

**MINUTES OF THE NORTH EAST SURREY  
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY FURTHER  
EDUCATION CORPORATION HELD ON  
FRIDAY 09 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 09.00,  
SKILLS PARK BOARD ROOM**

<b>PRESENT*</b>	<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>
Professor Sam Luke (Chair) Peter Stamps (Vice Chair) Frances Rutter (CE & Principal) Gloria Ozolua Lynne Reddick Catherine Biscoe Margaret Martin Graeme Hodge (Support Staff Governor) Jamie Roberts (Teaching Staff Governor) Maureen Kilminster Alexandra Cartmell <sup>1</sup> (Student Governor - HE) Kieran Sainsbury (Student Governor) - HE	Cliff Shaw (Deputy Principal) Dario Stevens (Vice Principal, Planning and Information Services) Maria Vetrone (Deputy Principal, Finance & Resources) Donna Patterson (Director of HR) Fred Carter (Vice Principal, Curriculum)  David Round (Clerk to the Corporation)

\* Attendance at the meeting = 75%

<b>31.17</b>	<b>CHAIR'S REPORT</b>
<p>The Chair advised the Board of the decision of Ms Catherine Biscoe to step down from the Governing Body following the next meeting of the Audit Committee. He expressed his personal thanks and that of all Members to Catherine for her commitment and service and also for the excellent work she had done for the College as a governor, member of the Audit Committee and latterly, Chair of the Audit Committee.</p> <p>It was also reported that Mr Fred Carter, Vice Principal Curriculum, was leaving the College at the end of term to take up the Principalship of a 6<sup>th</sup> form College in Sussex. Congratulations and thanks were extended to Mr Carter.</p> <p>The Chair commented on the announcement regarding the College's former Principal noting the agreement that had been entered into was in the best interests of the College.</p> <p>Following the discussion at the last meeting of the Corporation about the volume of papers, the matter had been taken up by the Search and Governance Committee.</p>	

<sup>1</sup> The HE Student Governor share voting powers; only 1 Member has voting powers at any one time.

It was proposed that the Clerk undertake a review of the delegation of matters to Corporation committees and report back (**ACTION: DR**).

**32.17** | **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Martin West, Chris Shortt, Chris Muller and Sally Pritchett.

**33.17** | **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Chair reminded Members to declare any interest that they may have in any of the items on the agenda. Frances Rutter, Professor Luke and Peter Stamps declared their interest as unremunerated directors of NBS. Maureen Kilminster noted her position as the previous Principal of Brooklands College and a trustee of Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership. Margaret Martin declared her interest as a member of Ewell Rotary Club, a trustee of Age Concern and a member of Surrey Chamber of Commerce.

**34.17** | **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2017 were approved as a correct record.

**35.17** | **MATTERS ARISING**

The matters arising report (Appendix D) from the previous minutes and other items carried forward were received and noted. Other matters of report were: -

**10.1 Principal's report** - the Principal noted that the marketing department was being restructured to improve the use of social media and the effectiveness of the website.

**36.17** | **GOVERNOR LINK VISITS: FEEDBACK**

Governors reported back on recent link visits.

**Human Resources (MM)** – The following was noted: -

1. The number of HR 'cases' was increasing (89 in the current year). This needed to be kept under review. There was a view that this reflected the management of issues arising from increased recruitment of staff to replace long-standing staff where appointments didn't work out.
2. Getting the right person in post – ideally first time - was the preferred strategy.
3. The take-up of training delivered by HR such as effective recruitment and capability and disciplinary procedures could be better and would avoid problems in the future.
4. Areas of particular teacher recruitment difficulty were construction, computing, business and English and mathematics.

5. Reflecting the changing nature of recruitment and selection, the use of social media including *LinkedIn* was an area for development.
6. The HR department was a committed and dedicated team who worked under pressure to ensure that the HR service to the College is provided to a very high standard.

The Clerk reported that Dr West had visited the Computing department. He was pleased to report that the quality assurance issues had now been addressed. Dr West would be invited to give a fuller report at the next meeting.

<b>37.17</b>	<b>SAFEGUARDING, PREVENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY<sup>2</sup></b>
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The Deputy Principal presented the Safeguarding and PREVENT update report. RAG-rated longitudinal data of cases was available to the Board, noting that there were no live red safeguarding cases at present. There were 21 amber and 55 green cases currently. All cases were reviewed weekly by the Deputy Principal together with the safeguarding team. His view was that the area was well managed and robust controls were operating. Curriculum staff were very aware of the importance of safeguarding although sometimes confusion arose about safeguarding and issues of classroom management. There was currently one live PREVENT case: the Police had confirmed that they were happy with the management of the case.

In the longer-term and subject to budget he would like to see a centralised student health and well-being centre established at the College giving it greater visibility and accessibility. Whilst effective, the service was somewhat fragmented currently and would benefit from bringing together key student welfare services. The Principal reported that she would like to create a suitable-level post to give focus to this area. This approach was welcomed by governors.

<b>38.17</b>	<b>STUDENT MATTERS</b>
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One of the student governors drew attention to issues of behaviour of male students towards female students. There was some evidence that these were not isolated incidents: details of alleged incidents in the alleyway leading to the railway stations were noted. The Principal commented that the College had a zero tolerance policy in relation to these matters and would always take appropriate action. Mutual respect between all members of the student community was a key principle. The alleyway leading to Ewell East station was however private land and College staff including members of the Security team were not covered by insurance there.

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<sup>2</sup> Standing item

The Deputy Principal undertook to explore what could be done including CCTV and signage (**ACTION: MV**).

The College commented on the College-wide campaign that all students wear their lanyards visibly whilst on College premises. Staff were required to challenge students who didn't comply.

**39.17**

**STAFF MATTERS**

Staff governors did not wish to raise any matters at this point.

**40.17**

**STRATEGIC REPORTS**

**40.1 Strategic Plan 2018-2023 Update**

The update about the review of the Strategic Plan was noted. FE and HE students had been involved in the consultation, as had College staff.

**40.2 Management Accounts December 2017**

The Deputy Principal presented the latest management accounts. She advised the Board of her concern that the College was at risk of a rapid decline in profitability, but a detailed recovery plan had been developed to mitigate the risks. The key issues highlighted were: -

7. An end-year deficit of £416k was forecast
8. Although additional income of £222k is forecast to be generated by year end, additional expenditure of £652k is also likely to be incurred.
9. The College's in-house curriculum provision was shrinking, and the curriculum areas short-falling significantly against curriculum plans, particularly in relation to self-paying learners in FE, HE and full cost courses.
10. The College's participation in the LGPS was no longer affordable.
11. The College had no more provisions in the balance sheet for release to assist in managing any shortfalls in operating revenues.
12. Pay savings of £300k (sessional staffing) had been identified.

13. There was an emerging risk associated with the partnership with ASTM. The Deputy Principal Curriculum had visited the College and he assessed the risk as 'low' red. ASTM contributed a forecast net contribution to the College of £473k. There were, however, risks in terms of student progression although attendance was high and the team there were confident of successful delivery. It was not a matter of missing students and indeed the work at the campus there was highly valuable in terms of social impact and provided a very good model of practice if the quality concerns could be addressed.

Governors expressed their disappointment at this emerging risk. MK had previously voiced her concern about the level of sub-contracting but was advised that it was being well-managed. The quality issues were of the greatest concern. Did it mean that the College did not have effective monitoring procedures in place? The College commented that it believed it was managing the risk properly but it was only right to warn the Board of the potential risks. The Principal emphasised that the Oldham campus team took the risks very seriously as did the College. New appointments in Oldham were being made to strengthen the management of curriculum quality. It was pointed out that this was not a sub-contract arrangement but a direct-delivery partnership.

The Chair commented that quite properly the Board had been advised of the risk, had received assurances that mitigating actions were in place and that the risk was being managed. Close scrutiny and reporting to the Board was clearly essential going forward. The Deputy Principal (Finance) advised that the increased level of risk would be addressed through increased granularity of the reporting of this partnership in future management accounts **(ACTION: MV)**.

Other matters of note in the accounts were: -

14. Details of the recovery plan were included which included freezing posts, making significant savings in non-pay expenditure and generating additional income. If delivered, a balanced budget could still be realised this year.

15. Pay expenditure was 66.3% of income which was at sector benchmark; however, the FE Commissioner advised that 60% was required for longer-term sustainability.
16. The College's Balance Sheet remained very strong, particularly compared to other colleges. The cash position remained healthy and the College retained its ESFA financial health status of outstanding. This is because it has no borrowings despite the potential deficit position.
17. The target of 3% surplus in the Finance strategy will not be achieved this year.
18. Income shortfalls had occurred in: (i) curriculum delivery against the curriculum plan; (ii) shortfalls in cost recovery income for 'Innovations' Hair and Beauty salon, although it was noted that revenue was up 50% compared to last year; (iii) booking for the sports grounds because the pavilion was now out of action.
19. It was noted that no revenues were included for Le Raj because it had not been possible to confirm the business financials for the enterprise.
20. £222k was as additional commitment in respect of LGPS interest.
21. £25k in additional security costs had been incurred.
22. Performance against sector KPIs were comparatively positive but still unsatisfactory i.e. (i) the target for surplus income would not be achieved; (ii) staff costs as a percentage of income were at benchmark but below the FE Commissioner's target; (iii) cash days in hand were positive; (iv) there were nil borrowings; and (iv) the financial health score remained at the target of 'outstanding'.

Staff governors made the following comments: -

23. The transparency and detail provided in financial reports was welcomed.
24. The decision to locate the corporation conference at the College this year was the correct one.
25. The College was entering a critical period and sound decision-making was required.
26. All unnecessary expenditure should be avoided. It was therefore to be regretted that 3 members of staff had attended the World Skills event in Abu Dhabi.

<p><b>40.3 Corporation KPIs</b></p> <p><b>40.4 Growth Committee update</b></p>	<p>27. Staff will buy-into the strategy of expenditure constraint if the quality of the student experience is protected.</p> <p>28. Are the new commercial ventures being managed with the same degree of rigour as core college activities?</p> <p>29. The CPD budget for the updating of professional skills should be safeguarded.</p> <p>The Principal thanked staff governors for the honesty of their comments and undertook to reflect on them carefully. She agreed that the CPD budget should be protected wherever possible. She also noted the comments regarding World Skills and accepted the point being made which would be taken on board in future. The Chair noted that we needed to be at events such as World Skills to increase our profile.</p> <p>She also commented that there had to be a big drive to increase income not just this but in the longer-term for the future viability of the College.</p> <p>Student governors urged the College to make greater use of students to promote the College through visits to schools, posts on social media etc. Students were powerful advocates for the College and could counter anti-FE prejudice in schools. The Principal commented that she wanted to build strong relationships with local schools and a number of secondary head teachers had visited the College recently and were positive about NESCOL. We need to tell people more about what we do. Other governors noted the value in inviting junior schools into the College as a way of building longer-term positive perceptions.</p> <p>Gloria Ozolua left the meeting at this point (11.10)</p> <p>The KPIs as at December 2017 were noted</p> <p>A stock-take report from the work of Growth Committee took a broad view of existing commercial enterprises and other opportunities. Specialist expertise had been brought in as necessary. There were some fundamental design flaws with the siting of certain facilities e.g. the motor vehicle centre and valeting centre. The work had also identified opportunities that would require a review of existing policies e.g. in relation to the use of NESTOTS which had been designed as a service for students and staff rather than a commercial enterprise.</p>
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41.17	CURRICULUM REPORTS
<p><b>41.1 Deputy Principal's Curriculum report</b></p>	<p>The Deputy Principal presented his curriculum report which provided an assessment for governors of where the College stood in terms of the quality in teaching, learning and assessment and also Ofsted readiness. His report made the following observations: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30. Performance management was an area for development.</li> <li>31. The intensive care process for at risk courses appeared to be working.</li> <li>32. Safeguarding at the College was strong.</li> <li>33. He was doing work with curriculum teams to prepare for Ofsted inspection. Role play was an effective tool to develop teams' confidence and effectiveness in meetings with inspectors.</li> <li>34. He would be presenting an update to the SAR to the next meeting of Curriculum and Quality Committee (C&amp;Q) for consideration. His view was that the College was under-stating its leadership and management performance and he would be pushing for this to be grade 2 'Good' rather than requiring improvement.</li> <li>35. The College could have another 2 day inspection. Inspectors had a short amount of time to establish evidence that the College is no longer a grade 2 'Good' college. It was possible that a full inspection could take place but it was his experience that a minority of previously Good colleges had a full inspection, although this was dependent upon Ofsted's risk assessment. One of those risk factors was the appointment of a new Principal.</li> <li>36. There is a particular focus on sub-contracted provision: how is the provision managed; why is the College sub-contracting the provision? Sub-contracted provision should be different provision from that offered at the College and meet specific unmet need?</li> <li>37. The use of position papers is an effective mechanism to present well-reasoned responses to areas of investigation in an inspection. They should be prepared in advance.</li> </ul>

**41.2 English and Maths Progress update**

- 38. College finances is not normally an area of focus in an inspection unless it is impacting upon the student experience. This could be the case in a College that has high levels of leverage which is impacting upon curriculum budgets. NESOT had no borrowings at present.
- 39. Discussions by inspectors with governors will concern curriculum and not just finance and estates.

