

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE 2020 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:

Lillian Croston	Chair
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Mark Allanson	Member
Geoff Disley	Academic Staff Governor
Paul Fleming	Member
Catherine Hill OBE	Member
Chris Johnson	Member
Michael Lee	Business Support Staff Governor
Glenys Pashley-Crawford	Member
Don Lennon	Member
Paul Levet	Vice Chair
Paul Morris	Member
Shru Morris	Member
Arif Patel	Member
Roger Spensley	Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jennifer Eastham	Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
Jean Tracy	Clerk to the Corporation
Caroline Wilson	Note-taker

It was noted that the meeting commenced at 16:37 and was quorate. Glenys Pashley-Crawford, Paul Morris, Shru Morris and Arif Patel were attending their first Board meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Kathryn Lord, Sajeela Mahmud and Steve Waggott. It was noted that Professor Waqar Ahmed had indicated he would be attending the meeting but that at the time, no apologies had been received.

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.

Geoff Disley advised the Board that he was a Trade Union Safety Representative and had been in meetings with the Principal and others to consider the College re-opening. He gave an assurance to members that discussions at the Board meeting were not reported outside the meeting.

There were no other declarations received.

3. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20 MARCH 2020

It was **AGREED** that the minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 20 March 2020 would be deferred and considered at the July 2020 Board meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

It was **AGREED** that the matters arising from the Corporation Board meeting held on 20 March 2020 would be deferred and considered at the July 2020 Board meeting.

5. COVID19 – RE-OPENING COLLEGE

- (i) DfE RE-OPENING GUIDANCE FOR COLLEGES AND CHECKLIST**
- (ii) RE-OPENING COLLEGE RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW**
- (iii) POST COVID19 LOCKDOWN – PRIORITY STUDENTS TO BE INVITED IN**

The Principal and Chief Executive provided an overview of the current plans. He and the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services had met with the local Director of Public Health and were involved in regular dialogue regarding the approach to re-opening the College. It was noted that the Government would allow the Directors of Public Health to take decisions on a local basis.

In addition, the Principal and Chief Executive attended weekly meetings with the School Heads and the Director of Children's Services to look at the approach to be adopted across the Borough. Regular updates from the DfE were also received; it being noted that the proposed date for re-opening had been moved to 15 June 2020 (from 8 June 2020) and that only a quarter of the intake could be brought into College at any one time. The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services also sat on a national AoC Board which was looking at re-opening colleges.

The Board was informed that the College Health and Safety (H&S) Manager, who was NEBOSH trained in addition to having a degree in Law, had oversight of the risk assessment and approach to re-opening. The College Health and Safety Committee met regularly and its membership included the Health and Safety Governor Champion, Paul Morris, both Student Governors and staff members.

The Board noted that the Saturn Centre which housed the offsite commercial gas provision had been re-opened, this having been planned with the staff and the H&S Manager, and that union colleagues had opposed the move. In response, Geoff Disley – Board member and TU H&S Representative – had visited the Centre to look at the processes and procedures in place and had been happy that these were comprehensive. The College was considering opening the MOT Centre, the TU Health H&S Representative to be part of the planning.

The Health and Safety Committee had met that day and had provided good pointers which the College would look to embrace as it moved to the College being open from 15 June to invited students.

The Board was assured that the health and safety of staff and students was the College number one priority.

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services was welcomed to talk through the papers.

The summary paper provided information on the current situation relating to on and offsite delivery, staffing and the College's planned delivery in Term 3. The latest Government guidance and the College's response was included and noted by the Board. Information on external and internal consultation was also contained in the summary paper and noted by the Board.

The papers provided to the Board contained detailed information on the Covid-19 Secure Risk Assessment Overview, the DfE checklist and management responses and actions prior to partial re-opening in June and the priority students to be invited into College from June. The Board was informed that the Risk Assessment Overview had been considered in detail by the Health and Safety Committee and the Committee would be fully involved in ensuring updates to the Risk Assessment included all critical items.

The Board was informed that FE providers had flexibility in which learners could return and which assessments needed to be carried out face-to-face, rather than by other means in order that students were able to complete their qualifications and thus progress in life or further education. Since the papers had been prepared, the College had completed its work on identifying the 'worst case' number of students required on site.

Questions were then invited of the Board.

Q. How would the College identify staff or students who were unwell?

A. There will be no testing equipment in the College; the Borough will be providing details on the action to be taken; the staff/student would need to isolate, report and then follow the government guidance when reporting a suspect case.

Q. How would they get home?

A. The use of public transport was not encouraged in Government guidance; the College would ensure that appropriate arrangements were in place to take them to their home/safe place.

Q. What is the guidance for PPE for staff – in general and if a student/staff member presents symptoms?

A. The Government recommendation was that staff and students were not expected to wear facemasks or gloves. Hand sanitisers would be/are available and the College would be marked out e.g. distance markers, etc. First aiders would be fully briefed and masks/gloves were in the first aid kits. Where a member of staff had to go nearer than 2m to a student – e.g. practical assessment – masks would be supplied and the scenario would be part of a specific Risk Assessment for those activities. However, it was noted that the latter would be rare.

Were a student/staff member to become ill, separate rooms could be opened. Cleaners were on site to carry out regular cleaning and to ensure that high-touch areas or desks were regularly wiped. In addition to the overarching Risk Assessment, local risk assessments would be completed in the coming week.

Training for all staff would be undertaken. Students would also be drilled on how to behave, how to position themselves, the use of sanitisers etc., and what they have/have not to do. Action would be taken against those students who refuse to follow the guidance.

Q. Can staff/students chose to wear a face-covering?

A. Yes.

Staff returning to the College and before they do so would be asked to complete a self-declaration to confirm that they have no symptoms, understand the risk assessment, that they feel that have the PPE necessary and that they were comfortable with what they were asked to do.

Q. Are there plans to assist students who wish to attend College but do not wish to use public transport?

A. The College would look to provide transport in order that students can complete their qualification.

Q. What communication has the College had with students? How were the College plans being communicated to students and parents?

A. Regular updates are provided on the College website. Staff are in contact directly with those students who will be coming into College.

A member of the Board congratulated the College on the detailed work being undertaken in preparation of students coming back into College.

Q. What support might be needed for vulnerable students?

A. Once the list of students has been finalised, the College would look at those who need additional support e.g. ALS, assistance with kit/equipment, etc. The Additional Learning Support Team would be involved and students would be able to flag any issues/support requirements.

Staff are working with each student on an individual basis where they are unable to attend – e.g. shielding. This includes working with the relevant awarding bodies on resits.

The Chair noted the guidance included consideration of the establishment of a coronavirus governance and leadership group to monitor the Board approved plan and to consider any required adjustments. A detailed discussion took place and it was **AGREED** that this should be undertaken by the Board as a whole, via Board and Committee meetings, it being everyone's responsibility to understand the risks and apply mitigating measures, as in Health and Safety. It was **AGREED** that there would be regular communication to Governors and that the overall Risk Assessment would be uploaded to the Governors' Portal and thus made available to all Governors.

Action: Principal and Chief Executive/Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services/Clerk

It was noted that particular Governor expertise could be called upon as necessary in providing assistance on rapid changes to the guidance. Regular updates were also covered at the Chair, Vice Chair, Principal and Clerk meetings and by email to Board members. However, a governance and leadership group would be set up at a later date, if this were felt to be necessary.

In answer to a question from the Chair, the Board was assured that the College was satisfying its requirements regarding vulnerable students. The Assistant Principal: Student Support and Engagement (also the College Designated Safeguarding Lead) was continuing to work with the local authority to ensure that such students were being supported. Weekly meetings with the local authority were taking place.

