

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held at 5.30pm on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021 via Zoom**

**Governors Present:** Max Hailey (Chair), David Bainton (Vice Chair), Karen Mitchell (Principal), Anne-Marie McNeill, Jackie Campbell, Eddie Weiss, Nick Bevan, Amir Khaki, Caroline Hargrave, Ian Greggor, Kish Sidhu, Chris Oakley, Bethan Waters, Julie Gillespie, Benedicta Duhoe, Taysha Sargeant

**In Attendance:** John McGrath (VP, Corporate Services (VPCS)), Clare Rooney (VP, Learning & Quality (VPL&Q)), Anna Smith (Clerk to Corporation), Sarah Mason (RSM, agenda items 1 and 2 only)

**Apologies:** Ian Harper

<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	
	<p><b>CHAIR'S WELCOME</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular the two new Student Governors to their first Board meeting and to Sarah Mason (representing external auditors RSM). The meeting was quorate and there were no new declarations of interests.</p>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>EXTERNAL AUDITOR PRESENTATION</b></p> <p>The Chair handed over to the VPCS to introduce Sarah Mason (SM) who was in attendance to provide assurances to the Corporation of the external auditors' opinion of the Annual Report and Financial Statements. This is a new requirement under the Audit Code of Practice. The accounts had been scrutinised and reviewed by the Audit Committee (as confirmed by the Chair of the Committee) and recommended for Board approval.</p> <p>SM briefed the Corporation on RSM's work with the Audit Committee on the accounts noting the College's finance team produce very good quality information on a timely basis. RSM have no regularity issues to report and are satisfied that the accounts can be approved. Governors were given the opportunity to pose questions to SM but all were satisfied to approve.</p> <p>The Corporation <b>Resolved</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the Annual Report of the Audit Committee</li> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the Annual Report and Financial Statements</li> </ul> <p><i>Sarah Mason left the meeting at 5.40pm.</i></p> <p>The Chair thanked the Audit Committee for their work.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>FEC RECOMMENDATIONS PROGRESS UPDATE</b></p> <p>The Chair briefed Members on the progress since the last Corporation meeting noting the first four actions had been completed by the Remuneration Committee as reported and highlighting progress for the remaining two actions.</p> <p>The Corporation <b>Noted</b> the update.</p> <p><i>Julie Gillespie joined the meeting at 5.45pm.</i></p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>CLERK'S REPORT</b></p> <p><b>3.1 Corporation Self-Assessment 2020-21</b></p> <p>The Clerk reported on the outcome of the SAR survey which had been sent to Governors to reflect on the effectiveness of the Board fulfilling its responsibilities under the Code of Good Governance during 20-21.</p>

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The review concluded that the Board is effective in fulfilling its responsibilities and this had been externally validated with the recent Ofsted inspection grading for governance under Leadership and Management. The Student Governors were welcomed in their capacity of ensuring the student voice at Board level.

Governors and Senior Post Holders had also completed a survey reflecting on the performance of the Chair during 2020-21 and results were very positive on all aspects. The Clerk had discussed individual comments with the Chair, the main theme being around more discussion time on key items. Given that this is the main aim of the move to committee structure it was agreed it would be interesting to review this in the 2021-22 assessment.

Query was raised regarding the timing of the appointment of Student Governors to ensure representation at the October meetings. Student governors continuing studies at the College are likely to continue in their roles and attend October meetings but the VPL&Q noted that the cycle could be reviewed where students are progressing on to other destinations.

Comment had been made in the review that Governors might appreciate more information about local workforce trends and support was offered and welcomed on this from the LEP representative Governor **(Action: Clerk to follow up with Caroline Hargrave)**.

### 3.2 Governor Links and Engagement

The Corporation **Noted** the updated Governor links and engagement record.

## 4. MINUTES AND BOARD ASSURANCE REPORTS

The Corporation **Resolved to:**

- 4.1 **Approve** the minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 21/10/2021
- 4.2 **Note** the updated rolling actions log
- 4.3 **Note** the report of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 3/11/2021
- 4.4 **Note** the draft minutes and report of the Audit Committee meeting held on 1/12/2021

The Clerk informed Members that the draft minutes and report of the Quality & Curriculum Committee meeting held on 29/11/2021 would be presented at the next Corporation meeting.

## 5. STUDENT UNION REPORT

Student Governors took the Corporation through their report highlighting the key items as detailed and noting useful suggestions for increasing student activities and opportunities across the campuses. Included were suggestions for improving attendance at English and maths sessions and this had been discussed at the recent Quality and Curriculum Committee meeting and the Principal noted additional tuition money had been received to support plans.

Students praised the safeguarding provision in College but safety concerns had been raised over Council lighting outside of the Amersham and Aylesbury campuses. The Principal noted that this had been followed up with Estates who are addressing concerns and following up again with the Council.

The Chair thanked the Student Governors for their report which was **Noted** by the Corporation.

## 6. REVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Governors were reminded to consider the updated KPIs when scrutinising the management reports.

## 7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal briefed Members on her report highlighting:

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Ofsted Inspection Outcome: a verbal update was received in advance of the report being published. Governance is “very strong”. The hard work of staff was recognised and special thanks noted to the VPL&Q as inspection nominee.

Covid: Governors were updated on measure in place since Omicron’s emergence, adhering to DfE guidance. The Lead Governor for Health & Safety noted the H&S Committee had received reports of non-compliance on wearing face coverings. The Principal provided reassurance in explaining sanctions in place for non-compliance by those not exempt. DfE advises encouragement of vaccinations and twice weekly lateral flow testing and this is the approach the College follows. The vast majority of staff are in College and risk assessments are regularly completed. Absences due to Covid are reported daily to the DfE for both staff and students.

Bucks Health and Social Care Academy (BHSCA): the Board were briefed on the collaboration and Amir Khaki (Bucks Healthcare NHS Trust Governor) reinforced its importance as a unique system focussing on the county’s needs. Governors were encouraged to visit HealthTec when at Aylesbury Campus. The benefit and success of the venture is measured by student satisfaction, successful placements and destination data and overall providing opportunities and filling gaps across the healthcare sector.

Flannery Plant Hire: collaborative work is underway to broaden the construction curriculum and meet skills gaps in specialised areas. This will provide direct progression pathways into infrastructure construction, including HS2 as well as house building. In terms of tutors to deliver such provision this is the subject of a review by the AoC nationally but Flannery have indicated they will support the College on this.

Health and Safety Report: Members noted the update.

The Principal’s Report was **Noted** and the Chair thanked her for her update.

### 8. LEARNING AND QUALITY REPORT

The main focus for discussion was on the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2020-21 which had been scrutinised by the Quality and Curriculum Committee and been subjected to moderation with rich discussion. All evidence triangulated well as an honest evaluation of the College and Ofsted had agreed the draft SAR was a fair and accurate reflection.

The VPL&Q briefed on the priorities going forward (attendance; improving outcomes; TLA; effective use of initial assessment and feedback to ensure rapid progress and high needs).

In terms of High Needs, we have been strong on this but the focus is on consistency across the provision. It has grown significantly across both College provision and subcontracted provision and strong delivery needs to be consistent. The VPL&Q explained the process for ensuring fair representation for observations by inspectors.

Governors agreed and congratulated the senior team on the overall Ofsted result noting this indicates the strength of the leadership team.

The Corporation **Resolved** to:

- **Approve** the Self-Assessment Report 2020-21
- **Approve** the Quality Improvement Strategy
- **Approve** the updated Safeguarding Policy
- **Approve** the HE Access and Participation Statement
- **Approve** the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- **Note** the Annual Safeguarding Report

all as scrutinised and recommended by the Quality and Curriculum Committee.

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	The Chair thanked the VPL&Q for her report and all those involved in the lead up to and during the recent inspection and gave credit to the leadership team.
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>FINANCE AND RESOURCES REPORT</b></p> <p>The VPCS briefed the Corporation on his report including the management accounts noting in-year changes to (i) adult education budget, (ii) apprenticeships, and (iii) tuition fees. Discussion took place regarding tuition fees and associated challenges. Recruitment to date across the campuses was explained adding to the justification for the estates strategy given the continued lower recruitment to Amersham campus. Pressures on cost from inflation are not having a large effect as yet although construction material costs have increased. The largest costs are awarding body fees and gas/electricity costs increasing. Aspiration remains to invest in staff pay and resources.</p> <p>Regarding demographic trends, the county is in an upward trend for 16 year olds leaving school and the challenge is the market share rather than the demographics. The Principal added that young people with teacher assessed grades are staying on at schools during the pandemic for certainty and stability and it is difficult to predict trends going forward.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the VPCS for his report.</p>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Corporation <b>Resolved to Approve</b> the appointment of Benedicta Duhoe as a Member of the Quality and Curriculum Committee and Taysha Sargeant as a Member of the Search and Development Committee as recommended by the Search and Development Committee.</li> <li>• The Chair thanked Anne-Marie McNeill for her time, commitment and valued input to the Corporation throughout her two full terms as Staff Governor for Business Support. Anne-Marie added that she is pleased to be handing over to Adam Poland (HealthTec Centre Manager) as the new Staff Governor for Business Support noting he will bring a lot of knowledge to the Board.</li> </ul>
<b>11.</b>	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>10<sup>th</sup> February 2022</p>

The meeting moved into confidential discussion at 7.15pm

**Approved as an accurate record of discussions: 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022**