

**Minutes of the Corporation held on 25th March 2020 5:30pm
 Virtual meeting**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Present Heather Du Quesnay, Chair
 Mark Robertson, Principal
 Tim Arthur
 Barry Fyfield
 Raj Kumar
 Mike Cole
 Martin Doel
 Nichola Harrison
 Daniele Gibney
 Martin Clapson
 Judith Coplowe
 Theresa van Ruth (Staff Governor)
 Lewis Beddow (Staff Governor)
 Cameron Wallace-Sayers (Student Governor)

In attendance Michelle Dowse, Derek Sharp, Laura Kerry, Kate Da Costa, Corrin Hoyes

Clerk Emily Baldwin

1. Introduction		
1.1	Declarations of Interest	Apologies were received from A Jennings, T Butcher, J Lancaster, P Gaudin and M Abdul Qadir.
1.2	Apologies for absence	
1.3	Minutes of the meeting held on 17 th December 2019	<p>The minutes of the meeting of 17th December 2019 were amended to indicate that Martin Clapson attended the meeting. Otherwise, they were agreed to be a true record.</p> <p>The minutes of the Awayday meeting on 17th January 2020 were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.</p>
1.4	Governor feedback	<p>Governors gave feedback on their link visits and visits to the College.</p> <p>D Gibney had met with her governor link R Metcalfe on Higher Education matters. N Harrison had met with E Bennett to discuss student support services. T Arthur had attended the apprenticeship dinner and also met members of the catering and hairdressing departments.</p>

		<p>M Doel had attended two iMET meetings. The iMET had considered a revised financial forecast which was more prudent and realistic. However, iMET's business would be further constrained due to the coronavirus as it was highly dependent on apprenticeships. N Harrison expressed her concern over iMET's financial viability and purpose. D Sharp reported that each college would be formally asked by iMET for a loan for £200k to cover the 2019/2020 year. T Arthur gave his opinion that iMET posed less of a financial risk due to its relatively low student numbers and the possibility of furloughing staff if necessary. It was important to make a financial case to government outlining support the College needed in the current crisis.</p>
<p>2. Strategic Matters</p>		
<p>2.1</p>	<p>Principal's Report – Coronavirus update</p>	<p>SMT members introduced the update on the Coronavirus.</p> <p>D Sharp updated Governors on the current financial position. 16-18 funding was secure for the current and following year. Other areas were less certain. There was no threat of clawback of the adult education budget from the Combined Authority. However, the position was less clear with the Greater London Authority.</p> <p>The position with apprenticeships was also not clear, particularly if the apprentice was made redundant or furloughed. There were some contingencies in place to offer online learning. It was not yet clear whether college staff could be furloughed except for in the College's commercial areas. Governors recognised the great financial pressure. They also noted the work of the IT and facilities department who had been working extremely hard to ensure staff had access to computer facilities and that the building was secure. All appropriate MIS and finance systems were now offline.</p> <p>M Dowse updated Governors on the College's commercial activities. The commercial part of the College was being shut down, while retaining communication channels with customers. The International department had assisted students in returning to their home countries, and supporting the few that wanted to remain with their host families. The department was working with its international partners to postpone international students coming to the college.</p> <p>Student services was being offered remotely. There were challenges with free school meals.</p> <p>M Dowse presented an updated safeguarding plan. M Cole advised to add to the plan the procedure if a student could not be contacted. M Dowse agreed to make the amendment and Governors agreed the safeguarding plan on that basis.</p> <p>L Kerry updated Governors on the work with staff, many of which had childcare commitments. Staff were doing very well in difficult circumstances, and were being supported in their flexible working arrangements. The College was continuing to pay staff on variable hours contracts. The College's occupational health and counselling service was being promoted. The College was continuing to advertise selected posts but recruitment generally had been put on hold. Virtual social interactions had been set up. The College was supporting staff who wanted to undertake community or</p>

NHS support on a case by case basis.

Governors queried whether staff who were undertaking NHS work were doing two jobs, and whether they should be released from their college work. M Robertson confirmed this was being assessed on a case by case basis with the affected staff member, and there was no risk of the staff members spreading the virus as the College was now shut.

C Hoyes outlined the teaching and quality arrangements in place. She confirmed that e-learning had been established with appropriate support for teaching staff. Microsoft teams had been established and teachers were being supported by a small e-learning team. Teaching had been carried out to the College timetable from Monday 23rd March 2020. Initial attendance was good given the circumstances at 77%.

Managers had undertaken informal 'learning walks' by dropping into e-learning sessions. Management reports on attendance, including both real time and those working remotely, were being produced. Exams had been cancelled, but there was only limited information on vocational qualifications. Teachers were using innovative ways to replicate vocational learning online. Staff were also being encouraged to undertake online CPD where appropriate.

K Da Costa explained that the College only had 4 days to get communications out to students and parents on online protocols. Registers were being used to monitor attendance. Non-attendance was being chased up by tutors and marked on the Pro-monitor system. Heads of departments or curriculum administrators were chasing up non-attendance where tutors were not able. If the student had high needs or was a looked after child, this was being monitored by J Lloyd. Study support staff were engaged with online lessons.

Governors suggested looking at how attendance was being monitored by other colleges in such unusual circumstances.

Performance tables were being suspended for the year. The College's priority was making sure students secured the qualifications they wanted and deserved. The College seemed to be further ahead on e-learning than most other colleges at this stage. The Staff Governor confirmed this was the case in her experience. A file was being kept to demonstrate what was being carried out which could be shown to Ofsted or other regularity bodies.

M Doel explained his understanding that learning might resume on a partial basis. The College may be asked to prioritise areas of the curriculum that had the most practical learning. There were also signs that English and Maths would be prioritised if restrictions were lifted.

M Robertson said the College was learning lessons for the future about how students liked to learn online.

		<p>M Dowse reported that some vulnerable learners had reported a preference for online learning and that it had reduced their anxiety.</p> <p>There were opportunities for Colleges to try online resources for free at this time.</p> <p>Governors asked whether all students had access to appropriate technology. C Hoyes confirmed that students were being asked this, but online learning could be accessed via multiple types of devices.</p> <p>It was agreed that a Governor Emergency Planning Task and Finish Group should be established as an advisory group to Corporation. It was suggested that the Group be combined with the existing Ofsted Task and Finish Group. All Governors were welcome to join the group. D Gibney and T van Ruth expressed an interest in joining the group. The Clerk agreed to circulate a date to all governors.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following arrangements in light of the current exceptional circumstances. In the event that urgent decisions needed to be made between Corporation meetings or where there were issues with quoracy due to the health of Governors, Governors agreed to delegate authority to the Chair and Vice Chair, or if they were unavailable, another Committee Chair(s). Decisions would be communicated to full Corporation by email.</p> <p>In the event that the Principal was incapacitated, M Dowse would act as the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer in his absence.</p> <p>Governors thanked all staff for their work in such difficult circumstances, and in particular for the impressive way in which online learning had been delivered in such a short space of time.</p>
<p>2.2</p>	<p>Ofsted Findings and Actions, including report from Ofsted Task and Finish Group</p>	<p>H Du Quesnay updated Governors on the main points arising from the Ofsted Task and Finish Group that had taken place on 19th March 2020. Key points included:</p> <p>English and Maths – issues included quality of teaching and attendance. Governors had felt that separate leads for English and for Maths were needed if possible, and agreed with the proposals for moving english and maths into curriculum areas</p> <p>Adult learners – issues included intent of curriculum and careers advice. M Robertson confirmed that the College had assurance from the Combined Authority that they would give 100% funding for ESOL so moving some learners from functional skills to ESOL would have less of a financial impact than first envisaged.</p> <p>Apprenticeships – issues included careers advice and accountability. Governors discussed possible structural change in the area to clarify accountability.</p>

		<p>Systems – issues included compliance with use of systems, and particular issues over documenting attendance.</p> <p>Governors asked how the College was ensuring best practice if apprenticeships and english and maths moved into curriculum areas. It was confirmed that there would still be a lead, but this would be outside of direct management in a similar manner to excellence coaches.</p> <p>Governors underlined the importance of staff documenting their activities appropriately.</p> <p>The Chair reminded Governors that an email had been circulated asking for any comments on how governance could be improved.</p> <p>Governors also noted the letter the Chair had written to the Ofsted regional lead asking inviting her to meet with Governors on how governance could be improved.</p>
2.3	<p>Matters for approval (F&R Committee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial Regulations - Fees Strategy - Subcontracting 	<p>T Arthur updated Governors on the main discussions of the F&R Committee on 17th March 2020.</p> <p>The College was updating its financial forecast, and this was important in order to make a case to the relevant authorities. If there was any additional funding support, this could help the College in its Ofsted ambitions.</p> <p>Governors approved the recommendations of the Committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the amended Financial Regulations, which had been updated in light of current best practice. • the College’s fees strategy, with minimal changes. It was noted that these could further change due to the current circumstances. • changes to subcontractor contract values, as set out in the paper. It was noted that the Committee had asked for further clarification on CodeNation.
3. Information reports		
3.1	<p>Equality and diversity report</p>	<p>C Hoyes introduced the Equality and Diversity Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of students with a declared disability had risen by 6% to 28% last year. This was expected. • There were no significant gaps in achievement rates between 19+ males and females in classroom-based learning. • For 16-18 year old male students had achieved at a higher rate than female in several departments. There were no significant gaps in retention. • There were no significant achievement gaps between male and female apprentices.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no significant achievement gaps for 16-18 students of different ethnicities. <p>Governors suggested that information on Looked After Children was included in future reports.</p> <p>Governors asked what information the College had for the reasons for the achievement gap between male and female students. There was no obvious trend to explain the reason, but this was being explored with the particular curriculum areas.</p> <p>H Du Quesnay asked for clarification on the gap in performance for those with a disability. C Hoyes clarified that the gap was only for those at Level 3 with a disability.</p> <p>L Kerry introduced the staff data. There were no significant changes over the previous year.</p> <p>Governors noted the Equality and Diversity Report.</p>
3.2	Matters agreed between meetings	<p>Corporation noted the items that had been agreed electronically since the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of safeguarding to the Internal Audit plan (approved by Audit and Risk Committee)
4 Final matters		
4.1	Verbal update from Safeguarding Lead Governor	There were no further updates that had not already been covered in the meeting.
4.3	Self-assessment of Governors' Performance	Governors agreed it had been a productive meeting. They agreed that the Chair had managed the virtual meeting well, and the chat function had been useful to help Governors raise questions.

There was no other business and the meeting ended at 8:00pm.

Signed

Chair