**The Corporation of Newham Sixth Form College**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 July 2020**

**Members**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Gail May (Chair) | Independent Member | Present |
| Joanne Dean | Independent Member | Present |
| Mandeep Gill | Principal & Chief Executive | Present |
| Sohidul Hoque | Independent Member | Present |
| Julianne Marriott | Independent Member | Present |
| Jay Nair | Independent Member | Present |
| Martin Oakeshott | Independent Member | Present |
| Edet Okon | Staff Member – Teaching | Present |
| Paddy Salter | Independent Member | Present |
| Miklos Sarosi | Parent Member | Present |
| Julia Shelton | Independent Member | Present |

**Non-Members in attendance**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Michael Gainlall  Magdalena Johnson | Vice Principal Finance & Operations  Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress | Present  Present |
| Robin Jones | Clerk to the Corporation | Present |
| Martin Reed | Interim Assistant Principal Student Services | Present |
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**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Corporation NOTED that it was anticipated that all Members would be present although Jay Nair and Edet Okon would be delayed by a few minutes given other commitments.

**2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Members and the Clerk confirmed that there were no declarations of interest to be recorded on this occasion at this stage of the meeting based on the published Agenda.

**3**  **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 17 JUNE 2020**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 17 June 2020 were agreed to be a correct record.

**4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 17 JUNE 2020**

The Corporation agreed that, on this occasion, there were no matters arising from the Minutes of the last meeting which were not covered by the Agenda for this meeting or those planned for forthcoming meetings.

**5 CORPORATION DECISION TRACKER**

The Corporation received the updated Decision Tracker and NOTED that, given the training session for Members on role and responsibilities on 17 June 2020, an email exchange since the last meeting and the Agenda for this meeting, a number of items could be removed:

* COVID-19 – insurers informed of the College’s approach to addressing the reopening of the College buildings
* Fees Policy – 2020/21
* Further Education Bodies – Insolvency Guidance

The Decision Tracker would continue to be updated in the light of developments and presented to future meetings of the Corporation.

**6 REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Corporation received and discussed the report of the Principal & Chief Executive.

Members recognised that the main focus for the Executive over the past few months was to steer NewVIc through COVID-19 and the lockdown with the further limited opening of the College as from 15 June. It was originally intended to limit this to two weeks but was extended in the light of experience and benefits for students. The staffing was all based on volunteers.

Plans were underway for the return of students to the College in September 2020 with appropriate “bubble” strategies in place.

Shielding was due to end on 1 August 2020 and following periods of annual leave staff were expected to return to College unless there were exceptional circumstances which would be assessed by the College.

The Government continued to issue regulations and guidance and these were scrutinised on a line by line basis so that the College could put in place appropriate arrangements. The risk update would be shared with the Unions so that there was an opportunity to give feedback.

To provide Corporation Members with the opportunity to engage and be aware of developments a meeting of the COVID-19 Group would be arranged for early September (proposed date - 2 September 2020 at 4pm to be confirmed).

There continued to be uncertainty on the basis for awarding grades for A levels and vocational programmes and, as a result, it was anticipated that more young people would be going through clearing than ever before. The College was putting in place arrangements to support students for when the results were announced in mid August.

The Government had announced financial support for colleges to continue to provide meals during the summer vacation period but a lower level than for schools - £2.41 per day and not £3 per day for school pupils.

The Principal & Chief Executive also provided College non COVID-19 good news which included the following:

* Eight teachers had successfully completed their Outstanding Teacher Programme
* A number of individual and team awards had been made to NewVIc by AoC Sports
* The College won the Health & Wellbeing category at the annual SFCA awards

The Corporation agreed to NOTE the report of the Principal & Chief Executive.

**7 PERFORMANCE AGAINST STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

The Corporation received the updates against the 3 strategic objectives:

* Strategic Objective 1 – to have the best teaching, learning and curriculum
* Strategic Objective 2 – to be recognised as an inclusive and supportive College providing a holistic student experience
* Strategic Objective 3 – ensuring financial stability to allow continual investment in our resources and estate

The Principal & Chief Executive stressed, as he had done on a previous occasion, that, as a result of the pandemic and moving all provision to on-line, it was necessary to continue to review the basis of aspects of the KPI report.

A Member asked if staff were feeling valued at such a difficult time for the country.

The Principal & Chief Executive explained that staff had recently been invited to participate in a national survey (the York survey) although it appeared that the level of engagement was low which perhaps was not a great surprise at this time with so much uncertainty and the staff restructuring which, although paused, was a consideration for many.

The question posed was “what would help staff to make them feel more valued”? One approach by the Executive was to invite the Staff Council to take the lead and key outcomes would be made known to Members.

The Corporation AGREED::

1. To NOTE the updated KPI report which it was explained linked to the Risk Register as appropriate such as achievement rates, value added, students feeling safe, learner enrolments and staff costs
2. To appreciate that aspects of the KPI report would continue to be reviewed to reflect the reality of the prevailing circumstances arising from the lockdown
3. To look forward to receiving further updates at future meetings including on the important issues of staff feeling valued.

**8 BLACK LIVES MATTER**

The Corporation discussed the approach of NewVIc to the world-wide Black Lives Matter movement which, it was explained, had been developed in conjunction with other institutions.

The Corporation agreed:

1. To congratulate all those involved in progressing the College’s approach to Black Lives Matter as set out on the College website
2. To place on record the support of Members to the initiative
3. To note that the associated issues would continue to be addressed via student tutorials and staff development programmes and the College had made new appointments including a Equality & Diversity Manager to enable such initiatives to be resourced .

**9 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN – 2019/20**

The Corporation received the updated College Quality Improvement Action Plan for 2019/20.

It was recalled that the key areas for improvement were covered within 7 priorities:

* Priority 1 – Students to make better progress from their starting points in a significant number of A level courses and some vocational courses
* Priority 2 – GCSE maths 9-4 grades to meet the College target
* Priority 3 – Improve progression on A level linear courses from year 1 to year 2
* Priority 4 – Achievement for “white British” students to be more in line with their peers
* Priority 5 – Improve attendance
* Priority 6 – Improve the College’s finances
* Priority 7 – Improve staff survey results

These in turn had interim and final SMART targets with assessments of progress at specified points of the year.

The Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress explained that, as a result of the lockdown in March 2020, many of the objectives would not be achieved by the year end.

The Corporation was also advised that the College was preparing for the likelihood that a large number of students returning to the College in the Autumn Term or joining the College would be seeking to enter retakes which would have an impact on the organisation in terms of arrangements and staffing.

The Corporation agreed:

1. to note the updated Quality Improvement Plan and the overview provided by the Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress
2. to recognise the reasons why there would not be as much progress against targets as originally anticipated
3. to look forward to receiving further updates on progress against the Plan at future meetings of the Corporation.

**10 BUDGET – 2019/20 – MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR MAY 2020**

The Corporation received the Management Accounts for May 2020.

The Vice Principal Finance & Operations drew to the particular attention of Members the improving financial health position – specifically the operating surplus before exceptional items of £398,756 compared to the profiled deficit before exceptional items of £(609,711) .

The commentary covered a range of issues including:

* The key performance indicators with a Financial Health rating of outstanding
* Income & Expenditure Account
* Funding by the different streams including High Needs Learners
* Pay and non-pay costs
* Balance Sheet
* Cash and liquidity
* Cashflow forecast
* Effects of COVID-19
* Bank and banking covenants
* Early intervention triggers
* Risk analysis

The Corporation agreed to NOTE the Management Accounts for May 2020 and, whilst appreciating that there were still two months remaining in the current year, it was apparent that the financial health of the College was much improved relative to the position projected in August 2019.

**11 INCOME & EXPENDITURE BUDGET FOR 2020/21 AND UPDATED FINANCIAL PLAN FOR PERIOD TO 31 JULY 2022**

The Corporation received and considered at length the proposed Income & Expenditure Budget for 2020/21 and the Updated Financial Plan for the period to 31 July 2022.

The projections as set out in the comprehensive report provide for an operating surplus of £1,478,572 before exceptional items in 2020/21. After exceptional items the year end surplus was noted to be £652,572.

The key factors which provided for the surplus included the number of funded learners (an increase of 241 learners) and the increase in the funding rates.

It was appreciated that the planned staff restructuring had been delayed due to COVID-19 although, as the process was set in motion in 2019/20, there will be discussions with the Auditors on allocating the costs to that year rather than 2020/21.

The College’s overall pay costs continued to be reduced and at 72.2% were in line with the sector average for sixth form colleges.

The report also covered such issues as:

* A summary of the Balance Sheet incorporating the Budget for 2020/21 and the Financial Plan for 2021/22
* The Cashflow forecast to 31 July 2021
* The Strategic Objectives
* The financial objectives
* Early intervention triggers with “outstanding” anticipated for NewVIc in both 2020/21 and 2021/22
* Bank and banking covenants – all met
* Capital expenditure
* Sensitivity analysis
* Key risk analysis

Members were provided with the basis for the estimates having regard to the risks and such factors as the ongoing and uncertain impact of COVID-19 and invited to seek clarification as appropriate. Particular focus was given by Members to:

* staffing costs and the long term savings from the restructuring - these would continue to be tracked in the light of developments and updates provided for Corporation Members via the monthly Management Accounts
* Adult Education provision – planned review to assess if it fits within NewVIc’s education plans as a Sixth Form College – an option was to partner with a local adult skills provider – discussions were underway

The approval of the Budget and Updated Financial Plan as presented was proposed by Member Joanne Dean and seconded by Member Paddy Salter with all Members voting in favour.

The outcome position in summary was, therefore, noted to be:

1. The Income & Expenditure Budget for 2020/21 and the Updated Financial Plan for the period to 31 July 2022 were both APPROVED by the Corporation
2. The review of adult provision would be the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Corporation.

Members agreed to place on record their appreciation to the staff of the College for bringing about such an improvement in the financial health of NewVIc relative to the position projected a year ago when the Budget for 2019/20 was presented to the Corporation.

**12 FEES POLICY – 2020/21**

The Corporation APPROVED the Fees Policy for 2020/21 which included as Appendix 1 a refund policy statement.

**13 SAFEGUARDING POLICY – 2020/21**

The Corporation received the proposed updated Safeguarding Policy for 2020/21 to come into force on 1 September 2020. The basis for the changes were explained including the revised Keeping Children Safe in Education and the impact of COVID-19.

The Corporation agreed:

1. To APPROVE the updated Safeguarding Policy for 2020/21
2. To thank Paddy Salter as the Safeguarding Link Member for contributing to the review of the draft document.

**15 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

The Corporation received and considered the proposed updated Whistleblowing Policy as recommended by the Members of the Audit & Risk Committee.

The Principal & Chief Executive explained that the document circulated with the Agenda was based on the AoC model with additions to reflect the views of Members of the Audit & Risk Committee to make various statements as clear and helpful as possible.

The Corporation APPROVED the updated Whistleblowing Policy for immediate application.

**15 COLLEGE COLLABORATION FUND**

The Corporation NOTED the basis of the application submitted for financial support under the provisions of the College Collaboration Fund scheme as supported by Members of the Corporation via email. The outcome of the application should be known by the end of the month (July 2020).

**16 FE COMMISSIONER – COLLEGE COMBINED ACTION PLAN**

The Corporation received the updated the Combined Action Plan which reflected the ESFA early intervention notice and the outcomes from the Diagnostic Assessment Visit by the FE Commissioner and members of his team in November and December 2019.

Members were pleased to see that all but one of the issues listed were regarded as green or amber based on the traffic light indicators with only one red and that, in the big scheme of things, could be viewed as minor (ie an anticipated saving on professional fees which had proven not to be possible given the costs involved in pursuing the Matrix accreditation for careers – shortfall to be covered by other savings).

The Corporation agreed to NOTE the updated Combined Action Plan and the anticipation of the Principal & Chief Executive that based on discussions with the ESFA the College would be removed from the early intervention oversight arrangements.

**17 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE – 10 JUNE 2020**

The Corporation received and noted the unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 10 June 2020.

The main points of discussion at the meeting had been on:

* Risk
* Financial Statements Auditors – approach for carrying out the 2019/20 audit
* Internal Audit – implementation of recommendations
* Internal Audit – arrangements for the remainder of 2019/20
* Whistleblowing Policy

**18 BUDGET STRATEGY TASK & FINISH GROUP – 9 JUNE 2020**

The Corporation received the received and noted the unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting of the Budget Strategy Task & Finish Group held on 9 June 2020.

The main focus of the discussion at the meeting had been on:

* the budget implications of COVID-19 in both 2019/20 and 2020/21
* a comprehensive review of the Management Accounts for April 2020
* looking to the future in terms of the arrangements for budget setting and management

It was recognised that this was the final meeting of the Budget Strategy Task & Finish Group given the establishment of the Finance & Resources Committee as from 1 August 2020.

**19 GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE – 30 JUNE 2020**

The Corporation received and noted the unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting of the Governance & Search Committee held on 30 June 2020.

The main points of discussion at the meeting had been on:

* Corporation Membership – Independent, Staff and Student Members
* Skills and Knowledge Profile of Members
* Internal Audit Review of Governance
* Committee Membership and Calendar of Meetings – 2020/21

**20 MEMBERSHIP OF THE CORPORATION – UPDATE**

The Clerk advised that a recruitment campaign was underway through the AoC to seek to identify people with the skills and interest to join the Corporation as Independent Members.

The closing date for applications was noted to be 9 August 2020 and it was anticipated that the Governance & Search Committee would interview candidates in late August so that recommendations may be circulated to Members prior to the meeting of the Corporation scheduled for 7 October 2020.

The Corporation agreed to note the update provided by the Clerk on the membership of the Corporation and to look forward to receiving the outcome of the interviews of shortlisted applicants.

**21 MEMBERSHIP OF CORPORATION COMMITTEES – 2020/21**

The Corporation APPROVED the basis of the membership of the Corporation Committees for 2020/21 as presented by the Clerk subject to a further review in the Autumn Term given the anticipated appointment of several new Independent Members to join the Corporation.

**22 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2020/21**

The Corporation APPROVED the Calendar of Meetings for 2020/21 as circulated by the Clerk in the knowledge that:

1. The number of Corporation and Committee meetings would be kept under review in the light of the volume and urgency of the business to be considered
2. Where possible Committee meetings would place during College hours and not during the evenings
3. Meetings scheduled for the Autumn Term would be online until it was thought safe and appropriate to meet in person at the College

**23 CORPORATION CHAIR APPOINTMENT - UPDATE**

The Clerk provided the Corporation with an update on the arrangements being progressed with the aim of appointing a new Corporation Chair.

The Corporation agreed to note:

1. That three shortlisted applicants for the role of Corporation Chair would be interviewed on 17 July 2020
2. That a Special Meeting of the Corporation was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 22 July 2020 to receive and consider the recommendation of the Panel with a view to appointing a new Corporation Chair as from 1 August 2020

**24 LINK MEMBERS – HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Corporation APPOINTED Paddy Salter as the Health & Safety Link Member with immediate effect and thanked him for taking over this role until further notice.

The Clerk advised that the Link Member protocol was scheduled to be reviewed by the Corporation at the meeting scheduled for 7 October 2020 when there would be an opportunity to review the allocation of Members between the different roles.

**25 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT OF FE COLLEGES – THE NEY REPORT**

The Corporation noted the publication of the Independent Review of Financial Oversight of FE Colleges – the Ney Report – and the Written Statement by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, Gillian Keegan MP.

The implications for the NewVIc Corporation would be reviewed and appropriate items addressed with any appropriate reports and recommendations being presented as soon as practicable.

The Clerk took the opportunity to draw to the particular attention of the Corporation paragraph 8.4 of the published report which related specifically to governance and concerned:

* Declarations of interest
* Whistleblowing
* Conflicts of Interest Policies
* Publication of Corporation Minutes

The Corporation agreed:

1. That the individual Declarations of Interest forms completed by individual Members would be published when the 2020/21 updates were provided in September 2020 with care taken not to quote home addresses and other such information
2. To note that the new Whistleblowing Policy would be published on the College website
3. To note that the Conflicts of Interest Policy for NewVIc would be updated early in the Autumn Term and then published on the College website
4. To note that the College website includes up-to-date Minutes of meetings of the Corporation

**26 VOTE OF THANKS FOR GAIL MAY**

The Members of the Corporation recognised that this was the last meeting to be attended by Gail May before she stepped down from membership of the Corporation on 31 July 2020 having been appointed as a Member in December 2008.

Members took the opportunity to share the views relating to Gail May which included grateful thanks for her support, her leadership, her willingness to listen and her commitment to inclusiveness.

Gail May responded accordingly and, in wishing the College and the Corporation well in the future, spoke of her absolute pleasure of being involved with NewVIc for nearly 12 years notwithstanding the occasional challenges.

**27 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

The Minutes covering these items will be regarded as being confidential until agreed otherwise by the Corporation and will only be available to Members.

At this point the Principal & Chief Executive and all other members of staff (including the Corporation Staff Member) withdrew from the meeting.

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_