



Leading learning and skills

A report by the Learning and Skills Council on the capacity of Harlow College to deliver proper and reasonable provision from September 2007 for learners in the community

31 JULY 2007

CONTENTS	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Background	3
3. Overall Conclusion	5
4. Methodology	5
5. Findings	8
6. The Issues and Risks	13
7. Recommendations	15
8. Annexes	
1) Scoping document	17
2) Curriculum review	19
3) Staff recruitment strategy	20
4) Membership of Harlow College Corporation Board	24

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This review has been undertaken by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to ensure that the learners in Harlow have access to a breadth of opportunities and quality learning at Harlow College. The Review has resulted in this report.
- 1.2 This report is presented to the Harlow College Corporation Board and the LSC Essex Council. The objective of the report, drawn from the report scoping document, is:
- To report on the capacity of Harlow College to deliver proper and reasonable provision from September 2007 for learners in the community.
- 1.3 The scoping document set out the following aims for the report:
- To satisfy LSC that Harlow College can deliver proper and reasonable provision from September 2007 for learners in the community.
 - To report on the findings by 31 July 2007.
- 1.4 At the Corporation Board meeting on 12 July 2007 the scoping document was discussed and agreed. A copy of the scoping document is at Annex 1 to this report.
- 1.5 The LSC would like to acknowledge the staff, governors and learners who have contributed to this report.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2005/6 the College's overall success rate was slightly below the national average. These overall results comprised 36% unsatisfactory success rates and 37% excellent success rates, the balance of 27% being satisfactory or good.
- 2.2 Ofsted reported in their January 2007 inspection that the College had a good understanding of itself and considered the College's new Teaching and Learning Strategy to be a key strength in its demonstration of capacity to improve. With the support of the College's Corporation Board, the new Principal is moving to implement the Teaching and Learning Strategy from September 2007.
- 2.3 The following text is drawn from the Teaching and Learning Strategy in order to illustrate the ambitions behind the it. It has been supplied by the College:
1. *Harlow College (working with its partners) intends to achieve excellence. It intends to achieve excellence not in isolated pockets but across the full range of its work.*
 2. *To achieve excellence the College must make the strongest possible impact on each individual student and the strongest possible impact on*

the wider community through the development and progress of its students.

3. *The values that the College has, and how the College behaves and manages itself to achieve excellence, are of great importance. How the College should act and manage itself can be summed up as "putting students at the heart of the College".*
4. *In essence this is where:*
 - i. *The whole college community cares passionately about the welfare, development and progress of each individual student*
 - ii. *Everyone plays a part in encouraging and enabling each student to reach their potential - in terms of qualifications gained and grades achieved*
 - iii. *There is a strong focus on demonstrating, utilising and building the wider skills, competencies, characteristics and attitudes that students need to be successful in the College and in the wider world*
 - iv. *Staff are committed to building, where needed, the aspirations, confidence and self-esteem of students*
 - v. *Although there is a clear focus on each individual, the College seeks to be a strong learning community where students not only learn, mature and gain their qualifications/grades but enjoy themselves and have fun and in which achievements are celebrated.*
 - vi. *As a learning community, all staff are committed to being learners themselves. Part of this involves collaborating with, and learning from, each other.*
 - vii. *All staff constantly consider how their roles, and the service they provide to students and staff, can help others in the college community to increase the effectiveness of student learning.*

2.4 Under this new strategy, the delivery of teaching and learning will be carried out in a radically different way than has hitherto been the case and a new staffing structure was developed to support the strategy.

2.5 In moving towards implementing the new structure, employment relations have become seriously strained with some staff (especially those represented by the trade union, UCU). This has led to an industrial dispute being called by UCU and to strike action being taken. Some students have also supported the strike action. The College has now advised us that ACAS is working with the College and the UCU.

2.6 A significant number of staff have left the College and an extensive staff recruitment campaign is currently underway.

2.7 Therefore, and in light of the background to the current situation at the College, the LSC considers that in order to discharge its statutory duty, it should establish the College's capacity to deliver proper and reasonable provision from September 2007 for learners in the community.

3. Overall Conclusion

3.1 Harlow College has provided information to demonstrate that the College believes it will have sufficient resources to deliver the expected level of provision from September 2007 for learners in the community.

3.2 However, as the staffing and capacity is not yet fully in place there is a level of risk to the learner experience.

3.3 The overriding concern for all of us in the learning community is the learner. Therefore, the recommendations at the end of this report will require a number of actions to be taken which will increase the level of assurance for the College, the LSC and the community.

