**The Corporation of Newham Sixth Form College**

**Finance & Resources Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 December 2021**

**Members**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Simon Mayfield (Chair) | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Laura De Vos | Staff Member – Support  | Present  |
| Mandeep Gill  | Principal & Chief Executive  | Present  |
| Martin Rosner  | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Graham Willson | Independent Member  | Present  |

**Non-Members in attendance**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Michael Gainlall | Vice Principal Finance & Operations  | Present  |
| Robin Jones | Clerk to the Corporation | Present  |
| Martin Reed | Assistant Principal Student Services & Human Resources | Present  |

**1** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Corporation NOTED that all Members were present on this occasion. However, Graham Willson had difficulty in accessing the online meeting and joined during item 5.

The meeting was quorate from the beginning and throughout.

**2 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.

**3** **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee held on 10 November 2021 were agreed to be a correct record.

**4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Committee noted that there were no matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee held on 10 November 2021 which were not covered by the published Agenda.

**5 STAFF SURVEY**

The Committee received a report which addressed the key outcomes from the Staff Survey report for 2020/21.

The Principal & Chief Executive provided the context for the Staff Survey:

* The College has participated in the York Staff Survey in the last 3 years – previously this was conducted internally which meant that there was no benchmarking
* The York Staff Survey which had about 40 other colleges involved had the benefit that it was free whereas other options involve a fee for processing
* Whilst only 39.8% of staff participated in the most recent survey this was in fact a significant increase on the previous year when only 23% had completed
* It was appropriate to remember the position at NewVIc over the last 3 years which no doubt impacted on the number of staff completing and the outcomes relative to other colleges – the identification in January 2019 of a budget deficit and not surplus as projected, the involvement of the FE Commissioner and the need to carry out staff restructuring with some redundancies to improve the College’s financial health

The Assistant Principal Student Services & Human Resources took the Committee through the detail of the report. Whilst highlighting the positives relative to previous years it was acknowledged that there was a need to tackle a range of issues to continue the improvements.

The establishment of the Staff Forum drawn from all areas of the College was an important development with staff wellbeing at the forefront of actions.

Laura De Vos, as the Head of Marketing & Communications at NewVIc, outlined recent developments in College including the launch of a new Staff Intranet which provided all staff with access to up to date information on a wide range of issues. There were plans in place to engage with staff to bring about further improvements.

The use of team meetings was also seen as important for direct communication with the Principal & Chief Executive attending with members of the Executive.

A Member asked what more could Corporation Members be doing to contribute to bring about improvements across the College? This warranted further thought whilst not undermining the role and responsibilities of the Executive.

The Committee AGREED:

1. To note the report on the outcome of the Staff Survey carried out during the summer term 2021 including the numbers participating and the top 5 and bottom 5 scores and the actions being progressed by the College
2. To ask that the full staff survey report be made available to the Members of the Committee via Google Docs and all staff with the commitment to share with staff much sooner after receipt so as to increase awareness and engagement
3. That the summary report be updated to reflect the discussion at this meeting and presented to the Corporation on 15 December 2021 so that all Members were aware of the position and the actions being taken
4. That it was essential that staff were consulted on strategic issues and communication was improved so as to address the concerns of staff including issues where rumours and interpretations were unfounded - a solutions focussed approach should, it was thought, bring about improvements in morale and engagement
5. To acknowledge the importance of avoiding a “top down approach” as this was not the most appropriate way of addressing many issues in an organisation such as a college and, therefore, the engagement with staff was essential – the NewVIc approach has been to involve staff as much as possible
6. That the Executive present to future meetings of the Committee a report setting out what had been progressed since the last meeting and what was still planned so that there was an understanding of what will be different in the future

*Note: Martin Reed left the meeting*

**6 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS APPROPRIATE TO THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the report relating to the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the College to be tracked by the Finance & Resources Committee on an ongoing basis.

The report circulated with the Agenda included a formula error which would be addressed by the Executive – specifically the column headed “difference between progress and target”.

The Committee AGREED following discussion:

1. To note the KPIs as presented and that the staff related data would be available at the March meeting of the Committee when the Staff Annual Report was published
2. To recognise the cycle of events between and within years such as (1) with reporting against the original Strategic Plan targets and (2) on student applications converting to enrolment and offers to acceptance which needed to be addressed so as to make the KPI report as useful as possible

**7 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – OCTOBER 2021**

The Committee received the Management Accounts for October 2021 (Period 3 of 2021/22).

The Vice Principal Finance & Operations provided an overview of the key issues with the overall College financial position being regarded as healthy and the requirements of the bank covenants being met in full. The projection was to retain the outstanding financial health status as at year end.

It was stressed that the extremely positive position was due in part to the front loading of ESFA funding allocations. These reduced as the year progressed and these actual amounts would be reflected in the monthly Management Accounts.

The Committee recognised that one of the biggest risks for the College over the next few years concerned the New Build including the affordability of the project. It was known that the experience elsewhere showed that the financial health of the institution was bound to fall to probably no better than satisfactory. This would need careful modelling and planning to minimise the impact of the risks on the College.

A Member asked if the ESFA and or any others published guidance on sector norms for finance major building projects. As far as it was known there were none although discussions would continue with the ESFA as the College plans were progressed so that these could be stress tested.

The Committee agreed to NOTE:

1. the Management Accounts for October 2021 which would now be made available to all Members of the Corporation for their information
2. the timetable of events for the preparation of the monthly Management Accounts which anticipated completion by the 20th of each month
3. the intention to model the affordability of the New Build via the preparation of a ten year financial forecast and this would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

**8 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – 2020/21**

The Committee received the draft Financial Statements for 2020/21 and, for information, the Management Report prepared by the Auditors as presented to the Audit & Risk Committee on 24 November 2021.

Whilst reviewing the draft Financial Statements and the Auditors Management Report the Committee recognised:

* the Going Concern position for the College
* the much improved Balance Sheet and the huge improvement relative to two years ago
* the cash days which were far more than many colleges and would help to support future investment in the College
* the adjustments mentioned would not impact on the end of year position set out in the Financial Statements

The Committee agreed, following discussion:

1. to RECOMMEND to the Corporation on 15 December 2021 that the Financial Statements be signed for publication subject to consideration being given to the advice of the Audit & Risk Committee
2. to thank the Vice Principal Finance & Operations and all others involved in preparing the Financial Statements and meeting the needs of the Auditors when carrying out the field work.

**9 ESTATES - UPDATE**

The Committee NOTED that the shortlisted firms of Architects were scheduled to be interviewed by a Panel on 6 December 2021 which included Simon Mayfield and Kieran Healy.

**10 HEALTH & SAFETY – UPDATE**

The Committee NOTED that the carbon dioxide monitors which had been promised on behalf of the Government had still not arrived in College. However, the delay was being used by the College to develop a comprehensive plan for the deployment of the monitors to achieve maximum benefit.

**11 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2021/22**

The Corporation NOTED the dates of the planned meetings to take place in 2021/22:

* Wednesday 9 March 2022 at 4 pm
* Wednesday 29 June 2022 at 4 pm

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

The Committee recalled that it was for Members to decide the arrangements for meetings – in College, online or hybrid.

Whilst it was good to have options Members thought online worked well for the Committee but would be kept under ongoing review.

**12 SUSTAINABILITY**

The Committee recognised climate related issues such as sustainability fell within the Terms of Reference of the Finance & Resources Committee.

The planned New Build provided the opportunity for the College to improve on the sustainability position but the completion was likely to be three or more years away. In the meantime it was known that there were many aspects that would benefit from attention sooner rather than later for the benefit for staff and students.

The Committee AGREED following discussion:

1. To note that, as far as it was known, there was not an equivalent in Further Education of the Green Gown Awards for sustainability that exist in Higher Education but this would be explored
2. To note that the College was currently preparing a Sustainability Strategy which would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee so a view could be taken of what could be done in the short to medium term and at what cost
3. To welcome the offer of Graham Willson to arrange for one of his professional contacts to discuss with the College the sustainability opportunities

 Chair: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_