**The Corporation of Newham Sixth Form College**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 February 2024**

**Members**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Martin Rosner(Chair) | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Chris Folorunso | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Mandeep Gill  | Principal & Chief Executive  | Apologies – unwell  |
| Trevor Harris | Teaching Staff Member  | Present  |
| Aleeza Hassan  | Student Member  | Present  |
| Kofo Ladele | Independent Member  | Apologies – work commitments  |
| Jane Lofthouse | Independent Member | Present  |
| Ebby Maps | Parent Member  | Present  |
| Sam Mendy  | Support Staff Member  | Present  |
| Matthew Odeyemi  | Student Member  | Present  |
| Avnesh Pandya | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Mandeep Sahotay | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Elizabeth Scott | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Julia Shelton | Independent Member  | Apologies – holiday  |
| Kate Towner | Independent Member | Apologies – work commitments  |
| Yolanda Valery | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Graham Willson | Independent Member  | Present  |

**Non-Members in attendance**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Miranda Coles  | Interim Executive Director Finance, Marketing & Estates  | Present  |
| Victoria Cornwell - Lyon | Interim Executive Director – Skills  | Present  |
| Susanne Datta  | Executive Director Human Resources & Organisational Development  | Present |
| Susanne Davies  | Interim Principal  | Present |
| David Francis  | Executive Director Student Services  | Present  |
| Sue Hadfield | Interim Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality  | Present  |
| Robin Jones | Head of Governance  | Present  |
| Lorna Langridge | Interim Head of Quality  | Present  |
| Sijul Miah | Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality  | Present  |
| Dayo Ogunjobi  | Interim Executive Director  | Present  |
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**1 WELCOME TO VICE PRINCIPAL CURRICULUM & QUALITY**

The Chair, on behalf of the Corporation, welcomed Sijul Miah, the recently appointed Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality, his meeting of the Corporation.

**2 MEMBERSHIP OF THE CORPORATION – RESIGNATION OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER FEDERICO VALORI**

The Corporation NOTED that Federico Valori had resigned from membership of the Corporation as from 15 January 2024 primarily given the time commitment needed to fulfil the role and responsibilities.

The Governance & Search Committee had met on 25 January 2024 primarily to consider the arrangements for filling the vacancies for Independent Members – see item 16 below.

**3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Corporation NOTED the apologies for absence:

* Mandeep Gill due to ill health
* Kofo Ladele due to work commitments
* Julia Shelton on holiday
* Kate Towner due to work commitments

It was appreciated that the meeting had been arranged at relatively short notice and this meant that some Members had other pre arranged commitments.

Sam Mendy explained that he had joined online because he felt unwell. In the event he did not remain online for all of the meeting.

**4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Members confirmed that there were no declarations of interest to be recorded on this occasion at this stage of the meeting based on the published Agenda.

**5**  **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2023**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 13 December 2023 were agreed to be a correct record subject to the correction of certain typos in the text and, most importantly, the addition of a note to explain that in fact the inclusion of T Levels in the overall College achievement rates would not have such an adverse impact as had been suggested at the last meeting.

**6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2023**

The Chair took the opportunity to mention that he had now completed most of the 121 discussions with Members and he found these really worthwhile. It was planned to complete the 121s shortly when the Chair would write up the key points for future consideration possibly linked to the consideration of the report on the external review of governance.

The Chair also addressed next steps on the external review of governance – see item 8 below.

The Corporation agreed that, on this occasion, there were no other matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023.

**7 CORPORATION DECISION TRACKER**

The Head of Governance presented to the Corporation the updated Decision Tracker and it was AGREED that, at this time, only one of the issues could be deleted – this related to the Improvements to the College Estate which was addressed in a report on the published Agenda.

It was appreciated that several of the items should be addressed at the meeting of the Corporation on 27 March 2024.

**8 EXTERNAL REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE**

The Chair introduced this item and invited Members to consider the preferred approach to considering the report on the external review of governance and the preparation of the Action Plan.

It was noted that the final report was expected on or about 26 February 2024 following a review by Members of the Governance & Search Committee, the Interim Principal and Head of Governance which had provided an opportunity to provide the reviewer with additional background information where this was thought to be appropriate.

It was recognised that it was essential that the Action Plan was owned by Members and set out clearly what was to be done and in what timeframe.

The Corporation agreed, following a discussion on the options, that a Special Meeting of the Governance & Search Committee would be arranged in April 2024 to which all Members and the external reviewer would be invited. An Action Plan would then be prepared for future consideration and approval of the Corporation.

