**The Corporation of Newham Sixth Form College**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 December 2020**

**Members**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Martin Rosner(Chair) | Independent Member | Present |
| Laura De Vos | Staff Member – Support | Present |
| Joanne Dean | Independent Member | Present |
| Mandeep Gill | Principal & Chief Executive | Present |
| Kieran Healy | Independent Member | Present |
| Sohidul Hoque | Independent Member | Apologies – other commitments |
| Kofo Ladele | Independent Member | Present |
| Julianne Marriott | Independent Member | Present |
| Simon Mayfield | Independent Member | Present |
| Habib Said Midh-Hir | Student Member | Present |
| Jay Nair | Independent Member | Present |
| Yvonne Odai | Student Member | Apologies - submitted later |
| Edet Okon | Staff Member – Teaching | Apologies – submitted later |
| Mandeep Sahotay | Independent Member | Apologies – unwell |
| Paddy Salter | Independent Member | Present |
| Elizabeth Scott | Independent Member | Present |
| Miklos Sarosi | Parent Member | Present |
| Julia Shelton | Independent Member | Present |
| Graham Willson | Independent Member | Present |

**Non-Members in attendance**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Amarjit Basi | Black FE Leadership Group | Present |
| Michael Gainlall  Magdalena Johnson | Vice Principal Finance & Operations  Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress | Present  Present |
| Robin Jones | Clerk to the Corporation | Present |
| Martin Reed | Assistant Principal Student Services | Present |
|  |  |  |

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Corporation NOTED that the majority of Members were present on this occasion and the meeting was quorate.

Two Members advised the Clerk that they were unable to attend and the apologies for absence were accepted from:

* Sohidul Hoque – other commitments
* Mandeep Sahotay – unwell

Yvonne Odai and Edet Okon submitted their apologies for absence following the meeting given other commitments and illness respectively.

**2 ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL HUMAN RESOURCES & STUDENT SERVICES**

The Chair of the Corporation welcomed Martin Reed to the meeting following his appointment to the post of Assistant Principal Human Resources & Student Services.

**3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Members 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.

**4**  **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2020**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 7 October 2020 were agreed to be a correct record.

**5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2020**

A Member asked if there had been any developments relating to the Climate Change Roadmap which had been raised at the last meeting of the Corporation.

It was explained that, given other priorities, this issue had not been progressed although the SLT was keeping a watching brief on the initiative and the opportunities for the College.

Other than this one item 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.

**6 CORPORATION DECISION TRACKER**

The Corporation received the updated Decision Tracker and AGREED that the item relating to the report of the FE Commissioner could be removed – see item 7 below.

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

**7 FE COMMISSIONER**

The Corporation noted that the report of the FE Commissioner had now been received and circulated to Members via email on 9 December 2020.

Following receipt of the report the ESFA had confirmed that the College was not now regarded as being in “early intervention”.

**8 BLACK FURTHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP GROUP**

The Chair of the Corporation welcomed Amarjit Basi, a key member of the Black FE Leadership Group, to the meeting for this item.

The Corporation was reminded of the background to this item – the Black FE Leadership Group had prepared an open letter to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Education, funders of further education colleges, regulatory bodies and membership bodies setting out proposals to address issues of race equality within the further education sector. The open letter included 10 proposals 4 of which were for others such as the ESFA and OFSTED to address although colleges could, as and when opportunities arose, persuade and encourage these organisations to implement.

It was explained that the use of the word “black” in this context was an inclusive definition covering all those from a minority ethic background.

The discussion at this meeting was a pilot for the planned roll out across the sector when it was hoped that all college corporations would address the issues associated with race equality and what could be done.

The Corporation received a table containing the 10 proposals with an assessment by the College SLT where NewVIc was in relation to the 6 points of direct relevance to the College.

Before starting the planned discussion – initially in three groups and then as a Corporation – a Member asked if this issue could be seen as the Corporation engaging in political activities which could have consequences. The Corporation was assured that the Black FE Leadership Group was non political and was not an arm of, for example, Black Lives Matter. It was noted that Gillian Keegan, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, had written in support of the open letter.

The Members of the Corporation shared their thoughts on the various themes arising from the 10 points and these would be summarised for further review possibly at the forthcoming Strategy & Planning Session or at the next meeting of the Corporation.

Two specific action points were identified:

1. A request to the Principal & Chief Executive that background data be provided for Members so as to help understand the various issues and the position for NewVIc
2. The College to look at the content of the item on the College website on Black Lives Matter to see if this needed updating in the light of experience and developments

The Corporation also acknowledged that, whilst this discussion had related to race equality, the same approach could be applied to other areas of possible inequality including sex and disability.

In terms of the experience of addressing the issues as a pilot for the Black FE Leadership Group, it was suggested that more time was needed for both the group and feedback sessions as well as the nature of the initial briefing so as to get maximum benefit.

Amarjit Basi thanked the Corporation for acting as a pilot for the discussion of the issues arising from the open letter to the Prime Minister and others which would be invaluable in the sector wide roll out.

*At this point Amarjit Basi left the meeting.*

**9 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Corporation noted that the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee and the Finance & Resources Committee had reviewed the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) associated with the respective Terms of Reference.

A presentation would be made to the next meeting of the Corporation so that all Members understood and could use the KPI reports which would be added to the Corporation area on the College website on an ongoing basis.

**10 COVID-19 – UPDATE**

The Principal & Chief Executive provided the Corporation with an update on the impact of COVID-19 on the College.

A number of issues were highlighted including the following:

* The call on colleges by the Government to put in place COVID-19 testing facilities for the beginning of the Spring Term during the week of 4 January 2021 with no regard to the limited time to make the necessary arrangements and the ongoing resource implications
* Apparently online training for those involved in the testing arrangements would be available next week when, at least in theory, the vast majority of staff should be on leave
* The reality was that the testing arrangements could not be in place by the beginning of January 2021 but every effort would be made to make progress in planning what was required and this included discussions with the London Borough of Newham arranged for the following day (17 December 2020)
* The number of staff and students who had tested positive for the virus or were isolating which had an impact on attendance, cover and the course bubble arrangements made by the College
* Examinations were scheduled for the beginning of the Spring Term and, therefore, a relatively large number of students were due to be on site even if online lectures and activities were arranged for those who were not due to take examinations

A Member asked about the financial impact of responding to the pandemic. The main source of income which for NewVIc was from the ESFA was currently protected and the only shortfall was from the loss of lettings of College accommodation. The additional costs were, however, significant and growing. To date there had been no additional material funding from the Government and none had been promised. The costs continued to be tracked and were set out in the monthly Management Accounts.

The Corporation agreed following a wide ranging discussion:

1. To thank the Principal & Chief Executive for the comprehensive update on the College’s approach to responding to COVID-19
2. To place on record the appreciation for staff and students in having to respond to the circumstances arising from COVID-19 and, specifically, that in the view of Members it was essential that all staff had a break from College and if this meant that there was a delay in having the testing arrangements in place so be it
3. To look forward to receiving further updates as and when there were any significant events and or changes in circumstances impacting on the College as a result of the pandemic

The Principal & Chief Executive thanked the Members of the Corporation for their understanding at such a difficult time for the country as a whole. The appreciation of the Corporation would be passed on to staff at the end of term awards event on Friday 18 December 2020 to which all Members would be invited to attend.

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

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

Members recognised that the main focus for the Executive over the past nine months or so was to steer NewVIc through the impact of COVID-19 and to provide learning opportunities whilst seeking to ensure as far as possible safe environment for students and staff.

A number of non COVID-19 updates were provided in the report including the following:

* The Lifetime Skills Guarantee launched by the Prime Minister in October 2020
* The Government’s Spending Review on 25 November 2020 which provided some benefits for FE although on this occasion this was only for one year at this time and not the usual three year horizon
* The impact of the use of Centre Assessment Grades in the summer of 2020 resulted in A level grades being awarded that were on average 12% higher GCSE grades that were on average 9% higher than they were for the summer 2019
* Examination performance data for 2019/20 would not be published in the normal national table format
* The launch by the Government on 23 October 2020 of the second stage of the consultation on “The Future of Vocational and technical qualifications at Level 3 and below”
* The publication of The English College of the Future report which, it was anticipated, would inform the forthcoming White Paper on FE to be published shortly although no firm date was yet known
* The College had provided the first on-line open day on 10 October 2020 with 873 registrations and 570 attendees on the webinar; a 65% turnout which compared favourably with the 51% turnout in 2019 when the event had been run on-site
* The development of a new partnership with the University of Law which had lots of advantages for both students and staff including progression opportunities.

The Principal & Chief Executive also provided a summary of the number of students who had applied through UCAS for a Higher Education place for 2020 and showed increases over the position in 2019. For example in 2019 67 students had been accepted by Russell Group Universities and this had increased to 115 for 2020.

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

**12 FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 4 NOVEMBER 2020**

The Corporation received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee held on 4 November 2020.

On this occasion the Committee had focussed on the following issues:

* Terms of Reference of the Finance & Resources Committee
* Management Accounts for September 2020
* Financial Regulations – Review
* Health & Safety Annual Report 2019/20
* Health & Safety Policy Statement
* Estates – Update
* Redundancy Policy & Procedure – Update
* Key Performance Indicators appropriate to the Finance & Resources Committee
* Work Plan for the Finance & Resources Committee

**13 FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 2 DECEMBER 2020**

The Corporation received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee held on 2 December 2020.

On this occasion the Committee had focussed on the following issues:

* Management Accounts – October 2020
* Financial Statements 2019/20
* Estates – Update
* Health & Safety – Update
* Key Performance Indicators appropriate to the Finance & Resources Committee

**14 FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Corporation APPROVED the amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Finance & Resources Committee as recommended by the Committee on 4 November 2020.

**15 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT**

The Corporation APPROVED the update of the Health & Safety Policy Statement as recommended by the Finance & Resources Committee on 4 November 2020.

**16 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE – 25 NOVEMBER 2020**

The Corporation received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 25 November 2020.

On this occasion the Committee had focussed on the following issues:

* Terms of Reference of the Audit & Risk Committee
* Post 16 Audit Code of Practice
* Financial Statements Auditors Report
* Regularity Self-Assessment
* Risk Register
* Internal Audit – Follow Up
* Internal Audit Review of Governance
* Internal Audit – Review of 2019/20
* Annual Report of the Audit & Risk Committee – 2019/20

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

The Corporation received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 10 December 2020 which had been arranged specifically to interview the shortlisted firms for appointment as Internal Auditors.

**18 INTERNAL AUDIT – REVIEW OF 2019/20**

The Corporation noted that at the meeting on 25 November 2020 the Audit & Risk Committee had received and discussed the Internal Audit Review for 2019/20 which had been prepared by Mazzars in lieu of an Annual Report given the extraordinary circumstances during the past year and that the engagement as Internal Auditors had now ended.

**19 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE – 2019/20**

The Corporation received and noted the Annual Report of the Audit & Risk Committee for 2019/20.

**20 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITORS MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Corporation received the following:

* the draft Financial Statements for 2019/20
* the Auditors Management Report prepared by Buzzacott
* the Regulatory Self-Assessment
* the proposed Letter of Representation

The Corporation noted that both the Audit & Risk Committee and the Finance & Resources Committee had considered the issues falling within their respective Terms of Reference and no issues of concern had been identified requiring the attention of Members.

The Corporation agreed, having noted the opinion of the Auditors, to APPROVE the following for signature by the Chair and the Principal & Chief Executive:

* the Financial Statements for 2019/20
* the Regulatory Self-Assessment
* the Letter of Representation

The Financial Statements would be published on the College website early in the new year.

**21 CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 3 DECEMBER 2020**

The Corporation received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 3 December 2020.

On this occasion the Committee had focussed on the following issues:

* Terms of Reference of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee – to be reviewed again at the next scheduled meeting with a view to recommending an addition to the current version
* Student Report – changes made in College as a result of Covid-19
* Self-Assessment Report – 2019/20
* Quality Improvement Plan – 2020/21
* Safeguarding – Update
* Key Performance Indicators appropriate to the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee
* Work Plan for the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee

**22 SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT – 2019/20**

The Corporation received the proposed Self-Assessment Report for 2019/20 and noted that this had been reviewed by and commented on by the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee on 3 December 2020.

The judgements for the different themes as set out in the national Inspection Framework were as follows:

* Effectiveness of Leadership & Management – Grade 2 (Good)
* Quality of Education – Grade 2
* Behaviours and attitudes – Grade 2
* Personal development – Grade 1 (Outstanding)
* Overall effectiveness – Grade 2

The Corporation agreed to APPROVE the Self-Assessment Report for 2019/20 as recommended by the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee including the judgments as set out above.

The Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee would receive at future meetings reports on what actions would be taken and progressed to move the College from Good to Outstanding.

**23 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – 2020/21**

The Corporation received the proposed Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2020/21 and noted that this had reviewed by and commented on by the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee on 3 December 2020.

The Key Areas for Improvement were set out with seven priorities to be addressed:

* Students make insufficient progress from their starting points on a significant number of vocational programmes
* GCSE maths 9-4 grades are below the College target and require improvement
* Progression on A level linear programmes from year 1 to year 2 requires improvement
* Attendance on the majority of study programmes need to increase
* Further reduce staffing costs
* Improve staff survey results
* Further improve online teaching and learning

The Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee had recognised when reviewing the draft QIP that as a result of Covid-19 the delivery model was significantly different to what was originally planned. Not all of the actions would lead to the preferred level of improvements in the year due to the adverse impact of the pandemic.

Members took the opportunity to seek clarification of the approach to the preparation and tracking of the QIP including confirmation that both support areas and curriculum areas have separate action plans and these had informed the content of the College-wide SAR and QIP.

The Corporation agreed following discussion:

1. To APPROVE the College Quality Improvement Plan for 2020/21 as recommended by the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee
2. To acknowledge that, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the College was operating in a very different environment to those seen in previous years and this had a direct impact on the nature of the performance targets and the likely speed of improvement
3. To note that regular updates on progress against the Quality Improvement Plan would be presented to the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee and made available to all Members of the Corporation
4. The importance of continuing to consider what sort of College should be in the medium to longer term and how best to achieve the goals without setting unrealistic expectations
5. To begin a review of College culture given the last staff survey and the demands placed on staff as a result of the pandemic

**24 CORPORATION STRATEGY & PLANNING DAY(S)**

The Corporation NOTED that, as agreed via email, the Corporation Strategy & Planning Day would be held on Saturday 30 January 2021 via video link from 9.15am to 12.30pm.

In addition Members agreed that the morning of Saturday 13 February 2021 would be reserved in case there was a need for a further session.

It was appreciated that publication of the Government’s White Paper on FE had been delayed – possibly as a result of the demands arising from the pandemic – but when it was available Corporation Members would have an opportunity to discuss the implications for NewVIc.

**25 E GOVERNANCE**

The Corporation received the report of the Clerk on the opportunities to introduce a system of e governance to support Members and the Executive.

The Corporation AGREED:

1. the Clerk carried out an up-to-date scoping review of the e governance systems now in use in the market place
2. the Governance & Search Committee, the Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee and Member Paddy Slater consider the outcome of the review
3. that a recommendation would be presented to the Corporation for decision having regard to the benefits for all concerned as well as the financial costs involved arising from introducing an e governance system.

**26 CORPORATION MEMBERSHIP**

The Corporation agreed to APPROVE the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee that Julia Shelton be re-appointed as an Independent Member of the Corporation for a second period of four years ending on 15 January 2025.

**27 FE COMMISSIONER’S ANNUAL REPORT – 2019/20**

The Corporation received and noted the FE Commissioner’s Annual Report for 2019/20.

**28 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2020/21**

The Corporation NOTED the dates of the planned meetings to take place in 2020/21:

* Wednesday 31 March 2021 – time to be confirmed
* Wednesday 14 July 2021 – time to be confirmed

It was recognised that other meetings will be arranged if and when thought to be appropriate to address issues.

**29 APPOINTMENT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AUDITORS**

The Corporation agreed to APPROVE the recommendation of the Audit & Risk Committee that Buzzacotts be re-appointed as the Financial Statements Auditors for 2020/21.

**30 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITORS**

The Corporation agreed to APPROVE the recommendation of the Audit & Risk Committee that, following tender and interviews, Scrutton Bland be appointed as Internal Auditors as from 1 January 2021 until 31 July 2023 subject to annual reviews of performance.

**31 VOTE OF THANKS AND APPRECIATION**

The Corporation agreed to place on record the thanks and appreciation for all that had been done over the last year by the Principal & Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team and all members of staff at such a challenging time for the College due to the pandemic.

**32 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM OF BUSINESS**

The Minute covering the item will be regarded as being confidential until agreed otherwise by the Corporation and will only be available to Independent Members and the Parent Member.

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

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