The Deputy Principal's report was noted.

An update report on progress in the delivery of English and Mathematics courses was presented by the Vice Principal, Curriculum. It was noted that: -

- 40. Both areas now had Heads of Department which was giving greater stability in curriculum leadership than in recent times.
- 41. The pilot in Animal Studies basing the delivery of English and mathematics in the vocational area was continuing. It was too early to say whether this was successful.
- 42. A dedicated Student Attendance Monitor (SAM) had been appointed for mathematics as historically it had been more difficult to get high levels of attendance. Attendance in English was 80% and 78% in mathematics (the College target was 80%).
- 43. 23 students are on final warning for poor attendance at English and mathematics classes; parents have received formal letters from the College.
- 44. Teaching and learning sets have been established to share best practice across teams.
- 45. Regular learning walks and observations of teaching and learning are taking place to formalise key strengths and areas for improvement which are linked to directed CPD
- 46. Work is taking place to encourage students to take greater ownership of their learning and teacher are actively encouraging the use of growth mind set techniques to help students overcome blockages in their understanding of key concepts. The impact of these initiatives were as yet unproven.
- 47. Teaching assistant support is in place to support curriculum delivery.

	<p>48. Initial assessment of students' skills was being reviewed and would take place at enrolment rather than after term had started.</p> <p>49. RAG ratings have been completed for all learners and have been updated using the mock exams and assessment results as a basis for predicting outcomes.</p> <p>50. Work is ongoing to develop vocational teachers' capacity to support English and mathematics delivery in students' main vocational areas – the March CPD day will be focusing on this. Staff training is arranged for vocational teachers on the new 9-1 curriculum. Teaching topics are shared with vocational teachers.</p> <p>Comments made in discussion by the Board noted that teachers needed to be supported to 'own' their professional development and that short CPD inputs alone provided by the College would not achieve the required outcomes. CPD needed to be continuous. In response to questions it was confirmed that attendance at CPD days was compulsory and was monitored. Small practical steps could be taken by vocational teachers to support students' skills development, for example through emphasis on punctuation, spelling and grammar in all written work. Students only had 3 hours' of teaching in these subject and a whole-college approach to skills development was essential.</p>
<b>42.17</b>	<b>DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR CORPORATION CONFERENCE 23-24 MARCH</b>
The draft programme for the Corporation conference to be held at the Skills Park on Friday 23 and Saturday 24 March was noted.	
<b>43.17</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT OF THE COLLEGE'S EXTERNAL AUDITORS</b>
Following a competitive tendering process it was <b>RESOLVED</b> that MHA be appointed as the College's External Auditors for a period of 4 years.	
<b>44.17</b>	<b>FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS</b>
23-24 March 09.00 Corporation Conference and Board Meeting.	
<b>45.17</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>

It was reported that Search and Governance Committee met the previous evening and considered the application of a potential governor, Mr Kabir Shaikh CBE. He had a long and distinguished record in education leadership and management occupying senior positions in schools, local authorities and UNESCO. He was also a member of the Board of a university in the south of the country.

**RESOLVED:** that Mr Kabir Shaikh be appointed as an external governor for an initial period of two years.

It was also proposed to make a number of changes to Committee membership to take account of the departure of Catherine Biscoe as governor and Chair of Audit Committee: -

- Dr Martin West be appointed Chair of the Audit Committee and steps down from F&GP with effect from 01 April 2018;
- Peter Stamps be re-appointed Chair of F&GP and steps down from the Audit Committee with effect from 01 April 2018;
- That should he be invited to join the Corporation, consideration be given to the appointment of Mr Kalbir Singh to an appropriate Committee; and
- Steps be taken to recruit a qualified auditor to join the Audit Committee either as a full member of the Corporation or as a co-opted member (it is noted that Maureen Kilminster sits on both C&Q and Audit Committees currently).

There was no further business.

**46.17**

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

A record of the discussion of confidential matters is lodged in the confidential minute book.

Signed .....

Date .....

**Professor Sam Luke, Chair of the Corporation**

Author	David Round
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