



**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2021
AT 5.00 PM REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	2
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND QUORUM	2
MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING	2
MATTERS ARISING	2
HEALTH AND SAFETY STATUS REPORT	2
REPORT FROM THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 MARCH 2021	3
REPORT FROM THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMIC BOARD HELD ON 4 MARCH 2021	4
VERBAL REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 MARCH 2021....	5
STRATEGIC RISK REPORT	5
FURTHER EDUCATION COMMISSIONER'S LETTER DATED 22 FEBRUARY 2021.....	6
SKILLS FOR JOBS PRESENTATION	6
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	6

A review of the H&S inspection schedule had taken place with the introduction of an area inspection checklist.

Over 4,000 lateral flow tests and home test kits had been issued to employees and students who were able to undertake two home test kits per week over a three week period. Members noted it had been challenging to introduce on such a vast scale and Head of Health and Safety acknowledged the support of the volunteers, and support and hard work of the Estates, Facilities Site Services and IT Teams.

Mike Kapur reflected on a discussion that had been raised at the Audit Committee in respect of formally testing unintended consequences through impact assessments before decisions are made.

Mike's comments were noted, but reference was made to the Decision Making Policy and it was explained impact assessments were undertaken as a matter of course, but perhaps needed to be more formalised.

Alan Brady, the Standards Committee Chair, questioned the attendance rate at the lateral flow testing. He noted at Standards Committee a 40-50% rate had been mentioned. It was advised that 4,000 students attended over the three days, although this dropped down a little by day three.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that there had been later requests for home test kits and these had been provided.

46/20-21 REPORT FROM THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 MARCH 2021

The Committee Chair asked how the new routine was working now more students were back on site. The Deputy Chief Executive explained students were engaged and the focus was now on working towards the teacher assessed grades.

Questions were raised by the Committee Chair with regard to teacher assessed grades. The Deputy Chief Executive referred to the KPIs. Attendance prior to Christmas had been high, but had dropped. The team were disappointed and hoped to see an improvement with students' return to site. Some students and parents were questioning the value in light of teacher assessed grades and the College were trying to re-engage those students who may have turned off.

Governors referred to the 'Catch-up Fund' and asked who was providing the additional support. The Vice Principal explained new members of staff had been recruited provide English, maths and vocational support, alongside some digital support for those who aren't confident with accessing the online delivery/information.

The Chair of the Standards Committee presented the report from the meeting held on 4 March 2021, summarising committee business.

Progress reports had been provided by the Director of Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement and the Vice Principal – Curriculum.

The Committee had received an comprehensive presentation on the swift move to online learning at the beginning of the first lockdown and the concept of regular CPD.

The Business Planning timeline was shared, alongside an update on the JWC Local Board – which had provided valuable insight from a range of students.

The Students' Union had joined the meeting and provided an overview of the enrichment work which had happened during lockdown and the case study for the AoC of their exemplar best practice, which had been shared at the AoC Annual Conference.

A discussion had taken place on the summer assessments with further information to be shared at the next Standards Committee meeting. As information was received it was being shared with students and parents.

46/20-21 REPORT FROM THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMIC BOARD HELD ON 4 MARCH 2021

The Chair of the Higher Education Academic Board provided an overview of Committee activity following the meeting on 4 March 2021.

The Committee received a summary of the key strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the provision.

A performance report was shared at the meeting and it had been noted there was a decline on applications from the prior year, which was discussed. This could be due to the impact of Covid-19 affecting many employers that send students to the College.

However, an increasing number of students were applying for the College through UCAS. The College had also shared its approach to building internal progression from Level 3 to the HE offer.

Overall attendance was good at 94%.

The Access and Participation Plan was discussed, as was partnership performance and the KPIs were shared.

A letter from the Secretary of State for Education relating to Academic Freedom was presented, along with the College's response.