4. Methodology

4.1 Curriculum review

4.1.1 A review of the curriculum offered by the College has been carried out. We have compared the offer contained in the 2006 prospectus with that contained in the 2007 prospectus (College publications: 'Full time guide for 16-19 year olds 2006/07' and 'Full time guide for 16-19 year olds 2007/08').

4.1.2 Our findings are shown at section 5.1 below. Annex 2 contains our complete analysis.

4.2 Demand for learning

4.2.1 Demand for learning at the College in September 2007 has been reviewed by comparing information supplied by the college and LSC's data and discussions with the Connexions Service.

4.2.2 Our findings are shown at section 5.2 below.

4.2.3 Essex Southend and Thurrock Connexions has supplied the following information: 'We have reviewed the intended destinations for young people leaving year 11 this summer and compared this with destinations for 2006 year 11 leavers for Harlow. The data for intended destinations does not identify specific post 16 providers but rather an area of preference e.g. college or 6th form. There is no significant variation in the percentage identifying FE College as an intended destination at this time; the picture is broadly comparable to last year. Until enrolment time, however, we are unable to quantify the final position.'

4.3 Employer confidence

4.3.1 College data shows that the College has grown its LSC funded Train to Gain business throughout 2007.

4.3.2 Our findings are shown at section 5.3 below.

4.4 Focus group meetings

4.4.1 Following an invitation from the Chair of the Corporation, the LSC East of England Regional Director and LSC Essex Area Director facilitated five focus group meetings at the college on 11 July 2007, supported by an LSC Essex Partnership Adviser. The groups comprised representatives of:

- The three trades unions (UCU, Unison and ACM)
- Motor vehicle and engineering teaching staff
- Managers for the media area
- ESOL and basic skills management and teaching staff
- Learners
- Support staff

4.4.2 A final meeting, comprising four members of the College's Corporation Board, was facilitated on 12 July 2007 by the LSC Essex Area Director, supported by the LSC Essex Partnership Director.

4.5 How LSC has been kept informed

4.5.1 The LSC has been kept informed by the College about the strategic thinking behind the Teaching and Learning Strategy through scheduled business meetings.

4.5.2 Details are explained at section 5.5

4.6 Staffing position for September 2007

4.6.1 The College has supplied data showing the proposed staffing position. Figures presented suggest that the staffing levels in September will be in line with the number agreed by the Corporation.

4.6.2 The College has also supplied details of its staff recruitment strategy. Details can be found at Annex 3.

4.7 College contingency plan

4.7.1 The College has provided information about how staffing in each direct delivery team is building up for September 2007, by curriculum area, job title and staff numbers.

4.8 Partner and stakeholder support

4.8.1 A desk top review has been carried out of the minutes of key stakeholder groups.

4.8.2 Additionally, the Principal has supplied copies of the minutes of the Harlow Education Consortium (HEC) meetings held on 10 November 2006 and 23 March 2007.

4.8.3 The relevant sections from the Minutes of these groups are detailed below.

4.8.4 Harlow 14-19 Area Planning Group

The minutes of meetings held on 2 October 2006, 22 November 2006, 21 February 2007 and 25 April 2007 have been reviewed. The minutes of the

meeting held on 20 June 2007 have not yet been received. One reference relevant to this report was found, at Minute 5.1.b in the minutes of the meeting dated 2 October 2006, thus, 'Harlow College is currently consulting internally on a new Teaching and Learning Strategy'.

4.8.5 Harlow 2020 Partnership Board

The minutes of meetings held on 1 September 2006, 24 November 2006 and 23 February 2007 have been reviewed. No references of relevance to this report were found. The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2007 are not yet available.

4.8.6 Harlow Education, Learning and Skills Action Group

The minutes of meetings held on 8 September 2006, 3 November 2006, 2 March 2007, 27 April 2007 and 22 June 2007 have been reviewed. No references of relevance to this report were found.

4.8.7 Skills for Health – the Harlow Project

The minutes of meetings held on 11 September 2006, 6 November 2006, 22 January 2007 and 12 March 2007 have been reviewed. The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2007 have not yet been received. No references of relevance to this report were found.

4.8.8 Harlow Education and Employer Partnership (HEEP)

The inaugural HEEP meeting was held on 17 April 2007. Papers from the meeting contain no reference of relevance to this report. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2007 are not yet available.

