

**CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP**  
**Wednesday 15 December 2021, 6 pm – By Zoom**

**Members Present:** Stephen Davis (CEO), Alex Fyfe, Tony Johnston (Chair), Laura Griffin, Derrick Betts, Ross Mackenzie, Colin Smith, Max Maalimey, Nadia Babar, Amish Nathwani, Grainne Brankin, Desmond Bishop, Lee Horsley, Norman Whyte, Temi Alebiosu, Melek Mandal, Natalie Dweh, Franklin Asante.

**In attendance:** Zoë Lawrence, Claire Collins, Nick Bell\*, Peter Hardy\*, Amanda Thorneycroft, James Wilson.

\*relevant agenda item only

<b>1</b>	<p><b>PROCEDURAL</b></p> <p><b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Melek Mandal, student governor, and James Wilson, Deputy Group Principal to the Corporation. Apologies had been received from Matthew Green, Angela Drisdale Gordon, and Elom Tay.</p> <p>TJ recorded that this would be Nick Bell’s last Corporation meeting and he thanked Nick on the Corporation’s behalf for all the work he had done for the college in the past two years and wished him well for the future.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest in the agenda items</b></p> <p>None were declared.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>I. Approval of Corporation minutes</b>  <i>(Draft minutes were circulated in advance)</i>  <b>The draft non-confidential minutes of 13 October were approved as an accurate record.</b>  The confidential minutes would be approved by email with the independent members only.</p> <p><b>II. Matters arising</b>  All matters arising were included elsewhere on the agenda.</p> <p><b>III. Audit Committee Terms of Reference (ToR)</b>  <i>(Draft ToR circulated in advance)</i>  A revised version of the Audit Committee ToR was presented for approval. The main changes were to reflect the updates to the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice which had changed as a result of the Skills Bill and FE White Paper. <b>The Corporation resolved to approve the Audit Committee ToR.</b></p> <p><b>IV. Request to raise Grey Box items</b>  Members were asked if they would like to raise any items in the Grey Box which were provided for information. No items were raised.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>STRATEGIC</b></p> <p><b>I. CEO’s Report</b>  <i>(Report circulated in advance)</i></p>

SD explained that he had restructured the report to reflect Product, Process, People and Property highlighting where each activity supported the implementation of the themes of the strategic plan. He reported the main items under each section and the stakeholder involvement. TJ welcomed the report and asked what the likely implications were for the college now the cases of the new Covid variant were increasing across London. SD said that the learning from the earlier parts of the pandemic could be built upon. Transferring learning to hybrid or online platforms could be done quickly as necessary, though it was hoped that face to face learning would continue as far as was possible. The degree of lost learning from the pandemic to date was notable including the impact on attendance. AN asked what were the key lessons learnt and how we might address them this time. SD explained that there had been digital exclusion particularly for ESOL learners, but the key worker scheme was already in place, and the skill levels of teachers in delivering online lessons had improved. The laptop loan scheme was in place this year already. AN thanked SD for the report but said he found the presentation less easy to link with strategic objectives. SD acknowledged the feedback and stressed how important it was to recognise the interdependencies between the strategic themes. SD was hoping to bring in a balanced score card approach which he would discuss with governors at the Strategy Event in January. AF asked how the college would deal with the level of absenteeism if many staff were ill at the same time as a result of the fast-spreading new variant. SD said that this was impacting now in some student facing roles. It may be that a mixed model of online learning would be introduced to address levels of staff absence. Agency staff were already at a premium. **Member resolved to note the CEO's report.**

## **II. KPIs outturn**

*(KPIs circulated in advance)*

This was to close off an item from the previous meeting where the EDI data on achievement was yet to be consolidated. AN noted that were lots of areas which were RAG rated red and a number of groups of students were below the level expected of achievement. He asked what actions were being put in place to address this. SD said that there was a separate EDI plan which was looking to address achievement in these areas. The issues in English and Maths and the pandemic had also adversely affected these groups of students. DBetts asked if the improvements overall in achievement would take more than one academic year to resolve, and whether the delay in receiving timely data was having a negative impact. SD said that if there had not been the issues in English and Maths overall achievement would have improved. The numbers involved had a detrimental impact on achievement overall in 2020/21. Other indicators such as lesson observations were looking positive, along with cultural improvements. The rate of change was difficult to ascertain during the pandemic. There would not be any national averages on achievement issued by the Dept of Education for 2020/21 due to the use of centre assessed grades. **Members noted the KPIs.**

## **III. Risk Register**

*(Highest risks circulated in advance)*

AT highlighted the four main risks which had changed since the previous meeting. These included failure to achieve enrolment numbers for growth funding, safe environment in respect of Coronavirus, violent incidents at the Paddington Campus, and loss of key staff. MM asked if the loss of the additional growth funding would impact curriculum staff. AT said that as the students had not been recruited there were some costs that would not be incurred, but it would be necessary to realign the budget. There may be some impacts on the level of investment particularly at a time when commitments were being made to the capital project. SD noted that the staffing was a mix of permanent and HPL staff which could provide more flexibility, however it was important to take a holistic view over the organisation on how the budgets would be controlled. CPD investment had been made in curriculum. GB commented

	<p>on the range of risks included in this report and whether there needed to be improved moderation. SD said that a Risk Control Group had been set up following the Risk Appetite Workshop and this would be addressed through that forum. <b>Members noted the risk register.</b></p> <p><b>IV. EDI Action Plan</b>  <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i>  CC highlighted the main areas of change in the EDI Action Plan. EDI would also be a main activity at the Strategy Day in January. <b>Members noted the report.</b></p>
5	<p><b>COMMITTEE MATTERS</b>  <b>Property &amp; Infrastructure Committee</b></p> <p><b>I. Purchase of the Olympic Office Centre</b>  <i>(Sale &amp; Purchase agreement/ Facility agreement shared in advance)</i></p> <p><b>See Confidential minutes</b></p> <p><b>II. Wembley Park Project - Update</b>  <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p><b>See Confidential minutes</b></p> <p><b>III. Cockpit Theatre MOU</b>  <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p><b>See Confidential minutes</b></p>
6	<p><b>Teaching, Learning &amp; Skills Committee</b></p> <p><b>I. Self-Assessment Review</b>  <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i>  JW described the process on which the SAR was generated, the moderation process and that this had concluded that UCG based on Ofsted criteria was graded as not yet good. The decline in English and maths was one of the predominant factors for this. A quality improvement plan (QIP) was in place to address areas of improvement. AF asked if SD thought that the improvement in lesson observations had not been reflected in achievement rates. SD said that it could be seen at a more granular level, and this was only one of the ways to assess improvement. AN asked if the issues with the MIS and delays in receiving real time data was inhibiting performance. SD said that it could be improved, but there was now more resource at curriculum management level and that he would expect the teachers to know their students and how they are progressing regardless of the delays in collating data at an organisational level. AN asked if the QIP was fully implemented would good be achieved. SD confirmed this but caveated this with issues of staff recruitment and retention. He said that the student experience was fundamental, and use of student survey data would be key. RM asked whether the Ofsted inspection took into account the impact of the pandemic. JW confirmed that the EIF had been altered regarding the pandemic. UCG would be describing the challenges faced and how they were overcome. CS confirmed this that the inspections were not about data but were student centric and dependent on the students and their understanding of their learning. <b>Members resolved to approve the Self-Assessment Report.</b></p> <p><b>II. English &amp; Maths Progress</b></p>

	<p><i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>It was noted that a new VP for English and maths had now been appointed and was making good progress to date in addressing the issues in this area. The report was noted.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Finance and General Purposes</b></p> <p><b>I. External Audit Post Audit Report 2022/21 / Letter of Representation</b> <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>This report was discussed at the joint meeting of the F&amp;R and Audit Committee on 1 December 2021; however, it was not recommended for approval due to outstanding issues which have since been agreed to be disclosed in the financial statements and letter of representation. The issues concerned the tuition fees and the learner records internal audit which had been adversely affected by the online enrolment process due to the coronavirus. Remedial action had been agreed and disclosures included in the documents. The chairs of the respective committees were consulted and confirmed their assent of the particulars. Members noted the surplus position at the end of the year. Members supported UCG as a going concern and accepted that the RCF and purchase of the OOC (approved earlier in the meeting) would need to be included in the reports as post balance sheet events. <b>It was resolved to approve the External Audit Post Audit Report and Letter of Representation.</b></p> <p><b>II. UCG and CWC Enterprises Annual Report and Financial Statements</b> <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p><b>The financial statements for UCG and CWC Enterprises were approved.</b> A letter of support for CWC enterprises was also approved. The insurance claim for £250k for business continuity from the impact of coronavirus for the Cockpit which would be for the current year was noted.</p> <p><b>III. Management Accounts (October)</b> <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>AT provided a short summary of the management accounts which had been reviewed by the F&amp;R and Audit Committees on 1 December. AF asked for details of the coronavirus costs and it was agreed this would be addressed outside of the meeting. <b>Members noted the management accounts (Oct).</b></p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Audit Committee</b></p> <p><b>I. Audit Committee Annual Report</b> <i>(Draft Report circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>DBetts highlighted the main parts of the report to the Corporation in particular that the recommendations made in the IA reports were often not implemented in a timely way. The Policy Framework and Business Continuity IA were highlighted in respect to this. <b>The Corporation resolved to approve the Audit Committee Annual Report.</b></p> <p><b>II. Health &amp; Safety Annual Report</b> <i>(Report circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>This was provided for information.</p> <p><b>III. Risk Appetite Workshop</b> <i>(Summary of workshop circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>This was provided for information.</p>
<b>10</b>	<b>AoB</b>

	<p>The date of the next meeting 06 April 2022</p> <p>The meeting closed at 8.33 pm</p>
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Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 17/ 12/2021

**SIGNED:** ..... **Date:**

**Tony Johnston, Chair**

**ACTIONS**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>04i 13/10</b>	A review of the format for KPIs to be undertaken by the GSR Committee	ZL	GSR to review in Summer term.
<b>07i 13/10</b>	An update on the IT Team restructuring and resourcing and the unmet organisational IT requirements to be an item on the next Property & Infrastructure Committee.	NB/AT	Complete