Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Corporation held on 22 February 2016, in Room 017, Orient House.

PRESENT: Pat Edwards (Chair); Asiia Abassi; Lewis Coakley; Mark Carroll (Vice-Chair); Hannah Eaton; Taiyyabah Ijaz; Barbara Matuskovicova; Naihum Levi Stevens; Sonia Watson and Kevin Watson (Principal)

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; Steven Crane; David Hatchett; Katherine Hewlett and Alex Jackson.

REPORT ON POST-16 AREA REVIEW PROCESS

63.15 The Principal introduced discussion of his briefing paper to the Corporation, the following key points being noted:

i) that were the College to contemplate academy status not only would it lose autonomy, it would lose something more fundamental in terms of cultural identity;

ii) that the College was in a good position to take a lead in forming partnerships with other institutions short of formal merger. In this regard, it was noted that BSix, Woodhouse and New Vic had expressed an interest in discussing further the NE London Post-16 Partnership initiative;

iii) that Woodhouse Sixth Form College had already announced its intention to remain an autonomous institution, whilst Havering was actively considering academy status;

iv) that it was likely that more schools would move into the 16-19 market.

64.15 The Chair invited Governors to comment on the Principal’s report, the following points and observations arising out of detailed discussion:

i) that the academy argument was unconvincing for a college such as Leyton;

ii) that the College enjoyed very good relations with both local schools and schools outside the Borough which was part of the institution’s strength;

iii) that efficiency savings had already been achieved (ie outsourced payroll; shared Director of Finance post);

iv) that models whereby students are shared between different institutions in order to broaden the curriculum offering tended to result in a lot of travelling time for students, and an incomplete experience of college life. However, it was acknowledged that the sharing of outstanding subject teaching (eg with Woodhouse) could be explored as part of a wider partnership arrangement.
65.15 The Chair summarised the discussion by commenting that the Area Review process effectively posed three strategic options for the College:

a) to merge;

b) to convert to an academy or become part of a multi-academy trust;

c) to adopt an enhanced status quo model of operation, including leading the NE London Post-16 Partnership initiative.

The Board accepted this proposition and unanimously agreed that the College should adopt the enhanced status quo option moving forward.

OFSTED INSPECTION

66.15 The Principal made a short presentation in advance of the forthcoming four-day Ofsted inspection of the College, 23-26 February. Governors were advised that four inspectors would be visiting the College, each with a particular focus, viz: Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Outcomes for Students; Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare and Leadership and Management.

67.15 With regard to the safeguarding agenda, the Principal emphasised how important it was for all Governors to have completed their online training prior to the start of the inspection process, had they not already done so.

68.15 It was noted that a small, representative group of Governors would meet with Inspectors on the afternoon of 24 February; informal feedback being made to the Board (and SLT) at 1.30pm on Friday 26 February. Within two weeks, a draft report would be produced for factual accuracy checking, the final report being published within five weeks.

69.15 On behalf of the Corporation, the Chair wished to record his best wishes to the SLT and all College staff in what he believed would be a successful inspection.

70.15 There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.27pm.