



**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER 2020 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:

Lillian Croston	Chair
Paul Levelt	Vice Chair
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Mark Allanson	Member
Geoff Disley	Academic Staff Governor
Paul Fleming	Member
Michael Lee	Business Support Staff Governor
Paul Morris	Member
Glenys Pashley-Crawford	Member
Roger Spensley	Member
Brooklyn Spiers	FE Student Governor

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jennifer Eastham	Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
Nicola Clayton	Director: Business Development and External Engagement
Jean Tracy	Clerk to the Corporation

The meeting started at 2:00pm and was quorate.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Professor Waqar Ahmed, Kerry Baron, Catherine Hill OBE, Chris Johnson, Kathryn Lord, Shru Morris, Arif Patel and Steve Waggott.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair advised those in attendance that should members of the Corporation Board become aware of any potential conflicts of interest, they should be disclosed at the earliest opportunity during the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2020

The minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 16 October 2020 were **ACCEPTED** as a true and accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

It was noted that since the agenda had been circulated the actions in relation to the HR Annual Report and the HE Report – OfS Initial and Ongoing Conditions of Registration Update had also been actioned. There were no other matters arising, the Board having noted the status of actions from the previous meeting.

5. APPOINTMENT OF HE AND FE STUDENT GOVERNORS

The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of the Student Governors, namely:

- Kerry Baron – as HE Student Governor and member of Learning and Quality Committee
- Brooklyn Spiers – as FE Student Governor and member of Audit Committee

The term of office of both would be until 30 November 2021, or earlier were they no longer to be a student at the College.

The Board welcomed the HE and FE Student Governors, noting the reason why the HE Student Governor had been unable to attend the meeting.

6. (i) CORPORATION BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Board considered the draft Corporation Board Self-Assessment Report, noting the Chair's comments that whilst Grade 2 was being proposed at this time, the Board would look to achieve Grade 1 in the future. The Self-Assessment Report had been considered previously by the Governance Panel and had been amended to take into account the comments raised.

The Chair commented that, whilst acknowledging that Board members were volunteers, attendance at Board and Committee meetings could, in some cases, be improved. The Board was informed of the actions which had already taken place and the reasons for absence in particular cases was noted and accepted.

The Board **APPROVED** the Corporation Board Self-Assessment Report 2019/20.

(ii) APPOINTMENT OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY GOVERNOR CHAMPION

The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Arif Patel as the Equality and Diversity Governor Champion.

7. (i) REGULARITY AUDIT 2020 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The Board noted the requirement to make a statement on regularity, propriety and compliance with the annual financial statements and that the Regularity Audit 2020 - Self-Assessment Questionnaire had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 22 September 2020.

In answer to a question from a member of the Board, the Principal and Chief Executive confirmed that, as per the commentary in the self-assessment questionnaire, a complaints policy/procedure was in place, that complaints were recorded in the Quality department and that appropriate investigations would take place. A report would be presented to the College Management Team, to Academic Board and also to Learning and Quality Committee.

Having considered the Report and noting the recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Board **APPROVED** the Regularity Audit 2020 Self-Assessment Questionnaire and noted that a copy signed by the Chair of the Corporation Board and Principal and Chief Executive would be sent to BDO, the College External Auditor.

(ii) RSM INTERNAL AUDITORS – ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

The Board noted that the report had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 22 September 2020. The Board considered the Report and the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that the College had an adequate and effective framework in place for risk management, governance and internal controls, and that the rating was the second highest out of four possible grades. The Board congratulated the College on the assurance levels and outcomes of the internal audit assignments as detailed in the Annual

Report. The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that actions were in place to complete the recommendations relating to the Progress Observations Framework and Sickness Management Framework

The Board noted the recommendation of the Audit Committee and **APPROVED** the Annual Internal Audit Report and Opinion – Year ended 31 July 2020.

(iii) BDO EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT ON FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2019/20

The BDO External Audit Report on the Financial Statements for 2019/20 was received and it was noted that Audit Committee had also considered the Report at its meeting on 17 November 2020.

Members were advised that the College's External Audit Provider, BDO was contracted to provide the External Audit of the Annual Report and Financial Statements on the year ends 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 and had carried out their work for the year ended 2019/20. The College had received an 'unmodified' Audit Opinion with no recommendations and no adjustments.

The Board noted the detail on the significant risks as identified by BDO and in particular the commentary in relation to going concern, where the reporting of no significant issues was subject to receipt of the formal notification from Santander (since received) that the net assets covenant was withdrawn. A member of the Board commented on the fluctuations in pension liabilities and on the risk to the College.

The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the BDO External Audit Report on Financial Statements 2019/20 together with the Relation Party Transactions disclosure as included in the External Audit Report. The External Audit Report on Financial Statements 2019/20 would be submitted to the ESFA.

8. (i) CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

The proposed Conflict of Interest Policy had been drawn up in line with best practice and had been considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 30 November 2020.

On the recommendation of Policy and Resources Committee, the Board **APPROVED** the Conflict of Interest Policy.

(ii) ANNUAL REVIEW OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Annual Review of the Accounting Policies which had been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2015 (the 2015 FE HE SORP), the College Accounts Direction for 2019 to 2020 and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102). The Report had been previously considered and approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 30 November 2020.

The Board was reminded that the Accounting Policies were used in the preparation of the accounts and formed part of the Year End Annual Report and Financial Statements.

It was reported that there were no new accounting standards that would require any change to the Accounting Policies previously adopted by the College. Some external changes, introduced by the Office for Students were detailed in the Report and noted by the Board.

The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Accounting Policies 2019/20 as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee.

(iii) FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Biennial Review of the Financial Regulations, noting that these had been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 30 November 2020.

The Board was advised that the Financial Regulations reflect changes to the Financial Memorandum issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The Financial Memorandum set out the roles and responsibilities of the Accounting Officer and the Governing Body.

A review of other source documents had also taken place to determine whether others changes were necessary to the Financial Regulations, namely the Accounts Direction: the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice: and the Terms of Reference for the Corporation Board and its Committees. The review of these resulted in only minor changes to the Financial Regulations and were as highlighted in the Appendix.

The Board noted the proposed amendments in 10.2 and 10.5 whereby all capital building projects over £100,000 were to be presented to Policy and Resources Committee for prior approval and monitoring.

The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the updates to the Financial Regulations as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee.

(iv) FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented a Report that provided a review of performance against the Financial Objectives for 2019/20. The Board considered the commentary on the performance against each of the objectives and also noted that the Financial Objectives remained fit for purpose and thus no amendments were proposed for 2020/21.

The Board **APPROVED** the performance against the Financial Objectives for 2019/20 and the Financial Objectives for 2020/21.

(v) FINAL MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS 2019/20 INCLUDING FINAL UPDATE AGAINST BUDGET FOR 2019/20

The Board received the Final Management Accounts which provided an update on the year-end 31 July 2020 financial results of the College and noted that the Report had been considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 30 November 2020.

Key headline data was included in the Report. The operating deficit position was noted, and that given the challenges of recruitment, Covid-19 and pension charges, this compared well to the budget, reforecasts and out-turn presented to governors through the academic year. The ESFA financial health auto-scored as 'Outstanding' for 2019/20, better than the forecast 'Good' and the College had met all three of the FE Commissioner's metrics. The Board noted the position in relation to the loan covenants and the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that the letter from Santander confirming the removal of the loan covenant re net assets had now been received by the College.

The College was congratulated on the excellent results, particularly in the current situation.

The Board **APPROVED** the Final Management Accounts for 2019/20 as recommended by Policy and Resources Committee.

(vi) YEAR-END ACCOUNTS 2019/20

The Board received the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2020. The accounts delivered financial health as 'Outstanding' and met all three FE Commissioner's measures. As reported in the previous agenda item, the Board noted the position in relation to the loan covenants and the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that the letter from Santander confirming the removal of the loan covenant re net assets had now been received by the College.

