

The Corporation Board of Accrington and Rossendale College

Minutes of a Meeting of: The Corporation Board

Date: Thursday 18th December 2014

Location: Conference Room, Accrington & Rossendale College



Confirmed

Members Present:

Mr B Stephenson	Chair and Independent Member
Mr S Ireland	Vice Chair and Independent Member
Mrs S Taylor	Principal
Dr M Lee	Independent Member
Mr M Aslam	Independent Member
Mrs S Bridgeman	Independent Member
Mr S Cox	Independent Member
Dr A M Coyne	Independent Member
Mr R Grigorjevs	Independent Member
Mrs L Spencer	Independent Member
Miss T Landon	Staff Member
Miss C Robinson	Staff Member
Mr S Long	Student Governor

In Attendance:

Mrs S Collinge	Vice Principal (Business & Innovation)
Miss W Higgin	Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality)
Mr A Armiger	Clerk to the Corporation
Mrs N Tattersall	Minuting Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Mrs R Andrews	Independent Member
Ms L Gaskell	Independent Member
Mr Z Shah	Independent Member

Draft Minutes Prepared by: NT-AA
Draft Minutes approved by the Chair:
Minutes Approved by the Board:

Date:
22-01-15
26-01-15
24-03-15

.....*Brian Stephenson*.....
Chair

Prior to the meeting members had a tour of the College's new Sports Hall complex.

PART ONE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

CB

14/15-2.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Andrews, Ms Gaskell and Mr Shah.

14/15-2.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

14/15-2.3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd September 2014

The Minutes from the meeting held on 23rd September 2014 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Resolved

14/15-2.3 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2014

14/15-2.4 Matters arising not otherwise on agenda

The Clerk to the Corporation advised that there were two actions from the previous Corporation Board meeting:

14/15 1.9 that the DfE be asked to remove Accrington and Rossendale College from its list of 14-16 Direct Entry providers.

Mr Armiger advised that the DfE were informed of the Board's decision by the Principal, Mrs Taylor on 2nd October 2014.

14/15 1.3 iv) that these resolutions be communicated to the Bank and remain in force until changed by a resolution passed by the governing body of the College and a copy, certified by the Chairman and one other member of the governing body of the College, is received by the bank.

Mr Armiger confirmed that the bank mandate was returned to HSBC by the Finance Director, Mrs Jarvis on 25th September 2014.

Mr Armiger advised that there were no other actions required to be taken outstanding

Unconfirmed Minutes, Chair updates and Recommendations for Board Approval from the following committees:

14/15-2.5 The Search and Governance Committee held on 26th November 2014

Mr Stephenson, as Chair of the Committee, informed Board Members that the main business of the meeting had been to deal with re-appointments of current Corporation Board members and also the re-appointment of a co-opted member of the Scholarships Committee. Mr Stephenson explained that members of the Committee had considered the contribution that Mrs Spencer and Mr Cox had made to the Board, its committees and in other work with the college during their probationary year. Discussions had taken place around each of the recommendations. Members of the committee had noted Mr Cox's concerns about not being able to attend as many meetings as possible due to commitments at his school, but members had agreed that Mr Cox was committed to and

had made contributions to the Board's work. All members of the Committee were unanimous in their decision in that they were pleased to be able to make recommendations for Mrs Spencer and Mr Cox's re-appointment for a further 3 years.

Members

Resolved

14/15-2.5 A i) that Mr Stephen Cox be re-appointed to the Corporation Board as an Independent Member for a further term of 3 years until 9th December 2017; and

ii) that Mrs Lynn Spencer be re-appointed to the Corporation Board as an Independent Member for a further term of 3 years until 9th December 2017

Mr Stephenson advised that Mrs Smith had been in contact shortly before the meeting and had explained that following a promotion at work she had felt it was unfair to continue as a member of the Corporation Board as she would be unable to commit the time required. Mrs Smith was thanked for the time and commitment she had put into the Corporation Board and College during the year she had served as a member.

Mr Stephenson also advised Board members that Mr Cassell had also decided not to continue as a member of the Board following his probationary year. It appeared that the role was not what Mr Cassell had thought it would be and had taken the opportunity presented by the probationary year ending to step down. Mr Stephenson advised that Mr Cassell has a lot to offer the College in other ways and that he hoped links between Mr Cassell and the College would be maintained.

