

## MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2021 AT 6.00 P.M. MEETING 20/03

Present: Cintha Archer, Belinda Dutch, Ayas Fallon Khan, Jane Farrell, Paul Herridge, Donna-Marie Janson, John McKee, Bo-Min Ryu, Janice Robinson, Richard Seager, Alan Walker, Brendan Ward, Simon Waters, Aldona Wheeler

In Attendance: Peter Bailey, Elaine French, Lisa Watkin-Stevens, Louise Pennington

Apologies: Simon Lindfield, Lucy Townsend, Katharine Travis

In the Chair: Janice Robinson

### 1. Welcomes and Apologies for Absence

Janice Robinson gave an introduction to the Meeting, highlighting the items requiring Corporation approval, including the Finance and Audit items.

It was also noted that the two sub-items listed under the Chair's Report, should be included under the Principal's Report and therefore would be reported in that order.

Although there were no expected Governor Membership Matters to report, in fact the Corporation will be invited to approve an appointment for a IB Link Governor – refer below.

It was reported that induction sessions had been held for the two new Parent Governors, Belinda Dutch and Cintha Archer, with Chair, Principal and Governance Director prior to this meeting. Both Parent Governors gave a brief introduction about themselves to Governors and were welcomed to the Governing Body (in post until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022).

The meeting was quorate.

Ayas Fallon Khan joined the meeting at 6.15 p.m.

The Chair reminded Governors of the remote meeting protocols, details of which had been circulated prior to the meeting and also referred to the various Google Meets' options e.g. screen formatting, chat function etc

The meeting was being recorded.

Apologies – as recorded above.

As it was the last meeting for the current Student Governors, Governors recorded their thanks to the excellent work which both Bo-Min Ryu and Lucy Townsend, had done during their time in post.

### 2. Membership Matters – None

#### a) International Baccalaureate (IB) Link Governor

Referring to the Matters Arising item listed in the Actions' Schedule with regard to the invitation to appoint an IB Link Governor Refer matters arising item, the Corporation was informed that the appointment was now a requirement of the IB Organisation. Hence although it was decided earlier in the year that the appointment should be deferred until post the pandemic, it was agreed to appoint Ayas Fallon Khan as the IB Link Governor, with immediate effect (Ayas Fallon Khan had

originally expressed interest in the role when interest was sought last year). **ACTION: Donna-Marie Janson/Louise Pennington**

#### **Declaration of Interests:**

None recorded other than those notified at previous meeting declarations and as recorded in the Register of Interests' folder.

### **3. Minutes of the Corporation held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

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

### **4. 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 post pandemic.

It was noted that the action schedule would be updated to reflect any changes detailed above.

**ACTION: Louise Pennington.**

**SIGNIFICANT RISKS 2020/2021**– the Corporation noted the risks for 2020/2021 and agreed to bear these in mind with reference to the Meeting's business.

### **5. Chair's Report**

Janice Robinson reported on the following matters:

#### **a) FE White Paper: The Key Reforms**

The following points from the White Paper, issued last week, were highlighted:

- Intention is to **transform post-16 education, boost skills needed in economy and get more people into higher skilled and better paid jobs**. The purpose also aims to end further and technical education as being seen as a second-class option for young people i.e. degrees are not the only route to success and jobs.
- It's not very clear what the contents of the paper mean for SFCs as the central focus of the paper is upon technical skills and qualifications, together with the influence of employers in determining what skills are required and also their involvement in designing courses and qualifications. At this point Governors were reminded that the College does not offer Technical courses/qualifications, but offers academic courses including A Levels, the IB and vocational courses – General Applied Qualifications (GAQ) (one of which is Engineering). Regarding the latter, there remains a question mark about the future of GAQs  
There is still a question mark about the future of GAQs, which many of our Students choose to study alongside their A levels.
- However, SFCs are part of the FE sector and some of the proposals will be relevant to Varndean College. The proposed reforms have implications for planning, finance governance and for Staff and Students.
- Strategic Planning: Colleges, training providers and employers will work together to create Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP), with a £65M Strategic Development Fund in 2021/2022 to help providers re-shape their provision in line with priorities.

- Finance – new powers will be granted to allow failing Colleges to be closed down or to remove and replace College leaders; proposals to simplify funding streams and to move to outcome-based funding (employment impact).
- Governance – new requirements for the appointment of College Leaders and Boards of Governors: and for annual board assessment and external governance reviews.
- Students and Staff – a commitment to lifelong learning with an entitlement to access to 4 years' worth of loan funding across Fe and HE throughout a Student's lifetime; there will be a drive to recruit more technical experts from industry to train Students, with training bursaries on offer.
- It's unlikely to change quickly bearing in mind that some opportunities in the future for us to offer courses to adults who don't have a level 3 qualification (depending on the courses designated as eligible for lifelong loan entitlement) but this will only be available after the 2025 and the election.
- Also, we might welcome simplify funding streams and outcomes funding,
- (although getting more people into jobs will depend on state of economy /job availability).
- And there are some threats to our independence (new intervention powers closing us down etc and imposing new requirements on the appointment of College leaders and Governors.)
- The College will have to monitor developments and continue to work with its local Colleges, local authority and Universities in the Coastal strip in order to devise plans for courses/qualifications.
- Governors were disappointed to learn that there would be no help with the current adult education funding.
- Corporation recognised that although the College may welcome a simplified funding stream and outcomes funding, the latter will be granted in relation to the number of Students who get jobs once they have qualified and this will depend upon job availability in the local area.
- The first meeting of stakeholders has been scheduled for March 8<sup>th</sup> 2021 with Gillian Keegan, the Minister for Skills, opening the meeting.
- Initial thoughts from the SFC sector included the concern that once Students reach 15/16, they will have the choice of A Levels or technical courses, but nothing in between (such as the GAQ mentioned above).
- Reference was also made to Pete Bailey's report made at the Governors' Strategy Event, regarding the T Levels.

## 6. Principal's Report

Donna-Marie Janson provided the following information to Governors:

### a) GB Met – Expression of Interest (E of I) in Merger

Governors were reminded about the formal FE Commissioner's intervention of GB Met which took place in 2020, after it was granted an undisclosed amount of emergency funding from the Government. The Principal reported that all local Colleges had been asked whether they'd be interested in submitting an Expression of Interest to merge with GBMet and that the College was undergoing a Structure and Prospects Appraisal regarding their financial issues. She confirmed that SLT would not recommend that Varndean College should submit an E of I.

Clarification regarding the details and context relating to the GB Met proposal was sought and provided, including for newer Governors, historical details from previous similar situations such as the Mid-Sussex/Crawley merger and also the growth of the Chichester Group and its part in the above developments. The Chair also mentioned the Area Based Review which was carried out in respect of Colleges in the local area, after which the ESFA had agreed that Varndean College could remain a standalone SFC, based on its preference, combined with satisfactory financials.

The Corporation agreed with SLT's recommendation and resolved that an E of I should not be submitted to the FE Commissioner with regarding to acquiring control of GBMet.

#### **b) Student Applications for 2021/2022 enrolment**

All applications have been received and the deadline passed and interviews will be commencing this week, involving SLT. The initial predicted numbers are looking healthy at around 1,265 to date, which is an increase of 30 compared to last year. The figures also show a significant improvement in applications received from local schools (418 – Brighton (compared to 433 in previous years), and noting that historically these numbers have shown a strong conversion rate. Governors were reminded that as per the Accord agreement, applicants may only apply to either BHASVIC or Varndean College.

#### **c) FE Climate Change Road Map**

Governors were reminded about the announcement made at the recent Governors' Strategy Event, whereby the College had signed up, along with BHASVIC and GB Met, to become one of the leading Colleges in England and Wales to sign up to the recently released FE Climate Roadmap. It's intended that Steve Frampton (Association of Colleges (AoC) ex-President and Climate Commissioner, Steve Frampton) will give a presentation about Sustainability and Climate Change at the next Corporation Meeting in March 2021.

