

# WQE & Regent College Group

---

Corporation Meeting 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021, 17:00, virtual via Zoom

## MINUTES

### Members of the Corporation in attendance:

Stuart Dawkins (Chair), Joyce Black, Bernadette Green, Alistair Lockhart-Smith, Jash Maadhavji, Neil McGhee, Nisar Navsariwala, Ing'utu Palmer, Philip Parkinson, Jim Phillips, Paul Wilson, Aaron Winterton & Jimmy Zachariah

### Other attendees:

Carolyn Davies, Andrew Jackson, Sarah Oldfield, Donna Trusler & Rachel Middleton

### Apologies:

Wayne Allsopp, Jo Cooke, Allfaz Samnani, Amrik Singh and Tim Cullinan

---

#### 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies were received from WA, JC, TC, AS and ASi.

The Chair thanked Tim Cullinan for his significant contributions to Corporation meetings over a long period of time and asked that thanks be cascaded on to Tim in his absence. **Action PW**

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair confirmed there was an agenda item focusing on the Estates Strategy. In the lead up to the meeting, the Chair had consulted the Clerk and Principal regarding perceived or actual conflicts of interest on this item. This informed a discussion with Jim Phillips, whose business is in the building sector. Following discussion with Jim about the nature of the matters concerned, the Chair confirmed that the limits of discussion at this meeting would not risk any potential conflict of interest, but at some future point as discussion and decision making progresses further, Jim's interest will be declared and he may be required to recuse himself from these agenda items.

#### 3. Minutes and matters arising– Paper 001

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 26 May 2021 were approved as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair at the next physical meeting.

The action list was reviewed. The following actions were completed in the intervening period between Corporation meetings:

- Contact Governors to confirm gender and ethnicity for Equality & Diversity Report
- Recirculate updated Equality & Diversity Report to all Governors

The following matter was updated and subsequently removed from the action list:

- Lobby for clarity on examination board fees – PW highlighted the fact that examination boards were now fully aware of the issues and he expected the matter to have been fully worked through by the autumn.

The following matter was tabled for discussion at the meeting and was subsequently removed from the action

list:

- Table paper on student mental health will be tabled at the June 2021 meeting of the Corporation

## **OVERSIGHT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

### **4. Principal's Update** — *For information and questions*

Paul Wilson – Presentation

The Principal provided an update on a range of issues, including:

- Teacher Assessed Grades – internal and external arrangements and QA
- Results Days for 2021
- A summary of the Strategic Conversation with ESFA
- Welcome to WQE Days
- Futurewise event – 95 different sessions offered to students
- Enrolment numbers
- Confirmation of 6<sup>th</sup> September as the first teaching date for all in the new academic year
- Long-serving staff departures

The Principal highlighted the significant efforts of all staff with grading this Summer and recorded thanks accordingly

He also thanked the contribution of Kate O'Farrell and AJ in organising such a successful careers event.

Governors asked clarifying questions in relation to the focus of the ESFA Strategic Conversation. They also queried whether the departure of a number of long-serving Maths teachers would be impacted by a national shortage of Maths teachers. PW confirmed planning was in place and there were no recruitment issues in this subject area.

A Governor queried whether there was any longer-term student modelling data available in the city to help the College forecast likely numbers of students on roll for future years. PW confirmed he had sought this through the Local Authority and as a result some updated data had now been made available to the College. This demographic data would be shared with Governors in the autumn term.

### **5. Property Strategy Update** – Presentation – *For information and questions*

Paul Wilson and Carolyn Davies

This item was minuted in the confidential minutes.

### **6. Review of Governor Conference** - Summary paper sent in advance - *For discussion*

Stuart Dawkins

The Chair stated that one of the Governors had made to contact to highlight another area of focus raised at the Governor Conference, which they felt needed inclusion in the summary of strategic actions to take forward. The Chair and Principal agreed to include the following, and Governors approved:

What do we want to be best known for locally and what are the enablers needed to help us achieve those aspirations?

**7. SAR Quality Improvement Plan – progress update – Paper 002 - *For information and questions***

Sarah Oldfield

SO confirmed that the majority of actions intended had been completed. In light of the disruption to normal teaching, observations could not be facilitated as planned with regards to British Values and British citizenship and work/employment. Monitoring of these areas rolls forward to the next academic year.

Governors asked a range of question which were addressed by SO and PW. These focused on access for relevant staff to funding body portals, opportunities to capture Teachers' Voice, consideration of T Levels.

PW confirmed there was a national curriculum review of Level 3 vocational qualifications in light of the launch of T Levels.

Governors noted the QIP and thanked all staff involved in the work and the collation of the report.

JP left the meeting at 18:42.

**8. Health & Safety Policy annual review – Paper 003 - *For approval***

Paul Wilson & Carolyn Davies

The policy had a major re-write post-merger and was subject to an annual review, which was conducted this summer. There were no substantive changes and the tracked changes were accepted. The policy was approved by the Corporation.

## **OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS**

**9. Recommendations from 8 June Audit & Risk Committee meeting**

Philip Parkinson

PP provided a verbal update on each of the papers which had been tabled at the Audit & Risk Committee meeting. The main highlights/outcomes of the papers are noted below.

**9.1 External Assurance Update – Paper 004**

QED (Leicester) Ltd is to become dormant and will de-register from VAT.

## **9.2 External Assurance Report:**

### **Funding Audit Health Check – Paper 005**

This was a useful exercise which highlighted a number of actions which CD and her team will undertake.

## **9.3 External Assurance Report:**

### **Infrastructure Review – Paper 006**

This was a lengthy report, produce by JISC free of charge. It provides a blueprint for the College's strategy group to look at the College's approach to technology, the network and a move to WIFI 6. CD affirmed there would be a College-wide strategic approach to technology.

## **9.4 External Assurance Programme for 2021-2022 – Paper 007**

The Chair of the Audit Committee highlighted the fact there needed to be a mechanism in place for Governors to highlight areas which it would like to be scrutinised by the Audit & Risk Committee. These topics need not be purely financial. They can be broader and cover matters such as wellbeing. **Action all Governors:** to refer any matter which could be externally assured to the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee.

## **9.5 Annual Procurement Report – Paper 008**

### **9.5.1 Appendix 2 Supplier spend analysis – Paper 008A**

### **9.5.2 Appendix 4 Value for Money Audit – Paper 008B**

The papers from this agenda item remain confidential.

PP affirmed that the finance team is well disciplined and organized in relation to procurement practices.

## **9.6 Risk Register and Significant Risk Action Plan – Paper 009**

PP highlighted the 4 risks discussed in detail at the Committee

## **9.7 Risk Management Policy – annual review/update – Paper 010**

The Committee recommended to the Corporation that the policy be approved.

The Corporation approved the updated policy.

## **9.8 Post-16 Audit Code of Practice – Paper 011- *For noting and subsequent review of governance activity***

PP highlighted the significant changes which need to be made in light of the March 2021 iteration of the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice, which were discussed at length at the Committee meeting, with Committee members and the external auditors.

One of the main changes is for the Risk Register to be considered by the Corporation in future and not just the Audit & Risk Committee.

In addition to being reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee, the annual accounts also need to be reviewed by the Corporation with the external auditors invited to present at the December meeting ongoing.

PP highlighted the fact that a working group will convene to look at the governance ramifications of the Code in early autumn and will report back to the Corporation in autumn. This will comprise PP, SD, CD, RM

#### **9.9 External audit plan – Paper 012**

PP highlighted the additional work required by the Code for external auditors to look at ILR data, tracking students from the point of application through to receipt funding. The approximate cost for undertaking this work is c. £3-4k. PP confirmed that there will be some involvement of the team who oversee learner records and this has a practical implication for the College.

#### **9.10 Emerging issues Report – Paper 013**

PP confirmed this was the report from the external auditors looking at horizon scanning.

The Chair thanked the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee for his oversight and summary of the papers. The Corporation accepted all of the recommendations from the Audit & Risk Committee.

#### **10. May 2021 management accounts including reforecast – Paper 014**

*For information and questions*

Carolyn Davies

CD highlighted a couple of matters affecting the reforecast – uncertainty relating to refunds from examination bodies, and the impact of revenue maintenance costs reporting, in relation to Phase 1A of the estates programme.

There has been a change in financial performance against targets. Lower numbers of students are impacting on next year's funding formula.

#### **11. Three Year Financial Plan (which incorporates the budget for 2021/22)- Paper 015– For approval**

Carolyn Davies

##### **11.1 Commentary to accompany Financial Plan - Paper 015A**

Carolyn Davies

CD highlighted a number of matters such as the impact of the multiple deprivation indices on the receipt of funds for disadvantaged students, the cost of the 2020/2021 pay rise due to its phased approach.

CD informed the Corporation that assumptions had been made in the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 budget that Capacity Funding bids would be successful.

An assumption has been made that Phase 1b of the estates work will proceed as planned.

The Corporation formally approved the 2021/2022 budget.

CD confirmed that the CFFR document now has to be submitted to the funder and the commentary is submitted to ESFA.

**Action PW and SD:** to discuss the multi-deprivation indices and impact on the College

**12. Staff Wellbeing Strategy Update and Report** – Paper 016, to follow - *For information and questions*

Carolyn Davies

In addition to the report, CD confirmed that for next academic year, teaching staff would also now be joining the Staff Wellbeing team. She confirmed that the team had now been convening for a year. They are looking to secure external accreditation for mental health first aid training.

## OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES & EXPERIENCES

**13. Student Mental Health Report** - Paper 017, to follow – *For information and questions*

Donna Trusler

DT thanked Jo Cooke for her support and efforts over the last academic year in relation to Safeguarding and student welfare. This was pivotal in the creation of a post-pandemic strategy for students' recovery.

DT highlighted the rise in mental health cases reported through CPOMS between Feb 2019 and now. There are three main areas which are recorded: suicide ideation, anxiety and depression.

DT highlighted the Student Assistance Programme – a 24/7 service which had been implemented where students can speak to counsellors within a few seconds. The BAME representation amongst the counsellors has been noted by students as a real positive. Students can talk with the counsellors about a wide range of issues including finances and relationships.

ELT will look at the impact of the service and review it ongoing.

Governors asked if there were identifiable trends in terms of the issues student were referring for help.

DT confirmed that diversity and inclusion in relation to professionals supporting safeguarding and counselling services is being reviewed. The counselling service offered by the College is all female, the safeguarding team is more diverse and the Student Assistance Service is very diverse.

DT will be training staff in August on developing confidence to talk about equality and diversity.

An aim for next academic year is to involve parents and carers far more in relation to mental health.

DT thanked JB for her support on matters relating to diversity, equality and inclusion.

**14. Cross- College Questionnaire Report - Paper 018 – *For information and questions***

Sarah Oldfield

SO confirmed this was a very positive report. Students' responses have increased in positivity.

Positivity in terms of students wanting to recommend the College at this point in an academic year was higher than would normally be expected in a questionnaire completed at this time of year.

SO confirmed that access to PPMs was under review moving forward.

Governors noted that the view of the Student Executive was not as positive as it could have been and queried why this was the case. Governors requested that the Student Executive and DT and SO look at ways to measure their effectiveness and ensure the questions/supporting information is worked on in readiness for next year's report. **Action DT and SO**

**ROUND-UP**

**15. Any other Business - *For discussion***

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee raised the matter of access to the University Road campus by members of the public and proposed that it would be helpful to have an appraisal of risks to the College and its students from the perspective of health and safety, legal matters, safeguarding, insurance, security and any other vulnerabilities.

**Action PW**

PW confirmed that any basis for allowing public access in future was a matter for the Local Authority in due course, but that the interpretation of the College was that there was no right of access.

A Governor requested that signage be displayed to provide information about the deliberate wild area at the boundary of the University Road campus, to celebrate this. It was highlighted that a fallen tree trunk also needs attending to. **Action PW**

**16. Confidentiality**

The Corporation considered discussion and papers relating to agenda item 5 to be confidential. Additionally, papers relating to the Procurement Report remain confidential.

Papers relating to the financial forecasting remain confidential.

**17. Next Meeting**

Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021, 17:00, at Regent Road Campus

The Chair confirmed the Corporation's wish to meet face to face from September, but confirmed that this would be under review and the Clerk/Chair will confirm during the first week of the new term whether the September meeting will be face to face or remote via Zoom. **Action RM/SD**

### Action List

	<b>Actions arising from 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021 Committee meeting</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>Date for completion</b>
1.	Investigate options for a portal or repository for governance documents	PW and RM	Before September Corporation meeting
2.	Send all governance meeting dates to Governors and ELT for 2021-2022	RM	
	<b>Actions arising from 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021 Committee meeting</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>Date for completion</b>
3.	To discuss the Travel Plan at a future Corporation meeting	PW	
4.	Communicate to Governors the arrangements for car parking passes at both campuses	PW and RM	
	<b>Actions arising from 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 Committee meeting</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>Date for completion</b>
5.	Cascade on thanks to Tim Cullinan for his significant contribution to the Corporation over time	PW	asap
6.	To discuss the multi-deprivation indices and impact on the College	PW and SD	
7.	To discuss how to assist the Student Executive to report on their effectiveness and to review the question relating to this in the Cross-College questionnaire for next academic year	DT and SO	
8.	Complete an appraisal relating to a range of matters about public access to the UR campus	PW	
9.	Pursue signage celebrating the wild area of the UR campus	PW	
10.	Inform Governors during first week of term whether September Corporation meeting will be face to face or virtual	RM/SD	
	<b>Standing item</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>Date for completion</b>
	To refer any matter which could be externally assured to the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee	All Governors	

Signature:  
Chair

Date: