

GOVERNING BODY
Minutes of the meeting held at 2.00pm on 8 July 2019

Present: E D'Souza (Chair) S Daley (Vice Chair)
 J Wakelam K Points
 S Clarke R Berongoy
 J Gazzard A Maltpress
 N Savvas, Principal/CEO

In attendance: S Jones, Vice Principal Finance and Resources
 L Moody, Vice Principal Employer Engagement
 C Shaw, Vice Principal Quality and the Student Experience
 S Graham, Interim HR Director
 R Stevenson, Operations Director
 P Fawcus, Executive Director Quality Improvement
 M Firth, Chair of One LGB (Observer)
 J Bridges, Clerk to the Corporation

There were no interests relevant to items on the agenda declared by members.

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
 Apologies for absence were received from S Howard, C Higgins and D Wildridge.
- 2 **Minutes of the meetings held on**
 - i. **29 March 2019**
 The minutes of the meeting (minute book pages I114-I122) were agreed as a correct record. **Proposed** by J Wakelam and **seconded** by S Clarke.
 - ii. **6 June 2019 – Extraordinary Meeting**
 The minutes of the meeting (minute book pages I123) were agreed as a correct record. **Proposed** by A Maltpress and **seconded** by E D'Souza.
- 3 **Matters Arising from the meetings held on**
29 March 2019
 The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report (minute book page I124) and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

 It was noted that there are 143 staff to DBS check and 50% of those are for OC1 staff (temporary infrequent hour contracts). There is confidence that these checks will be completed over the summer. Governors said that they would benefit from refresher training and online modules for Safeguarding, Data Protection and Equality and Diversity are to be circulated to members over the summer for completion.

6 June 2019 – Extraordinary Meeting
 There were no matters arising from the Extraordinary meeting held on 6 June 2019.
- 4 **Committee Chairs' Summary Reports**
 - 4.1 **Resources Overview**
 The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book page I125).

 The Chair of the Resources Committee, S Clarke, reported that as a result of the Extraordinary meeting held on 6 June 2019 the loan has been fixed at a rate of 1.42% to the year 2030.

Action

JBridges

It was further reported that at month 9, the College is performing well, cash remains healthy and despite the weaker performance against the HE income target that has been a challenge all year, positive performances against other budget lines have compensated for this shortfall. This leaves the current forecast for the year-end stronger than that of the original budget even after allowing for some summer works and investment. The challenge for the remaining months of the year is to continue to exercise strong budgetary control over expenditure and ensure that the remaining planned income is achieved. It was noted that all loan covenants have been fulfilled.

4.2 Standards and Excellence Overview

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages I126-I127).

The Chair of the Standards and Excellence Committee, S Daley, reported that overall student attendance is at 88% and retention remains strong for both 16–18s at 94% and 19+ at 96%. Apprenticeship performance is also strong with a predicted achievement rate of 75% compared to a 70% achievement rate last year.

Assessment progress in most areas remains either on or ahead of target, with Access to HE courses continuing to do well as assessment progress in this area was weak last year.

Predicted achievement looks strong for vocational courses and there is a drive to maximise Functional Skills achievement in both Maths and English.

It was reported that Adult English GCSE achievement rates show that the College is Number 1 across the Country as a General Further Education College with achievement rates of 69.7% (grades 4-9) which is 29% above the national rate. This puts us Number 6 across the Country for all provider types. The top 5 are all 'other Public funded providers' (i.e. County/Borough Councils).

Adult Maths GCSE achievement rates show that the College is Number 4 across the Country with achievement rates of 61.3% (grades 4-9) which is 28% above national rate. The other 3 Colleges with better achievement rates only had cohorts of 30-40 adults where we had a cohort of 140. Across the Country West Suffolk College is Number 17 for all provider types and Number 6 for institutions with cohorts in excess of 100 students.

The Corporation wished to extend its thanks and appreciation to the Manager of the Adult Maths and English provision at the Local Learning Centres and to the Maths and English Teams for this outstanding work and student achievement.

4.2.1 Quality Improvement Plan 2018/19 Update

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages I128-I129).

