

Chair	Rob Hull
Corporation Members	Vivien Bailey OBE, Marilyn Hawkins, Steve Hedges, Gerry McDonald, Diana Murray, Dawn Samwell, Cynthia Griffin, Gareth Wall, Neil Yeomans, Stephen Critoph, Ryan McLean, Francine Corbin, Mohamed Elhag, Nikki Makinwa
Officers	Deputy Group Principal: Paul Wakeling Deputy CEO: Suri Araniyasundaran Principal Tower Hamlets and Hackney: Alison Arnaud Principal Havering Colleges: Janet Smith Principal Designate Redbridge and Epping Forest: Narzny Khan Group Executive Director of International Studies Richard Surtees Group Executive Director of Apprenticeships & Business Development Jamie Stevenson
Director of Governance	Elsa Wright
Apologies	
Item No	Item of business
PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS	
	1 Chair's Welcome & Opening Remarks The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. It had been a really gruelling 3 months, all had found hard and college staff and students have faced a tremendous learning curve. Richard Bint had decided to step down from the Board. Principal Designate of Redbridge and Epping Forest, Narzny Khan was welcomed to the meeting
	2 Apologies for Absence There were no apologies for absence.
	3 Declaration of Interests Members were reminded of the need to declare any interest in any items on the agenda. No declarations were made.
	4.1 Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 15 December 2021 The minutes were APPROVED with some drafting changes from the Chair of C,Q and S and they would be signed as an accurate record of the meeting at the next face to face meeting. ACTION – Minutes to be signed at the next face to face meeting.
	5 Matters Arising and Action Points from the Meeting HE due diligence The college was continuing joint working with the preferred HE partner and the report was self-explanatory. They were eager and committed to the partnership in some form. Work continued to validate 4 programmes for September. There were no issues around access and participation plans and these were available on the OFS portals. SMT had reviewed the report and support the due diligence being effective to continue to the next stage.

There were different forms of agreement to consider. There could be a franchise for some courses and the college would look at long term options and joint ventures and come back with formal proposals. The Corporation had previously signalled support in principle and it was important to keep in touch with developments. Courses were for the CEO's remit. The college was well sighted on risk before and due diligence had covered off the main risks for both parties.

Governors asked about the length of time the process would take and what the impact would be on students. The OU revalidation required similar documentation and assurance which had sped up the process. There was a discussion about the risks of relying on another institution for curriculum delivery and governors were keen to avoid any long chains within a partnership. SMT would keep this under close review and were alert to the risks. There was no contractual relationship but it made sense to deliver as much as the college could with them as it was simpler and brought more commitment. The college was coming out of the relationships it has with the OU, UEL and London Met and the aim was to have a main relationship. Governors commented that this was a good report and asked about the level of demand. CQS had looked at some projections which could be reviewed in the minutes. The expansion target was ambitious of 1500 students by 2026. Governors thanked the CEO and Deputy Group Principal for the update and regular reports would be given to CQS.

All additional items had been completed or were covered in the agenda for the meeting.

STRATEGIC MATTERS

6 Audit Committee

The committee Chair confirmed that 3 internal audit reports had been reviewed which offered satisfactory or reasonable assurance with no issues reported. The risk register had been updated for the Corporation with no significant changes and there would be a full review for the June meeting.

6.1 Appointment of the External Auditor

The paper set out the process led by procurement team and the scoring system was supplemented with follow up questions with around an hour with each firm. Cynthia Griffin and Gareth Wall had been involved in the selection. Buzzacott was a middle tier firm and scored comfortably at the top. There had been discussion about the fee. There had been the opportunity to question each firm and take two references about comparable work. The Deputy CEO and Group Director of Finance had spoken to referees which had offered assurance to members. The two colleges had given glowing references. The view was that Buzzacott were the most competent and this was a clear recommendation from the committee.

The Corporation agreed to appoint Buzzacott and the external auditor subject to the contract terms set out in the paper

6.2 Risk register

The view was that it was helpful to see the risk register presented in this way. Governors asked about the red rating on subcontracting post control. The Deputy CEO confirmed that this would always be a risk. The aim was to balance the portfolio and get comfort from the checks in place. It was reviewed by the internal auditors on an annual basis.

Governors asked about any adjustments to risk from the pandemic. This was covered by the third risk and the control measures were accurate and did take into account external factors. There was a discussion about the risk that the curriculum offer did not meet local and national requirements. The work by Group Executive Director of International

	<p>Studies and Deputy Group Principal on labour market information fed into curriculum planning and business planning. The view was that reviewing the 10 key risks was a sensible approach. SMT reviewed it every 6 weeks to check plans and resilience. There should be some risk descriptors which were more specific to the college. The Corporation noted the report.</p> <p>NY left the meeting 6.09pm</p> <p>Governors commented that they had not seen this format before. There was further work to do to show how items rated as yellow could be moved to green although this would not always be possible given the external environment. The CEO commented that he was happier with this format and it could be actively monitored.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Group Principal & CEO's report</p> <p>The CEO introduced his report. It had been a gruelling three months and he was grateful for the work that the whole team had done. He was fortunate to have such a strong team. The picture was changing on a daily basis and the report was out of date as soon as it was written. Summer assessment was a complex issue.</p> <p>There had been a managed return to campus from 8 March. There had been a very high buy in to testing. It had been conducted thoroughly and incidence was very low and continued to be so. There had been a large number of s44 letters staff claiming the right to not come into unsafe environment and one modification had been made to manage this. Home based testing continued of staff and students with kits available. The Covid email address was monitored every day and there was a well-established protocol. Some isolation was required but much lower numbers. There was a duty and obligation to respect those who needed to shield and that would end the following day with staff expected to come back on campus. There had been pressure to extend home working but all were expected on campus from 19 April.</p> <p>One of the staff governors explained that SEND students had been in college all through lockdown. There had been some online learning for students with complex needs and remote learning had been supported with daily welfare check calls. This had gone well but some were struggling with the return. The college had worked with Educational Psychologists and Speech and Language Therapists to get them back on site. Nearly all were not back with some who had been shielding returning after Easter. Student governors reported that the testing had been very organised the first day and asked why LFT testing was not enforced. The majority of students had tested at the start but were not testing now. The recommendation was to encourage testing but this could not be enforced and it was a national decision.</p> <p>Teachers were reminding students to take them and texts were being sent alongside on-screen reminders. There had been work with local Imams to confirm that tests could be taken during Ramadan. It was a collective responsibility for all. It had been a huge operation and very impressive to see. Governors passed on their thanks to all involved.</p> <p>Summer assessment</p> <p>This was a huge logistical exercise with much of the work of the awarding bodies now sitting with the college. Assessment would be as objective as possible with some flexibility. There would be communication to all staff and students after Easter. There was no clear approach by the AOs and an inherent disparity between functional skills and GCSEs with FS students taking a national online exam. There was pressure from the sector to get this overturned. All practical and vocational courses were to be completed by the time the ILR closed on 21 October and the AOC was lobbying for a 4 week extension. There were major risks and there would be an extended term for vocational students to the end of July. The early results release had huge implication with the unions and potentially there would be additional cost to cover loss of holiday. Staff were expected to teach longer and be back for early results and appeals.</p>

	<p>Governors asked about turbulence. The algorithm would not be applied and the expectation was that results would not look much different than in previous years. Remote sampling would take place in the last week of July. There would still be appeals. All colleges would have their own approach. A narrow evidence base would be used to increase objectivity but it would be clear that further evidence could be considered. Governors discussed the impact on staff. There would be a challenge and the college would need to offer holiday flexibility and, in some cases, additional payment. Communication would be key. The CEO confirmed, in response to questions, that moderation process would be robust, using the March assessment. It would be too onerous to do this with other colleges. The March assessment had used past papers and was standardised with the national picture. There would be more papers the following day but it was a narrow assessment window. There would be cross referencing nationally but there were no national rates from 2020 due to the pandemic</p> <p>The White Paper set out a good aspiration but it had been disappointing in the lack of commitment to inflation generated increases in the base rate as set out in the Ney report. There was a tension with the government lifetime skills guarantee as this provided money at one level through the GLA and traditional income streams would be put under considerable pressure. It would be important to get the tolerance reduced.</p> <p>The CEO updated governors on the restructure. Narzny Kahn would be taking the Principal role at Redbridge and Epping. Phil Hall would move across to Wingletye Lane as Paul Nutter was moving on. The large campus needed an experienced deputy. The two deputy posts at Redbridge and Epping had been advertised internally. Deputy Group Principal's responsibilities would be reallocated with Group Executive Director of International Studies working on Strategic Intent. There would be some further changes to be reviewed and communicated after Easter. Governors congratulated Narzny Khan on her appointment and her strong performance in the selection process.</p> <p>The college had been due to be inspected when the first lockdown happened and preparations were in hand for an October inspection. Finance had dipped a little on cash days to 24. The ambition to increase commercial income had stalled and colleges who had large commercial provision were struggling.</p> <p>Strategic Intent Work on the teaching and learning lab was developing and good progress had been made. The college was looking again at mental health provision with issues such as workload and sustainability requiring further exploration. The work on the Green strategy was more explicit. The CEO would update on Black Lives Matter at the July meeting.</p> <p>There would be a further update in July on the progress and momentum with the individuals strands of the Strategic Intent. There would be a clear plan to drive this forward in 2021-22.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all the team for their hard work and hoped that they would all get a well-deserved an Easter break</p> <p>ACTION – Director of Governance to note for July agenda</p>
8	<p>F and GP 8.1 Management Accounts The Chair of the committee explained that they had reviewed finances and looked at a significant commercial shortfall. The team had done a good job to keep a lid on costs which was reassuring. A key risk area was the adult education budget as the Corporation had heard earlier. There was £1.8m risk at risk but the view was that this was low and there was a lot of political lobbying on the tolerance and more flexibility for NCC with most of the funding coming from the GLA. The cash position was good given the turbulence. The Covid impact looked like £1.5m on the bottom line. The number of cash days were improving.</p>

There was a risk to the land sale as with planning delays the payment may go into the next financial year. This should not affect the financial grade but would be managed closely.

8.2 Capital

Capital spend was limited to depreciation and the release of capital against grants. Master planning had identified key projects and bids had been made to the FE transformation fund for Poplar, Wingletye Lane (performing arts and teaching block), Rainham (motor vehicle) and Arbour Square (windows). Successful bids would require 50% match funding. The first stage should be known by 21 May with stage 2 plans required for 17 July. T level bids for delivery from 2022-23 had been made for three areas: health, business and digital. Most projects were within the £500k limit but any projects going forward to the next round would come back in July.

The Corporation noted the bids.

8.3 Epping

The funds were due from Fairview of £4.73m once planning was approved. There was a final payment date of April 2022 if planning wasn't approved. The aim was to start on site in January/February. A preferred supplier had been identified and work was ongoing for a pre-construction services agreement. The paper at 8.3 set out the details. The Corporation was asked to approve the preferred contractor subject to final approval on the contract. The Deputy CEO confirmed that Fairview were obliged to pay the full amount and it was safe to go out to procurement.

The Corporation agreed to appoint the preferred contractor subject to the conditions set out in the paper

8.4 Fee Policy

There were no significant changes and this was a policy which was reviewed and agreed on an annual basis. The committee had recommended the policy.

The Corporation agreed the policy as drafted.

8.5 Ilford lease

At the last meeting the College had been ready to sign two leases on the current building for two floors but plans had changed. A unit had been identified in December and now two further units were available. A business case was included in the pack – paper 8.5 - which supported a 10 year investment. Potentially the college could purchase the units on a 999 lease. It was agreed that a twin track strategy should be pursued to secure clarity on costs and viability. The college was not keen to take out a loan but the option should be reviewed.

The financials made sense and the Property committee had heard about the location and the opportunity to offer new curriculum areas onsite. The plans were looking to increase income by £20-25,000. In response to questions, the Deputy CEO confirmed that the curriculum case was very strong. The current provision had high demand in poor accommodation. The Principal Tower Hamlets and Hackney confirmed that this was a high street location that would give the college prominence. There was high demand and every target had been met despite the issues of access and visibility. This would open up the market and put outstanding practice on the high street. It was very close to the station and the learning zone and ALS AEB could be maximised with a café offering work experience. Accounting and childcare were two keys areas the college wanted to expand. The detailed business case would come back to F&GP with a Corporation decision by written resolution, if required.

The Corporation hereby resolved to approve the extension of the existing lease at Ilford with a break point at 1 year and gave delegated authority to the CEO to sign the lease

The Corporation agreed that negotiations on the proposed new unit should

continue with a full business case to F&GP and a decision by written resolution of the Corporation, if required.

9 Curriculum, Quality & Students Committee

The Chair of CQS explained that the papers were from page 87 in the pack with an executive summary of the items covered in committee. Governors were encouraged to read the minutes and the papers on BI were worth reading. The HE paper had been referred to earlier and there were comprehensive plans for HE that were moving forward. A report on Learner Voice including the induction survey was available. Student feedback on teaching and learning was that this had improved greatly in the second lockdown. The safeguarding report would be taken under confidential items. The committee had also reviewed the subcontracting report. The team had worked hard to keep learners engaged throughout the pandemic. Student progress and destinations would be recorded in a new format with more detail on both internal and external progression. Work was beginning to bring together the Student Union constitution from all the colleges into one.

9.1 QIP and KPIs

The Chair reported that the committee had reviewed the QIP. There had been limited progress where practical assessment had been delayed and the report gave details on how this was being addressed. The risk of underachievement was covered in the report for specific areas. There was now complete coverage across 16-18 for measuring value added with a few adjustments. QIP 3 showed some progress against the apprenticeship standards with in year achievements. QIP4 measured attendance rates and there had been some disappointment. The progress with improving for English and Maths attendance had been pushed back through lockdown with an unhelpful national message about exams. This was improving. QIP5 looked at teaching and learning consistency which was measured through student voice. QIP 6 looked at the effectiveness of QI across the group and good progress has been made.

Progress against the KPIs was shown from p113. Rag rating for current targets was against the national rate in 2019. Retention was good for both age groups. Attendance was amber but there was a good explanation for this. Positive destinations showed as red but this would not change until the end of the year. An additional KPI had been agreed to improve consistency with a less than 5pp variance across campuses for retention and achievement across the campus.

The Learner Voice target for satisfaction for teaching in learning was set at 85% in the first instance. This could be increased but there were a number of unknowns and history showed some variance. A KPI had been set for complaints to be resolved within the timescale set out in the policy in 90% of cases. The other KPIs were well established. Governors asked about learner satisfaction. There were a whole range of surveys and one question around overall satisfaction. This year had been different as much of the teaching had been online. The responses would be measured against the baseline and the same questions were asked to look at the trend.

There had been a lot of hard work on the QIP and the Chair of CQS looked forward to telling OFSTED about its development. There was a strong sense that the action plan was closely monitored with detailed plans for improvement and the measurement of impact. Governors thanked all those involved.

The Corporation hereby resolved to approve the additional KPIs for 2020-21

PERFORMANCE MATTERS

	<p>10 Search</p> <p>10.1 KPIs</p> <p>The committee had reviewed performance against the KPIs and an update was included at page 114 of the pack. There was further work to do on the statement of public benefit and reporting on employer engagement.</p> <p>10.2 Board composition, recruitment and training</p> <p>The Board had made a commitment to change with ambitions and pace. After reviewing the process it had been decided not to reselect colleagues as many had been recently selected and the recruitment of the Chair had been a lengthy and expensive. There were some colleagues due to leave and one or two others might stand down to allow for an improvement in diversity. In advertising for new colleagues it would be made clear that they did not require governance experience and that training and mentoring would be put in place. The Board would also use co-optees as a mechanism to give experience to potential Board members.</p> <p>Two members who were qualified accountants had left the Corporation and Search would need to look for someone with finance skills . An advert was being prepared which would not target any specific groups but be clear about the desire to better reflect the communities that the college served. The Corporation agreed to this approach with the aim of reducing the size by two and aiming for 50% female membership.</p> <p>The Corporation agreed the approach to Board composition, recruitment and training</p> <p>10.3 HLB – terms of reference</p> <p>The Havering Local Board had been reviewed at the end of the first year post merger and some changes had been made. Further change was needed to work within the matrix structure. There had been consultation with every member of local board. It was important that the staff and students voice at Havering was heard but this could be done in other ways and the Principal, Havering Colleges was asked to look at this. The Corporation agreed to the general direction of travel and remitted to Search to agree the terms of reference and size of the committee. It was important during the transition to keep a good relationship with the LA and schools and they were both represented in the current membership and positive about the changes. It would be key to strengthen relationships with employers.</p> <p>The Corporation delegated the final sign off of the terms of reference and committee composition to Search Committee</p>
	<p>11 Havering Local Board</p> <p>The minutes of the Local Board were included in the pack.</p>
	<p>12 Property Committee</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee explained that the committee had had a long discussion about moving forward with Poplar and that Marick had presented financial propositions for the viability gap. The bid to the FE transformation fund would also cover this gap but it was unlikely that this would succeed. Engagement with LBTH was difficult with the purdah for the leadership structure of the council running alongside a major staff restructuring. There was some interest from other boroughs, but they would not move forward unless LBTH confirmed that they were not interested.</p> <p>The Corporation had approved expenditure up to a fixed limit, but this may need to be increased. However, at some point a view would have to be taken about continuing. The</p>

	<p>decision on 6 May might reject current arrangements of an elected mayor. The changes being made to the LBTH planning framework would make it difficult to pursue the plans and this was a clear risk. The College had engaged Savills to advise. Three to four years of work had gone into this and it would be a real tragedy if the college had to walk away from this. There were curriculum drivers to get this work started. Governors asked about correspondence with the Mayor. There had been extensive contact at every level including the Mayor, planners and the s151 officer. The college needed to know if the Borough would support a redevelopment before any further progress could be made.</p> <p>Governors were keen to be kept informed of the project.</p>
	<p>The Student Governors left the meeting at 20.11</p>

CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

	<p>13 Confidential minutes of the last meeting held on 15 December 2020 The minutes were AGREED as drafted.</p>
	<p>14 Safeguarding Report</p> <p>See part 2 minutes</p>
	<p>15 Meeting Evaluation Governors were asked to complete the online evaluation form.</p>
	<p>16 Date of next meeting The next Corporation meeting was on 8 July.</p>
	<p>17 Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chair and CEO thanked the Deputy Group Principal for the great job he had done in leading Havering over a number of years and for managing the merger. He would be a loss to the College and a gain to his new employer. He had offered sound advice and the college had ben well served by him. He would be sent to his new role with commendation from all of the Board and SMT. The Deputy Group Principal thanked everyone for their kind words. He had been at Havering since 2006 and every phase had been fascinating and offered different and exciting challenges. The merger had been a struggle and hard work but a project that he believed in and NCC would be a fantastic resource for East London.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 20.24</p>

Signed.....

Dated.....