**9 PRESENTATION - COLLEGE COURSE OFFER INCLUDING ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD OF WORK**

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality and the Interim Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality provided the Corporation with the requested presentation on the College course offer including its relationship to the world of work.

The key points covered were noted to be:

* The curriculum vision
* London Skills Improvement Plan
* Courses offered by NewVIc
* Overview of the NewVIc curriculum offer by level with the majority of learners at Level 3
* Relationship to the world of work

During the presentation a range of points were highlighted including the local Newham needs with the NHS being one of the biggest employers and the large number of Small & Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

A priority for the College was to increase the number of employers willing to provide work experience placements. It was also hoped to establish Employer Advisory Boards.

The Interim Principal took the opportunity to update Members on initiatives to support SEND learners. These included a sensory garden and the adaption of the former Performing Arts area to be a living space with bed, cooker and washing machine to provide a life skills facility.

Members were invited to ask questions and seek clarification and a number of aspects were raised including:

* The names of the biggest local employers with which the College has a relationship
* The success of the recent Employers Fair attended by over 450 students
* SMEs by the nature of their businesses were important but could only take on relatively small numbers of work experience students
* The opportunities to grow student numbers which would be seen in the new Curriculum Plan when completed – this included the planned growth in the Level 2 route to Level 3 and or Apprenticeships – sustainable growth was intention
* The large number of students without English and or maths at the time of entry which has to be addressed by the College
* The number of students not looking to progress to university and their future needs – approximately 40% of the total student population

A Member asked about the opportunities to increase courses in the creative arts given the range of employment roles. This was noted to be one of the areas highlighted in the London Skills Improvement Plan. Consideration needed to be seen in the context of the availability of other suitable provision within the region. There was also a question about the opportunity to reintroduce modern languages to the College’s course offer.

Members need to be briefed on how they can help the College in terms of building employer links and providing meaningful work experience placements. The Interim Executive Director for Skills highlighted a 2 page summary which was provided to Members for comment and would then be circulated once it had been updated.

The Chair on behalf of the Corporation thanked the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality and the Interim Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality for giving the presentation.

The presentation would be made available to all Members within the next few days.

**10 REPORT OF THE INTERIM PRINCIPAL**

The Corporation received and discussed the report of the Interim Principal.

A number of the issues addressed in the report were specifically highlighted including:

* Political parties manifestos indicate pending changes to qualifications availability and access after the next General Election
* Recent decisions about defunding of various T Levels are undermining confidence in the qualifications
* Funding was putting colleges under financial pressures
* National decrease in enrolment of 16-19 year olds was causing a corresponding decrease in College revenue
* Ofsted focus on SEND provision
* Ofsted to look at decoupling safeguarding from judgments and intend to publish reports quicker
* Joseph Chamberlain College in Birmingham had received its second Outstanding Ofsted outcome
* An update on the proposed British Standards qualification
* The introduction of a Mental Health Charter by the AoC
* Minimum Level Service agreement
* JCQ assessment screening for AI

The report then explained the risks for NewVIc associated with the update outlined above.

It was confirmed that mental health support was available in College for those who had need.

Members noted with interest the suggestion from the AoC that colleges consider hosting hustings in the run up to the General Election to engage students.

The Corporation agreed following discussion:

1. To thank the Interim Principal for the report covering a number of key issues
2. To look forward to receiving updates on the issues as and when there are developments.

**11 OFSTED INSPECTION OF NEWVIC**

The Members of the Corporation were aware that after the Agenda for this meeting had been published the College had been informed that there would be an inspection by a team of HMIs from 27 February to 1 March 2024.

Copies of the key documents such as the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) had been uploaded to the Ofsted portal so that the up-to-date information was available to the Inspection Team.

There would be discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporation and the Skills Link Member. It was appreciated that the Vice Chair was the designated Safeguarding Link Member and so would have been seen wearing that “hat”. In the absence of the Chair of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee currently abroad the other Members would cover the related areas of questioning by the Inspection Team.

The outcome of the inspection would be made known to Members as soon as possible and there would be consideration of the issues and the basis for the Post Inspection Action Plan at forthcoming meetings including the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee on 21 March and the Corporation on 27 March 2024 if not before.

**12 RECOVERY PLAN**

The Corporation received with the published Agenda the following documents:

* The report of the Interim Principal
* “NewVIc Recovery Plan visualisation 2023 – 25”
* The high level QIP
* KPI updates
* The “impact, not effort” list of senior management achievement since October 2023

A copy of an email from the Interim Principal to the Chair of the Corporation and Head of Governance was also included with the pack of reports confirming that, following the recent meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee, it had been established that, notwithstanding what had been said previously, had the T Levels outcomes in 2023 been included in the overall student achievement there would not have been such a significant difference to the overall position.

