

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2020 9:00am

Present:

Chris Brown	External Governor	Chair
Andrew Wolfe	External Governor	
Dawn Whitemore	Principal	
Jane Wilson	External Governor	
Matt Humphrey	External Governor	
Miles Brown	External Governor	
Mark Walker	Staff Governor	
Lorraine Smalley	Staff Governor	
Bob Kelly	External Governor	
Maddie Kennedy	External Governor	
Jenny Shackleton	External Governor	
Geoff Guy	Staff Governor	

In attendance:

Catherine Duro	Vice Principal Corporate Services	Interim Clerk
Lisa Craddock	Vice Principal Business Development	
Simon Kibble	Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality	
Vanessa Scales	Vice Principal Human Resources & Organisational Development	
Sylvia Royle	Vice Principal Resources	

Apologies for Absence

99 Apologies for absence were received from; Josie Fraser, Joanna Harrold, Simon Ashworth and Peter Jordan

Declarations of Interest

100 No declarations of interest were received beyond the standing register of interest.

STRATEGY – COVID-19 RESPONSE

Principal's update

101 The Principal **thanked** the executive team for their very hard work during challenging times and gave particular mention to the IT and estates team who had been amazing in their diligent and professional approach and hard work to keep the college working as it moved into lockdown.

102 The Principal began by highlighting for the board the likelihood that Covid 19 will take away many of the opportunities of merger, but others would remain possible.

103 The executive's current understanding of the impact of Covid-19 on income, particularly commercial activity and the levy was detailed.

104 The implementation of the furlough scheme was discussed and the board assured that funding body and legal advice had been taken on this matter.

105 The continuation of the management restructure, made necessary by merger not Covid 19 was explained and supported.

106 Governors **sought assurance** that commercial activity would only recommence when it would make a positive contributions. It was **assured** that this was the executive's intention. The possibility of franchising some commercial activity was also discussed.

107 A governor **asked** if staff on furlough could be encouraged to take holiday and thus be ready to work when possible. The Board was **assured** that this was the preferred situation and advice was being sought.

Sale of the Spinney

108 A detailed background to the sale of the spinney was shared so that all governors were fully informed.

109 The sales strategy was shared and a **robust discussion** followed on the risks and challenges of selling at the current time. The alternative approaches to securing a sale were detailed.

110 The anticipated net value was shared. The importance of securing the 'right price' for the college was agreed. The value and liability of the asset were discussed and all agreed the possibility of not selling should remain an option.

111 **Resolved** that the sales strategy be approved and an update be brought to the Board once offers were received.

112 The Board received an update on the King Street site, the sale of which was now detached from the sale of spinney but a commitment to sell it for positive use remained in place.

113 The Board **understood** that a holistic approach was needed to protect the college's interest and support the wider community

Finance Update

114 The financial impact of Covid 19 was explained to the Board with detailed, illustrated narrative, the reasoning behind the estimates was explained and the actions taken and to be taken detailed. The potential impact on the bottom line was explained with the underlying assumptions.

115 The reduction in commercial income, for example the theatre being closed and weddings postponed was discussed.

116 A governor asked if there was a potential risk of redundancies as a result of the Covid impact. The Board was assured that the Covid recovery plan would be worked through and the staffing structure would be considered as part of this, redundancies were considered to be highly likely due to the significant financial impact. The potential need for smaller class sizes and therefore additional staff was also discussed.

117 The capital expenditure budget was detailed with potential variations to the items needed, to ensure a safe reopening of the campuses discussed.

118 A governor **reflected** that the report could be depressing but demonstrated that significant thought and hard work was underway which was encouraging. It was **recognised** that the group was in survival mode and should prioritise cash protection to protect the future of the organisation.

Management Accounts

119 The management accounts reporting on the position to the end of February were received.

120 It was acknowledged that whilst the financial forecasts were now out of date these accounts did illustrate the strong pre-covid starting point the group had achieved.

121 As these were the first set of accounts for the SMB Group, the format was discussed and feedback was given, governors were asked to feedback to SR if they had any additional requirements to aid understanding. The Corporation appreciated the detailed approach.

Human Resources Update

122 The Board **received** an update on the human resources management activity underway, including furloughing, union consultations and restructuring.

123 There was a **robust discussion** around the implementation, impact and management of the furloughing scheme. The Board was assured that legal advice had been taken and the group was working to protect colleagues as far as possible. The unions were also being consulted.

124 A governor **asked** what would happen if furloughed colleagues became at risk of redundancy, the Board was informed that normal processes and meaningful consultations would apply.

125 The post-merger management restructure was discussed in more detail. The Board was given assurance that trade unions were being consulted and meaningful individual consultations were envisaged using the technology available to us.

Quality and Curriculum Update

126 A significant amount of information was shared with the Board regarding the different groups of learners and the best known position at that point in lock down.

127 The Board was **informed** that there were around 26% consistently not engaging and student services were working to contact these students. The interventions with vulnerable learners were detailed. The Board was **advised** that our engagement levels were in-line with those being reported by other colleges.

128 The Board was **assured** that safeguarding of learners remained a priority and weekly reports were being provided by the student services managers with any issues escalated as they arose.

129 The revising of schemes of work, timetabling and class sizes for post covid reopening were all discussed and the board **assured** that these were being reviewed and developed.

130 A governor praised the work done in such a short period of unprecedented change. The Board was reassured by the human approach being taken to teaching and learning beyond the systems and encouraging learners.

131 A governor asked how qualifications would be awarded. The Board was informed that each awarding body was determining their own approach and that caution was necessary, particularly where the qualification was a license to practice. It was too early to know the detail of each qualification but dialogue was open with the 20 awarding bodies the group works with.

132 The impact on apprentice End Point Assessments was also recognised and discussed. The number affected and the interventions were being worked through and update would be provided to the Quality and Standards Committee.

Business Development

133 The Business development report was received and the Board were assured that all areas had been investigated and evaluated in detail. Where possible, activity was being adapted to be provided virtually; including college open days and live chats with lecturers.

134 The potential upturn in study programme learners if employer recruitment of apprentices decreased was discussed and is being monitored.

Risk Management

135 The revised risk register was presented and discussed. Questions were invited.

136 **Resolved** that the risk register be approved and reviewed on an ongoing basis by the executive team.

POLICIES

Safeguarding Annex

137 The safeguarding annex was shared with the Corporation. It was the DFE recommended document which had been published at the start of the Easter break to ensure an appropriate policy was in place to cover the lockdown period.

138 The Board was advised the NWLDC were offering support to keep learners safe if needed.

138 The Board **ratified** the executive decision to publish the safeguarding annex and agreed this should be followed alongside the previously approved safeguarding policy.

139 A governor **asked** for the sponsor to be given an update on the impact of Covid 19 on the studio school at the next meeting. **(Action)**

Date of Next Meeting

140 The next meeting will take place at 10.00am on Wednesday 20th May 2020,