The Health and Safety Governor Champion informed the meeting of the issues raised at the meeting of the College Health and Safety Committee which had been held prior to the Board meeting.

Q. Students may be asymptomatic. Should testing be offered to students before they return to College?

A. The Principal and Chief Executive confirmed that testing was not a requirement. The Government had announced that testing was available for anyone displaying symptoms and this message would be reinforced in an induction letter for students.

Q. What strategies/plans are in place to support student progress?

A. Staff are in regular contact with students and engagements is being closely monitored; the Heads of Learning are ensuring that those students who were not engaging were receiving the support needed.

Q. How would the College know that students were coping, following the re-opening of the College?

A. This would be monitored on an individual basis. There would be a different set of rules in place for September, it being noted that more staff would be working in College.

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services covered information on the opening of the departments within the College. This included actions arising from the various Risk Assessments such as how students would arrive, how social distancing would be maintained, the use of PPE and the adaptations made in College. It was noted that a number of videos had been prepared and circulated to staff and students.

Q. How was the College monitoring staff feelings on the return to work? How were they being supported?

A. An FE Quality survey had been undertaken to obtain staff views on working from home. Staff were reminded daily on the need to take regular breaks, on the availability of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), etc. CLT managers had been tasked to ensure that daily contact was made with each member of staff so that they were aware of any who were struggling.

Managers would be completing a survey which would provide the College with information on who in their team was shielding, who was living in a house with someone who was shielding, who could/could not come back into work, etc. Staff who were required to come into College would complete a self-declaration with the line manager and would be provided with a 5-page PowerPoint briefing which covered all actions/expectations and all relevant information.

Q. What was the feedback from students?

A. A similar survey had been issued to students via Moodle. Regular updates were being provided to students and a separate survey had covered online learning. At the Audit Committee held on 2 June 2020, the FE Student Governor had praised the tutor support and the online delivery she had received. A full briefing sheet would be provided to students on the work done to prepare areas in advance of re-opening and on the expectations expected of them.

Information was provided on the addendums to the Safeguarding Policy, etc. in relation to vulnerable students.

In response to a comment from a member of the Board, the College would look at the AoC information covering a centralised approach to re-opening to identify ideas which could be used at the College.

Q. What measures had been put in place for those students who did not want to come back into College?

A. The College was currently in the process of identifying students who needed to come back into College e.g. for practical assessment. This number was expected to be small. Those students who did not want to return would be held in a 'neutral' position until such time as they felt confident to return.

A member of the Board, who was also a member of the Health and Safety Committee, commented that the Committee had raised a number of minor operational points as had been covered earlier at the Board meeting. He commented that these would strengthen the work done by the Health and Safety Manager, whom he felt should be thanked for the hard work undertaken in completing the necessary documentation.

Having discussed the papers in detail, the Board gave **APPROVAL** for management to re-open College for low numbers of students in Term 3 2020 on an invite-only basis – in line with Government guidelines.

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Business.

7. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair summarised the meeting:

1. College Managers were thanked for the comprehensive papers. The Vice Principal’s membership of the AoC national group looking at re-opening colleges was welcomed.
2. Risk Assessments are to be made available to Governors in order that they can be assured that the plans are progressing as they should
3. The Board noted the videos that were being produced to inform students on the spacing arrangements, etc.
4. The Chair would undertake a tour of the College on Friday 12 June 2020 to gain assurance that everything was in place for those students re-starting

The Principal and Chief Executive was keen that Geoff Disley be included in the tour of the College; Geoff Disley stated he was happy to take part. Mr Disley also provided feedback from a number of candidates who had attended the Saturn Centre, it being noted that they had been extremely complimentary of the approach taken by the College. He commented that this provided a clear model that worked and which should be borne in mind as the re-opening of the College begins.

All Board members were thanked for their attendance and contribution.

8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Corporation Board – Friday 3 July 2020

The meeting closed at 18:03.

Signed:

Date: