

#### Item 4

### MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021 AT 6.00 P.M. MEETING 21/02

#### HELD IN ROOM 2, VARNDEAN COLLEGE

Present: Jill Arnold, Ayas Fallon-Khan, Jane Farrell, Paul Herridge, Donna-Marie Janson, Simon Lindfield, Jack Pattison, Robyn Read, Janice Robinson, Alan Walker, Aldona Wheeler, John Williams, Jason Wye

In Attendance: James Gordon, Elaine French, Lisa Watkin-Stevens, Louise Pennington

Apologies: Cintha Archer, Belinda Dutch, Katharine Travis, Brendan Ward

Welcomes: Jason Wye – Governor (Teaching Staff)

In the Chair: Janice Robinson

#### 1. Welcomes and Apologies for Absence

The meeting was quorate.

Apologies – as recorded above

Chair – apologies for late papers/deferred meetings – Audit and S & G and audit/finance reports coming through

#### 2. Membership Matters

Jason Wye, who was elected as the Teaching Staff Governor following the end of Simon Waters' term of office, was appointed by the Governing Body for a 4 year term of office with immediate effect, until 31 December 2025. Jason Wye introduced himself – Head of Physics and a Teaching Staff Union Representative.

Thanks were recorded to Simon Waters for his support over the last 4 years.

Other recommendations from the Search and Governance Committee which were endorsed by the Corporation:

- Search and Governance Committee membership – Alan Walker and Katharine Travis to join the Committee with immediate effect.
- Risk Management Group (RMG) to be disbanded with immediate effect; all risk matters to be integrated fully into the Audit Committee. Thanks were recorded to Paul Herridge for chairing the RMG and it was noted that as a Member of the Audit Committee, he would lead on the Risk matters and it was also agreed that he should be appointed as the Lead Governor for Risk. It was recorded that he would meet with Elaine French on a regular basis to ensure that Governors were kept up to date with any risk matters.

- Audit Committee vacancy: The Corporation noted that the S & G Committee had decided to seek co-opted Members to fill the current vacancy and would be taking this action forward.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

None recorded at this time, other than those notified at previous meeting declarations and as recorded in the Register of Interests' folder. Jason Wye's disclosure regarding his Teaching Union rep. role, as reported above, was also noted.

### **4. Minutes of the Corporation held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021 – Part 1 (Non-Confidential)**

The minutes of meeting were approved by the Corporation and the Chair was authorised to sign these.

**Confidential minutes part II** circulated to external governors only were approved – refer item 17 below.

### **5. Matters Arising and Action Points – Progress Report and Significant Risks Schedule**

The Corporation noted the progress with actions to date and those which were on going or would be taken forward in due course.

It was noted that the various internal audit related actions could be removed owing to the recent appointment of the new Internal Auditors, Wylie and Bisset, who were progressing the works as per the agreed Internal Audit Assurance Plan.

STEM centre opening ceremony – The Principal confirmed that the intention would be to organise a summer event in 2022.

Architectural drawings – circulation to Governors. It was noted that post the last Corporation meeting and following the unsuccessful grant bid, it had been decided that it was no longer necessary to circulate the plan, but that these could be shared in future, if the planning proposals were resurrected.

It was noted that the action schedule would be updated to reflect any changes detailed above. **ACTION: Louise Pennington.**

**SIGNIFICANT RISKS 2021/2022**– the Corporation noted the risks for 2021/2022 and agreed to bear these in mind with reference to the Meeting's business.

### **6. Chair's Report**

Janice Robinson presented her report and referred Governors to her written update. The following additional points were recorded:

New FE Commissioner's Priorities (as detailed in the FEC's recent letter)

- Reviewing the way in which Colleges are funded and regulated.
- 5 priorities:
  - a) build more supportive relationships with Colleges (as referred to the Dame Mary Ney's Report Independent Review into College Financial Oversight).
  - b) focus accountability on outcomes, namely skills that Colleges develop for Students and future employability. New funding agreements and outcomes/performance dashboards will be developed to include a measure for skills and how well Colleges support their learners in seeking employment. It's unsure at this stage how SFCs will be treated compared to the rest of the FE sector, with their continued focus upon A Levels.
  - c) Reduction in the complexity of funding (with a new Skills fund), which the AoC and SFCAs have raised as an issue for some time
  - d) liaison with Ofsted – FEC would like Ofsted to build the FEC's skills agenda into their inspection framework, which is currently being piloted in the FE sector.
  - e) Aiming to strengthen the role which FEC has in improving Colleges' performance, particularly for those who are struggling to deliver sufficient outcomes.

## 7. Principal's Report

Donna-Marie Janson presented her report to Governors and the contents of her written report were noted. In summary, the following points were highlighted and additional points and questions were also recorded:

- a) Strategic Plan
- b) Outcome of FEC Visit
- c) Covid Update (rate of infections, vaccinations, disruption to teaching and learning etc)
- d) Staff Pay Award
- e) HR Staff Report – paper

Reference was made to the front sheet summary provided with the papers in respect of items 7 a to d).

Other points:

- Strategic Plan: separate Staff and Governors' events to discuss the strategic plan during October and November respectively, were noted, from which the 5 key strategic drivers were agreed in principle, together with the various KPIs. The intention will be to issue the final draft early next year and Governors' will be presented with this at the January 2022 Corporation meeting.
- FEC Visit: Thanks were recorded to all Staff and Governors involved in the process, which had worked well. The final FEC report is awaited which will be shared with Staff and Governors. Positive feedback has been received from the FEC team to date at the recent follow up meetings with Staff and Governors on 29<sup>th</sup> November. The Chair, Principal and Clerk have been working with a NLG (National Leader of Governance), Elton d'Souza on a number of governance aspects including succession planning.
- Covid Update: the numbers of Students and Staff with Covid has been increasing over the last week, since the figures in the front sheet report were issued and now

stands at 26 Students and 15 Staff, but with 200 plus Students who are isolating, causing disruption in their learning. The College has informed Students and Parents that next week will be an online working week with the aim of avoiding a major outbreak in Covid pre-Christmas. Despite the latter, some Students will still be coming on site for examinations. Mask wearing has also returned although this remains a recommendation rather than being enforceable.

- Staff pay negotiations and award: Teaching Staff – agreed at 1% and the Finance Committee met recently on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and recommended that the pay award should be implemented and noted that this had already been factored into the financial forecast and budget. Regarding, the Support Staff award, this has only recently been agreed at 1% for the majority of the pay spine, but the agreement also included the deletion of pay points 1, 2 and 4 on the national pay spine, in order to reflect the movement in the National Living Wage, plus an uplift to Support Staff Standards payment award made annual just before Christmas and being £370 per Staff member (up from £320 last year). Simon Lindfield, Chair of the Finance Committee, confirmed that the Committee had recommended the Support Staff pay award to Corporation if it was agreed prior to Corporation, at 1%. The Corporation also endorsed the Support Staff pay award and agreement and confirmed that both pay awards would be back dated to September 2021.
- HR Staffing Report – although the document had been issued by HR in readiness for the October Corporation meeting, it had been decided to include this on the December Corporation meeting agenda. The following aspects were highlighted:
  - Staff turnover – last year it was at its highest point for some years – increased by 3% but still below the sector benchmark of 18.2%. The increase was influenced by the pandemic, owing to for example various temporary appointments such as the learning coaches and to some staff retiring.
  - Partly as a consequence of the above point, Staff recruitment was higher too with 44 posts recruited in the last year, including two SLT members.
  - EDI (equality, diversity and inclusivity) – the College is still under represented when compared to both the local community and the Student body and doesn't therefore fully reflect the local ethnicity; however, Staffing remains in line with the FE sector average. The staffing also has a female bias which also reflects the sector average.
  - Sickness absence – this has reduced in the pandemic, partly owing to Staff continuing to work from home regardless of illness. This is also a national trend within the sector.
  - Staff wellbeing and motivation – HR Department has focused on this during the year and will be considered for the Carnegie award/medal for wellbeing (Carnegie Centre of Excellence) – outcome awaited. The College's recent internal audit on Staff well-being has been shown to be very good too.
  - Performance Management and Coaching – the latter model reflects improvements and how to improve further and identifies what the College is doing well etc, with the aim of achieving consistency throughout the College.
  - Data collection regarding curriculum costing – the Deputy Principal, Vice-Principal (Resources) and HR, are working on collating the information on this.
  - Restructuring Support Services – following some Staff departures and meetings will be held this week to consult with the relevant Support Teams before finalising proposals.

- The HR Manager is on long term sickness leave at present, so SLT are reviewing action needed in her absence. At this point, Governors passed on their good wishes to her and for a speedy recovery.
- In response to a question from Governors regarding the College's part-time Staff, the Principal confirmed that the College did have a greater proportion of part-time Staff than many other Colleges in the SFC sector, but that the advantage of this was that it provided the College with flexibility in managing Staffing needs in order to meet adjustments required in the various curriculum areas based on Student numbers. However, it was recognised that having a greater number of Staff did mean that there were more appraisals to complete and contract management, changes and other HR related work.
- Number of job applications overall have been high over the year, but it was noted that this was skewed by the 132 applicants for the recent Library assistant vacancy. In contrast, the marketing department's vacancy has received no applications so will have to be re-advertised.

## **8. Student Governors' Report**

Jack Pattison and Robyn Read presented the following update to Governors:

### **Jack Pattison**

- SU Executive is focusing upon its restructuring proposals regarding the key roles and to ensure that these are effectively distributed and reflect the overall Student cohort, including a role for International Students and those on Level 2 courses. Any changes will take affect towards the end of next term, when the SU hustings take place.
- Students were grateful to know that the Library would be open next week, for those Students who were unable to access online lessons and resources from home.
- This Friday is the Christmas Jumper Day and there will also be entertainment in the Common Room.
- Tutorials this week – the subject matter is Prevent.
- Personal statements – Students aiming to go on to Higher Education are working on finalising these, prior to the January 2022 deadline, with input from their tutors etc.

### **Robyn Read**

- Tutorials held last week covered the following topics: keeping safe and well in College survey (for both A1 and A2), sexual harassment, bullying and racism issues. It was noted that the survey was completed by Students anonymously so that Students could be open and honest about the various issues.
- Citizens seminar – organisation dealing with social injustices in the local community – last night Students were involved in a listening training seminar, with a local area listening campaign due to run in January and February 2022. Student survey is being planned to get general feedback on feelings so that those who may need support may be targeted and enrichment sessions organised eg for young carers.
- Christmas Tree in Reception – this year has been decorated with recycle materials.

## **9) Curriculum and Standards**

### **a) College SAR (Self-Assessment Report)**

## **b) QIP (Quality Improvement Plan)**

James Gordon (Deputy Principal) introduced the document and highlighted the following points:

- Governors are already aware of the content usage and importance of this type of document.
- Normally an executive summary front sheet would have been issued with the document to assist Governors, but owing to time constraints this was not possible this year.
- Structure of the SAR – a different more objective approach has been followed for the latest SAR, with the first section focusing upon the key Ofsted requirements, making judgements against the quality of education, behaviour, leadership etc. The document highlights the key strengths and weaknesses in the various key areas, followed by a grade per area and overall noting that the final College grade was outstanding.
- Following the first section of the SAR which sets the context. The operational SARs and QIPs follow (quality improvement plans)
- The process this year was re-launched with more of a focus on subject and department level which was more formal than in previous years; Staff were asked to present their departments' key strengths and weaknesses/areas for development in SAR meetings with SLT members. This provided SLT with a good understanding of the current challenges within the curriculum and support areas. When finalising the whole College SAR, many of the common strengths and areas for development have been included and the document reflects the key strengths and challenges that are being faced at operational level.
- Main reason for overall outstanding grade was the examination results (VA ALPS 1), including positive movement in the quality of vocational results and other area improvements such as in careers, employability and effective support for Students particularly during the pandemic.
- The SAR and QIP documents are sectioned according to SLT responsibilities eg curriculum (lead by the Deputy Principal), etc, which made the overall exercise more efficient.
- James Gordon highlighted to Governors some of the areas which SLT focused upon within his area of responsibility. Target setting that ensure student with differing GCSE score all achieve equally well is a focus. Actions were also implemented to improve in-year assessments, which will support student interventions where necessary. SLT is also focused on reviewing the curriculum offer to ensure that students are placed on the most appropriate course. There is renewed focus on teaching and learning strategies that will support lost learning; learner voice activities have also been progressed to ensure that the College is effective in capturing sufficient student feedback via consistent and measurable surveys and focus groups.
- James Gordon explained that Lisa Watkin-Stevens had taken responsibility for the sections of the documents that relate to Student experience areas and likewise, Elaine French had repeated a similar process in respect of resourcing. In total 15 areas/issues have been analysed and evidenced and both areas of weakness and strength have been included.

- QIP (Quality Improvement Plan) – the various elements within the Plan link directly with the reference number in the SAR, providing measurable objectives and targets, aligned to the various Staff leads and SLT. The actions within the QIP are also linked as far as possible to the various strategic aims, although noting that the new Strategy Plan won't be finalised until January 2021; the intention will be to link this more closely next year.
- In response to a question from the Corporation regarding grading, James Gordon explained the reasoning behind the “outstanding” grade awarded for overall effectiveness, whilst Leadership and Management was awarded a “good” grade. He reported that within the 5 key areas, there were 3 outstanding grade classifications but thought that owing to the FEC diagnostic assessment visit this year, it wasn't thought appropriate this year to make Leadership and Management higher than “good”. It was also noted that within the latter area, there were areas for further development such as lesson observations and the need to align these more closely with the performance appraisals, together with developments required within the MIS area. Furthermore, it was recognised that action had been taken following the FEC visit to take forward various recommendations including the financial sustainability action plan but it was thought that this would be taken into account in next year's SAR owing to the timing of the action. Financial sustainability has been added as a key strategic aim which will be the focus for Leadership and Management going forward. It was also suggested that if/when an Ofsted Inspection is next due, it would be important to ensure that Inspectors focus upon the quality of Teaching and Learning /Student experience rather than financial sustainability matters, including value for money, hence Governors suggested that SLT may wish to ensure that the SAR is focused within the former area rather than financial matters. In response, James Gordon agreed to review and revise the wording regarding the financial sustainability references, in light of the fact that this has been covered via the FEC review, so that should an Ofsted Inspection be scheduled in the next year, the focus will be upon the Student experience rather than an area already covered and addressed by the FEC. **ACTION: James Gordon**
- Taking into account the points made above regarding the overall grade, it was noted that the Governance SAR had been graded as “good” by the S & G Committee and recommended for approval to Corporation – refer below.

Subject to the points made above, the document was approved by the Corporation.

**ACTION: James Gordon**

## **10. Risk Group Meeting (RMG) 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021**

Paul Herridge, Chair of RMG, presented the risk items to the Corporation, referred Governors to the RMG draft minutes and also to the Audit Committee minutes to which the various Risk reports were presented following the RMG meeting.

Governors' attention was drawn to the following documents and comments:

- As reported into item 2 above, RMG to be disbanded and all risk matters to be the responsibility of the Audit Committee, with revised terms of reference.
- Annual report.

- Critical incident plan – will be reviewed next year following a scenario testing exercise to be completed by SLT.
- Reminder that the Risk Management Action Plan has been incorporated into the Risk Register and a summary of the proposals for future development was given, including the intention to produce a risk matrix and remove numerical scoring, replacing this with narrative to improve understanding. The Group spent time discussion “pandemic” as one of the College’s significant risks, noting the on-going management of this.
- Risk Assurance Map – reference to additional risk – financial sustainability with associated assurances/measures in place.
- RMG revised TOR and referenced that this will be included within Audit Committee TOR going forward.
- Risk Management policy – review deferred until next year.

Taking into account the recommendations within the RMG draft minutes and the endorsement from the Audit Committee (refer below), the following approvals were given:

- Draft Minutes** – noted
- Risk Management Annual Report** - approved
- Risk Register** - approved
- Risk Assurance Map** - approved
- Revised Terms of Reference** – approved, but also noting that following the recommendations of the Search and Governance Committee that risk would be incorporated fully into the Audit Committee and that the relevant parts of the RMG terms of reference should therefore be included in the Audit Committee terms of reference going forward. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

## 11. Finance

Simon Lindfield (Chair of the Finance Committee) and Elaine French presented the various papers to the Corporation and the following points were recorded:

- The first Finance Committee was held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021, which replaced the Finance Working Group, with 2 new Members – Jill Arnold and John Williams.
- The Annual Report and Financial Statements were reviewed and subject to the revisions as recorded in the draft minutes, were recommended to Corporation for approval. The final draft was circulated prior to Corporation to both the Finance Committee Members and Audit Committee Members, with no further amendments requested. A final version was also circulated yesterday to Corporation members. Elaine French confirmed that there had been some late audit related adjustments, details of which had been shared, but that these had had no impact on the financial health score.
- The predicted financial health score for this year is good, being an improvement from last year’s “requires improvement”.
- Attention was also drawn to the financial sustainability action plan created by the Principal and Vice-Principal (Resources) which was recommended for approval by Governors.
- Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31/7/21 highlights:



- Page 132 comprehensive income for year (equivalent to profit and loss account): actual accounting deficit is £746K which at first glance may seem of concern but account should be taken of the fact that this figure is impacted by the accounting adjustment of approximately £1M depreciation; impairment loss adjustments (costs incurred over the previous years in respect of projects which did not go ahead; £450K approximately in respect of the annual accounting pension liability adjustment, based on the latest actuarial analysis for the LGPS (Local Government Pension Scheme). In effect the “real” surplus is the operating surplus or Ebitda being £469K for the year. The financial health is as reported previously “requires improvement” but it was noted that following the FEC visit, the FEC Team acknowledged the positive movement in the College’s financials going forward.
- Balance sheet (assets and liabilities) and the impact of the pension liabilities, which affects all FE Colleges, was noted and that the College’s financial statements were audited with no issues regarding “going concern” and also taking into account the FE sector’s public funding commitment.

**a) Draft Minutes from Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021** – noted and referenced in respect of the various items listed below and recommendations made by the Finance Committee at its recent meeting.

**b) Annual Report and Accounts to 31/7/21** – taking into account the above and that the Finance Committee (and Audit Committee – responsibility for advising Corporation on the appropriateness of the accounting processes), had recommended to Corporation that these be approved, with no further changes required following sight of the final draft (as signed off by Mazars Audit Partner) circulated before Corporation, the Corporation approved the document and authorised the Chair and Principal to sign these on the College’s behalf. **ACTION: Elaine French/Chair/Principal**

**c) Financial Update including latest management accounts to end 31/10/21 and financial forecast for 2021/2022 and reference to the adoption of the new Management Accounts Good Practice Guide**

Elaine French reported on the latest management accounts and also explained the differences in content and format, since the last accounts were presented, which reflected the adoption of some of the good practice recommendations within the new DfE Good Practice Guide, including more narrative (refer executive summary).

- Ebitda (operating surplus) increased from £558K to 701K, reflecting the success of the International Department in recruiting more International Students (from the EC).
- Predicting cash days to increase, along with an improvement in the current ratio.
- Staff cost ratio has reduced slightly.
- Financial Health for the year end is “good”.
- No overdraft facility will be necessary during the year.
- There will be some increase in costs owing to the adoption of the national agreed pay award for both Teaching and Support Staff. The budget for this had been included within the contingency budget. There will also be an impact on costs owing to the

increase in energy costs this year – the College’s current energy contracted ended in October, so a new contract has been negotiated – 2 year fixed deal.

- Capital expenditure allocations have been limited and this year has been restricted to £80K in light of the College’s need to be cautious and focus on increasing its cash reserves and improve its financial health.

The management accounts were noted by the Corporation and the revisions made to reflecting the new Good Practice Guide, were endorsed by the Corporation, noting also that further elements of the Guide may be added over the next year in order to ensure that the document provides a better understanding for all Governors, including those who don’t have financial experience. **ACTION: Elaine French**

**d) ESFA Financial Record, Dashboard, Financial Health confirmation – noted.**

**e) Update on Costing Model and Financial Sustainability Action Plan**

James Gordon reported on the curriculum rationale and costing model which was presented to the recent Finance Committee, recording the following points:

- The model will highlight curriculum areas in terms of efficiencies eg set sizes and costs, together with the ability to identify areas which are under or over staffed, extending to how Staff are deployed over the various option blocks, Staff remission and Staff utilisation. The document will be used as a planning tool for SLT for next year’s timetabling.
- SLT has also purchased project management/planning tool software from “Forecast” which will enable the College to carry out various analysis for example determining costings per subject area within programme choices and to further determine the efficiency of each curriculum area. The FEC team were also in support of the College purchasing this planning tool, which is used by a number of other Colleges. Although currently in the early planning stages, it’s intended to use this for the College’s forecasting for next year as Student applications are received – for curriculum costing, identification of Staff shortages, set size management and efficiency and Staff redeployment. Governors asked to be kept up to date with the work and analysis within this area, and particularly that in respect of curriculum costing and efficiency analysis, noting that the results would probably not be available until the Autumn Term 2022. **ACTION: James Gordon.** Once the analysis is underway, the intention will also be to benchmark the data against previous years, particularly to highlight growth/decline in any particular area.