4.8.9 Harlow Education Consortium (HEC)

The minutes of the HEC meeting held on 10 November 2006 record at Minute 3:

'Harlow College Teaching and Learning Strategy

- Document tabled by Colin Hindmarch (Principal) for discussion.
- Initial reactions were positive; common approach in a number of key principles were noted
- CH felt that consistency of expectations could help underpin future exploration of staff being appointed more frequently to work in school and college setting'

And at Minute 4:

'School/College operation of post 16 provision (closely linked to previous item)

- Historic examples given
- Brief discussion of timetabling, contractual issues
- College also very interested in the possibilities offered by joint appointments'

The actions were recorded as:

- 'Schools to share Teaching and learning policy or strategy as necessary
- Schools invited to engage in teaching partnership development.'

4.8.10 The minutes of the HEC meeting held on 23 March 2007 record at Minute 12:

- 'Staff restructuring at Harlow College

Further details of future plans for Harlow College were given by CH. During the autumn term 2006 a Teaching and Learning review was undertaken. A new structure proposal will be put before the Governing Body soon.

There has been resistance from some staff although some areas have already embraced changes. Two unions have approved and one opposed. If there is no agreement there will be a 90 day consultation period.

CH is confident for the future of the College but acknowledges there may be areas of difficulty in the autumn term. CH was thanked for sharing plans.'

4.9 A membership list of the Harlow College Further Education Corporation is at Annex 4.

5. Findings

5.1 Curriculum

5.1.1 Our review of the curriculum offer for 2007/08, comparing it with that offered for 2006/07 shows that there are very few changes between the two years.

5.1.2 For 2007 there is a slightly extended entry level offer and minor changes at AS level, i.e. the addition of World Development and the removal of Physical Education. In all other curriculum areas, with the exception of Early Years Care & Education and Floristry, there is an increased range of qualifications offered for 2007/08. In Hospitality and Catering the College is offering VRQs in place of some NVQs but the range of subjects is broader. Apprenticeships are being offered in the same areas as in 2006/07, with the exception of ICT. This is due to the implementation of LSC's policy on minimum levels of performance.

5.2 Demand for learning

5.2.1 The College estimates learner numbers (FE funded) for September 2007 (full time equivalents [FTE]) to be 3000. LSC data shows a figure of 2963 (2142 16-18s and 821 adults). The LSC funding allocation with the college for 2006 (FE funded) showed a figure of 2913 FTE (1980 16-18s and 933 adults); LSC's database for college performance in 2006/07 (in-year estimate at July 2007) shows a total figure of 2874 FTE (2040 16-18s and 834 adults).

5.2.2 The LSC's 2007/08 allocation to the College represents growth in provision of some 50 learners overall over 2006/07. The College appears to be recruiting learners in line with LSC priorities and its development plan.

5.2.3 In addition, LSC data shows that the College intends to offer 96 places to 14–16 year olds under the 14-16 Increased Flexibility Programme.

5.2.4 Furthermore, at the end of June 2007, the College was offering training to 227 Work Based Learning Apprentices (an 'average in learning' figure) not included in 5.2.1 or 5.2.2. For comparison, the College had 191 (an 'average in learning' figure) Apprentices in training in June 2006.

5.3 Employer confidence

5.3.1 Data on the College's engagement with employers shows that since January 2007 the College has engaged 24 new employers through Train to Gain.

5.3.2 In other funded programmes, the College has informed us that they have engaged 112 new employers (59 employers for Apprenticeships) since January 2007.

5.4 Focus group meetings

5.4.1 The focus group discussions indicate that there is support within the College for the Teaching and Learning Strategy. In the view of participants in the focus group meetings, it is also clear that the College faces many challenges in implementing it.

5.4.2 The key issues that emerged from the five focus group meetings on 11 July 2007 were:

- Students value the opportunity to achieve daily targets.
- Staff welcomed the team approach within the Teaching and Learning Strategy.
- A strong view that ACAS be brought in to advise the College management on the implementation of the staff structure.
- The College has lost 'corporate knowledge and history' of its ways of working with the loss of a large number of experienced staff.
- Cross-College communication needs to be improved.
- Support staff are unclear about management requirements.
- Cross-team working and the sharing of good practice should be developed quickly.

5.4.3 Key issues to emerge from the focus group meeting of governors held on 12 July 2007 were:

- There is strong support for the principles of the Teaching and Learning Strategy.
- The right staff might not be in post for September 2007.
- The critical next four to five months will need careful management.
- Concerns to manage the College's reputation positively through a considered Public Relations strategy and plan (internal and external).

5.4.4 The number of people attending the focus group meetings was 34, excluding LSC staff.

5.5 How the LSC has been kept informed

5.5.1 This section considers the remit of both the LSC and the Harlow College Corporation, and how we have worked together.