Mr Stephenson advised that there were now three vacancies for Independent members of the Board. He went on to say that it was felt that there should be some representation from the Higher Education Sector and that the college was looking how that gap could be filled from its network of connections. It was also noted by Members that the Audit committee was down to 3 members and action need to be taken to find the two members required to fill this committee.

Mr Stephenson moved on to report that the Board's Scholarships Committee was fully re-established and awards had been made to student this year. Members of the committee had considered the re-appointment Mrs Kath Burrows, who has been chairing this committee. Mrs Burrows had indicated that she would be happy to continue as a member of the committee if reappointed. Mr Roger Brunt, who was also a Co-opted member had indicated that he now wished to stand down from the committee, as had had been his intention once the committee had been firmly re-established. Members noted the very long service Mr Brunt had given the College as a member and previous Chair of the Board, and more recently as a co-opted member of the Scholarship committee. At the Board's request, Mr Armiger will look at ways in which we can recognise Mr Brunt's contribution.

Board members, following discussion

Resolved

14/15-2.5 B that Mrs Kath Burrows be re-appointed as a Co-opted Member of the Scholarships Committee for the term of up to 4 years until 2nd October 2018.

14/15-2.6

The Audit Committee held on 18th November 2014

In Mrs Andrews' absence, the Chair updated members from notes provided by Mrs Andrews on the recent committee meeting. The recommendations from the committee primarily relate to the signing of the Financial Statements and the College Risk Management plan for 2014-15. It was noted by Members that, with regard to the Year End Financial Statements, the Committee did not review the financial figures in detail as these are reviewed by the Resources Committee and the committee seeks assurance from the Financial Auditors as to their validity. The Auditors had informed the committee that there were no issues to report with the statements and no recommendations for controls.

In terms of the Risk Management Plan the final outcomes for 2013-14 had been reviewed and the new plan for 2014 – 15 had been scrutinised. Both sets of auditors who had been present at the meeting confirmed that the College's plan in its updated format represents best practice in the sector.

The Chair advised that the following recommendations had been made by members of the committee to the Corporation Board for approval.

AC 14/15-1.5 ii) to recommend the audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st July 2014 to the Corporation Board for approval;

AC 14/15-1.10 ii) to recommend the Risk Management Plan 2014/15 to the Corporation Board for approval;

Mr Stephenson noted the recommendations and advised that the recommendation regarding the Financial Statements would be taken alongside the similar recommendation from the Resources Committee.

Following discussion Members of the Board

Resolved

14/15- 2.6A to approve the College Risk Management Plan for 2014-15

Moving on to the Audit Committee Annual report Mr Stephenson commented that it was good to see the commitment and attendance of all members of the committee. Mr Armiger noted that the report is a key document, summarising the work of Audit Committee throughout the year and also summarises the assurances received from the work of the Internal Auditors Baker Tilly and the external Financial Auditors Grant Thornton. It contains the advice from the committee to enable the Board to approve the signing of the Financial Statements by the Chair and Principal. It was noted that a copy of this report is submitted to the SFA along with the financial statements. The Members of the Committee had resolved

AC 14/15-1.11 ii) to recommend the Audit Committee Annual Report 2013/14 to the Corporation Board and the College's Accounting Officer (the Principal) to enable the advice contained within it to be considered when approving the financial statements for the year ending 31st

Members of the Board

Resolved

14/15-2.6B to note the Audit Committee Annual Report 2013/14 and the advice contained within it

Mr Stephenson advised members that Mrs Andrews had recently attended an AoC North West Governors Forum which had discussed the work of the Audit Committee in Colleges. She had reported that it appeared that this College's Committee was well placed amongst the others represented in terms of the type of work it carried out and how it undertakes that work. There had been some new ideas that could be investigated, but it had given Mrs Andrews, and should give the Board, assurance that the work of this committee was up to date and valid.

Mr Cox joined the meeting at 5.40pm

14/15-2.7 The Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee held on 25th November 2014

Mr Ireland, as Chair of the committee, updated members on the business undertaken at its recent meeting. Members had received, and discussed, reports from a range of College Directors concerning College recruitment, constraints on national curriculum, school vocational options, and decline in cohort and funding stream reductions for adults and HE.

Mr Ireland advised members that work was taking place to adapt curriculum for 2015-18 to ensure that the college was meeting local employment/ training needs in line with LEP priorities. It was noted that there would be a presentation to the whole board on the shape of the new curriculum. Members had discussed the segmentation of the College Curriculum allowing each sector to react independently to change if and when required. The Committee had heard about the re-introduction of A level provision and had received assurances about the level of learners involved and how the provision would enhance the current and proposed curriculum. It had been reported that there had been very favourable reaction to the proposal from potential learners and their parents at recent open evenings.

Mr Ireland noted that there would be an update from The Vice-Principal (Curriculum and Standards) later in the meeting regarding the College Self- Assessment Report but asked that the 11 teams who had received an overall outstanding grade should be sent a congratulatory note from the Board. Mr Armiger agreed to arrange this.

Mr Ireland advised that destinations of College Learners had been discussed at the Committee meeting. It had been noted by the committee members that the system for collecting and collating data continues to be improved and the destinations of over 4,000 learners was now being tracked and reported on.

There had been discussion at the meeting on safeguarding the college learners and if there had been any hint of a problem with extremism. Members had been assured that this was not in any way a problem at the college, but management would continue to monitor the situation.

Members had also discussed at the committee meeting a proposal that the Board may wish to have a lead Safeguarding. Mr Ireland reported that there had been varying views from committee members as to whether this role should be established. Members

recognised that there was logic in having a designated person but ultimate responsibility would still lie with all Board members rather than the individual nominated. Following that committee's discussion members had resolved

C&QS 14/15-1.6 iii) that the Corporation Board, at its meeting on the 18th December 2014 will be asked to make a decision regarding the Board having a "Designated Safeguarding Member".

The college Designated Senior Lead, Mrs Higham, had produced a role description for Board members to inform their discussion. It was noted that Safeguarding is monitored at every Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee(C&QSC) meeting and continuing assurance would be provided at this point.

Members discussed the recommendation. Dr Lee confirmed that at the committee meeting he spoke against a nominated safeguarding representative on the grounds it was everyone's responsibility, but that having thought about the matter he had changed his view and now felt the board should have a Lead, but on the understanding that the C&QSC still maintains the same level of reporting. Mrs Taylor noted that there were equally strong views for both sides, but felt that the Board was as a mature enough body and would take its responsibility seriously and that the role would provide additional depth and strength to the Board.

The Chair summarised all the discussion adding that if the Board did appoint a lead member for Safeguarding they would expect to receive a report at least annually with an update on activity from the Governor nominated. Two members indicated that they would want to take on the role if approved. After final discussion on the matter it was

Resolved

14/15-2.7 that Mr Grigorjevs be appointed as the Board's Designated Safeguarding Member and Mrs Spencer be appointed as the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Member

It was noted that this would enable safeguarding matters to be further scrutinised in both the Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee and Resources Committee. Mr Armiger advised that he would inform Mrs Higham of the Board's decision and that both members could expect to be contacted by Mrs Higham in the near future.

14/15-2.8

The Resources Committee held on 2nd December 2014

Mr Stephenson, as Chair of the Resources Committee updated members on the reports and discussions at the Resources Committee, held on 2nd December 2014.

Mr Stephenson advised members that the committee had been presented with a review of HR issues by the Director of People & Performance which went extensively into work of her team and its impact on the College. As part of her report Mrs Higham had explained to members that a letter had been sent to all staff with reference to the College's financial position and pay review. It was a very open letter and reflected clearly the position the College was in and the desire that staff be rewarded if feasible. Mrs Higham had noted that it was disappointing that one of unions was seeking strike action (as part of a national action), but that the college would work to minimise the effect of any action.

Mr During, the Director of IT and Facilities, had at the committee meeting, presented his annual Health & Safety Report. Members were pleased that, given the size the college and scope of practical based work, there were minimal incidents to report. The Committee

had received good assurances about work being undertaken with College's disaster management plan and development of work based risk assessments placed assessments.

Mr Stephenson moved on to the Property Strategy Update which had been presented to the committee, remarking that it was important for the College to be forward looking and ensure its suitably placed to take up capital build projects opportunities as and when appear. The Resources committee had

RC 14/15-1.9 ii) to recommend to the College Property Strategy for 2014-17 to the Corporation Board for approval

Board members had received copies of the strategy prior to the meeting and discussed the 4 options presented in the strategy. Following that discussion members

Resolved

14/15-2.8 B to approve the College Property Strategy for 2014-17

A question was raised by Mrs Bridgeman, referring to the Hameldon Building, as to why an investment that is only 14 years old needs to be refurbished and assurance was sought that the two new builds i.e. the Sports Hall Complex and the VEC project won't need to be refurbished in 15 years' time. Members were advised that the Hameldon Building was built at the time for specific curriculum needs and as time has progressed it has met those specific needs less and less. Lessons had been learnt from this and subsequent capital projects have had as much flexibility as possible incorporated into their structure.

Mr Stephenson moved on to advise Board members about the Loan Facility with Lloyds Bank and the recommendation from the Committee regarding the matter

RC 14/15-1.8 ii) to advise the Corporation Board that the Members of the Resources Committee have scrutinised the Lloyds Heads of Terms document and the Loan Facility Letter and:

- a) **have authorised Mr Stephenson and Mrs Taylor to sign the Heads of Terms agreement**
- b) **recommend that the required resolutions as detailed on the Loan Facilities letter are approved by the Corporation and are signed as required by the Chair of Board and the Clerk to the Board**

Mr Stephenson advised that committee members had spent a long time considering the agreement with Lloyds Bank for a £1m loan facility. He explained that the committee had recognised that the terms of the loan could be restrictive and that the number of covenants required had been worked through in as much details as possible to gain assurance that the college would be in a position to service the loan.

Mr Stephenson reminded the Board that at its last meeting it had given delegated authority to the Resources Committee to look at all these arrangements in details. Following that scrutiny Mr Stephenson and Mrs Taylor had signed the Heads of Terms agreement. Members were advised that on a day to day basis management of the loan facility will be the responsibility of Mrs Collinge and Mrs Jarvis (Finance Director). If there are any financial changes, the College has a duty to notify the Bank.

In summary members were advised that the College has negotiated a competitive deal, without overtly onerous conditions or hidden costs. There is flexibility to draw down the monies when required with minimal costs, although the Covenants are much tighter than those attached to previous loans. Members recognised that College Management and the Board will need to monitor regularly the financial situation to ensure that no covenants are breached. Members asked that the covenant situation is added as a risk to Key Performance Indicators. The Resources Committee will continue to monitor and check against termly outturn forecast and Financial Auditors will report on the situation as part of the year-end Financial Audit. Members also asked that a statement is made in the regular management accounts of the status against covenants. Following final discussion on the matter Members

RESOLVED
CB 14/15-2.8 A

that a loan facility in an original principal sum of up to £1,000,000 (the "**Facility**") be arranged with Lloyds Bank plc (the "**Bank**") and that the offer of such Facility made by the Bank in a letter dated 6th October 2014 (the "**Facility Letter**") be accepted and that **Mr Brian Stephenson (as Chair of the Corporation Board) and Mrs Sue Taylor (as Principal of the College)** be authorised to make the necessary arrangements with the Bank and to sign on behalf of the College the Facility Letter which was produced to the meeting and its terms and conditions approved.

Resolved further in respect of the operation of the Facility that:

- (a) **any one of Mrs Sue Collinge or Mrs Claire Jarvis** be and are hereby authorised on behalf of the College to give telephone instructions to the Bank for the purpose of (i) selecting interest bases or (ii) selecting certain interest periods, that are to apply from time to time to an amount outstanding under the Facility;
- (b) **any one of Mrs Sue Collinge or Mrs Claire Jarvis** be and are hereby authorised on behalf of the College:
 - (i) to give all written instructions to the Bank in respect of the drawdown and continuance of the Facility; and
 - (ii) to give written confirmation of all instructions that are not given to the Bank in writing.
- (c) **Mr Brian Stephenson as Chair of the Corporation Board** be and is hereby authorised on behalf of the College to appoint in writing additional authorised officials of the College for the purposes of Resolutions (a) and/or (b) above and that, on receipt of a certified copy of such appointment (together with a copy of their specimen signatures), the Bank be authorised to act on the instructions of such additional authorised officials;
- (d) the Bank be furnished with a list of the names of the members of the Corporation Board, the Clerk to the Corporation Board and other Officers of the College and that the Bank be authorised to act on any information given by any member of the Corporation Board or the Clerk to the Corporation Board as to any changes therein; and
- (e) the foregoing Resolutions do not in any way prejudice or affect the instructions to the Bank contained in Resolutions of the members of the Corporation Board constituting the bank mandate of the College.

Continuing, Mr Stephenson moved on to the Audited Financial Statements for 2013-14 observing that the commentary provided with the accounts was excellent and gave an admirable view of the College and its Financial status and should be read widely within the college. Board members were assured of its scrutiny by the external Financial Auditors, Grant Thornton and also additional scrutiny by both the Resources and Audit Committees. Members of the Resources committee had at their meeting resolved

RC 14/15-1.11 ii) to recommend the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st July 2014 to the Corporation Board for approval

Mr Stephenson commented that although the reported deficit of £67k, before the application of FRS17, was not as originally planned in the approved balanced 2013-14 Revenue Budget it was better than the anticipated outcome predicted throughout the 2013-14 period and thanks should go to all those staff who had made that possible. After final scrutiny, in which two small errors had been detected and corrected members

Resolved

**14/15 -2.8C i) to approve the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st July 2014; and
ii) That Mr Stephenson as Chair of the Corporation Board and Mrs Taylor as Principal and Accounting Officer for the College be approved to sign the said Financial Statements**

Finally Mr Stephenson moved on to the Tuition Fee strategies for FE and HE. Members were advised at the Resources Committee that there had been very minimal changes to the two strategies and members of that committee after discussion had resolved

RC 14/15-1.14 ii) to recommend the Further Education Fee Strategy 2015/16 to the Corporation Board for approval

and

RC 14/15-1.15 ii) to recommend the Higher Education Fee Strategy 2015/16 to the Corporation Board for approval

Board members discussed the fee strategies and

Resolved

14/15-2.8D to approve the Further Education Fee Strategy 2015/16

And also

Resolved

14/15-2.8E to approve the Higher Education Fee Strategy 2015/16

Items for Information, Discussion, Consideration and Board Approval

14/15-2.9 Board Strategic Update including Key Performance Indicators

The Principal presented her Strategic Update and updated members on the following:

Policy Update

The Association of Colleges has published the first of a new quarterly policy update, which summarises the national issues impacting college. Mrs Taylor recommended that if members had not had the opportunity to do so yet they should read through the appendix document as it provided a good insight into current issues.

AoC 2015 Manifesto for Colleges and National Conference

The Principal advised members that both she and Mr Stephenson had attended this year's AoC National Conference in Birmingham and a summary of the key issues arising from the keynote speakers was included at Appendix B. The message throughout the conference, less and less funding available for the FE Sector, participation and regenerating economy with decreasing levels of funding i.e. a more for less agenda.

Mrs Taylor went on to say that the sector is very volatile, a lot will depend on how resilient it is going forward and there was a risk that some colleges will not survive. The Skills Funding Agency has a close eye on the financial status of colleges and are now identifying high performing colleges who are now getting into financial difficulty.

Mrs Taylor also noted the AoC 2015 Manifesto for Colleges which provided the key focus for the AoC Conference. She directed members to the AoC website for further information

FE Commissioner's Annual Report

Mrs Taylor advised members the Commissioner annual report had been published in November 2014 and circulated to members. Increasingly, interventions are being driven by financial difficulties rather than performance. It would seem that the future has never been so unknown.

Lancashire Developments

Economic Impact Report

Mrs Taylor advised members that the report is now in its final draft. The report focuses on seven key sectors which were selected either because they were identified as priorities by the LEP or because they are major employers in Lancashire. The report provides really useful information about the current state of the nation and what the future will look like in terms of skills needs. They include:

- Health and Social Care
- Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing
- Financial and Professional Services
- Visitor Economy
- Energy and the Environment
- Construction and Creative
- Digital and Media

Mrs Taylor advised that it was pleasing to note that ACCROSS has been mentioned within the report and 3 case studies have been submitted. Once the report is finalised, ACCROSS as a college will receive its own report and the college's impact on local economy.

Blackpool and The Fylde College has now been confirmed as the National College Hub for onshore oil and gas.

Annual Visit to Westminster

Mrs Taylor advised members that she would be attending this annual event in January 2015. It gives Lancashire Principals the opportunity to lobby on behalf of the sector, get the Lancashire Colleges' voices heard and the chance to influence policies.

College Developments

Lanway/Netwise Joint Venture

Mrs Taylor advised that the heads of terms and memorandum of understanding for a joint venture were being drafted by the college solicitors. A feasibility study is taking place and is due to be completed by end of February 2015 with a contribution of £8k per partner, Mrs Taylor noted that the College's contribution would be in the form of staffing costs and cover for releasing teaching staff. Mrs Taylor reminded members that a group of Board members would be asked to contribute to the project by providing scrutiny of the possible joint venture.

New Website

Members were advised that the new college website was up and running, but with some tweaking still to do. The College had already seen a return on the investment with 137 learner applications being made through the website against zero last year.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Mrs Taylor led the discussion on the College KPIs data for 2013-14 and the targets for 2014-15. Mrs Taylor explained the key results for 2013-14 highlighting the effects of functional skills on college success rates.

Members discussed the 2013-14 actual results noting those areas where performance had not reached target and challenged the Principal and Vice Principals on the reasons for this. One area, progression to HE had seemed to drop considerably. The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) commented that this was because, as noted in a previous item, the tracking of student destinations had improved and this had caused this figure to appear smaller than the previous year. It was important to note that as this dynamic document rolls out over the next year or two some figures may change as systems improve and comparative methods used change.

Members were asked to approve the KPI targets for 2014. There was discussion around the targets and members asked if the target for GCSE A*-C English and maths was too high at 60%. Miss Higgin replied that this was where the College should be and robust plans are in place to achieve this including the establishment of an English & Maths Steering Group, which the Principal sits on.

Members commented that the format for this report was good and allowed easy access to information which could be used to provide challenge to the senior leadership team. Members were reminded that the underlying information for these KPIs is reported on regularly at committee meetings.

Resolved

14/15-2.9

i) to note the report;

ii) to approve the high level Key Performance Indicators for 2014-15

14/15-2.10

College Key Performance Indicators

This item was included within the Principals Strategic Update at Item 2.9.

14/15-2.11 Board Financial Update

The Vice Principal Business & Innovation presented a financial update to members. Mrs Collinge advised that the latest Management Accounts to 31st October, attached as appendix A to her report, provides a good summary of the College's position and also highlights the risks associated. At present the College is showing an under achievement on commercial targets and income loans. It is achieving some of the savings built into the budget pay costs and the Director of Finance and her team continue to maintain a very tight control over the budget.

Dr Lee commented that in relation to Learner Loans it was interesting that the departments that appears to be doing well against predicted target, in the original plan, are Access to HE and Hairdressing and both of these areas are currently involved in the Special Measures Process. Mrs Collinge explained the reason Access does well is that learners take out a loan progress to degree level and when they do progress their current loan is written off adding that nationally Access to HE courses are one of the most subscribed adult loan courses. Hairdressing is an area where adults re-skill and returning students will take out a loan to pay for this. The Care & Health sector is also attracting adults taking out loans to pay tuition. Members were reminded that loans do not have to repay before earn learners more than £21k.

Members noted that the financial update illustrates how tight the College 2014-15 finance situation still is and highlights the risks to be overcome. The situation will continue to be monitored at the Resources Committee and also at Board level.

Resolved

14/15-2.11 i) to note the report and the risks and issues contained within it.

14/15-2.12 Board Property Strategy Update

The Vice Principal Business & Innovation had prepared an update in relation to the current Property Strategy. Mrs Collinge highlighted, and members recognised, that there are risks around the following item but the College is working to alleviate and/ or minimise the risks.

Lloyds Bank have confirmed their offer of a loan facility of £1m which is required to supplement the £4m SFA Grant. This was dealt with at Item 2.8 of this meeting, but Mrs Collinge had included the item in this report. The details of the loan was scrutinised by the Resources Committee. Lloyds Bank's assurance that this loan would be made available was obtained before the construction contract was signed to mitigate the risk of insufficient funds being available to complete the Project. Following discussions with Lloyds Bank, some favourable adjustment to the financial covenants had been made.

Mrs Collinge reported that there is a risk that some of the SFA Grant will not be received if sufficient expenditure has not been incurred by 31st March 2015, at which point the SFA capital funding transfers to the LEP. In order to manage this risk, all items that can be purchased in advance will be bought and the College will obtain a bond to insure against the risk of goods being purchased but not received.

Resolved

14/15-2.12 to note the report and the risks identified

14/15-2.13 Board Curriculum and Quality Update: The College Self-Assessment Report

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented her report. The newly published Annual SAR was circulated to members. Miss Higgin highlighted the key areas of the SAR in her summary report which included the overall grades, curriculum team grade profiles,

and the College's key strengths and further areas for improvement. Members were asked approve the overall grades of Outstanding (1) for:

- Overall Effectiveness
- Outcomes for Learners
- The quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- The Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

Miss Higgin advised members that the College was self-assessed at grade one for 2013-14 and it was felt that the college had shown further improvement in terms of strengthening quality in curriculum and the systems to ensure the quality of provision.

Members were advised that the percentage of curriculum teams having a grade profile of good or better, following the recent curriculum review, was 81%, a 9% increase on 2012-13. It was felt that this was impressive set against a backdrop of more challenging targets, introduced limiting grades into the review this year and improved curriculum SAR profile for 13/14.

It was reported that there was also confidence that those teams in the requiring improvement or below categories will make the improvements required within a short space of time, demonstrating the impact of the College's performance management processes.

Miss Higgin reported that the Observation of Teaching and Learning process had produced a profile in 2013-14 of 78% good or better which was realistic as the college uses no notice regime, of which 30% was outstanding (8% higher than 2012-13).

Miss Higgin advised that Success Rates on the vast majority of lines are really strong, with an overall headline success rates of 91.7% excluding Functional Skills, which places the college again in the top 10% of colleges and 89.4% including Functional Skills.

Members were advised that the College is in a stronger position than this time last year when it was graded at Grade 1. The SAR report itself focus on the narrative statement, but sets out to demonstrate the impact of the college quality processes on its learners. Miss Higgin commented that it was an honest and self-critical reflection.

The quality processes will continue to be rigorously monitored on a termly basis by the Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee and an update provided at Board level.

Members expressed their appreciation of the work required in putting the comprehensive report together with an understanding that information contained in it comes from months of hard work across the college. The overall picture of the college presented in the report gave the Board great assurance that the evidence seen over the year at the Board and in its committee meetings confirmed that the college is still operating at outstanding level and that its rightful place was in the top 10% of colleges.

Mrs Taylor commented that, as Principal, she was always impressed by the honesty of the College's curriculum teams and that were the Senior Leadership Team hear about issues they immediately set about putting these right. The Senior Leadership Team had scrutinised the report and had all come to the same conclusion and were confident that all statements in the SAR were justifiable and that was the acid test for the Self-assessment grades.

Miss Higgin concluded by informing members that the single biggest risk to the Grade 1 in the future was the results within English and maths. She speculated as to whether those

results would be used as a limiting grade in forthcoming OFSTED inspections. However Miss Higgin was confident that the College has clear evidence of the progress being made in this academic year in these areas as discussed in item 2.9. To give the members assurance of this there would be a specific item presented on the progress with English and maths at the next Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee in March 2015.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) asked that if any members had any specific queries or comments about the SAR could they please contact her directly and she confirmed that the SAR would be upload onto the Skills Funding Agency "gateway" by end of January 2015.

Following final discussions members

Resolved

14/15-2.13

i) to note the report; and

ii) to approve the College Self-Assessment report grades of:

- Overall Effectiveness 1
- Outcomes for Learners 1
- The Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment 1
- The Effectiveness of Leadership and Management 1

The Chair thanked Mrs Taylor, Mrs Collinge and Miss Higgin for their informative and assuring reports

Other Business for Consideration, Discussion and Approval

There was no other business.

Governance

14/15-2.14 Declaration of any Confidential Issues

There were no items deemed to be confidential.

14/15-2.15 Date and Times of Next Meeting

Tuesday 24th March 2014

The Chair thanked all members for attending the meeting and wished everyone a happy and enjoyable festive season and New Year. The Chair also thanked staff members for the contributions they have all made throughout the year.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm