

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the Special Corporation meeting held at 11am on 26 May 2020

Present: Nazir Ahmed (Staff Governor), Stephen Burke, Max Craft, Robin Dickens, Martin Doel (Interim Chair), Tim Mason, Rob Nitsch, Mark Pembleton, Paul Quigley, John Royston-Ford and Penny Wycherley (Interim Principal & CEO).

Apologies: Katie Danvers Hewitt, Callum Farminer (Student Governor) & Lena Itangata

In Attendance: Paola Schweitzer
Sue Martin
John Owen

Clerk to the Corporation
Interim Vice-Principal Learning & Quality
Interim Chief Finance Officer

Minutes

1 – Standing Items

2989 Attendance and Participation

Katie Danvers Hewitt, Callum Farminer (student governor) and Lena Itangata sent their apologies, as did Fiona Wilmott (ESFA).

2990 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 – Matters for Discussion & Decision

2991 Audit Committee's Annual Report to the Corporation

Mark (Audit Committee chair) presented paper 2548/20/A setting out Audit Committee's annual report to the Corporation 2018/19. The annual report was part of the Committee's responsibility to advise Corporation and the principal on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's risk management, internal control and governance systems. The report concluded that reports in the year from the Internal Audit Service give support to the Audit Committee's continuing confidence in the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's current audit arrangements, risk management and control and its processes for securing economy, efficiency and

effectiveness (value for money). However an action plan would be required to strengthen the controls required for the future, with particular regard to the College's framework of governance over which the Internal Audit Service was unable to provide assurance for 2018/19.

Mark noted that the Committee was being strengthened so that it was able to operate more effectively and that the 2019/20 report would be in his name. He drew governors' attention to a number of key points, including membership (the 2018/19 chair, Andrew Minter, was no longer on the Board), the internal audit areas covered and the fact that a great deal of the Committee's recent work, alongside the Finance & Estates Committee and John, was to address the issues raised in Mazars' external audit report.

Members **Noted** the Audit Committee's Annual Report to the Corporation 2018/19.

Minute 2992 was confidential.

2993 Extending Physical Opening of the College (paper 2657/20/C)

The College had been open to vulnerable students for a month and was now preparing to extend its physical re-opening from 01 June 2020 on the basis of four main themes:

- Supporting students
- Making sure those who need a licence to practise (or similar) have the opportunity to achieve
- Recruiting our students for next year
- Preparing for the new world of next year.

These themes would be underpinned by five principles:

- To protect the well-being of staff and students
- To prioritise support to our most vulnerable students aged 16-19
- To maintain and extend successful on-line delivery
- To map for current students aged 16-19 their individual routes for support and achievement over the next 3 months
- To contact and offer to every new and current student at least one tutorial/advisory session either face to face or online to:
 - support students, who have been offered a place, in their transition from school to college
 - offer advice about future options in the current situation
 - to prepare students, both adults and young people, for returning to education.

Extending the re-opening was an operational decision by the principal in consultation with governors. Corporation/Committee chairs had met with Penny the previous week and supported the proposals. The Health & Safety Manager

and Estates Manager had undertaken comprehensive work to ensure a safe environment in the College and preparations for extending re-opening were being made in two phases: 01 June onwards and September onwards. Lessons learnt in June would inform the planning process for 2020/21. Activity was focusing on individuals and seeking to be as flexible as possible. In response to a question, Penny confirmed that there was a headline risk assessment, with individual assessments being carried out for students and staff as necessary, with staff involved in these assessments. There was a brief discussion around the recent government announcement on re-opening as well as guidance from awarding bodies.

Nazir asked what preparations had been made for the 2020/21 enrolment process. Penny responded that planning was underway and enrolment would mostly be online. There was a discussion about the possible impact on recruitment and Penny noted that there might be some dramatic changes particularly with apprentices where it was likely the numbers would decrease. Rob noted this was likely to be sector specific and it was probable that bridging courses would be funded before apprenticeship numbers picked up.

Rob thanked Penny for her comprehensive work and asked how the College would measure the effectiveness of its actions. Penny stated that staff focus groups were measuring effectiveness and attendance/participation in online learning was a measure of student effectiveness, noting that it was about outcomes and keeping students engaged in education. Rob agreed and suggested that the College might also like to consider how comfortable and supported students and staff felt during this time. Sue added that students were being asked for their feedback on the support they had received during lockdown and that this would be reported to Learning & Quality Committee. Rob also asked about practical arrangements for tracking student health and Penny outlined the tracking and testing system in place. Martin noted the usefulness of documenting this process and Penny **Agreed** to circulate the relevant health and safety document. Finally, Penny drew members' attention to the checklist attached to the report and the Safeguarding Policy addendum. The updated Health & Safety Policy would be considered by Finance & Estates Committee at its next meeting. It was **Agreed** that the working group of Corporation/Committee chairs would meet again on 22 June to review progress to date and determine the usefulness of future meetings.

Members **Noted** the plan and planned arrangements and **Agreed** the themes and priorities underpinning extending College re-opening and the addendum to the Safeguarding Policy.

Members expressed their thanks to David Cottrell, Health & Safety Manager for his hard work and asked that Martin write to thank him.

The meeting ended at 12.05.