The Interim Principal highlighted a number of issues including the following:

* The timetabling issues experienced at the beginning of the year had had a devastating impact on the College in the current year such as not integrating English & maths and tutorials in main individual timetables so that they were not at the beginning or end of the day – this had an adverse impact on attendance – it is not thought to be appropriate to make dramatic changes to timetables mid year because students and indeed staff had made other commitments based on what they had been told at the outset
* There were activities such as checking grades on entry which it was explained should have been done as part of the enrolment process but were still an issue for the College
* A Curriculum Plan was not in place for 2023/24
* The intention of the SLT was to stabilise the NewVIc “ship” which would involve “going back to basics” for staff and students
* There were College-wide inconsistencies in practice such as with student lateness
* A positive was the students were well behaved
* The Curriculum Plan for 2024/25 would be in place by Easter and timetables for the new year prepared during the summer term
* An Enrolment Handbook was being prepared which would include a clear expectation of the minimum number requirement for courses
* Although there were reviews underway of the course offer and practices it was thought that no members of staff would lose their jobs as a result
* Student attendance was now 83% but for English and maths it was around 60%
* A priority was to rebuild trust between staff and management – it was thought that this was happening as illustrated by the attendance at the Staff Christmas Party
* Relationships were improving and consultation with staff on appropriate issues was in place
* Deep dives into areas had been put in place as had learning walks

The Corporation noted that the QIP had now grown from the original 7 pages to 30. This was now a far more comprehensive document covering:

* Area of Development
* College Strategic Objective
* College KPI Intent
* Actions to implement
* Progress update
* Person responsible
* Date to complete
* RAG rating

Members were invited to ask questions on the published reports and what had been said by the Interim Principal in her introductory remarks.

Progress against the QIP was highlighted and if there aspects that were going well and what were the greatest challenges. Improvements in the student experience and their achievement were the priorities. An important aspect was the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. CPD sessions had been provided for staff and it was noted from the QIP that from the lesson observations completed so far 90% of lessons were considered to have met the DfE standard.

It was asked how well students were progressing? The College approach to determining this was via maintaining a record of progress. Learners were targeted to attend additional workshops to enable them to access support with the setting of SMART targets.

The attendance at these additional workshops was usually between 6 and 8 students.

Revision classes would be provided over the Easter vacation period. These would be made up of a mix of students who had been identified as needing such support and by responding to requests from students.

Attendance was disappointing and interventions were in place. This would be addressed at the meeting of Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee on 21 March 2024 when attendance and retention would be highlighted.

The relatively low attendance at tutorials was noted to be an issue for the sector and not solely NewVIc. The intention was to bring about improvements and this would be addressed when the timetables for future years were prepared by not having tutorials at the beginning or end of the day.

The Chair of the Corporation highlighted the request made at the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee on 29 January 2024 that the appropriate parts of the Curriculum Area QIPs be shared with the designated Link Members. This had not yet been progressed but would be.

The Committee agreed after discussion:

1. to note the reports of the Interim Principal covering the Recovery Plan, the Quality Improvement Plan and related issues
2. to note the issues arising from the reports and the planned actions
3. to look forward to receiving further updates at future meetings in the light of developments with a focus on progress, any slippages and changed factors.

**13 IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COLLEGE ESTATE**

The Agenda for this meeting of the Corporation had included an update on the project to improve the College estate as approved by Members at the meeting on 13 December 2023.

The Interim Executive Director Finance, Marketing & Estates explained that over the last few days the Interim Principal and her had reviewed the approved plan and had concluded that further thought needed to be given to the intentions so as to seek to ensure a sensible use of funds having regard to the updated Curriculum Plan and projected student numbers.

The Interim Principal explained that the average class size was 14 and it was anticipated that student numbers would go down in 2024/25. It was also noted that the courses which were closed as from the beginning of 2023/24 but with the continuing students completing their second year would also free up teaching space as from the summer 2024. The Interim Principal added that the intention was in future to take a far tougher approach to running groups with small numbers.

One known certainty was that the College was required to move out of blocks BU and G by November 2024 when the current planning permission ended – it was recalled that it had been made clear to the College by the Local Authority that the temporary planning permission would not be extended again.

The land that the blocks BU and G stood on were part of the College estate and, therefore, they could be demolished at an estimated cost of £175k which was part of the project plan budget approved by the Corporation.

An intention on the part of the Executive was to make NewVIc the number one choice by students for digital. The Interim Director MIS, Exams and IT reported that, as part of plans to bring about improvements, the IT infrastructure for the College would be enhanced by increasing the internet speed from 1gb to 10gb.

The Corporation agreed following discussion:

1. to APPROVE the suggestion from the Executive that the estates improvement project approved on 13 December 2023 would be paused to enable the Executive to consider the best possible use of the available funds having regard to the updated Curriculum Plan and projected student numbers
2. that there was no immediate urgency in progressing the demolition of blocks BU and G – indeed there may be a short term need to use some of the space in the first few weeks of the Autumn Term 2024
3. to note (1) the planned improvement to the College internet speed from 1gb to 10gb and (2) that the fee expenditure to date would be reviewed given the pause to the anticipated scheme
4. to look forward to receiving further updates and revised proposals at future meetings of the Corporation via the Finance & Resources Committee.

**14 CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2023**

The Corporation received and noted the working draft of the Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 29 January 2024.

It was explained that the Minutes as presented were regarded as a working draft as the Chair of the Committee had not reviewed as she was currently out of the country. The Minutes had, however, been seen by Martin Rosner as a member of the Committee who thought that they were an accurate report of the issues covered on that occasion.

This was an additional meeting in recognition of the number of issues requiring attention. The key issues considered by the Committee relating to the College QIP and the Recovery Plan had been addressed earlier in this meeting.

The particular attention of the Members was drawn to the item on examinations and the fact that, following review, it had been established that there had been no malpractice on the part of the College in terms of the organisation of examinations. A further update on examinations had been requested by the Committee for the next meeting which was scheduled for 21 March 2024.

**15 GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2024**

The Corporation received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Governance & Search Committee held on 25 January 2024.

The items considered at this meeting of the Governance & Search Committee had included:

* Membership of the Corporation – Independent Members - Vacancies – see item 16 below
* External Review of Governance – see item 8 above
* E governance
* Governance – dedicated administrative support

The items concerning e governance and the possibility of providing dedicated administrative support for governance would be progressed alongside the preparation of the Action Plan associated with the external review of governance.

**16 MEMBERSHIP OF THE CORPORATION – INDEPENDENT MEMBERS**

The Corporation noted the planned approach by the Governance & Search Committee with regard to the arrangements for seeking to fill the 3 vacancies for Independent Members:

1. that the Head of Governance should contact the person identified as someone well placed in the local Newham community to bring that perspective to the Corporation so as to arrange an interview by the Committee
2. to invite the Interim Principal to make known one or more potential Members who have Ofsted inspection experience so that interviews may be arranged
3. that the Head of Governance should liaise with the senior member of College staff with the skills and employability brief with a view to identifying one or more potential Members from the local Newham business community leading to arranging interviews as soon as practicable.

The intention was for the Governance & Search Committee to interview potential Members and then present recommendations to the Corporation for possible appointment of new Independent Members.

**17 LINK MEMBERS – CAREERS AND SKILLS**

The Corporation noted that following the resignation of Federico Valori from membership of the Corporation there was a need to reallocate Careers and Skills Link roles.

Members appreciated the offers of Martin Rosner and Elizabeth Scott to take over the Careers and Skills Link roles respectively.

The intention was to review the allocation of the Link roles once the vacancies for the Independent Members were filled.

**18 PRESENTATIONS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE CORPORATION**

The Chair of the Corporation invited Members to make known on an ongoing basis any suggested topics for presentations for future meetings.

The following items had previously been proposed and it was agreed that these would be considered to be addressed at a future meeting:

* Health & Safety with a focus on the role and responsibilities of the Corporation
* External organisations coming into College to provide support and relevance to course and other activities
* Government policy relating to the further education sector

The outcome from the forthcoming Ofsted inspection would also provide a focus for future discussions.

**19 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2023/24**

The Corporation NOTED the dates of the planned meetings to take place in 2023/24 were now as follow :

* Wednesday 27 March 2024
* Wednesday 10 July 2024

At this time it is planned to start meetings at 5.45pm.

It was recognised that other meetings will be arranged if and when thought to be appropriate to address issues.

The intention was for the meetings to be held in College but with an opportunity for Members to join online if they wished.

*The members of the SLT including the Interim Principal left at this point of the meeting.*

**20 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS - PART B AGENDA**

The Corporation considered certain confidential items as set out in the separate Minutes which are only available to the Members of the Corporation.

*The Staff and Student Members of the Corporation left at this point of the meeting.*

**21 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS - PART C AGENDA**

The Corporation considered certain confidential items as set out in the separate Minutes which are only available to the Independent Members and the Parent Member.

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