#### Financial Sustainability Action Plan

The Corporation approved the draft action plan as discussed at the Finance Committee, noting the focus on building cash reserves, via two strategies – improving cost efficiencies and raising income (eg via improved use of the College’s estates). The document has also been RAG rated to assist Governors’ understanding. There will also be a greater focus on value for money (refer page 173).

It was noted that there will also be an annual benchmarking report for Corporation, via Finance Committee. **ACTION: Principal/Vice-Principal (Resources)**

At this point and following a suggestion made by a Corporation member, the Corporation agreed that it may be useful to investigate sponsorship opportunities, to create a better spread of risk in terms of funding. It was agreed that this may be worth investigating outside this meeting, but also noting that clear rules and protocols would have to be established, should this option generate income. **ACTION: SLT/GOVERNORS**

- f) **Revised Terms of Reference** the changes marked up were agreed, noting that these were made to bring the terms of reference into line with the ACOP. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

## **12. Audit Matters:**

Alan Walker (Chair of Audit Committee) and Elaine French introduced the various documents for approval or noting:

- a) **Draft Minutes of Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021** – the final draft version of the minutes, which had been circulated yesterday, along with the final draft of the Annual Report and Financial Statements (signed off by the Audit Partner, Mazars), was noted by the Committee. Thanks were recorded to Janice Robinson, Chair of Governors for attending the Meeting for the Audit Completion Report item, presented by Mazars (External Auditors), in order to comply with the new ACOP requirements to report to Corporation, without the need for the External Auditors to attend and represent their findings to the full Governing Body.
- b) **Annual Report of the Audit Committee** - the document which had been updated to comply with the ACOP, together with further changes recommended by the Audit Committee, was approved by Corporation and the Chair of Audit Committee, was authorised to sign the document. **ACTION: Alan Walker.** It was noted that the Annual Report would be submitted to the ESFA along with the Annual Report and Financial Statements, and other reports as listed above (Finance section) and below (Audit section) by the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. **ACTION: Elaine French/Alan Walker**

- c) **Audit Completion Report to 31/7/21 (and refer to Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31//21 within Finance Section)**

Reference was made to the report included within item a) relating to the External Audit Completion report. At this point the Chair of Governors, confirmed that she had attended the meeting and endorsed the recommendations made by the Audit Committee and the detailed discussion and report provided by the External Auditor at the Audit Committee meeting, highlighting the fact that the auditors had given the College an unqualified audit report, and that no concerns had been raised.

- d) **Regularity Audit Self-Assessment Question July 2021 and Annex which supports the financial statements and regularity audit** – approved as recommended by the Audit Committee.
- e) **Letters of Representation x 2 (supports financial statements and regularity audit July 2021)** – approved as recommended by the Audit Committee

- f) **Assurance Strategy and Plan 2021/2022 (internal Audit)** – approved as recommended by the Audit Committee.
- g) **Internal Audit Report: Student Records substantial grading and working on IT and security report** – The Student Records Internal Audit report was noted by the Corporation and that the ongoing internal audit work relating to the IT and Security Report, would be presented to the next meeting, via Audit Committee.
- h) **Audit Committee terms of reference** – approved regarding the revisions to reflect the latest requirements of the new ACOP and noting as referred to above within the risk section, that the relevant parts of the RMG terms of reference should be incorporated into the new Audit Committee TORs. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

Thanks were recorded to Elaine French and the Finance Team for all their hard work in producing the documents above.

### 13. Search and Governance:

- a) **Self-Assessment (Governance SAR)** – graded good. Reference was also made to the whole College SAR item, discussed no earlier. The Corporation approved the document based on the recommendation from the S & G Committee.
- b) **FOI Publication Scheme – refer to website policies section** – the revised document (housekeeping changes only) was endorsed by the Corporation, following recommendation from the S & G Committee.
- c) **Confidentiality Report** - approved
- d) **Draft Minutes of Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 – confidential** – noted.
- e) **Chair Succession Planning Process** – The Chair of Governors reminded Governors that the intention would be for her to step down as Chair in the Summer term at the earliest, if a suitable successor was found. She summarised the discussions held at the recent S & G Committee meeting and confirmed the recommendation from the Committee proposing a new recruitment process via an advert for the position, so that both internal and external candidates could be considered, followed by an interview and selection process. In response to a question from Governors, it was agreed to re-circulate the S & G draft minutes with the draft Corporation meeting minutes. **ACTION: Louise Pennington** It was also noted that the Corporation's standing orders would also have to be revised to reflect the change in process from an election process to an advertisement/interview process, as recommended by the S & G Committee and recorded in the S & G Committee draft minutes.

The Corporation agreed to review the revised standing orders at its next meeting in January 2022 and also agreed on the recommendation from the S & G Committee, that Simon Lindfield (Vice-Chair of Governors) should chair the Appointment Panel and that

the Principal and at least one other Committee/Working Group Chair, should join the Panel, with at least 3 Governors in total, but that this wouldn't rule out other Governors being invited to join the Panel by the S & G Committee. Following the interview process, the intention would be for the Panel to make a recommendation to Corporation for agreement. Governors were informed that the National Leader of Governance, Elton d'Souza, who had been appointed by the FEC to assist with the governance aspects of the diagnostic assessment, had endorsed the interview process, as a more professional approach. Janice Robinson confirmed that she had informed the two existing Governors who had expressed interest in the Chair's role.

In response to a question from the Corporation, it was confirmed that all Governors went through an "interview process" before being considered and recommended to Corporation via the Search and Governance Committee.

The Corporation was also advised that the Panel's interview questions would be prepared with the help of the College's external HR advisor, in the absence of the HR Manager.

The Corporation approved in principle the proposal but agreed to endorse the final arrangements, including timings once the standing orders had been revised and approved at the January 2022 Corporation Meeting.

#### **ACTION: Janice Robinson**

#### **14. Policies and Other Documents**

##### **a) Safeguarding and Child Protection Annual Report**

Lisa Watkin-Stevens introduced the annual report to Corporation and drew Governors' attention to the following:

- High percentage of vulnerable Students which has increased since last year, including a number of safeguarding alerts. Overall there were 2,348 alerts in respect of vulnerable Students which compares to 1,952 in the previous year. From enrolment to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021, there were 652 safeguarding alerts. However, it was recognised that some of the figures, may reflect the improvement in the online systems capturing this information. It was also recognised that the increase reflected the national trend owing to the pandemic.
- There are 19 Students on a Child Protection Plan which is approximately the same as last year.
- Safeguarding Staffing – from September 2021 have introduced 2 more designated Safeguarding Deputy lead Staff Members, which also takes into account one designated Lead have left the College. A Safeguarding Support Office has also been appointed and will commence work next Monday; this will allow a safeguarding triaging process to work effectively, prior to allocation of cases to Staff.
- Therapy service – counselling service manager and mental health practitioner and expanding provision having taken on Level 4 trainees, in order to help reduce the College's waiting lists.
- In response to a question from a Governor, Lisa Watkin-Stevens confirmed that the College had well-established and extending systems and processes in place to

provide the necessary support for Students, but agreed that the College had more vulnerable Learners and Students who needed support, compared to other similar Sixth Form Colleges. Governors were also reminded that the increase in both safeguarding and mental health issues affecting the Student body was a national wide issue.

- Confidentiality procedures relating to safeguarding matters were also explained following a question from Governors, which are in line with the College's Safeguarding Policy.
- Cases of suicidal ideation amongst the Student body were discussed including that some Students had had to be hospitalised as a result.

The Corporation recorded its thanks to Staff for their work in supporting Students.

**NOTE: Risk Management Policy and Information Security Policy** – deferred to Spring Term 2021, post internal audit work.

**15. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 6.00 p.m.** – venue to be agreed and whether the Meeting should be held remotely or on site.

**16. Any Other Business** – None.

Governors were informed that there would not be a Governor Links' Day in January 2022 but that a Governor lunch would be organised with Heads of School and new Staff etc before or after the Easter break. **ACTION: Donna-Marie Janson**

**17. Part II Confidential business**

a) **Part II Minutes from Corporation Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021** – circulated to external Governors only.

The external Governors confirmed that there were no issues to raise or be discussed in the absence of all Governors and the minutes were approved.

b) **Matters Arising** – None.

c) **Report and Recommendations from the SPH Remuneration Committee Meeting held earlier in the evening at 4.45 p.m. and approve the following SPH Policies (changes as tracked in the documents)** – It was noted that this would be carried forward until next term. **ACTION: Jane Farrell**

- SPH Remuneration Policy
- SPH Performance Review Scheme
- SPH Disciplinary Policy/Procedures
- SPH Grievance Policy/Procedures

**15) Enclosures:** noted meeting dates for 2021/2022 academic year to be included in Governors' diaries.

Chair.....

Date.....

Louise Pennington 7/12/21