#### **d) Nationally Agreed Staff Pay Award Update**

Discussions with the SFCA and the Teachers' Unions are ongoing and the pay rise has not yet been agreed (Support Staff agreement was agreed last year pre-pandemic). The Unions have asked for 7% pay increase which is in line with the Schools' sector. Account has to be taken of the difficult current climate and the significant demand on Government funds owing to the pandemic. The Principal reported that a preliminary agreement was expected to be agreed at the end of this month of 2.42% overall to the College (2% backdated to September, and then from May onwards an extra 1.25%, the latter of which has still be to agreed). Once the details have been finalised, these will be presented to Corporation for consideration at the March 2021 Corporation Meeting, with the latest financials; a Finance Working Group may also be convened prior to Corporation to review the figures in detail. **ACTION: Donna-Marie Janson/Elaine French**

#### **e) Covid-19 Update**

Currently the College has had 4 Staff who have tested positive for Covid-19, and 49 Students have also tested positive (24 since January, start of term). Tragically some Staff and Students have suffered bereavement, losing family members to the virus.

#### **f) Staff Inset Day**

The Principal reported on the recent Inset "Breather" Day and training for Staff, the theme of which was to prepare online lessons for the following term. Donna-Marie Janson also reported that the College was now fully teaching online, with Staff receiving training as needed. An ILT Champion has been appointed to deal with all Staff questions and training issues etc, to ensure that all Staff are up to date with online Teaching and associated IT. Lesson times remain as normal so that Students receive a full contact time with Staff and the timetable continues to be followed on the whole, but with some flexibility e.g. for group work etc. A further Staff Inset day will be offered later this term for catching up, reviewing ILT needs and any other needs arising from online working.

### **g) Covid Testing**

SLT met on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to review Covid Testing on site for Staff and Students, in line with Government guidelines. Lateral flow tests will be utilised for this purpose and these will be issued initially to International Students in order to provide assurance to local host families. The tests will also be offered to those Staff and vulnerable Students already on the College's site.

### **h) DfE and Ofqual Consultation on Summer Examinations**

The Principal confirmed that SLT had reviewed the consultation document which she was happy to circulate to Governors upon requested. In summary, the DfE is proposing externally set exams for this Summer's A Levels and GCSEs which would then be internally marked by College Teachers, then sampled/moderated (by the Teachers) and submitted. Should Students wish to appeal their subsequent mark/award, this would relate to the Teacher's marking and the full process would have to be completed by the end of July, which would be a very tight schedule. At the same time, Teachers would be expected to continue teaching A1 Students. Although it was uncertain when the outcome from the consultation would be issued, it was suggested that it may be after Spring half term. SLT will be submitting their feedback on the consultation by the due date.

It was suggested that the CAG (Centre Assessed Grades) would be more appropriate, also taking into account, this had worked fairly well last year.

### **i) Return to College Site**

Government announcement today informed Colleges and the public that there will be 2 weeks' notice prior to re-opening with suggestions that this may be from 8<sup>th</sup> March, although, whether this applies to FE, Secondary, Primary or all is unclear. There was also an announcement of budget support for 16-19 providers of up to £300M so that providers could recoup some of their Covid costs.

## **7. Student Governors' Report**

Bo-Min Ryu presented the report to Governors and the various issues identified by Students arising from the pandemic were noted (Lucy Townsend had sent apologies for the meeting but had passed on her aspects of the Report to Bo-Min Ryu to present on her behalf):

- IB student feedback from Lucy Townsend: IB Students have been anxious and under pressure regarding their imminent examinations and the fact that these were not given the option to sit/not sit their exams, unlike other qualifications (BTECs). However, it was noted that the IB was not within the control of the Government, being an International organisation and having to take into account other Countries' situations and requirements. A Parents/Students IB online meeting has been held, led by the IB Coordinator in order to ensure information is up to date and to answer questions and concerns. The extension of the UCAS deadline to 29/1/21 was welcomed, providing more time for Students to make decisions regarding their future. Offers and grade requirements have already been issued to many Students and the latter have welcomed many lower grade offers to reflect the difficulties experienced during the pandemic.
- Third lockdown for Students – has created a challenging time for Students, but nevertheless, with the great support from Staff, has helped sustain Students' focus on completing their studies. Students have particularly welcomed the suspension of the punitive colour support system, with a more supportive approach to assist Students who have struggled to attend lessons, submit work etc. Remote Teaching attendance is proving

to be successful with currently 90% attendance levels. Furthermore, online etiquette has improved too with Students and Staff having made adjustments to ensure a good quality of online lesson/contribution from Students etc. Some Teachers have created their own group chats, outside timetabled lessons which has also proved really useful for Students.

Regarding computer cameras being off or on during lessons, the debate has continued for a while and there are different opinions depending upon the Staff Member teaching at the time and the pros and cons of this were noted. Students have welcomed the fact that all lessons are currently being taught remotely following the existing timetable, which provides structure and familiarity for Students.

- Equality Report – noted on page 23 of report onward – Student outcomes figure demonstrates the College’s recognised consistent approach to all Students.
- End of year examinations/assessments – Students are understandably concerned about the outcome of the consultation and would prefer Teachers’ CAGs; Students are aware that the work they are submitting at the moment, could contribute towards CAGs should these be the basis of final “examinations” and Students are working hard as a result of this possible outcome.
- There is a general sense of sadness, that the Students’ time at the College is coming to an end and how unique and brilliant the College has been; Students will miss their tutors and staff who have provided such good levels of support and Bo-Min Ryu wanted to record thanks from Students to the dedication and excellent support provided by the Staff of the College.
- If possible, a leaving event would be a good way to end Students’ time at College.
- Methods of gathering Student information (Student Voice) were noted and the matter has been raised at the Student Council already. Progress in obtaining Student feedback has been limited owing to the pandemic but the benefits of the Student Council processes will enable better communication and information gathering for the future, noting that the usual method of obtaining feedback by the Student Surveys provided limited information. Further work will need to be carried out to progress this with the help of the next Student Union Executive, based on the new framework introduced this year.
- The Student wellbeing podcast is progressing and will be accessible via the wellbeing page on the website.

Bo-Min Ryu thanked the College and the Governing Body, noting that this was his last meeting.

In response, Governors thanked both Student Governors for the update and confirmed how very impressed they had been with their work as Student Governors and the progress within the Student Executive in taking forward various projects to improve Student Voice and communications etc

## **8. Curriculum and Standards**

SLT presented the various papers to Corporation, the contents of which were noted and the following points were recorded:

### **a) Student Update**

Lisa Watkin-Stevens presented her report to the Corporation and highlighted the following points:

- Thanks were recorded to Students for their excellent work including that relating to the Student Council.
- As reported above, all lessons are live streamed as per the usual timetable.

- During lockdown, there is provision at College (Library) for those Students who don't have a suitable study space at home. IT equipment has also been provided where the need has been identified with Chromebooks being provided or better wifi access. IT Staff have delivered Chromebooks to Students' homes where their own equipment has broken too.
- Careers service – a full service has continued during lockdown, including UCAS appointments being held via Google Meets with 368 UCAS applications submitted to date, which is in line with previous years. Additionally, over 100 ex-Students have sought references too. The extension of the UCAS deadline has been helpful particularly for those Students who were undecided whether to apply to Universities this year.
- Engagement of Students – confirmed as recorded above in the Students' Report, that attendance has been very good, with an average of 90% attendance.
- Heads of Schools – are monitoring quality within their areas and completing virtual learning walks to review and check quality of Teaching and Learning.
- At the time of writing this report, 34 Students had requested to be on site to access online lessons, which has increased to 42 Students presently, per day and all of whom are working in the library on a rota basis, to ensure social distancing is maintained. Students use earphones to ensure that there is no distraction for other Students, many of whom are participating in different lessons at any one time.
- During lockdown, Students and Staff are accessing the site via the main entrance only and there is a track and trace internal system in operation which is monitored by SLT and prepared by Aldona Wheeler, the Library Manager.
- Safeguarding and Mental Health – as reported earlier, the College has moved away from the more punitive RAG system to a more supportive system introduced at the start of the lockdown, with supportive meetings with the respective Heads of School.
- The College has provided a check in for Students' wellbeing sessions recording details on a central tracking system in respect of Students contacted arising as a result of Safeguarding or Wellbeing reasons. Staff make contact once or more per week to check how a Student is doing.
- Student Wellbeing podcast – Andrew Wright (CEO of Action Your Potential) has been working with Students and Staff on this and the next podcast will focus on surviving lockdown.
- Virtual spaces have been set up for Students to make connections with other Students during lockdown. An online lockdown surgery for Students with mental health issues has also been established, together with some anxiety group workshops.
- Wellbeing information and support has also been provided for Staff.

Governors welcomed the report and thanked Staff for all that they were doing to support Students during the lockdown.

In response to a question from Governors regarding the social worker employed by the College, Lisa Watkin-Stevens confirmed that the College had employed a new Social Work Liaison Officer (appointed Summer 2020 and started employment from January 2021, when she was available) who has taken over a case load of Students to work with in order to provide appropriate levels of support.

Governors queried whether there was a limit on Students attending the Library to work on site and in response it was noted that currently all those Students who need to come on site, have been accommodated either in the Library but also in 2 other classrooms in order to preserve social distancing. Other Students have also come on site to make use of the 3D room or laboratory requirements.

## b) Equality Duty Annual Data Report

Corporation noted the Report, the contents of which were taken as read, along with the Summary sheet. The Principal summarised the key aspects of the Report and the following points were recorded:

- The Report would normally have been presented to Governors at the December Corporation Meeting.
- The format of the Report broadly follows that established by the previous Principal, but this will be reviewed prior to the next issuance and the layout and content may be revised in some areas.

## STUDENTS

- Gender – figures have become more balanced.
- Ethnicity – positive improvement in diversity of the College which also better reflects the City's diversity.
- Student outcomes – no significant gaps and improvements noted.
- Male achievement rates improved last year and all outcomes are above the national benchmark for the sector.
- Females with learning difficulties have a lower achievement rate, although this is still above the national benchmark. The College will be taking this forward as an action to improve.
- 19 + Students' achievement has been traditionally lower than the lower age range.
- BAME male achievement rates remain lower than desirable compared to their peer group, although this does reflect a small percentage of the College's Students.
- The College will continue to take action to rectify this.

## STAFF

- Age demographic - average age of Staff has increased to 48 which is 4 years more than the FE sector average; over half of the Staff population is over 51 – which has an impact on Staffing costs as older/experienced Staff are more costly, being higher up the pay scale.
- Low Staff turnover compared to the sector average.
- Ethnicity profile has not changed significantly and overall diversity does not reflect the locality.
- There is no significant gender pay gap; excerpts from the Gender Pay Gap Report, circulated to Governors in June 2020, have been included in the Equality Report and referenced here. It was also noted that gender details would be revised to reflect change in gender of the Principal since Donna-Marie Janson's appointment.
- The action carried forward a previous meeting regarding the production of ethnicity pay gap analysis, will be included in the next Gender Pay Gap Report. **ACTION: Donna-Marie Janson**
- Following feedback received from the Student Governor regarding the BAME classifications, the Principal agreed that the terminology relating to BAME groups should be reviewed and brought up to date and should also include socio-economic groupings, along with bursary/free school meals categories etc. The Principal also advised that she would be reviewing how gender is presented e.g. biological, self-identified gender etc, in addition to reviewing the BAME categories. In this regard, Donna-Marie Janson invited Bo-Min Ryu to a meeting to discuss this prior to his department as a Student Governor.
- **ACTION: Donna-Marie Janson**



At this point it was noted that the Finance and Audit items 9 and 10, would be taken together.

## 9. Finance

Elaine French introduced the various documents from both the Finance and Audit sections of the agenda and provided a summary of the key issues and any outstanding matters.

Elaine French provided some context to the various reports, the following of which was recorded:

- As reported previously and for the benefit of the new Governors, re-assessments have been made by Elaine French regarding various budget entries for this year reflecting adjustments required owing to the pandemic.
- The Annual Report and Financial Statements and the Audit Completion Report and associated documents as listed on the agenda and included in the meeting papers, would usually have been reviewed and approved at Corporation in December 2020, prior to submission to the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 deadline. Owing to the pandemic, the deadline has been extended to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, reflecting the additional time required for completing all the work remotely.
- In addition to the guaranteed ESFA funding for the year, despite the pandemic the College has been able to ensure a reasonable level of income from adult education and International Students, although the latter 2 areas, are understandably much lower than usual. Despite the lockdown, the College has still managed to recruit some International Students albeit remotely and adjustments in the budget and financial forecasts for future years, have been made to reflect this.
- There have been costs to the College which are Covid related aside from the Covid Contingency budget, including additional cleaning costs and IT costs (provision of IT hardware etc to some Staff and Students).
- Notwithstanding the deadline extension, Elaine French advised that the College's Annual Report and Financial Statements and External Audit Completion Report, won't in fact be ready in time for the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 deadline as both are dependent upon the written confirmation from the College's Bank in respect of the overdraft facility required with effect from the end of February 2021 for a 2 month period. Nevertheless, subject to this outstanding written confirmation, the audit report will be issued as unqualified.
- Elaine French and Donna-Marie Janson met online with the ESFA lead Graham Young earlier today to discuss the situation. The ESFA understood that the College was awaiting the bank overdraft confirmation in writing in order for the auditors to issue the clean audit report and that this process was likely to take the College beyond the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 deadline. They have agreed to an extension to 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021 for the submission and the College will keep them up to date with progress; Elaine French reported that the bank has indicated that the written confirmation should be issued by the end of next week.
- Attention was drawn to both the FWG and Audit Committee draft minutes, which recorded the discussions held, highlighted outstanding matters and recommendations made by both together with the Annual Report and Accounts; the Audit Committee has also seen the draft Audit Completion Report issued by Mazars, the College's External Auditors. The recommendations from both the FWG and Audit Committee were based on the outstanding matters being resolved on the terms advised at the meetings.
- Elaine French reminded Governors of the External Audit process, whereby the auditors review the figures within the financial statements, implement their testing process, which includes various sample checks on invoices, debtors, creditors, bank statements etc, from which assumptions are made to determine whether the figures reflect a true and fair

position. The College's financial processes are also audited to ensure that procedures have been followed.

- Elaine French also highlighted page 52 of the papers – the Audit Report, which relates to an accounting adjustment (not cash) in the accounts which has been identified by the auditors with a recommendation that this be changed. However, the auditors advised that they would be content for the College to defer revising this until next year's financial statements and consequently, the adjustment has been incorporated into the current year's financial statements ending 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. It was agreed that the summary of misstatement should be removed from the document and the final Audit Completion Report will note this. The Corporation agreed that approval of the Audit Completion Report could be given on the basis given above and the Chair and Principal be authorised to sign the document on that basis. **ACTION: Elaine French**
- Reference was made to the earlier version of the Annual Report and Financial Statements presented to Governors at the December 2020 Corporation meeting. As an explanation for the new Governors, Elaine French gave a brief summary of the key statements, including Statement of Comprehensive income (profit and loss), which was in deficit by £1.4M – technically an accounting adjustment in respect of the College's pension liabilities for the year, being an annual adjustment. She also drew Governors' attention to the operating surplus and the importance of the College's financial health grade.

## FINANCE RECORD

The contents of the paper circulated earlier today via e mail, were noted by the Corporation and Elaine French highlighted the key points and summarised the purpose of the document, also referring to the Executive Summary which explained the ESFA's requirements. At this point, Elaine French shared the document on her screen with all Governors in order to draw Governors' attention to certain areas of the document. The following points were recorded:

- Document required to be approved by the College for submission to the ESFA by the 31/1/21 deadline.
- The various schedules incorporate and reflect the figures included within the Financial Statements including the Income and Expenditure schedule, Balance Sheet schedule, cash flow etc, together with figures included in the latest Management Accounts (included within the Corporation meeting papers for information).
- The schedules enable the ESFA to calculate the College's financial health and provide financial benchmarking analysis for the FE sector.
- Elaine French drew Governors' attention to 1 revision to the Finance Record, which this year has included various projections and forecasts; this is in addition to the additional cash flow analysis submitted to the ESFA in November 2020.
- As reported last year the 2020 financial health grade was calculated to be "requires improvement".
- ESFA was made aware of the College's financial position and forecasts, last term having had discussions with the Principal and Vice-Principal. The Principal confirmed that the ESFA had said that they were comfortable with the College's position, owing to the fact that the financial health grade placed the College towards the top end of "requires improvement" and they recognised that the College was unlikely to require emergency funding and consequently intervention.
- The latest financial forecasts which were considered at Corporation in December 2020 with the associated executive summary confirming that the financial health had improved from "requires improvement" to the lower end of "good". SLT will continue to monitor the financial

situation on a monthly basis. At this point, in the absence of Simon Lindfield, Chair of FWG, Janice Robinson passed on Simon Lindfield's view that Governors should keep in mind that the finances will have to continue to be monitored closely particularly as the current forecasts demonstrate that the College's position is on the cusp of requires improvement.

- In response to a question from Governors regarding the projected operating surplus on page 105 which appears as a straight line through the academic year, Elaine French explained that the graph in question demonstrated the movements to projected budgeted surplus at the year end, rather than individual monthly projections.

In summary, the Corporation resolved to approve the Annual Report and Financial Statements, Audit Completion Report and Finance Record based on the information available to date and the commentary and assurance provided by the FWG and the Audit Committee, subject to the written evidence from the bank confirming the overdraft facility with the terms as agreed together with the subsequent final version of the Audit Completion Report providing an unqualified audit report assessed on the basis of the anticipated bank facility letter, noting that the documents would be circulated to the ESFA as soon as finalised after the formal deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021. It was also agreed that should circumstances change and further discussion be required by Governors, a Corporation meeting would be convened. **ACTION: Elaine French**

It was also confirmed that the final versions of all documents above, would be circulated to Governors. **ACTION: Elaine French**

### **c) Financial update including the Management Accounts**

The contents of the document circulated with the meeting papers were noted by the Corporation and Elaine French highlighted the key points, as detailed in the Executive Summary. Referring to the Finance Record document discussed above, she reminded Governors that figures within the Management Accounts (prepared as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020) had been incorporated into the respective tables of the Finance Records, along with the relevant figures in the Financial Statements. However, Elaine French explained that some of the forecast figures in the Finance Record varied slightly to the projected forecast within the Management Accounts, owing to the fact that since having prepared the Management Accounts for inclusion in the meeting papers dispatched last week, she had re-forecast the figures owing to additional information which had arisen and needed to be taken into account regarding Adult Education course income projections. She highlighted the importance of the bottom line forecast and projection used to calculate the EBITDA (earnings before income, taxation, depreciation and amortisation) included within the forecast figures within the Finance Record, the latter of which showed a slightly better position compared to that in the previous Management Accounts.

Elaine French updated Governors on the income forecasts, advising that based on the latest assessment, the College was expecting less income from Adult Education and income generating activities generally, however this has been offset by the receipt of additional funding in respect of high needs' Students which hadn't been included in the Management Accounts as the confirmation of this additional income had not been received at the time of preparing the Accounts. Hence the College has been able to offset some of the losses arising from a decline in income generating activities, combined with some additional adjustments in the budget relating to further cost savings identified following ongoing assessment of expenditure.

A further update on the Management Accounts will be provided to Governors at the next Corporation Meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

The Management Accounts were received by the Corporation

ii) **Latest Financial Forecast for next year 2021/2022**, was also presented to Corporation at its December 2020 meeting; Elaine French confirmed that the figures in the papers were unchanged, since the last meeting. The funding allocation for next year has not yet been advised by the ESFA but is anticipated to be issued next month. She assured Governors that there was no reason to assume that the forecast with respect to the College's income generating activities, should change. With regard to the income entries, Elaine French confirmed SLT's prudent approach, noting that it would be some time, post Covid, before income would recover to the levels experienced prior to the pandemic. The College has achieved £250k income in respect of International Students and in the forecast, this has been increased very slightly as SLT is confident that there will be some improvement. The forecast figures will continue to be monitored closely by the Vice-Principal each month and the budget for next year will be drafted prior to March 2021 Corporation, once the funding allocation has been released.

iii) **Financial Regulations** – Governors noted the revised document and all the detailed work completed by the Vice-Principal, the Audit Committee and Alan Walker and Richard Seager. Thanks were recorded to the those involved and the final version was approved, noting that it would be uploaded to the website for all to view. **ACTION: Elaine French**

iv) **Other (Overdraft Facility and capital development opportunities)** – refer discussion about and FWG and Audit Committee draft minutes.

**9a) Draft Minutes from Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021** – noted.

**10b) Audit Committee Annual Report 2019-2020** – approved subject to above.

**9b) Audit Completion Annual Report and Annual Report and Financial Statements 2020 (also refer Audit Item below and draft Audit Committee Minutes)** – approved subject to above.

**9c) Finance Report** – approved subject to above.

**9d) iii Financial Regulations (linked document)** – approved.

**10d) Regularity Audit Self-Assessment Questionnaire (supports Regularity Audit Statement), plus Annex (Covid-19)** – approved.

**10e) Letters of Representation (iro Financial Statements and Regularity Audit)** - approved

The following documents were noted:

**a) Financial Update:**

- i) Dashboard, Management Accounts and Executive Summary**
- ii) Latest Forecast 2021-2022**

**Item iv) Other (overdraft facility, capital funding opportunities – refer draft minutes)** – discussion recorded above and in the FWG and Audit Committee minutes, were noted.

## **10. Audit Committee Matters**

**a) Draft Minutes from Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (deferred from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020)** – noted.

**b) Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2019-2020** – refer above – included in list of documents approved by Corporation.

- c) **Draft Annual Report and Financial Statements** – refer Finance section above
- d) **Regularity Audit Self-Assessment Questionnaire (supports Regularity Audit Statement), plus Annex (Covid-19)** – refer list of approvals above.
- e) **Letters of Representation (iro Financial Statements and Regularity Audit)** – refer list of approvals above.
- f) **Risk Management Group Matters (previously included in December 2020 Corporation meeting papers, but were for noting until Audit Committee had met and made their recommendations)** – all documents were approved.

At this point, the Chair confirmed that further investigation would be carried out by the Principal and Vice Principal on the inconsistency in the range and scoring between the risk assessment documents and the risk register. **ACTION: Donna-Marie Janson/Elaine French**

#### **Risk Group Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

- a) **Draft Minutes**
- b) **Risk Management Annual Report**
- c) **Risk Register**
- d) **Risk Assurance Map**

Paul Herridge highlighted the discussions and recommendations made at the October 2020 Committee, as recorded in the draft minutes and also discussed at the December 2020 Corporation meeting (but prior to consideration of the Audit Committee owing to the fact that the Audit Committee had been deferred from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 to 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021).

#### **g) Appointment of New Internal Auditor**

Referring to the draft Audit Committee draft minutes' recommendations and the explanation provided by Elaine French, it was agreed that the appointment process should be taken forward as soon as possible and by the proposed deadline of end March 2021, noting that Alan Walker, Chair of Audit Committee, would be part of the Appointment Tender Panel. **ACTION: Elaine French**

#### **11. Policies and Other Documents**

- a) **Admissions 19+ - Approved (action omitted from December 2020 meeting)-** approved, as unchanged (from the last Corporation Meeting December 2020).
- b) **Risk Management Policy** – approved as unchanged as per recommendations of the Audit Committee
- c) **Staff Development Annual Report – 2019-2020** - Noted

Pete Bailey presented the document to the Corporation, the contents of which were noted and the following points recorded:

- Highlighted online Teaching
- Online Staff Development together with regular ILT training provision to ensure Staff are equipped to teach and work online effectively.

- There was a live whole College Inset Day in December 2019, pre-Covid, mainly ILT based which in retrospect, well prepared Staff for the demand of online Teaching and making the best use of all ILT options.
- As reported earlier, there are also ILT champions have been appointed to assist Staff including providing opportunities to input suggestions for improving delivery of virtual lessons.
- The College continues to be members of S7 Group of Colleges and the EQR Group etc
- There has also been training for Middle Managers and Heads of Schools have organised some meetings to take this forward – dealing with values of the College and how to be a better Manager etc – currently this is half way through to completion.
- Part of the Staff Development Budget has been allocated to supporting Staff mental health needs with various online options having been made available, including a Staff wellbeing webinar.

**12. Date of Next Meeting**

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 6.00 p.m.**

**13. Any Other Business - None.**

**14. Part II Confidential business - There was no confidential business.**

**15. Enclosures**

- a) **Meeting dates for 2020 - 2021 – reminder as previously circulated – noted.**

Chair.....

Date.....

Louise Pennington 27/01/21