board received a confidential paper on The Indicative Budget Strategy for 2015/2016. Due to the confidential nature of the contents of the paper and the related discussions, this item is recorded as a separate confidential minute for Governors only.

**22/15 IT Strategy**

Members of the Board received the Annual Review of IT Strategy which had been reviewed by the F&R Committee and was recommended for formal approval. The Deputy Principal referred members to the Executive Summary which confirmed that:

* The paper provided a summary of the developments since the publication of a new IT Strategy in March 2014;
* The paper indentified progress to date on the core outcomes of the IT Strategy;
* The paper highlighted any changes in the strategy as a result of activity during the last year;
* The paper laid out intended developments over the next 12 months.

**Members of the Board accepted the recommendation of the F&R Committee and formally endorsed the IT Strategy Review.**

**23/15 Annual Review of Fees Policy 2015/2016**

Members of the Board received the Fees Policy for 2015/2016. Members were reminded that the purpose of the Policy was to provide a framework within which the College’s fee setting and fee refund processes were devised and operated. In addition, the policy also set a framework for ensuring that comprehensive guidance and information regarding fees was available and accessible to (prospective) learners, staff and Governors.

**Members of the Board reviewed and formally approved the Tuition Fees Policy 2015/2016.**

**24/15 Contract for the External Audit Service Providers 2015/2016**

Members of the Board received a paper on the Contract for External Audit Services. Members were reminded that the current External Audit contract with Grant Thornton had been awarded in June 2010 following a tender exercise. Members of the Board were advised that the Audit Committee had reviewed the performance of the External Auditors at their meeting on the 16th March 2015 and that no key issues of concern had been raised.

**Members of the Board accepted the recommendation of the Audit Committee and formally approved the re-appointment of Grant Thornton as the Financial Statements Audit Provider for a further financial year to run from 1st August 2015 to 31st July 2016.**

**25/15 Preparations for Governor/Board Self-Assessment 2014/2015**

Members of the Board received a paper on the Preparations for the Governance/Board Self-Assessment 2014/2015. Members reviewed the contents of the paper and considered the proposals and agreed the following:

* That a half-day Retreat/away day be convened (on the IOW) on the 3rd June 2015 to undertake some informal team building and to provide an opportunity to have some informal discussion about the sector and the issues raised in the self-assessment questionnaire.

**Members of the Board formally agreed the arrangements for the Self-Assessment session for 2014/2015 and the action to be taken in preparation for it as outlined in the paper.**

**26/15 TSC&Q Terms of Reference**

Members of the Board had received the revised Terms of Reference which had been updated in the light of changes to the new SFA Funding Regulations 2015/2016 related to Sub-contracting.

**Members of the Board accepted the recommendation of the TSC&Q Committee and formally approved the revised terms of reference for the TSC&Q Committee of the Corporation.**

**27/15 Termly Reports of Corporation Committees**

Members of the Board received and noted termly reports from the following Corporation Committees:

* Teaching, Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee;
* Finance and Resources Committee;
* Audit Committee;
* Marketing Working Group minutes from 28th January 2015 meeting;
* Minutes of the Wellbeing Committee meeting held on the 4th March 2015.

**Members reviewed and noted the contents of the reports, minutes and the issues which had been discussed at committee meetings during the term.**

**28/15 Student and Staff Liaison Committee Minutes**

Members of the Board received the minutes of the following meetings for information:

* Staff Liaison Committee (BRC) meeting which had taken place on the 21st January 2015;
* SLC (CEMAST) meeting which had taken place on 22nd January 2015;
* Student Board minutes from the meeting which had taken place on the 16th January 2015.

**Members reviewed and noted the contents of the minutes and the issues which had been discussed at these meetings during the term.**

**29/15 Performance Review of the Clerk**

Members of the Board received and noted the Performance Review 2013/2014 for the Clerk. Members were aware that the report had been considered and discussed by the F&R Committee at its meeting in March 2015 and members had agreed that the report was an excellent representation of the last year’s performance. In addition, members noted that no issues of concern had been raised.

**Members reviewed and noted the contents of the Performance Review 2013/2014 for the Clerk.**

**30/15 Performance Review of the Principal**

Members of the Committee received the Performance Review 2013/2014 for the Principal. Members were aware that the report had been considered and discussed by the F&R Committee at its meeting in March 2015 and members had agreed that it was a fair and accurate representation of the achievements secured through what had been a very turbulent but ultimately successful year. In addition, members noted that no issues of concern had been raised.

**Members reviewed and noted the contents of the Performance Review 2013/2014 for the Principal.**

**31/15 Date of next meeting**

In accordance with the approved Corporation Calendar 2014/2015, members noted that the next meeting of the Board was scheduled to take place on **Wednesday 24th June 2015 at 4.30pm.**