Good progress continues to be made against the 2018/19 QIP already including changes to the start of the new academic year to inform attendance monitoring and English and Maths progress, staff PD and introduction of Innovation Coaches and exams procedures. There are no red flag targets to report as all targets are making progress and it was noted that where flags are amber this is mainly because work is in progress rather than a concern. The impact of the progress made is to be reflected in the College's 2018/19 Self-Assessment Report.

It was noted that a PD Day on 24 August will be providing an update and workshop on the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework. The details are to be shared with the Clerk so that Governors can be invited to attend.

4.3 Audit and Risk Management Overview

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages I130-I131).

Risk Register

The report provided an update on the current risk position showing that there are currently 33 risks held on the register. There are 3 categorised as high risk in the red zone; 4 amber; 12 yellow and 17 in the green zone (low risks). There are no new risks added to the register and 2 risks have been removed (R038 and R072).

Risk Management Procedure

The procedure has been reviewed and only the insertion of 'CEO' to the role of the Principal to read CEO/Principal and the footer details have been updated in this review. Tracked changes have been used to demonstrate these minor amendments and the Audit and Risk Management Committee have endorsed the copy for the Corporation to approve. The Corporation considered the procedure and resolved that it be **approved. Proposed** by A Maltpress and **seconded** by S Clarke.

GDPR Compliance

In terms of GDPR compliance, the College has now completed 80% of its Compliance action plan to date, leaving 16% progress required (amber) and 4% good progress (green) to be made and there is confidence that this is being managed particularly well.

Appointment of External and Internal Audit Services

External Audit

The Corporation **approved** the reappointment of the external auditors. They are to continue to be contracted to 2019/20 at which point full market testing will be undertaken.

Internal Audit

The Corporation **approved** the reappointment of internal auditors for the 2019/20 academic year.

Both services were **approved** by the Corporation and were **proposed** by S Daley and **seconded** by J Wakelam.

4.4 Property Task and Finish Group Overview

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages I132-I138).

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group, S Clarke, reported that at the meeting of the Corporation held on 29 March 2019 it was agreed that an Extraordinary meeting of the Resources Committee was to be convened in order to expedite the approvals required to progress our capital projects. In addition it was suggested that a Property Task and Finish Group meeting also be convened in the immediate weeks to assess the approvals required so that the Resources Committee would make an informed decision/approval at their Extraordinary meeting. The Property Task and Finish Group met on 15 April and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Resources Committee subsequently held on 25 April 2019.

It was reported at the last meeting of the Resources Committee (held on 18 June 2019) that the work to Vintens STEM project 2 (Hanger One) is proving to be challenging, however options to resolve the outstanding issues are actively being pursued by the College team.

The latest plan for the Project 2 (Hanger 1) Vintens STEM Centre was shared with the Corporation and as previously reported the first two phases of the refurbishment (Project 1) are progressing well, with only the provision of a pedestrian crossing outstanding as an issue still to be resolved. Project 2 is now underway and should be completed in time for September 2019 opening, however, it was noted that given the late start of this section of works there is little slack in the build programme, as any challenges present themselves the team is working to resolve these in a timely way.

The Corporation **resolved** delegated consideration and discussion of the contract for the development of Project 2 (Hanger 1) to the Property Task and Finish Group who is scheduled to meet on 10 July 2019. **Proposed** by J Wakelam and **seconded** by S Daley. It was noted that the cost of the temporary pedestrian crossing has increased from £70K to £140K and the Corporation was angered by the insistence of the Highways department to invest in something that is temporary and will have no future benefit or indeed was not considered to be the best use of public money.

4.5 Safeguarding Overview

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book page I139).

The Safeguarding policy is subject to an annual review and approval by the Corporation.

It was subject to extensive review last year and was rewritten to align with the Suffolk School Safeguarding Policy from Suffolk County Council. This is still the model policy that the College adopts and therefore there are no amendments this year other than updating the footer details.

The Corporation **approved** the policy for publication in the College's procedure manual and on the College website. **Proposed** by J Gazzard and **seconded** by R Berongoy.

4.6 Health and Safety Overview

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book page I140).

The Health and Safety policy is subject to annual review and approval by the Corporation. There are a number of tracked changes and these are highlighted in the copy presented to the Board. The Health and Safety Committee has agreed the changes in sections 1 and 2 and have agreed that these sections can be approved, signed by the Principal/CEO and published in the procedure's manual while sections 3 and 4 that detail the planning and monitoring elements of our health and safety arrangements require further work before being published.

The Corporation **approved** the policy for the Principal/CEO to sign and that it be published in the College's procedures manual and on the College website. **Proposed** by S Daley and **seconded** by R Berongoy.

4.7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book page I141).

The Corporation recognised that the amendments to the policy are minimal and limited to updating the dates and other footer details.

It was reported that there is a gap in College policies for transgender staff and student procedures, so it is proposed that a standalone transgender policy is to be developed.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board has agreed the policy and the Corporation **approved** the document for publication in the procedures manual and on the College website. **Proposed** by A Maltpress and **seconded** by S Daley.

5 **Budget 2019/20 and Financial Forecast 2019/22**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages I142-I149).

The proposed 2019/20 budget shows a £124,567 surplus budget servicing an £870,240 capital budget. The Resources Committee has identified securing HE income as the key risk to the budget in the 2019/20 year.

It was noted that this year there is a new requirement to provide the ESFA with a 24-month cash flow forecast that reconciles to the financial plan. The Corporation recognised that the proposed budget for 2019/20 results in a change of financial health grade from Outstanding to Good before returning to Outstanding in 2020/21 and 2021/22. This prediction is as a result of a prudent assumption around the surplus position but as with the strategy in previous years, the objective will be to perform better than budget so that the Outstanding grade can be retained.

The Corporation considered the eight financial objectives set for the College and they were content to leave these unchanged. It was noted that the forecast shows that for 2018/19, the College will achieve all objectives in terms of aspiration but in the case of the last bulleted point relating to the adjusted surplus, the outturn predicts a surplus at 2.8% rather than 3%. The final outturn figure will confirm whether or not the aspiration has been achieved.

It was noted that there is confidence that the government will fund the 7% increase on employer's contribution of the TPS scheme and this has been budgeted for in year one. Years beyond this funding will place many Colleges under significant financial pressure and could throw them into insolvency. Our cloth will need to be cut accordingly to manage a balanced budget and this will be a challenge to sustain.

In summary the Corporation considered the small surplus budget of 0.41% of turnover and acknowledged that while this is small, it is positive considering the pressures on the sector from accumulated reduced funding.

The Corporation **approved** the Revenue and Capital Budgets 2019/20, Financial Objectives and the Three-Year Financial Plan. **Proposed** by S Clarke and **seconded** by S Daley.

6 **Strategic Matters**

6.1 **Principal's Briefing**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages I150-I165).

There has been an extensive number of events held and hosted by the College since the last meeting of the Corporation and these were all detailed in the Principal's report.

The most notable for mention included the progress made with our partnership and programme projects; STEM Innovation Centre and opening of the Abbeygate Sixth Form College and accommodating the first year on the main campus of the College in the Gateway building.

The College has started to work with the UEA and our first degree programmes will be available from September 2019.

The Board of what would have been the Institute of Technology, now temporarily known as the Polytechnic of the East, has been established to progress our strategic vision for technical education provision across the eastern region.

A significant number of activities and successes were detailed in the report together with an update on our partnership working at events such as the Suffolk Show, Big Girls Crumble, International Festival of Learning, Big Bang Fair, County Lines and Transport arrangements.

The Corporation was appreciative to receive the detail of the accolades and achievements since the last meeting of the Corporation held on 29 March 2019. These are significant achievements and an exhaustive list of all of the hard work and success only made possible by the great and committed staff of the College and our partners.

6.2 Update on Multi Academy Trusts (SAT and SENDAT)

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages I166-I171).

Suffolk Academies Trust (SAT)

Contingency arrangements are progressing for use of the Gateway building to accommodate the Abbeygate Sixth Form College students for the 2019/20 academic year.

Contracting for the new building has been completed and work has started on site. Recruitment figures are positive and interviews with prospective students have been held. The Senior Management Team has been recruited and all teaching staff are ready to take up their posts. Recruitment of support staff now starts in earnest.

The Checkpoint meeting, Readiness to Open Meeting and Ofsted Pre-opening Meeting have all taken place successfully.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Academy Trust (SENDAT)

Of the 15 students enrolled on bespoke learning programmes at Angel Hill College, 11 students will need to continue at the setting for a further year, 3 students are now ready to progress to College programmes on the main campus of West Suffolk College, and 1 student will be moving to adult care provision.

There are currently 14 students expected to be enrolled at Angel Hill College for 2019/20. WSC are liaising with the Suffolk Local Authority in order to have confirmation for SENDAT of high needs funding allocations for these students prior to the end of July 2019.

The transfer of Stone Lodge Academy in Ipswich to SENDAT has now been approved by the DfE and the Head Teacher Board, with an expected transfer date of 1 September 2019, subject to due diligence process.

It was noted that SENDAT is submitting an application to open a Special Free School in Norwich and that the Outreach service contract has been extended by the commissioner, Suffolk County Council, to July 2020.

S Clarke, A Maltpress and K Points left the meeting at 3.15pm

7 Governance

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages I172-I183).

7.1 Membership

The appointments of S Clarke, A Maltpress, S Howard and K Points whose terms of office are due to expire at the end of this academic year have been considered by the Appointments and Governance Committee at the meeting held on 8 May 2019. In addition, the Corporation considered the renewal of co-opted members; N Roberts, H Nydam and J Bloomfield to the Audit and Risk Management Committee (Nick Roberts and Henry Nydam) and the Appointments and Governance and Remuneration Committees (Jan Bloomfield).

The Corporation **approved** all appointed as detailed above. **Proposed** by J Gazzard and **seconded** by J Wakelam.

S Clarke, A Maltpress and K Points joined the meeting at 3.20pm

7.2 Annual Calendar of Meetings 2019/20

The calendar of meetings for the 2019/20 academic year has been compiled. It is the intention that where relevant meetings will alternate in venue with the exception of Audit who for logistical ease will host all meetings at West Suffolk College. Calendar invitations to all members will be issued over the summer weeks by the Clerk.

JBridges

J Gazzard, S Clarke, S Daley and E D'Souza left the meeting at 3.20pm

7.3 Designated Committee Chair/Vice Chair Roles and Membership

The Standing Orders of the Corporation determine that the membership of each Committee and all posts of Chair, and Vice Chair of each Committee shall be reviewed at least annually by the Corporation.

The Corporation considered the designated roles and Committee Membership as detailed in the report and **approved** all appointments. **Proposed** by K Points and **seconded** by J Wakelam.

J Gazzard, S Clarke, S Daley and E D'Souza joined the meeting at 3.25pm

7.4 Terms of Reference, Standing Orders and Code of Conduct

The Committee Terms of Reference have been reviewed in the year and are subject to annual review and approval of the Corporation.

In addition to the Instrument and Articles of Government that the Corporation is governed by it has adopted its own set of byelaws under which it operates known as the Standing Orders and Code of Conduct. These are subject to annual review and approval by the Corporation. The Standing Orders have been reviewed together with the Annexed policies on the Selection of Governors, Terms of Office and Chairs' Action.

The Code of Conduct has also been reviewed together with the Annexed policies on Seven Principles of Public Life, Six Core Principles of Good Governance, Access to Governance Information and Guidance on the Expectations of Governors' Attendance.

The Corporation **approved** all documents en bloc. **Proposed** by S Clarke and **seconded** by A Maltpress.

7.5 2017/18 Results and 2018/19 Annual Self-Reflection Evaluation

In previous years governors have completed an annual governance self-evaluation questionnaire to review the effectiveness of its operations at Corporation and Committee level. This process became tired and to this end the Innovative Governance Self Reflection Framework was developed to provide governors with the means to assess their own ability and capacity to innovate, reflect on current practice and create the future governance, rather than simply to evaluate governance on a section by section basis, as conducted in the past.

2017/18 was the second year that we have used this framework to assess effectiveness and in summary collective scores in each of the four categories show a positive green RAG status in each and high Innovative Governance Rating percentage concluding that governors should 'keep up the good work'.

The governance improvement action plan arising from this assessment concluded that the Corporation will agree to measure the effectiveness of its new governance arrangements and will review the diversity profile of the Board by completing an equality monitoring form (to be issued by the Clerk).

JBridges

The same tool is to be used to evaluate the performance of the Corporation for the 2018/19 academic year and the Clerk will issue the evaluation to members for completion and return by 31 July 2019.

JBridges

7.6 Remuneration Code – comply or explain

As reported to the Remuneration Committee in December 2018, in March 2015 the AoC introduced the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges (known as the AoC Code) and acknowledged that from time to time the AoC Code would need to be amended, to respond to the development of the sector and the wider context in which Colleges work. So, the AoC was proposing to amend the AoC Code at Section 9 Good Governance, Remuneration of Senior Post Holders (9.9 and 9.10) which introduces a Colleges Senior Staff Remuneration Code (Remuneration Code).

Whilst every indication is that Senior Post Holder pay is well controlled in Colleges and that governors are making decisions in appropriate ways, in the light of the Office for Students (OfS) registration requirements, new regulatory regimes and considerable political debate and media coverage (predominantly around Vice Chancellor's pay), the AoC has introduced this amendment to the AoC Code in order that governors can use this guidance to be more confident and clearer in their decision-making processes around the pay and conditions of those designated by them as Senior Post Holders.

The amendment to the AoC Code is a voluntary initiative which the AoC is encouraging Corporations to adopt. The aim is to help governing bodies meet and exceed basic governance requirements, demonstrating that the sector has robust arrangements to govern and manage its own affairs. As autonomous bodies it will be for individual Colleges to take forward this amendment to the AoC Code as they see fit.

The Clerk provided the Corporation with an assessment of how the College applies the principles of the new Remuneration Code in practice. Given that the Code

should not be seen as supporting a 'tick box' exercise it has to compiled to demonstrate how the College complies or explains how it can comply with changes to current practice in order to inform a decision of whether or not to adopt the Code.

The assessment confirms that there are a number of areas (indicated in the assessment) that are not applicable to the College; these being in Element 1 of the Remuneration Code with regard to the application of Performance Related Pay. In Elements 2 and 3, the assessment concludes that with some changes in practice all principles of the Code could be met.

The Corporation approved that it is to **adopt** the new voluntary Remuneration Code and will publish its written commitment to comply in the College's Annual Report and Financial Accounts. **Proposed** by K Points and **seconded** by S Daley.

SJones

7.7 Governor Link Protocol

The purpose of the protocol is to outline the process of the Governor Link Programme which is to provide Governors with an insight into different areas of the College and to create a better understanding of the way in which strategic decisions of the Corporation influence provision at an operational level.

This is not a new initiative and has been in place for a number of years although participation has been irregular and invitations from curriculum leads somewhat infrequent.

The protocol has been shared with the Corporation with the hope that this will encourage better participation and engagement of the Link programme and is also to be shared with the curriculum leads to ensure that linked governors are made aware of the activities they are linked to and have early opportunity to attend.

8 Governors' Reports and Information

8.1 Representational Activities

Governors have attended and represented the College at a range of events during the past few months. The Chair reported that he had attended the Suffolk Show and the T Level launch event of the second group of providers.

8.2 Training, Development and Governor Link activities

Governors have attended the International Festival of Learning and have participated in Governor First Hand visits. The Chair also reported that he attended the Elective Home Educated student event hosted by the College last week. This was a successful event with great feedback and comments about this specialist provision.

9 Any other business

The Chair of the Standards and Excellence Committee, S Daley, questioned how we can prepare and integrate governors for an Ofsted Inspection. The new framework is taking a more holistic view of a student's experience and governors want and feel a need to be involved. Ideas for inspection preparation and how we can integrate ourselves within and around students could include tactically arranging our first hand experiences to coincide with an inspection although we should not 'stage' engagement. It was agreed that we would give thought about how we could achieve this.

A member asked if the College had a policy on reducing single use plastic across the College. The Principal/CEO confirmed that staff and students are taking this up

as a project so it is already within scope to action. The Corporation asked for a progress report at the next meeting.

10 **Review of Meeting**

Comments to the Clerk are welcome.

Date of next meeting

Friday 13 December 2019 at 2.00pm

The meeting ended at 3.45pm