



CONFIRMED MINUTES

UNITED COLLEGES GROUP CORPORATION

PART ONE – PUBLIC

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 28 March 2018 at 6.00pm
in Room WF331 at Willesden Green Campus**

PART ONE

Present

Tony Johnston (Chair)
Alex Fyfe (Vice Chair)
Keith Cowell
Simon Haben
Glenys Arthur
Jan Knight
Judith Williams (Vice Chair)
Afsana Begum-Mirza

Also in Attendance

Amanda Thorneycroft, Chief Operating Officer
Eamon McCarroll, Group Executive Director of Finance
Anna Openshaw-Lawrence, Group Executive Director of HR
Jackie Grubb, Principal CWC
David White, Interim Principal CNWL

Natalie Watt, Acting Interim Clerk to the Corporation (Minutes)

The Chair welcomed Natalie Watt to the meeting and Members were invited to introduce themselves. The Chair confirmed that cover for the following terms meetings had been secured (pending confirmation of the return of the Clerk to the Corporation). Noted.

1. General Data Protection Regulations

Action

The Corporation and Senior Leadership Team received a briefing and presentation on the implications of GDPR for the Group and a summary of the actions being taken to ensure organisational compliance.

2. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

Peter Child, Mary Elliott, Brenda Goring-Moore, John Petrie, Jayanne Davis

Simon Neville (Unable to access meeting via teleconferencing). It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate any issues arising from the use of this option. Noted.

Clerk

The meeting was quorate throughout.

3. Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest other than those in the Register of Interests.

4. Health and Safety Announcements

The Clerk provided a briefing on the Health and Safety arrangements for the meeting.



5. Chair's Announcements

Chair's announcements were made under PART TWO (Confidential) of the meeting. Noted.

6. Re-appointment of External Auditors for 2017/18

- The COO presented the item and reported that the Audit Committee had reviewed the performance of Buzzacott, the Colleges external auditors (for both CWC and CNWL) in 2016-17 and was recommending them for re-appointment.
- Members sought assurance that the Auditors offered value for money, The COO confirmed that this aspect of delivery was addressed as part of the appointment process. Members sought confirmation of the charges and the rate for the newly merged college and sought confirmation of any savings anticipated.
- The COO informed the Committee that she was awaiting an update on proposed charges. It was agreed that this information would be relayed back to the relevant Committees, Audit and F&GP.

COO

The Corporation **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment Buzzacott as the financial statements auditors for 2017/2018 accounts.

7. Standing Financial Instructions

- The Group Executive Director of Finance presented the report and confirmed that he had collaborated and met with the Vice Chair of the Corporation to review the original instructions that were presented to the F&GP Committee. The Group Exec Dir. of Finance confirmed that the instructions were based on those approved by CWC pre-merger.
- Members noted that key changes had been highlighted from paragraph 1.5 onwards. Discussion followed on the changes to the authorisation of claims from the CEO, Members endorsed the proposals.
- The Group Executive Director of Finance assured the Corporation that robust and transparent processes had been identified and existing controls strengthened where deemed necessary.
- Detailed discussion followed on the financial limits identified in the document in relation to contracts and the use of consultants. Members expressed concerns at how these costs could be further controlled in light of lessons learned previously.
- Following robust debate and the Corporation statement of its risk averse approach to the use of consultants, it was agreed that the current levels would be approved, provided that they were monitored and analysed during the following year. The results of the analysis would be reported back to the F&GP Committee in due course to review how effective the controls were operated.
- Members also challenged the Group Exec. Dir. of Finance on how fit for purpose the instructions would be, should the need arise to restrict spending in year. Members were assured that budget and spend could be controlled from the centre. Discussion followed on which, if any, aspects of the Standing Instructions were benchmarked.
- The Grp. Exec Director of Finance informed the Corporation that no external benchmarking was available.

Grp.
Exec.
Dir. of
Finance

- Lengthy and detailed debate followed on delegated authority and to what extent this was needed. Following confirmation that the Corporation also had the capacity to execute written resolutions, it was agreed that all authority would rest with the Corporation, should an urgent matter arise outside of the meeting cycle it was agreed that a written resolution could be used.
- It was also proposed that the Corporation should undertake discussions at Committees, to gauge the level of delegation that each Committee felt was appropriate, with a view to constructing a full scheme of delegation in due course.
- It was agreed that the approval of spend over £500k would rest with the Corporation. It was further agreed that an analysis of the spend within each of the specified limits would be provided when the next opportunity to review the instructions arose.

COO

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the standing Instructions with the provision that all authority remained with the Corporation.

8. Policies for Approval

a) Criminal checks and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

- The Group Executive Director of HR presented the report and reminded Members that the policy had been subject to detailed scrutiny at Committee.
- Members discussed the change identified in paragraph 22 of the executive summary, noting that the duration of a previous DBS certificate would be accepted with a risk assessment pending receipt of a new one.
- Members discussed this approach at length and challenged the Group Exec Dir of HR on current practices and the reasons for the proposed change.
- Following confirmation and assurance of the robustness of the processes in place the change was accepted.

The Corporation **RESOLVED** to **approve** the Criminal Checks and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy as presented.

b) Tuition Fees Policies: FE and HE

- The Principal of CWC advised the Corporation that the policy had been scrutinised in detail at the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Noted.
- Members were advised that the FE and HE Policies had been amalgamated across both Colleges.

The Corporation **RESOLVED** to **approve** the Tuition Fees Policies as presented.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Summer Strategy Day

- The Chair informed Members that the property project management team would be advising the College of the delivery timescales. As this was deemed to be a key component of the strategy day, it was agreed that the date for the 12th May would be cancelled.
- Following discussion, Governors expressed their concerns at any significant delay to discussion of the marketing strategy. Members noted the critical importance of the marketing strategy and the need to drive this forward to achieve maximum business impact.



- It was agreed that the CEO and the Chair of the Corporation would confirm an alternative date asap. It was noted that some Governors would not have any other weekend availability and the option of delivering the strategy planning sessions across two evenings would also be explored. **CEO**
- The Chair requested that dates for prize giving and key college events be circulated as soon as possible to enable Members and the Chair to attend as much as possible. Agreed. **CEO**

It was **agreed** that the CEO would circulate proposed dates for the delivery of the Corporation Strategy sessions asap with a view to maximising attendance. It was **noted** that the next scheduled meeting of the Corporation would take place on **Wednesday, 4 July 2018 at 6.00pm.** **CEO**

10. Any Other Urgent Business

There was no further business.

11. Issues of Confidentiality

It was **agreed** that, the Chairs announcements and Part Two of the agenda would remain confidential.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chair