Hereford
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Present: Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mr Martin Churchward, Mrs Carol Clapham,
Mr Charles Davies, Mr Rob Doran, Mrs Diane Evans, Dr Jonathan Godfrey,
Dr Marion Hawkins, Mr Clive Hodgeman, Mr Chris Hodson, Dr Ken Hopkins (Chair), Mrs Heidi
Macdougall, Mr James Miller, Mr Ravi Tandon, Phil Tranter, Mrs Shirley Tully   (16)

In attendance: Mr Peter Cooper (Deputy Principal), Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk).

1.   **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
        Mr Rob Newton, Mr Shubham Kulkarni, Dr Amber Tahir   (3)

2.   **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS**
        None.

3.   **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2016**
        The minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed.

4.   **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
        None.

5.   **CLERK'S REPORT**
        The Clerk confirmed that membership of the Governing Body remained at 19.

6.   **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**
        The Principal presented his report and began by summarising the results from the Mock Inspection
        carried out by senior staff from other SFCs. The 'inspectors'' report was extremely positive about all
        aspects of the College. An action plan had been prepared to ensure all findings were acted upon. All
        College Governors are required to complete safeguarding training. The Clerk confirmed that Governors
        who had not yet completed training would be contacted by the Director of Studies with responsibility
        for safeguarding.

        The Principal went on to confirm that the College is one of 7 finalists for the TES Sixth Form College of
        the Year Award. Copies of the College's application statement were circulated, as providing a good
        summary of the overall work of the College. The awards will be determined at a ceremony in London on
        22 April.

        In response to a member's question about staffing and recent appointments, the Principal confirmed
        that the College was very happy with the appointments made, although some fields might have been
        larger.

        Under local and national issues, the Principal indicated that a 1 day strike was to be held by the NUT in
        SFCs on 15 March. The Area Based Review (ABR) would be dealt with separate item later in the agenda.

7.   **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
        (i) Audit Committee 1 March 2016
        The Committee Chair presented the Minutes of the meeting, and outlined that the Committee had:
        • received the Final report on the review of the College's ICT Infrastructure Arrangements

2015/16
- reviewed the performance of the Financial Statements auditors
- reviewed the Committee's Terms of Reference with no changes, and recommended them to the Board
- received and reviewed a Value for Money report 2015/16
- reviewed the Risk Management Action Plan.

The ICT Infrastructure review, carried out by the Internal auditors, highlighted a number of opportunities to further enhance the College's ICT infrastructure, including improvements to the College Wi-Fi network. The College was presently looking at specifications for a new network facility to cope with the growing number of connections required. In relation to the review of the External auditors, the overall performance was 'very good'.

After a brief discussion, the Board accepted the Committee's recommendation and **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Committee's Terms of Reference with no changes.

The Committee's Minutes were then considered and **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD.**

(ii) Search Committee 3 March 2016
The Committee Chair presented the Minutes of the meeting and confirmed that the Committee had:
- reviewed the size and composition of the Governing Body
- considered possible new governors

4 independent Governors whose current terms of office expire in October 2016, had each indicated a wish to retire. After detailed discussion, the Committee had agreed to keep the matter of the size and composition of the Governing Body under review.

The Principal and the Chair of Governors had interviewed 3 possible co-optee candidates in the week following the Committee meeting. The Committee had been appraised of the candidates' background details, and their interest in the College. The Clerk confirmed that he had subsequently contacted all 3 candidates to progress their co-option to Committees. The Principal confirmed that he was also in discussion with 2 other possible co-optees.

The Committee's Minutes were then considered and **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD.**

(iii) Finance and Premises Committee 3 March 2016
The Committee Chair presented the Minutes and confirmed that the Committee had:
- reviewed its Terms of Reference and recommended them to the Board with no changes from the previous year
- reviewed the Monthly Management Accounts for January 2016 which show the College's finances remain in a good position with Net Current Assets at £2.195m.

The Committee Chair confirmed that estimated costs for Wi-Fi improvements had been built into the College's 2015/16 figures. Formula funding protection, £437k in 2015/16, and thought to have terminated, will now continue, but will reduce over a 6 year period. Financial forecasts for 2016/17 onwards will be updated accordingly.

The Committee recognized the importance of ICT infrastructure and its enhancement, and suggested that the Board receive a presentation as to what the College currently has in place, and what possibilities are 'out there' for colleges for the future. The Principal agreed to follow up on what might be arranged.

After a brief discussion, the Board accepted the Committee's recommendations and **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Terms of Reference and Management Accounts for January 2016.

The Committee's Minutes were then considered and **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD.**

8. **(i) COLLEGE'S MISSION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**
The Principal presented the College's Strategic Development Plan 2016/17 to 2018/19, outlining where the Plan had been updated to take into account the various suggestions made by members. Key challenges now included:
- maintain distinctive mission following the Area Based Review
- maximising benefits of academy status if appropriate

Referring to the 3 year financial strategy included within the Plan, the Principal confirmed that Wi-Fi and other IT improvement costs and changes to Formula Funding Protection had been incorporated.

The Board discussed the Mission Statement and the various aspects of the strategic objectives, noting the changes that had been made.

The Board then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the College's Mission Statement and Strategic Development Plan 2016/17 to 2018/19.

(ii) AREA BASED REVIEW
The Chair and the Principal presented a summary of the College's ABR outcomes to date, possible ABR options and Academisation.

The Chair and Principal had attended Briefing and Steering Group meetings, and there had been a positive site visit by SFC advisors to the ABR. No actual written recommendations from the site visit, but advisors confirmed College of high quality, in good financial health and with robust strategic plans based on recruitment trends and demographics.

Next steps for the Review include an invitation to colleges to present their development options to ensure they are financially viable. All SFCs are able to apply to become Academies. Colleges wishing to seek Academy status must do so as a coherent part of an ABR, demonstrate commitment to collaboration and after consultation with stakeholders. The Academisation process involves:
- business case agreed by Governing Body
- proposal to ABR team and application to DfE
- action plan for consultation and legal work
- Academy Order grated by DfE
- dissolution of existing Corporation

Features of Academy status outlined, and discussed, included:
- ability to reclaim VAT
- some loss of autonomy (especially in a MAT)
- required collaboration with partners to improve quality and efficiency
- increased regulation
- oversight by Regional Schools Commissioner
- less freedom to borrow
- no ablty to recruit overseas students or deliver directly funded H.E.

The options available to a college, status quo, single academy trust or multi-academy trust were outlined, including the advantages and disadvantages of each option. The timescale indicated was in the order of 6 months after the final ABR Steering Group meeting.

The Chair made clear to Members that discussion at this stage was merely to decide whether or not the College should express an interest at the ABR in becoming an Academy, and that further discussions would be required as more details emerged.

Members discussed the options in some detail, including questions about the benefits of Single over Multi-Academy Trusts, collaboration, VAT and the possible influence on VAT of an 'EU no vote'.

After a very broad discussion, the Board **AGREED** that, at this stage, it was content to express an interest in Academy status and collaboration.

9.   ANY OTHER BUSINESS
None.

10.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING
6.00pm on Thursday 19th May 2016