5.5.2 Remit of the LSC – the primary statutory duty of the LSC is to secure the provision of proper and reasonable facilities for Post 16 Education (excluding higher education) and training suitable for the requirements of the learners in England. In order to fulfil this duty the LSC has the power to fund providers of post-16 education and training including Further Education Corporations. However Further Education Corporations are independent bodies and the LSC can only intervene in the management of a college's affairs in accordance with the powers it has been given by Parliament. In particular the LSC has no power to intervene in respect of matters arising from the relationship between the Corporation and its employees.

5.5.3 The role of the Governing Body of a Further Education Corporation is set out in the Instrument and Articles of Government. The Instrument and Articles set out the respective responsibilities of the governing body and the Principal, and lay out the rules for the conduct of the college's business. The ultimate authority and accountability lies with the governing body. The Instrument and Articles make clear that some functions are too important to delegate. These are:

- The determination of the college's educational character and mission;
- The approval of the annual estimates of income and expenditure;
- The safeguarding of the college's assets, and ensuring its solvency; and
- The appointment and dismissal of senior postholders and the clerk.

5.5.4 The Governing Body also has wide discretion over its use of public funds and it is ultimately responsible for the proper stewardship of those funds. The financial responsibilities of the governors in relation to the LSC are to:

- Require the principal to take personal responsibility, which shall not be delegated, to assure them that there is compliance with the financial memorandum and all terms and conditions referred to above; and
- Ensure that the LSC's funds are used in accordance with the corporation's statutory powers, the financial memorandum and any other conditions that the LSC may from time to time impose.

5.5.5 The LSC has been kept informed by the management team of Harlow College on the principles behind the Teaching and Learning Strategy.

5.5.6 The LSC, through its partnership team working, has liaised closely with the College over the last few months in relation to the regular business relationship. There has been increased liaison during the last few months when it was necessary for the LSC to establish from the College that appropriate arrangements had been made for students during the unsettling period in May and June 2007.

5.5.7 The LSC did express to the College management that there was a risk to the College's reputation and learner confidence through April, May and June 2007 and provided Public Relations (PR) support at a difficult time when

there was no PR in place. The College subsequently chose to commission PR consultants.

5.5.8 In summary, the College informed the LSC of the principles behind the Teaching and Learning Strategy, and they responded to requests for assurance.

5.6 Staffing position for September 2007

5.6.1 Our analysis of data supplied by the College indicates:

5.6.1.1 In 2006/07 the College had 205 direct delivery staff (affected by the restructure) and an additional 71 other direct delivery staff (not affected by the restructure), giving a total of 276 staff which equated to 210 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) (76%).

5.6.1.2 As a result of the selection process the College lost 79 staff. It is noted that the 26 staff who declined offers of post had above acceptable interview scores – the minimum was 67% and the decliners scores averaged 76%. We infer from this that some expertise has been lost to the College.

5.6.1.3 The College states that 122 existing staff have accepted new contracts; this number, added to the 71 unaffected other direct delivery staff, brings the figure to 193. However we note that some of the 71 may have been promoted and could be part of the 122 figure. Applying the same 76% FTE modelling to this figure yields 148 FTEs - a reduction of 62 FTEs on the 2006/07 number.

5.6.1.4 As of 16 July 2007 a further 21 new appointments had been made, bringing the total number of people to 214 (193 +21). Applying the same 76% modelling formula yields 164 FTEs (148 +16). This indicates that there is a gap of 62 people (47 FTEs) compared with 2006/07 levels. The papers received from the College indicate that they intend to recruit 24 FTEs reducing the gap to 23 FTEs which represents a reduction in percentage terms of 11%. This is well within the 20% reduction agreed by the College Corporation.

5.6.1.4a As of 31 July 2007, the College advises that 45 new staff appointments have been made (38.8 FTEs).

5.6.1.5 Figures presented by the College on 22 July, 30 July and 31 July 2007 suggest that the staffing levels in September will remain in line with the number agreed by the Corporation.

5.6.1.6 The College has also supplied information about planned staffing in the context of wider HR issues, e.g. training. Our digest of this information follows:

- All candidates are inducted into the Teaching and Learning Strategy as part of their college introduction and skills test. Their appointment is dependent, in part, on their understanding of, and commitment to, the strategy.

- A number of key tutor appointments have already indicated that they will meet with teams to plan and prepare before taking up their appointment.
- From 21 August 2007 onwards, all delivery staff will be taking part in further intensive team planning and team-training sessions to continue the planning process that has taken place to date.
- All new staff will be appointed a mentor from within the team except for the few teams (such as Media) where the base of current staff rolling forward is too small. In these cases mentors will be chosen from other teams in the same faculty or from managers elsewhere in the College who have the in-depth curriculum knowledge, and knowledge of the Teaching and Learning Strategy needed.
- A series of weekly training courses, to be led by the Principal and senior management team, will begin on 21 August 2007 and run throughout the Autumn term until the first of the next series of Awaydays.
- Further development will take place through Awaydays once students are settled in their programmes and teams can plan suitable spaces in the schedule. The Awaydays will be a particularly important means by which the College will seek to develop a team ethos (strengthened by daily team meetings). In addition, all teams are required to build into their schedule sufficient time to plan as a team.
- The College will repeat, and extend, the management training programme run weekly (3 hours per week) by the Principal. The College is considering the further use of an external management training organisation to supplement its internal training of managers.
- The College will continue to provide appropriate training and support to its Governors.
- A key part of the Teaching and Learning Strategy is that managers, Principal Tutors and Senior Tutors, will as part of their daily duties be working with, observing, mentoring and supporting their staff (new and existing).

5.6.1.7 Paragraph 2.5 notes that ACAS is working with the College and UCU; this development is welcome.

5.7 College contingency plan

5.7.1 The College has not supplied a contingency plan but has provided information about its risk management strategy. The College is confident that it will have in place sufficient staff to provide at least the 2006/2007 level of service in all areas for the beginning of the autumn term of 2007/08.

5.7.2 The major staff recruitment programme will be concluded by 3 August 2007.

5.7.3 Whilst this process is taking place, the College is also identifying part time, short term and agency staff to fill any temporary vacancies. The College has also identified the curriculum expertise of its other staff, in particular its managers, in order to be able to fill any temporary gaps.

5.7.4 In addition, the College advises us that other local colleges and providers have advised the College that they have staff that can fill gaps; some information about this has been provided by the College.

5.7.5 The College assesses that the position of its 19 curriculum teams is as follows for the start of the Autumn term:

- 10 teams have, or expect to have, sufficient staff to deliver the 'full' service.
- 9 teams have, or expect to have, sufficient staff to be able to deliver at least the 06/07 level of service (a 'satisfactory' service).

5.7.6 On the information presented to us, the College expects to deliver an improved service (the 'full' service) to some 67% of its learners.

5.8 Partner and stakeholder support

There is limited evidence, from the sources reviewed, to suggest that partners and stakeholders have been actively engaged with the implementation of the Teaching and Learning Strategy.

6. The Issues and Risks

6.1 The information provided by the College advises that plans are in place to recruit the required level of staff, and that extensive staff development is scheduled.

6.1.1 However, the plans are not yet fully realised, and the resources and learner numbers will not be confirmed until September. For this reason, the report highlights a number of issues and resultant risks.

6.2 Staff Resources

6.2.1 Issue

The information provided gives some assurance that the staffing position for September has been analysed, and progress made on recruitment. The full staff profile may not be confirmed until at least September.

6.2.3 Risk

At the busiest time of the college year, there is a risk that a high level of new staff, temporary staff and some vacancies may impact on learner experience.

6.3 Staff Development and Mentoring

6.3.1 Issue

Staff development for new and existing staff is planned and ongoing, and will be scheduled into the working day. Internal and external resources will be used for the development.

6.3.2 Risk

The level of internal management resource required could impact on the availability of the management team at a business critical period for the college.

6.4 Change Management

6.4.1 Issue

The focus groups made it clear that, whilst there is support for the principles of the Teaching and Learning Strategy, its implementation will be challenging.

6.4.2 The early stages of the restructuring have been fraught and the impact of a significant level of staff leaving and industrial unrest has altered the planned starting position for September.

6.4.3 Risk

There could be competing demands and pressures on the Principal and management team. This may impact on the capacity of the team to drive College business, potential opportunities and manage risk.

6.5 Partner and Stakeholder Support

6.5.1 Issue

During this period of restructuring there is limited evidence to suggest the College has engaged effectively with the local community and with stakeholders and peers.

6.5.2 Risk

The College does not have a recognised position as the key driver, and as a partner, in developing the skills agenda for local businesses and the community.

6.6 Reputation, Public Relations and Media

6.6.1 Issue

The reputation of the College may have been damaged by the perceptions arising from negative publicity locally and nationally. It appears that the College did not recognise the extent of the risk to the College over the resources required to ensure effective public relations and stakeholder management.

6.6.2 Risk

The College's reputation will impact on business growth.

6.7 Learner Recruitment and Employer Engagement

6.7.1 Issue

The actual level of learner enrolments will not be known until September, although overall applications are currently at a similar level to previous years.

6.7.2 Risk

The risk is that the staff dispute and adverse publicity may impact negatively on learner numbers for 2007/08, affecting the breadth of the curriculum offer, forecast learner numbers and fees.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Based on the issues and risks arising from the findings, the LSC wishes the College Corporation to accept this report by 3 August 2007 and action the following recommendations numbers 7.1.1 to 7.4.

7.1.1 The Corporation to ensure further development of the College's action plan by 10 August 2007 for at least the period 1 August 2007 to 1 January 2008, to be submitted to the LSC by 13 August 2007, and covering:

- Meeting the demand for learning by enrolling learners to at least LSC the levels set out in the College's financial memorandum (FE, WBL).
- Satisfying employer demand, evidenced by the College's Train to Gain business.
- Managing staff recruitment to substantive posts, evidenced by vacancy filling rates.
- HR planning for staff development (including management and governor development) and team/ethos building in the new structure.
- Developing and implementing a communications and public relations strategy that should comprise both internal and external elements.
- Developing and implementing a relationship and reputation management strategy that is focussed on the Harlow community, the FE sector in Essex and the FE sector in the East of England.
- Developing and implementing the College's learner satisfaction survey in September 2007, seeking assurances about the quality of the learner experience in the first weeks of the Autumn term.

7.1.2 The action plan will include the submission to LSC Essex by 13 August 2007 of a proposal for support for the capacity of the College's senior management team and management and curriculum areas from the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA), in order to achieve the quality of customer experience and the excellence in teaching and learning to which the college aspires. The LSC will work with the Principal on the development of the submission and secure QIA resources to deliver the action plan.

7.1.3 The action plan will include the submission to LSC Essex by 13 August 2007 for the College to participate in the East of England peer review programme.

7.2 The Governing Body to ensure the implementation of, and review progress against, the action plan at each scheduled meeting.

7.2.1 The Governing Body to consider the delivery and outcomes of the action plan at the scheduled Strategic Planning Day to be held in January/February 2008.

7.3 The LSC hopes that the Governing Body will agree to take the actions set out in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2. However the LSC reserves the right to

impose additional conditions on the funding provided to the College if it is not satisfied that the Governing Body intends to take the actions set out.

7.4 The LSC will continue to work with the Governing Body and management team and provide support as appropriate. The Governing Body will invite the LSC to appoint two additional Governors to the Governing Body to provide additional expertise and support for the work of the College.

Learning and Skills Council
31 July 2007

SCOPING DOCUMENT

A review of the capacity of Harlow College to deliver proper and reasonable provision from September 2007 for learners in the community.

1. Objective

To report on the capacity of Harlow College to deliver proper and reasonable provision from September 2007 for learners in the community.

2. Aims

2.1 To satisfy LSC that Harlow College can deliver proper and reasonable provision from September 2007 for learners in the community.

2.2. To report on the findings by 31 July 2007 as detailed below.

3. Methodology

3.1 We will review the college's curriculum offer in 2006/07 and compare it with the planned offer for 2007/08, using college prospectuses.

3.2 We will measure the demand for learning in Harlow by comparing applications for courses starting in September 2007 with applications at this time (July) in 2006 for courses starting in September 2006 by:

- 16 – 19 year olds, by qualification.
- 19+ year olds, by qualification.

3.3 We will seek confirmation of learner demand (from young people) by requesting from EST Connexions their activity surveys of Year 11 leavers in Harlow in 2006 and 2007.

3.4 We will review employer confidence in Harlow College, using Train to Gain (TTG) as a proxy measure, by:

- Harlow College TTG performance since January 2007, looking at the number of employers using the college monthly.

3.5 We will facilitate focus group meetings with Harlow College staff and students to gather views on:

- The level of readiness to deliver the new ways of working, and
- seek any suggested actions which may support the learners.

3.6 We will review how LSC has been kept informed by the college of the implementation of the new teaching and learning strategy.

3.7 We will review the likely staffing position for September 2007, asking for information about:

- The number of Principal Tutor, Senior Tutor and Tutor posts in the new structure, by curriculum area.

- The number of current staff who have accepted posts in the new structure, by curriculum area.
- The number of current staff not appointed to the new structure, by curriculum area.
- The number of vacancies still to be filled, once the internal recruitment campaign closes.
- The number of posts advertised externally, by curriculum area. This is to include expressions of interest received, application packs requested, offers of interviews made, interviews conducted and appointments made, all by curriculum area.

3.8 We will seek information on the college's contingency plan for delivering the curriculum in September 2007 should all posts not be filled substantively, including information about the point at which the college reviews and evaluates the staffing provision and implements the contingency plan.

