

WQE & Regent College Group

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting
Held at the University Road Campus on
3 July 2019
Commencing at 5.00 pm**

Members of the Corporation Present:

Stuart Dawkins, Chair
Sarah Fox, Bernadette Green, Alistair Lockhart-Smith, Neil McGhee, Nisar Navsariwala,
Philip Parkinson, Jim Phillips, Paul Wilson, Aaron Winterton & Jimmy Zachariah

In attendance:

Sue Ashwin, Tim Cullinan, Carolyn Davies, Dawn Haywood, Andrew Jackson,
Roger Newman (Bond Bryan) & Sarah Oldfield

Apologies for absence

Wayne Allsopp, Royston Bayliss, Joyce Black, Peter Butcher, Simon Catchpole, Jo Cooke,
Amrik Singh & Rosie Whitley

The Chair welcomed all to the final Corporation meeting of this academic year and introduced Roger Newman from Bond Bryan, who would be presenting the Estates Options item. An update was given with regard to Peter Butcher, who was doing well and would be making a full return to work in August.

1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. Minutes – Paper 001

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held 22 May 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters outstanding – Paper 002

These were reviewed and noted. It was agreed that the Risk Register item could now be removed as it was on the agenda for this meeting, as could the first item around the academisation and SFC landscape as this was now well embedded in strategic planning at the College. The Chair noted that it was extremely likely that a Finance Task & Finish Group would be set up in the new academic year, once Peter Butcher had returned.

OVERSIGHT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

4. Principal's Update - Presentation

The Principal updated the Corporation on a number of matters including:

- The main headlines from the Governor Conference and a medium-term watch list arising from these
- Industrial Relations

- Consultations with staff
- Student Recruitment
- Welcome to WQE Days
- Letter to continuing students
- Curriculum & Timetabling
- Staffing matters
- Retirement of Sue Ashwin

Members thanked the Principal for this information, noting that it painted a largely positive picture and that steps were being taken to address any areas where potential issues might arise. The Corporation recorded its thanks to all staff involved in the Welcome to WQE Days, particularly those in MIS and Admissions who had dealt with the logistics of organising such a large event over two campuses. Thanks were also expressed to Sue Ashwin for her outstanding contribution to the College and the Corporation throughout her time at WQE.

OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS

5. Audit Committee Minutes – Paper 003

Philip Parkinson, the Audit Committee Chair, updated governors on matters considered by the Committee at its meeting on 26 June 2019. After considering the Audit Committee's recommendations the Corporation endorsed the following matters:

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| Minute 5a: | Risk Register – Paper 004. |
| Minute 5b: | External Assurance Reviews 2018-19 – Noted. |
| Minute 5c: | 2019-20 Programme of External Assurance Reviews – Paper 005. |
| Minute 5d: | 2018-19 External Audit Strategy Memorandum – Paper 006.
Governors were also strongly encouraged to carefully read and consider the information in Appendix E of this plan. |
| Minute 5e: | Annual Health & Safety Plan – Noted. |

6. Monthly Management Accounts – Papers 007 (April) and 008 (May)

Carolyn Davies went through the accounts, noting that most of the comments had been picked up in the Financial Plan. The change in the forecast deficit from c.£870k in April to c.£820k in May was explained as resulting from the claim around Adult Education Funding, which could be more accurately estimated in May. Members thanked Carolyn for the accounts and had no questions.

7. Three Year Financial Plan Including Approval of Next Year's Budget – Paper 009

Carolyn Davies introduced the plan and tabled the final part, Paper 009D, which formed part of the return to ESFA. It was noted that the Financial Planning Checklist, Paper 009B, did not get submitted to ESFA but the Board was required to see it to ensure that it was comfortable with the plans. Paper 009C showed a slight improvement and small surpluses after adjusting for FRS 102 pensions charges, and the reasoning behind the assumptions made was explained. Members queried the wording of the entry on P19 with regard to interest charges and CDs will consider revising this. Members were confident that the assumptions made were rational and that there appeared to be nothing for the financial regulators to be concerned about.

The Three Year Financial Plan and Budget and the Financial Planning Checklist were unanimously approved.

Members were also informed at this time of a new financial planning document being introduced next academic year which would come to Corporation in January and had been requested by ESFA in light of the challenging current financial situation for the College sector.

8. Estates Strategy Update – Paper 010

This matter was considered to be confidential at this stage and is contained in the confidential annex to these minutes.

9. Health and Safety Policy – Paper 011

Carolyn Davies introduced the policy, noting that it had been approved in March as part of the annual cycle but that updates had recently been made to reflect changes due to restructuring. Harmonisation of previously campus-specific procedures had also made possible the re-introduction of Section 4, 'Identifying and Managing Health & Safety Risks', which was a summary of key legislation and college response for key areas. The Policy was due to be rolled out to staff at the start of the new academic year. The Chair asked that any comments be emailed directly to the Principal within the next two weeks.

The revised Health and Safety Policy was unanimously approved, subject to comments.

OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES & EXPERIENCES

10. Complaints Report – Paper 012

Sarah Oldfield introduced the report, noting that there had been ten complaints received during the reporting period. In answer to a question from a Governor, Sarah gave further details on two of the complaints, which involved issues around exams. Governors were assured that, where applicable, updated processes had been put in place to avoid similar incidents occurring in the future.

The Complaints Report was received and noted.

11. Teaching and Learning Monitoring Report – Paper 013

Sarah Oldfield went through the report, noting that separate processes had been run on the two campuses this year to allow decisions to be made regarding which model would be adopted for the future. Through consultations with staff, four Teaching and Learning priorities had been identified for 2019-20, as noted in the report. It had been decided to continue with the current University Road model in future, using Curriculum Area Leaders and Deputy Curriculum Area Leaders in the process and moderating through the Executive Leadership Team.

The Teaching and Learning Monitoring Report was received and noted.

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

12. Outline Meeting Calendar 2019-20 – Paper 014

The draft calendar was accepted, with one amendment to be made around the start time of the Audit Committee, who wished to trial a 5.00 pm start. Dawn Haywood will email a final copy to Governors once this amendment has been made.

ROUND UP

13. Any Other Business

The Principal informed members that Sandra Hamilton-Fox's role of Transition Director officially came to an end at the end of this academic year, although she was being retained by the College on a flexible basis. He noted his thanks for Sandra's contribution and the Corporation echoed this.

The Principal thanked the Executive Leadership Team for their work this year to deliver rapid change, which went beyond the norm. The Chair and Corporation echoed this thanks to ELT, the Principal, and staff across the College, as well as thanking all Governors for their substantial contributions throughout the year

14. Confidentiality

The following item was identified as confidential:

- Minute 8 – Estates Strategy Update

15. Next Meeting

5.00 pm, Wednesday 25 September 2019. Location to be advised.

The Meeting closed at 7.15 pm

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Corporation Chair

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Date

Corporation 3 July 2019
Confidential Annex

- 8. Estates Strategy Update – Paper 010**
Confidential – text removed