Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 12 April 2016, in Room 017, Orient House.

PRESENT: Pat Edwards (Chair); Lewis Coakley; Mark Carroll (Vice-Chair); Hannah Eaton; David Hatchett; Taiyyabah Ijaz; Alex Jackson; Sonia Watson and Kevin Watson (Principal).

In Attendance:
Gill Burbridge (Vice-Principal, Teaching & Learning); Dawn Hamilton-Barrett (Vice-Principal, Staffing, Resources & Infrastructure) and Alan Leak (Director of Finance).

Clerk to the Corporation: Michael Wood

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS
No Governor declared an interest in advance of the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence were received from: Asiia Abassi; Katherine Hewlett and Naihum Levi Stevens.

WELCOME
The Chair formally welcomed the Vice-Principals, Teaching & Learning and Staffing, Resources & Infrastructure to the meeting.

MINUTES

63.15 The Minutes of the meetings of the Corporation held on 1 and 22 February 2016 were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

64.15 (Minute 50.15 refers) it was noted that the Corporation’s business cycle was in the process of being reviewed and would include policies and procedures that required approval over the course of the next year;

(Minute 51.15 refers) the Principal reported that the term ‘weaknesses’, rather than ‘improvements’ was used by Ofsted;

(Minute 57.15 refers) it was agreed that the Search Committee (in its proposed expanded role as Governance & Search), should monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the External Review of Governance, other Governors being invited to join the Committee, as appropriate;

(Minute 61.15 refers) it was reported that all Governors had completed Prevent and Safeguarding training.
FINANCIAL REPORTS

65.15 The Director of Finance presented Management Accounts for the period ended 29 February 2016, the following key points being noted:

i) that the College remained in a relatively strong position with no variations against the profiled budget;

ii) that the projected surplus for the year had increased to £213k;

iii) that the College had 79 days cash-in-hand;

iv) that in response to a question regarding the College’s comparatively high current ratio of 6, it was commented that this was due to a timing effect and the fact that there were not many creditors;

v) that the College was continuing to pay suppliers promptly within accepted timescales.

66.15 With regard to the forward financial position, 2016/17, the Director of Finance advised the Board as follows:

i) that the College (and sector) was likely to receive slightly more funding in 2016/17 than originally envisaged in December, with the College receiving a £130k increase in funding related to the Index for Multiple Deprivation;

ii) that staffing budget estimates remained level, although increases were forecast in later years;

iii) that with regard to the Accounting Standard FRS 102 related to the technical treatment of Government grants, which could now be based on an accruals or a performance basis, it was agreed to maintain the current accruals arrangement, in keeping with sector best practice.

67.15 The Chair wished to record his thanks to the Director of Finance and his team for the finance reports.

OFSTED REPORT

68.15 The Board considered the Ofsted Report produced following the formal visit to the College, 23-26 February 2016. The Principal commented that the Report validated the stance the College had consistently adopted with regard to its core values and culture, the promotion of the craft of teaching and excellent safeguarding practice. The detailed commentary revealed that the institution was ‘more good’ than good, when compared to others. Arising out of detailed discussion, the following key points were noted:

i) that the College accepted the four points of weakness, related to AS results and GCSE English and Maths results, the quality of some teaching and learning and the support and guidance given to those Level 3 students not intending to go to university;

ii) that the College’s approach to partnership working had been vindicated and that there was a ‘whole College’ strategy in place;
that student behaviour was excellent and there was a well-planned and structured tutorial programme in place;

iv) that the 4-day inspection process had been very demanding, but the institution had received the best possible result and the report’s finding will be very useful for marketing purposes;

v) that the report read very well (almost like a Grade 1) and expressed full confidence in the management and leadership of the College;

vi) that ideas and thoughts on additional employer connections were welcomed from Governors;

vii) that the framework had now changed with regard to GCSE English and Maths whereby students were now judged according to progress, not just first attempt results;

viii) that the Report and its core findings and recommendations would be further considered at the Board’s Development Day on 26 May;

ix) that the Board’s appreciation of the work of all staff in achieving such a good result should be articulated in a formal way (the Principal and Chair to consider further).

69.15 On behalf of the entire Board, the Chair wished to record his sincere thanks to the Principal, his senior team and everyone concerned in achieving such an excellent report, which gave due credit to the College.

WALTHAM FOREST POST-16 PARTNERSHIP

70.15 The Principal introduced discussion of this item which was an attempt on the part of the Borough to initiate a collaborative approach with regard to post-16 education, reference being made to a meeting on 4 March. It was noted that the College was already taking a lead role in proposing a NE London Partnership of providers and that the Borough’s initiative (without appropriate resourcing) could potentially consume a lot of time and effort. It was agreed that the College would host the next meeting on the 24 April and consider some local lobbying, progress being considered at the Development Day on 26 May.

71-73.15 AREA REVIEW UPDATE (Restricted Confidential Items – not for publication)

REPORT FROM SEARCH COMMITTEE

74.15 The Board considered a Report from the Search Committee, the following recommendations being approved:

a) that the Board should reduce to 13 in overall size, to include one student and one parent Governor from August 2016 (in this regard, it was noted that A Mahmood had tendered his resignation);

b) that the maximum term of office be set as two, four-year terms (an exceptional third term being agreed in respect of the Chair);

c) that thanks be recorded to retiring Governors;

d) that Katherine Hewlett, Hannah Eaton and Alex Jackson have their terms of office extended to 31 March 2017, 31 January 2019, and 14 March 2019, respectively;
e) that the recent Skills Audit of the Board had highlighted the need to have more financial expertise;

f) that Alex Jackson be confirmed as Chair of the Audit Committee with immediate effect.

DEVELOPMENT DAY

75.15 The Board noted the outline programme for the Development Day on 26 May, 9.30 – 4.30pm (venue to be confirmed).

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

76.15 There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.24pm, the date of the next ordinary meeting being confirmed as 27 June 2016 at 6.15pm (the meeting on 9 May having been cancelled).