3.9 We will conduct a desk-based review of the minutes since September 2006 of key partner and stakeholder organisations in Harlow to review the level of community and key stakeholder comment, collaboration and involvement in the college's plans for change. These groups will be:

- Harlow 14 – 19 Area Planning Group
- Harlow 2020
- Harlow ELSAG
- Skills for Health (The Harlow Project)
- HEEP (Harlow Education Employment Partnership)

(Also included in this section will be securing a list of the members of the Corporation of Harlow College.)

4. Outcomes

4.1 LSC will provide an interim report on 16th July 2007 to the College Principal and Chair, and the Chair of LSC Essex Council.

4.2 Communication of the interim report, beyond 4.1 above, will be:

- To Harlow College Corporation – by the Chair of the Corporation.
- To LSC Essex Council – by the LSC Essex Area Director.

4.3 Communication of the final report will be as 4.2 above and also to the constituency MP by the LSC Regional Director, East of England.

LSC Essex
10th July 2007

CURRICULUM REVIEW



G:\All\Mid and West
Essex Teams\Partner

STAFF RECRUITMENT STRATEGY (INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE)

The College has adopted a strategic approach planned during the period January – March 2007, and underway since the start of the statutory consultation period (i.e. from 30 March 2007), towards recruiting staff to fill positions (once consultation was completed) that potentially may have become vacant as a result of the following:

- staff not applying for posts within the new structure
- vacancies not filled by the internal appointments process for ringfenced candidates (i.e. those at risk of redundancy)
- staff opting for redundancy in preference to posts offered

A variety of measures have been carried out to try to ensure that we are as fully staffed as possible across all curriculum areas for September 2007.

These are listed below:

- An extensive recruitment campaign has been underway since 28 June 2007 (the end of the consultation period) in terms of advertising posts in the press nationally, regionally and locally, as appropriate. In addition to advertisements in newspapers such as The Times Educational Guardian, Education Guardian and The Evening Standard, advertisements have appeared in specialist journals such as Education Today. They are also being placed in vocationally-specific, specialist journals in areas where this is appropriate
- Vacancies have been advertised internally so that support/non-teaching staff have had the opportunity to apply for posts. A number of such staff have taken this opportunity
- The college had a stand at the London Graduate Recruitment Fair on 19th and 20th June. All those who left their contact details were subsequently contacted by email, and many applied for posts.
- All university careers departments were contacted by email and given details of the tutor posts (and the link to The Times Educational Supplement and Education Guardian for Senior Tutor posts)
- On Wednesday 11th July 2007, there was an in-house information/recruitment evening held at the college. This had been advertised extensively in the local press and also in The Evening Standard. There were 60 attendees and a further 15 information packs/application forms were sent to enquirers who could not attend
- During the period April to July 2007 the college has been working with a recruitment agency to fill short-term vacancies. It also has established contacts with a number of other agencies, gathering information on their terms and conditions. Decisions have now been made as to which of them it would be most beneficial to work with to fill any remaining posts where this is judged to be the best method for recruitment. In the main, we are continuing to work with one agency and it already provided suitable candidates across four curriculum areas (Maths, Sociology, Psychology and Travel) who have been subsequently asked to submit applications. We have been able to

negotiate more favourable terms with the agency because of the potential volume of business. However, we are also using other agencies for specific posts where the agency is a specialist in the field. We are in daily contact with these agencies and are considering suitable candidates as they are put forward.

- An audit of the existing staff and their academic qualifications has been undertaken to identify areas of subject expertise that could be utilised. Where there is a shortfall in September 2007, work will be covered by managers with subject-specific expertise/ the necessary vocational experience. These managers have teaching qualifications. Fractional staff will also be approached with regard to temporarily increasing their hours
- Partner schools have been contacted in terms of whether they have
 - i) Any spare capacity and
 - ii) An interest in joint working and appointments. Three schools have responded very positively (Burnt Mill, Passmores and Brays Grove) and this is being further pursued in particular curriculum areas

The proportion of staffing expected (in September 2007) via schools is expected to be very limited

- The college is also contacting those staff who were previously hourly paid, who meet the criteria for vacant posts, to explore with them re-engagement by the college in September 2007 on fractional contracts, either permanent or fixed term as appropriate.
- Two open evenings were held on 2 and 9 May 2007 for adults wishing to consider training as assessors or trainers/lecturers in vocational areas. The first event was targeted at construction and engineering. It attracted 21 attendees with a further 14 being sent an information pack. Several have indicated that they would like to start training as assessors and/or trainers in September 2007. The second event was targeted at Early Years, Care, Hospitality and Warehousing with 11 attendees and a further 4 receiving information packs. We have contacted all attendees with information on vacancies
- Interviews have been underway for the last 7 (working days) and appointments are being made. Where necessary, and sanctioned by the Governing Body, inducements may be available to encourage the right calibre of applicant to accept posts. Further interviews will be scheduled throughout the summer period as necessary
- The college has already begun exploration with two local colleges to consider whether, should the need arise in September 2007; they may be able to assist us in covering any vacancies that need to be covered urgently. As the staff picture unfolds over the next two weeks we will, if needed contact other colleges and providers in the local area.

