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| Chair | Rob Hull |
| Corporation Members | Vivien Bailey OBE, Marilyn Hawkins, Steve Hedges, Gerry McDonald, Diana Murray, Dawn Samwell, Richard Bint, Cynthia Griffin, Gareth Wall, Neil Yeomans, Nikki Makinwa, Ryan McLean |
| Officers | Deputy Principal: Paul Wakeling Deputy CEO: Suri Araniyasundaran Principal Tower Hamlets and Hackney: Alison Arnaud Principal Redbridge and Epping Forest College: Janet Smith Group Director, Business Development: Jamie Stevenson Ruth Kendrick: Group Director, Quality |
| Director of Governance | Elsa Wright |
| Apologies | Stephen Critoph, Lutfey Siddiqi |
| Item No | Item of business |

Briefing - Employability, Business Development and Apprenticeships

The Group Director of Apprenticeships & Business Development explained that the approach was a holistic offer with one group of staff building strong relationships with stakeholders including local employers, training providers, the GLA, Chambers of Commerce and Job Centre Plus. The aim was to offer a one stop shop which supported local business and offered various routes for young people and adults. There were account managers who focussed on apprenticeships and others who dealt with work experience and industry placements. The Job Centre was keen to have coaches based within the college and staff worked closely to ensure there was good support in place. Some of the new L3 standards were still being developed for apprenticeships but the college team were working to ensure that there was a pipeline of applicants ready for employers as soon as the final approval was given. There was flexibility in the offer with L2 and 3 programmes being delivered online where needed to both unemployed and employed applicants and employers could also buy into programmes.

Work experience could be delivered in a block or one day per week with a requirement of 45 days or 360 hours. Around 450 young people had participated. A target of 700 was set for the year although this might be impacted by Covid. Virtual visits were taking place and the recent Ofsted visit had looked at all alternative models. Business development offered a one stop shop for employers and the aim was to roll this out across the group.

Apprenticeship numbers were down nationally and there had been 122 starts so far this year down from 198 this time last year. There were 60 vacancies to fill and nine new standards had been brought online in response to employer demand. The College was the provider of choice for six boroughs. In response to questions, it was confirmed that this was not a unique position but that the college would not need to go through a full tender process for any vacancies.

There were a number of major contractors as set out in the presentation (slide 8) and a contract had been signed with the government's facilities service which could offer up to 20 apprenticeships. 147 apprentices had been furloughed and the College had given both the employer and the apprentice additional support. NCC Business Plus had been launched which offered employers support with work placements, industry placements and apprenticeship and they could receive discounts if they used college facilities such as restaurants, gyms and room hire. It was important to build strong links with employers and good to hear that the team was busy despite the lockdown.

In response to questions, the following points were made: Areas such as public services, the Civil Service and Local Authorities were more sustainable in the current climate and it was important to target efforts at these sectors. Construction recruitment was still in demand and showed no sign of decreasing. The Government's ambition was to expand apprenticeships and the College was increasing the apprenticeship offer in a managed way. They were working with Housing Associations to offer programmes for repairs and maintenance. All provision was now being brought in house and there were supply chain issues which needed to be addressed. Levy payers could now pass on 25% of their funds to small employers which might help to increase supply.

An offer of 3-400 looked realistic in the current climate. There was a discussion about supply and whether the market would create enough jobs in the next 18-24 months. There was support available to help people develop their own business ideas and it covered issues such as tax and business planning. There had been limited progress in developing supported internships and work experience for people with learning disabilities or mental health needs, but this work continued. Apprentices had access to support from counsellors and mental health workers via the College. The Group Director of Apprenticeships & Business Development confirmed that there was provision in place for apprentices who may be furloughed for a second time.

| PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS | |
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| | <p>Chair’s Welcome & Opening Remarks The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> |
| | <p>Apologies for Absence Stephen Critoph and Lutfey Siddiqi had sent their apologies.</p> |
| | <p>Declaration of Interests There were no declarations made.</p> |
| | <p>4.1 Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 9 July 2020</p> <p>The minutes were APPROVED as drafted and would be signed as an accurate record of the meeting at the next face to face meeting.</p> <p>ACTION – Minutes to be signed at the next face to face meeting.</p> |
| | <p>Matters Arising and Action Points from the Meeting The Chair confirmed that he had reviewed the action points and that there were no outstanding items that had not been completed or were covered in the agenda for the meeting.</p> |
| | <p>Chair’s Action/Written Resolutions The action taken to approve the placing of charges on some of campuses as security in favour of the London Pensions Fund Authority of 14 October was noted.</p> |
| STRATEGIC MATTERS | |

Group Principal & CEO's Report

7.1 Current Covid overview – cases and measures in place

There had been a huge team effort to get the return to campus ready. Events had moved on since the report was written but it was important to get the experience right for students and to motivate them to achieve. Attlee had performed well and better than some local schools and the adaptations that had been put in place to support online learning had been delivered through training and support for both teaching and support staff. There had been around 70 student cases which was a very small proportion of students although each infection had led to groups isolating. The College continued to monitor contacts and sent staff and students home who were deemed as being in contact. In response to questions, the CEO said that it was placing an increasing strain on the management team but that the focus was now on defining close contacts and ensuring only those staff and students who fell into those categories went home.

7.2 Start of term and Preparations for blended/online learning

Attendance at GCSE resits had been high with all students turning up that day. It was complex to administer with no real recognition from DFE of the scale of these exams for the college and of the work involved.

The general message was that students should continue on campus and that teaching and learning should not be disrupted unless it was inevitable. Mitigations were in place with some delivery, such as ESOL taking place in a blended way with students attending in person on alternate weeks. Large classes had been re-roomed and class sizes had been kept low. Students and staff were wearing masks when moving around the building and rows were used in classrooms with areas marked out for staff. Nothing was risk free but cases were low and the College was keeping this under review. The College had bought additional cameras and microphones with all staff being asked to test out online and blended learning for all their classes to identify any issues and to offer support to any students who were unable to access the teaching.

There was still the option for support staff to work from home with the agreement of their senior manager and there were briefings in place to deal with queries from parents, students and staff. The Chair thanked the team on behalf of the Board. The situation was constantly changing which was difficult. The staff briefings that were being sent to the Board were incredibly helpful and gave governors a good insight into the work that was going on.

7.3 Enrolment

16-18 enrolment had been successful with a clear and effective digital marketing campaign in place. The switch was made to online enrolment after a slow start with many students coming in to complete their enrolment, having applied online. The College would be funded for 9354 students this year and enrolment stood around 200 above this level which would increase income next year. Local leadership had helped to promote each campus and secure increased enrolment. The final numbers for funding would be locked in at R04. There was a push by the sector for additional in year funding to support the increase in numbers. It had been raised in the Westminster Hall debate on FE by Meg Hillier MP who, as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, had some influence.

Work had been done to chase down every qualification and certification before the R14 date which locked in achievement. There were almost 40,000 qualifications for 16,000 learners. Very few learners were held over if they didn't complete and all cases were signed off by senior managers. Normally this was around 20 students. This year it was 382 with many waiting for a delayed assessment and all cases were known and documented. Governors asked about growth in the sector and if there would be any impact from Brexit. There was a national increase in 16-18 year olds over the next 5 years. Many of the students who came to study ESOL were not European and the decrease in adult numbers seemed to be reflected by the state of

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| | <p>Ofsted Preparation It was still unclear when inspections would resume but the College was prepared and would update all materials when there was an announcement. The College would be inspected soon after inspections resumed. Feedback from the pilot visits was positive. The process of updating the SAR and the QIP would inform any further preparation that was required. It was suggested that the group of Governors should be refreshed and that an update could be given at the Strategic Planning Day. Governors were asked to let the Director of Governance know if they wanted to be part of the group.</p> <p>The Chair had met the inspector on the pilot visit with the Chair of C,Q &S. There was an emphasis on student experience and how that had been managed during the lockdown and what quality assurance was in place. It had been viewed as a strength. C, Q and S would look at Governor visits and when they could resume as it was important for governors to see the College in action and to hear directly from staff and students about provision.</p> <p>Action – All Governors to notify the Director of Governance if they want to join the Ofsted group</p> <p>Action – C,Q and S to review Governor Visits for 2020/21</p> |
| | <p>PERFORMANCE MATTERS</p> |
| | <p>Annual Safeguarding Report Taken under confidential items.</p> |

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Learner Voice

The Group Director, Quality joined the meeting.

A number of surveys had been conducted both face to face and online. The LOOP survey would take place a little later this year using facilitators to work with the students. Leaders Unlocked had been engaged to do some work on feedback and unbiased reporting. The Induction Survey was underway and this looked at the first few weeks of a student's experience at the College. Face to Face surveys on Teaching and Learning would take place three times in October, February and May which used 5 questions to gauge how student were feeling about their learning such as: what is the best thing about your lessons; what do you learn each lesson and how do you rate your experience. The information would be analysed by course, age, campus to look at areas of good practice or to see whether improvements were needed. The last survey had an overall score of 4.04 which was up from 3.5 last year and had shown very little variation between the campuses.

Positive comments included that students were pleased to be back on campus and appreciated the time that teachers took. Comments were also positive about the variety of teaching methods used and the improvement in English and Maths. Areas that were less positive included comments about long gaps in the timetable and some staff not tackling low level disruption. There was work to do on strengthening the VLE and trying to get more consistency about how lateness was tackled. Overall, the messages were that students valued being back on campus and having access to the teachers. Comments were analysed and shared with campus and curriculum staff who used them to inform provision and teaching practice in their area.

Governors asked a number of questions about the surveys including how the feedback was used and whether there was anything in the most recent surveys that picked up on the Black Lives Matter agenda. The surveys did not identify gender or ethnicity. The scoring was out of 5 and work was in hand to try to increase the number of surveys returned which was low at around 10-15%. Governors were pleased to hear about the positive feedback in English and Maths as the College had worked hard to improve engagement and the Principal of Redbridge and Epping confirmed that the improved outcomes supported this. At Epping, the improvement had been quite dramatic which had been secured by a real improvement in teaching and learning. Ryan Mclean confirmed that students could not miss the survey as it was on the front page of the VLE when you logged in. It was very accessible, and the findings reflected his experience. Teachers were supportive and helpful. The LOOP survey would conclude in December and outcomes would be reported to C,Q and S in the Spring.

The Chair thanked the Group Director, Quality for her update and for the work that went into securing the feedback.

The Group Director, Quality left the meeting at 6.54pm

Black Lives Matter – update from the CEO

The College had had an equality and diversity strategy in place for a number of years but events this year had led to a changed perspective and it was important for the College to review this work and move forward. There were a number of areas to consider including whether the College was taking the right approach and what more it could be doing. The Board had also been reflecting on how to take this forward including reviewing its own composition. It was important to seek views from across the whole group and in a way that staff felt comfortable to be open and honest. Search Committee had discussed whether setting targets was the right approach and if this would make a difference. It was important for the Board to work in parallel and to understand the experience of both staff and students.

The Deputy Group Principal explained that the work referred to earlier with Leaders Unlocked was a student project to deliver a manifesto for racial justice. Groups from each campus would lead discussions looking at issues such as restorative justice to develop a manifesto.

The paper set out the College's approach and built on the work of the Equality and Diversity Committee which had led in areas such as reviewing curriculum material. Governors discussed the College's student profile which was diverse with large groups of both Black and Asian students. The CEO had held a number of discussions with interested staff. It was important and valuable to hear from staff about their lived experience and the issues that they faced. There was a view in the group that the BLM agenda was different to the wider Equality and Diversity Agenda and that it was focussed on Black Afro-Caribbean staff and students. Governors asked about unconscious bias training within the College. The CEO would discuss this with the HR Director. Currently this was focused on recruitment.

Search Committee had taken the view that a target was not the best way forward and that the Board needed to reflect the diverse community that it served. Governors **agreed** that this was a sensible way forward. It was important that the Board worked with the College on a strategy. The CEO confirmed that the College was looking at a number of areas that had been used successfully by other organisations including reverse mentoring and increasing the transparency of information. This would include publishing information on pay gaps for both gender and ethnicity. The paper set out further details of the approach. The Chair had experience of reverse mentoring in the Civil Service. Governors were very supportive of the approach and were keen to ensure that members of the reference group continued to share their experiences to help the College get its approach right. This needed to ensure that the behaviours and structures that were developed were inclusive and supportive. Black staff had been clear in their contributions to the group that they wanted to tackle the issues for black staff.

It was a challenge for the whole sector and radical change was needed. The Board was not representative and more diversity of thought and experience was needed at leadership levels throughout the College. Search committee had discussed recruitment and the need to look in a different way for governors to produce a more diverse group. There was a challenge to make volunteering more accessible and seen as a positive development. There had been a big push in the FE sector in the early 2000's to recruit more Black leaders which had had some success but the programme had been defunded and new pathways to recruit and develop college leaders needed to be developed internally.

The recent recruitment to the Havering Local Board had been positive and had attracted a good number of black and ethnic minority candidates. The Corporation agreed that it should look for new ways to recruit governors and should aim to accelerate its pace towards a board more representative of the communities it served. The CEO would report back on developments within the College.

Finance

12.1 Finance Outturn Report 2019/20

There was a detailed report setting out the position against a deficit budget that had been set at £1.24m. Covid costs came to around £1.1m and action was in hand to find £0.5m of savings. It was important to manage the bottom line and to manage the shortfall in income from a decrease in commercial activity. The F&GP committee had reviewed the outturn in detail. There were two key areas that had an impact. The merger had led to a recalculation of the depreciation charge for the Havering assets which had been agreed with the auditors at the time. The advanced learner loans from the ESFA stood at £4.6m and an efficiency of £0.5m had been sought. The College had found £0.7m in savings which brought the accounts close to break even. This would be reviewed by KPMG as part of the audit of the accounts and financial statements

Exceptional items included pensions which KPMG had asked for an expert opinion on the actuary assumptions and the capitalisation of the Quarles lease which the Corporation had agreed. The Rainham sale had not completed but balances were still strong and F&GP had reviewed both the balance sheet and the cash flow. It had been a difficult year and Governors congratulated the Deputy CEO and his team for their work. There had been a very significant turnaround from Q3 and it had been hard to drive down costs against the background of the pandemic. The team had pursued all the available options for relief and made bids for additional funding.

12.2 Early indications report 2020/21

The September management accounts showed small variations from the profile but the full picture would be known at the end of Q1. Early indications were positive for 16-18 funding with almost £1m extra due in September 2021. The £1.3m tuition fund was welcome but spending would be needed to put the support in place. The £3.6m capital would be used to release grant and match funded projects. The College was continuing to operate on an essential spend basis and messaging to staff was clear. Commercial activities were still at risk of further closure. The cash position was strong with additional funding from the ESFA and the proceeds from the land sale. A tight control would be kept on costs throughout the year.

The CEO explained that there would be a full Q1 review with SMT and the risks were being monitored closely. The tolerance for AEB was 90% for GLA funding but the ESFA had not moved their position. There would need to be further movement. The College was in a strong position having cleared all debts and all contracts were being monitored closely. The pay award had been included in the budget and many colleges would not make an award. The CEO was leading negotiations for the AOC and most colleges were looking at a 1% increase.

Committees of the Corporation

13.1 F&GP Committee

The committee had reviewed the proposal to use assets to secure a reduced pension contribution. This had resulted in the written resolution which had been reported to Corporation earlier (item 6). The CEO explained that the pension deficit in the sector was huge and unlike the TPS, the LPFA required security. Contributions were also rising which was an issue for all colleges. The TPS grant which covered the costs for teachers would continue for another 18 months. Governors confirmed that before the resolution was signed, it was confirmed that the charge over the assets could be released at any time. Under FRS102, the pension liability had to be shown on the balance sheet which masked the true financial position of the College.

13.1.1 Workforce Report

The committee had looked in detail at the Workforce Report and there were increasing links between the work of the Equality and Diversity Committee and the work that C, Q and S did on monitoring student equality and diversity. Governors commented that the data in the report was skewed by the fact that only 70% of staff disclosed their ethnicity and this needed to be looked at to ensure the data was as robust as possible.

13.2 Property Committee

The committee had heard from the Development Manager on their work on the first stage of the Poplar redevelopment. F&GP would be involved once there were some significant proposals on the table. The College would look again at the Havering masterplan in light of changes to recent land sales.

13.3 C, Q and S Committee

The Committee had been updated on the huge task which had been completed to calculate and assess grades for the 2019/20 exam series. Progress against the QIP in 2019/20 had been positive and value added for A levels was extremely positive. The committee had been updated on equality and diversity and on progress with HE provision. Feedback from the pilot OFSTED visit had been positive. The Committee recommended the new Safeguarding Policy which the Corporation was asked to approve. Governors asked about the commercial nurseries and how this policy related to their own policies and practices. The Deputy Principal confirmed that the College did review this and that the College policy would be updated with reports being included as part of the termly report.

Nurseries would be inspected by OFSTED in their own right and therefore required separate documentation. The Corporation **AGREED** the policy.

The Corporation hereby resolved to approve the Safeguarding policy for 2020/21

Action – Deputy Principal to update the Safeguarding Policy to include nurseries and for future reports to cover any safeguarding incidents in the nurseries

13.4 Audit Committee

13.4.1 IA Plan 2020-21

The Committee had reviewed the internal audit plan for the year and had looked at alternative sources of assurance where audits were not planned. There had been no qualifying disclosures under the Whistleblowing policy.

13.4.2 Regularity Self-Assessment

The Committee had reviewed the self-assessment documents which were required by the ESFA and there were no gaps to report. The Audit Committee recommended the self-assessment return for signature by the Chair and this was **AGREED** by the Corporation.

| GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE | |
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| | <p>Search Committee</p> <p>14.1 Annual Report The report set out the work of the Committee during the year including appointment and developments in governance. Once approved, it would be published on the College website. The Corporation hereby resolved to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Search and Governance Committee Annual Report <p>The Committee had recommended a target for 50% of Corporation members to be women and for the Board to be more reflective of the community it serves. (See discussion under item 11) The Corporation hereby resolved to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A target of 50% of Corporation members to be women and for the Board to become more representative of the communities that it serves <p>14.2 Code of Conduct The model proposed was the Eversheds model that was an FE specific code which followed the duties set out in the Instruments and Articles. All Governors would be asked to sign up to the Code and the Director of Governance would provide further clarification on any elements as required. The Corporation hereby resolved to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To adopt the Evershed’s Code of Conduct for Governors <p>14.2.1 Having Terms of Reference As discussed under item 13.5, the terms of reference for the Havering Board had been reviewed and the final amendments had been received from the Local Board. The Corporation hereby resolved to approve the terms of reference</p> |
| | <p>Annual Declarations of Interests Report The Corporation NOTED the report.</p> |
| | <p>Use of the Seal Report The Corporation NOTED the report.</p> |
| CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS | |
| | <p>Confidential minutes of the last meeting held on 9 July 2020 The minutes were AGREED as drafted.</p> |
| | <p>Safeguarding Report See Part 2 minutes</p> |
| | <p>Confidential Items See Part 2 minutes</p> |
| | <p>Any Other Business There were no items to report</p> |

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| | Date of next meeting – 15 December 2020 |
| | Meeting Evaluation Board members were asked to think about how this should be captured as the forms were rarely completed. |

Signed.....

Dated.....

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