The CFO had provided a summary on the financial performance which, included an overview of the curriculum planning process for the next academic year - looking at staff utilisation and remission breakdown for HE provision.

The key risks were highlighted, with the new and emerging risks relating to Covid-19 and the number of OFS consultations. It was noted this is also presented at the Audit Committee.

Discussions also related to some of the key policy drivers, such as the OFS's response to the Auger Review, TEF, Quality Standard and Free Speech.

The Committee were asked to approve a No Detriment Approach to awards by the Open University, which they approved.

47/20-21 **VERBAL REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 MARCH 2021**

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented a verbal report on the key business discussed at the meeting held on 16 March 2021.

ICCA, the Internal Auditors had presented their reports. They provided an overall substantial assurance conclusion on the Strategy Business Planning Process, with no recommendations. They had commented it was the most sophisticated process they had seen.

The other report on Capital Strategy provided substantial assurance with one recommendation.

There had been little to report on External Audit, although a key change was that going concern would be looked at as part of the planning process rather than at the end of the Audit.

Discussions took place in the confidential session with regard to the External auditors contract extension and it was recommended to extend for a further year, at which point a tender exercise will need to take place.

APPROVED: The Corporation approved the extension of the External Auditors for a further year.

Data Protection Report was shared under the confidential session and the Committee were pleased to note a number of measures were being introduced to minimise breaches. Committee members had been pleased to note there was a culture of open and honest reporting.

48/20-21 **STRATEGIC RISK REPORT**

Members received the Strategic Risk Monitoring Report which provided an update on high **level** risks identified on the Risk Register and a summary of current litigation being taken against the Group. This had been reviewed in detail at the Audit Committee meeting, along with the Higher Education Risk Register,

The Corporation Chair highlighted discussions, following questions submitted in advance of the meeting by Stuart Ellis, with regard to mitigation of risks. This matter had been discussed in detail with the CEO, during an earlier meeting. The CEO reiterated the rationale for some of the risks remaining in the 'very high' category following mitigation; specifically, the ongoing risk relating to Covid-19 and the potential impact on students, staff and financial performance.

Stuart had also questioned if there was any other support the Board could offer the management team in terms of safeguarding support. It was noted that DCG was a large college with a cohort from diverse backgrounds with varying support needs, wider societal issues brought about by Covid-19 had impacted the support required. However, the Safeguarding Link Governor had oversight at both the regular Safeguarding meeting and monthly 1-1 meetings and the ongoing

acknowledgement from the Board on the resource required was welcomed.

49/20-21 **FURTHER EDUCATION COMMISSIONER'S LETTER DATED 22 FEBRUARY 2021**

The Corporation Chair discussed the Further Education Commissioner's letter dated 22 February.

The letter acknowledged the challenges to colleges over the past 11 months and their continued response to the pandemic in the form of online teaching, learning, support to vulnerable students and keyworkers, alongside managing the complexities of exams and assessments.

The letter shared the revised FE Commissioner financial benchmarks which come into effect from February 2021 and explained these would be used for Diagnostic Assessments, intervention and stocktake visits.

The challenge to revise the benchmarks mid-year was noted, with a budget and financial plan set a year ago.

50/20-21 **SKILLS FOR JOBS PRESENTATION**

The Clerk delivered a presentation on the key headlines of the Skills for Jobs White Paper.

It was noted that once further specific information of government reform was available, this could be discussed strategically in more detail.

51/20-21 **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Key Performance Indicators.

She was disappointed by attendance, which was sitting at just below 90% and in contrast with that at the beginning of the academic year. As discussed earlier it was noted some students were turning off as a result of the Government announcement in relation to the awarding of grades.

Sue Bradley said the College had the evidence to demonstrate they were doing everything possible. It was an unusual situation and she could empathise why the students would be demotivated.

The financial KPIs would be discussed in the confidential session by the CFO.

Part 1 of the meeting finished at 6.10 pm - Staff and Student Governors left the meeting.

Signed: _____ Date: _____