Standards set for recruiting staff

Appraisal

In April of this year, the college refined its appraisal process to include 16 measures of performance as follows:

- o 05/06 success rates / value added
- o Success rates for 06/07 classes (where available)
- o Retention rates for 06/07 classes
- o Average student attendance for 06/07 classes
- o Module results 06/07 (where available)
- o EV reports (where applicable)
- o Teaching' observation grades (latest available)
- o Staff absences
- o Live disciplinary penalty
- o Active Capability Action Plan
- o Level of commitment to the Teaching and Learning Strategy
- o Level of ability / commitment to team work in the context of the Teaching and Learning Strategy
- o Staff development attendance / completed
- o Staff qualifications – dates achieved
- o Formal student complaint (investigated and upheld)
- o Formal student compliments

The appraisal dialogue enabled staff to discuss their performance in detail and where appropriate submit extra evidence. The measures were then aggregated into a score which was moderated by senior management.

Internal recruitment (ring-fenced)

Internal recruits for posts in the new structure were re-scored where applicable at the short-listing stage to take into account evidence of movement on action plans agreed at appraisal.

Five scores were then allocated as a result of interview:

- A) "Carried in" score from appraisal process above, excluding (B) and (C) below
- B) Commitment to Teaching and Learning Strategy, as above, modified by the interview where appropriate
- C) Teamwork ability and commitment, as above, modified by the interview where appropriate
- D) Ability to deliver excellence in the job role applied for
- E) Subject knowledge

Candidates needed to score at least 50% in each category (and therefore be broadly neutral for B and C), with a total of at least 18 for PT and ST posts (i.e. a minimum overall score of 67%).

The average score for successful candidates who accepted the new contracts was 83.62%. The average score for those not appointed was 42.92%. Those

who did not apply scored 53.62% (these scores of course were unmodified by interview). Those choosing not to take up posts scored 76.37% on average.

External recruitment (including internal candidates following conclusion of the consultation process)

The above standards apply equally to the external recruiting process. The only exception is the "Carried in" score (A) which, of course, is not available for external candidates.

Therefore scores B, C, D and E are used as a result of the interview and skills tests. A degree of confirmation, of the college's opinion, is then sought through references.

The college is confident that the overall quality of its staffing, in terms of their ability to work effectively in teams to deliver an excellent standard of learning, is greatly improved as a consequence of its restructuring strategy.

ANNEX 4

Membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation

Category of Governor		Name	Date of Appointment	Date of Reappointment
Business	Consultant scientist	Martin Coleman - Chair	27.9.2004	26.9.2008
	Ex-NHS	Myrtle Prodger - Vice-Chair	26.1.2006	25.1.2010
	Accountant	Marie Highton-Thain	2.10.2003	1.10.2007
	MD of an ICT company	Chris Matthews	31.3.2005	30.3.2009
	GlaxoSmithKline	Mick Ray	14.7.2005	13.7.2009
	Solicitor	Brian Spencer	2.4.2007	1.4.2011
	Vice-Chancellor ARU	Mike Thorn	21.12.2006	20.12.2007
Co-opted	Actor, Arts Manager	Laurence Sach	31.3.2005	30.3.2009
		Vacancy		
Staff	Support staff	Mo A-Messoud	7.12.2004	6.12.2008 (by election) 1
	Teaching staff	Sean Lynch	19.10.2006	8.10.2010 (by election)
Students	Engineering	Alex Woolmer	21.12.2006	21.12.2007
	Electrical Installations	Paul Grant	2.4.2007	1.4.2008
Local Authority	Essex County Council	Eddie Johnson	21.12.2006	20.12.2010
	Harlow District Council	Rob Eschle	27.1.2005	26.1.2009
	ECC Learning Services	Vacancy	**	
Community	Secondary Head Teacher	David Brunwin	1.9.2004	31.8.2008
	Training Manager NHS	Martin Smith	2.4.2007	31.8.2008
Principal		Colin Hindmarch	Ex Officio	Ex Officio

** Essex County Council completing reorganisation in Children's Services and will then make new nomination.