The Board noted the recommendation of Policy and Resources Committee and **APPROVED** the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2019/20. The final audited version was signed by the Chair of the Corporation Board and Principal and Chief Executive and would be forwarded to the ESFA and uploaded on the College web site.

(vii) MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – 31 OCTOBER 2020

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Management Accounts up to the period ending 31 October 2020, these having been considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 30 November 2020.

Performance against income targets was included in the Report which also included information on pay and non-pay costs, contributions analysis and Balance Sheet and Cash.

In answer to questions from the Board, the College confirmed that HE income was spread over the year and that commercial income was likely to be affected by the work-from-home guidelines.

The Board **APPROVED** the Management Accounts for the period ending 31 October 2020 as recommended by Policy and Resources Committee.

(viii) POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Having considered the proposed change, the Board **APPROVED** the amendment to Policy and Resources Committee's Terms of Reference as per the paper.

8a. ESFA FINANCE RECORD FOR COLLEGES

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that the template for the report had not been released until the week before the Board meeting and hence the delay in circulating the paper.

It was confirmed that the 2019/20 actuals were as the Financial Statement/Management Accounts which had been approved earlier in the meeting. The 202/21 forecast was the budget for 2020/21, as approved by the Board at its meeting in July 2020 with only minor changes as detailed in the Report cover sheet.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services for the work which had been undertaken in producing the Finance Record.

The Board **APPROVED** the Finance Record for submission to the ESFA.

9. (i) COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2019/20

The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) had been considered at Learning and Quality Committee and the Committee's feedback had been incorporated in the SAR. The Board noted that the draft SAR had also been through a two-day external validation process.

The Principal and Chief Executive noted the improvements which had been made but that there was still a need to consolidate this position and to make further improvements, including value added and in some areas of teaching and learning. He noted that staff were on board and were working very hard to ensure students got the best possible education at the College.

The overall Grade 2 was noted, together with the individual Education Inspection Framework (EIF) self-assessed grades and the curriculum areas' validated individual grades.

The Chair of Learning and Quality Committee confirmed that the Committee had looked at the SAR and had taken comfort that it had been externally verified. The Committee had also looked at the impact of the Centre Assessed Grades and were happy that the grading had been done in a tested and scrutinised way and reflected the students' work. He felt that the SAR was good, that it had forward momentum and was well written against the framework.

The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Self-Assessment Report 2019/20.

(ii) FE COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020/21

The Board was informed that the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) had been validated both by Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 1 October 2020 and externally as part of the two-day SAR validation exercise on 16/17 November 2020. The QIP reflected the distance travelled by the College across the majority of its provision and was thus shorter and more focussed than previously.

The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the College Quality Improvement Plan 2020/21.

(iii) ACADEMIC BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

The Report was designed to be primarily analytical rather than narrative. It therefore concentrated on the discharge of Academic Board's duties as laid out in its terms of reference, on significant issues that had emerged during 2019/20 and on future developments. It was noted that in the Principal and Chief Executive's absence, Academic Board would be chaired by one of the three Assistant Principals.

The Corporation Board noted and **APPROVED** the Academic Board Annual Report for 2019/20.

(iv) STUDENT VOICE COMMITTEE AND LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Having considered the proposed changes, the Board **APPROVED** the Student Voice Committee Terms of Reference and amendments to Learning and Quality Committee's Terms of Reference as per the paper.

10. (i) REMUNERATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

As required under the College's Senior Staff Remuneration Code, the Remuneration Committee Annual Report 2019/20 had been prepared and had been considered by Remuneration Committee at its meeting on 30 November 2020. Corporation Board noted that the Annual Report was intended to provide assurance to the Board that the Remuneration Committee had effectively discharged its responsibilities.

Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Annual Report of the Remuneration Committee 2019/20.

11. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair commented that staff had worked tremendously hard during the Autumn term, noting the additional work involved by the pandemic. The closure of St Mary's College was noted and that the College was progressing its plans for an extension to the Sixth Form Centre, including the appointment of a Head of Sixth Form. The Chair congratulated the Principal and Chief Executive and all College staff on the academic progress now evident. Attendance at a number of Quality Summit meetings had been useful and were very demanding of staff involved. The Chair thanked the other Governors who had also attended Quality Summit meetings.

The Chair also thanked the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services and all finance staff for their work, noting the positive comments from the external auditors.

The Chair reminded the Board of the virtual visit on Thursday 17 December 2020 by the FE Commissioner's Team; an update on which would be provided in due course.

12. REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Principal and Chief Executive thanked the Chair for her comments, noting that all staff had pulled together over the last academic year and that the College was working to improve HE outcomes. He also apologised formally for the change of dates of the Quality Summit meetings.

The Principal and Chief Executive then presented his Report. The overall student achievement rate in Further Education, at 90%, was the second consecutive year at this figure. The College was continuing its efforts to improve this figure still further and to be well above the national average of 86%. The College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) reflected the clear focus on improving student achievement. The Board noted the critical areas of improvement required in the vocational curriculum and on the need to further improve value added in some areas.

The Report also provided an update on the increase in the number of High Needs students and confirmed that the College appropriate systems in place to monitor progress and provide support when needed. Apprenticeships provision continued to make good progress, with a further increase in student achievement rates expected. However, because of Covid a number of apprentices had been furloughed and thus timely achievement rates were likely to be adversely affected.

The Board was reminded that an initial scoping document on HE provision had been presented to Learning and Quality Committee. A full report would be presented to Learning and Quality Committee in February 2021 and then to the Board. The appointment of a dedicated Assistant Principal in HE was expected in April 2021.

A new manager in cross-College maths and English had been appointed and initiatives had been developed in order to continue the improvements in this area of curriculum.

The Board noted the update on Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, including the introduction of the learning walk process in HE.

The Principal and Chief Executive also provided an update on "The English College of the Future" and on the 11 recommendations contained within it. The report advocated removing competition, setting up specialist colleges and consideration for Boards to adopt a group college structure. It was also noted that the White Paper, taking account of the Auger and Ney reports, was expected to be released in the new year.

The Report also provided the Board with an overview of the financial position, full details being contained in the other reports presented to the Board, and the meetings held by the Principal and Chief Executive with staff and students.

A member of the Board commented on the decline in recruitment in HE and the impact on staff morale. The Chair of Learning and Quality Committee commented on the long discussion of HE at the Committee meeting and on the need to improve the Blackburn College HE metrics if the College were to be able to continue to deliver HE, and as mentioned by the Principal and Chief Executive, on the scoping document being prepared.

The Chair, whilst understanding why some staff would want to work from home, wished to thank the Principal and Chief Executive for standing firm on the issue of staff working in College. Students at the Student Voice Committee had commented that they were glad to be back in College and to have face-to-face learning.

13. COVID-19 UPDATE: QUALITY, FINANCE AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The Report provided an update on the impact of Covid-19 on College business. As previously requested by the Board, the Report had also been considered by Learning and Quality Committee and Policy and Resources Committee at meetings held in November 2020.

The Board noted that the DfE guidelines continued to stipulate a face-to-face delivery in educational premises. Detail on the focus of the College on maintaining staff and students' safety whilst continuing to provide a high quality of education was provided and noted by the Board. This included the continued focus on the use of face coverings, social distancing and hand sanitisers and an update on the joint work with the Council and The Mall. The provision of IT equipment to support dual learning was also noted.

The Report also provided an update on the visit by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on 1 December 2020. The Board noted that the complaint to the HSE had been made by an individual and that UCU colleagues had not been aware of, nor supported, the complaint. The visit had confirmed that the College had adhered to all relevant Covid-19 guidance, with the HSE officer being complimentary of the College's approach and systems in place. No concerns or recommendations had been made following the visit.

The Board noted the information provided in the Report on the organisational impact, the financial position and the impact on recruitment of Covid-19.

The Chair thanked the Principal and Chief Executive for his Report and congratulated the College on the outcome of the HSE visit.

14. STAFF GOVERNORS' REPORT

The Academic Staff Governor presented the Report, it being noted that a number of items had been covered elsewhere on the agenda. The Report complimented the Principal and Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team on their work in relation to Covid-19. As a UCU member of the Health and Safety Committee, he had attended the meeting with the Health and Safety Executive Officer which had provided him with the opportunity to express his disappointment in the manner of the complaint and to confirm his support of the College's work in ensuring the safety of staff and students.

15. GOVERNOR CHAMPIONS' UPDATE

The attendance at relevant meetings of the Governor Champions for Careers, Health and Safety, including the Covid-dedicated meetings, and Safeguarding was noted.

16. STRATEGIC PLAN 2019/2022 – ANNUAL OPERATING STATEMENT

The Report provided the Board with the final progress for 2019/20 and an initial update regarding the progress towards the Strategic Plan targets for 2020/21. The impact of Covid-19

in 2019/20 had resulted in a number of projects not progressing as quickly as planned and thus a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had been severely affected. An explanation of each had been covered elsewhere on the agenda. The Board noted that a number of targets for 2020/21 were not yet reportable.

The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the Report on the Strategic Plan Key Performance Indicators 2019/20 and 2020/21.

17. PERFORMANCE AGAINST COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 21019/20 – FINAL

The paper listed performance against the shortened list of 23 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) monitored by the Board, it being noted that the full list had been reviewed by Policy and Resources Committee and Learning and Quality Committee.

Of the 23 KPIs, 14 were on target, 3 on target in part, 4 under target and 2 were no longer relevant. An explanation and reason for those KPIs which had not been met was provided in the Report and noted by the Board.

In answer to a question from a member of the Board, an explanation was given on the cost implications of the current room utilisation figure, these being minimal, and on the possibility of renting out rooms.

18. COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2020/21 – PROGRESS UPDATE AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2020

The Report provided the Board with information on a first progress update against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2020/21. Of the 32 KPIs, 7 were on target, 7 on target in part, 3 under target and 15 not yet reportable. An explanation on the reasons for those KPIs which had not been met was provided in the Report and considered by the Board.

The Chair requested and received further information on the apprenticeship and commercial income expected during the course of the year, it being noted that it would be a challenge to meet the targets. As a result of the actual recruitment figures to HE, the target in relation to HE income would not be met.

19. HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) REPORTS

(i) OFS INITIAL AND ONGOING CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION UPDATE

The Principal and Chief Executive presented the Report which had also been considered by Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 26 November 2020. The Report provided an update on the College's performance on its Office for Students (OfS) Improvement Plan to address student outcomes. It was noted that the Action Plan had an end of life in April 2021.

The Report included a summary of how the College was currently performing in relation to its internal targets and the OfS baseline metrics, including the direction of travel. Whilst there was evidence of positive improvements being made, the Principal and Chief Executive commented that further improvement against the national metrics must be made; the College needed to exceed these by 10% for it not to be a concern for OfS. The first semester results would provide a first measure of the work being done.

The Academic Support Staff Governor, in answer to a question from a member of the Board, confirmed that all staff in UCBC were committed to bring about the improvements needed.

(ii) ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN – ANNUAL UPDATE

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Report which informed members on compliance with Office for Students (OfS) regulations. The Access and Participation Plan covered a five-year period 2020/21 – 2024/25, and had been approved by OfS on 18 October 2019 and by the Board on 6 December 2019.

An extract from the approved Access and Participation Plan showing the targets and investment plan had been included in the paper. The Board noted that a monitoring return to the OfS detailing what activity had been undertaken in the previous year and how it compared to the Access and Participation Plan was due to be returned by 16 April 2021. The return would be brought to the March 2021 Board meeting.

Action: Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services

20. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE – 31 OCTOBER 2020

The Report provided a summary of core HE data sets for the period 1 August 2020 to 31 October 2020, and where appropriate, monitoring data against the protected characteristics as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

Headline information included College headcount, BAME and gender, disability, staff turnover, absence and sickness levels. The College Gender Pay Gap data showed a reduction in the man pay gap and an action plan to reduce the gap further was included in the appendix. The Board was informed that the national living wage had been confirmed as £9.21, the impact on the pay bands being noted.

In answer to a question from a Board member, the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that the College looked at the staff population against that of the local community and that recruitment adverts were targeted across various areas to ensure that the College was engaging with all communities.

21. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2020/21 – OCTOBER 2020

The Principal and Chief Executive presented the Report which provided a summary of the Organisational Development activity for the period 1 August 2020 to 31 October 2020 and an overview of progress to date in key development areas.

The Board welcomed the improvement in mandatory training compliance, this being 98.3% against a target of 95%, and in answer to a question raised by a Board member, noted that staff would be targeted to ensure that safeguarding training had been completed before the end of term. The Board also noted the online/blended learning Continuing Professional Development sessions and other staff performance training which had taken place. Focussed CPD activity for business support staff was being developed with the Head of Quality of Education and two Business Support area managers.

The Board noted that the pandemic had delayed the staff satisfaction survey. A new survey would be undertaken in April 2021 and would be benchmarked against other colleges.

22. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Chair approved minutes off the following Committee meetings were received for information:

- (i) Audit Committee – 17 November 2020
- (ii) Governance Panel – 9 November 2020

23. VALUE FOR MONEY REPORT

The Report updated Governors on the purchasing activities for 2019/20 and provided the priorities and objectives for cross-College procurement in 2020/21. The Board noted the information provided on the top 20 suppliers by turnover in 2019/20 and on how Value for Money was achieved.

The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the Value for Money Report 2019/20 and Priorities for 2020/21, noting that this had also be considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 30 November 2020.

24. ESFA COVID-19 – NOVEMBER 2020 FINANCIAL RETURN

The Board was informed that the ESFA had advised that an additional ‘mid-year’ return was required to check on cash flow and to receive explanations of any variances from the return which had been submitted in July 2020.

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that no concerns regarding cash were flagged and that the return, as included in the papers, had been signed off by the Principal and Chief Executive, as the Accounting Officer, and had been submitted to the ESFA on 27 November 2020.

The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the update on the ESFA Covid-19 November 2020 Financial Return.

25. SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE CHECK

The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the Report which provided the Board with a summary in relation to safeguarding arrangements. The Report had been considered by Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 26 November 2020 and confirmed that the College continued to prioritise safeguarding arrangements for students across all aspects of provision. Effective internal structures and processes supported statutory expectations and promoted positive external agency interventions.

26. STUDENTS’ UNION ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 INCLUDING ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Report provided an overview and information on the Students’ Union activities and the priorities for 2020/21. The Students’ Union accounts were also included.

The Corporation Board **RECEIVED** the Students’ Union Annual Report 2019/20 including its annual accounts for the period to 31 July 2020.

27. SUBCONTRACTING CONTRACT/ACTIVITIES

The Report provided an update on the subcontracting contract and activities. The Board noted the information provided on the ‘subcontract in’ and that as in previous years, the College was not intending to ‘subcontract out’ its ESFA funding in 2020/21.

28. FREEDOM OF SPEECH POLICY/CODE

The Board noted that the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech had been approved by written resolution on 27 March 2020 and that no amendments were being proposed at the December 2020 meeting. The Code would be reviewed and brought to the Board in December 2021, in line with requirements.

29. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Board was informed that a closure plan for St Mary’s College was being drawn up. The Principal and Chief Executive confirmed that the College would support St Mary’s College as necessary.

There were no other items of Any Other Business.

30. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair thanked College managers for their reports and Governors for their attendance and positive comments.

31. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Governors’ Strategic Seminar – Mid-Year Progress Review – Friday 12 March 2021 at 10.00am (time tbc)

Corporation Board – Friday 12 March 2021 at 2.00pm via Microsoft Teams.

Signed:

Date: