**Corporation of Sir George Monoux College**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Quality & Performance Committee**

**held on 22 September 2020**

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| **Present** | Alastair Owens (Chair), Tanha Ahmed, Caroline Evans, Stephen Jones, Jagdev Kenth, David Vasse. |
| **Participating Observer** | Alan Wells (Chair of the Corporation) |
| **In Attendance** | Holly Bembridge (Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality), Robert Smith (Clerk to the Corporation). |

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| **1** | **Apologies for Absence and Quoracy**    All members were present.  It was reported that Raafay Javed Bhatti had ceased to be student at the College and is therefore no longer a member of the Corporation or the Committee. |
| **2** | **Declarations of Interest**  None. |
| **3** | **Minutes of the Previous Meeting (9 June 2020)**  It was noted that the draft minutes had been approved by the Chair of the Committee for circulation.  They were approved as a correct record of the business transacted and *prima facie* evidence of the proceedings to which they relate. |
| **4** | **Matters Arising from the Minutes (9 June 2020)**  None. |
| **5** | **College Responses to the Public Health Emergency**  The Covid-19 Risk Assessment 2020-21 was received.  The Committee reviewed risks attending those measures concerned with how the College will provide quality education during the public health emergency and, where necessary, 'catch up' progressing students.  The following risks were noted as relevant to the Committee’s remit: |

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|  | **.** | The College fails to adequately reduce the risk of staff and students contracting coronavirus (Covid-19) when it responds to DfE guidance on social distancing. |
|  | **.** | The College is unable to accommodate all learners for timetabled lessons and induction activities from September 2020 due to on-going social distancing rules. |
|  | **.** | There is inadequate preparation and provision for remote learning in the event of further closure. |
|  | **.** | The college fails to respond to the welfare needs of students. |
|  | **.** | Disadvantaged, vulnerable students and those with pre-existing health concerns/conditions are disproportionately affected by the social effects of Covid19. |
|  | **.** | Students’ academic progress is below target and improvements in outcomes are not sustained as a result of reduced contact time and access to appropriate resources/facilities. |
|  | **.** | Students suffer a loss of motivation and/or aspiration and do not work hard, and behaviour worsens. |

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|  | It was reported that, despite concerns that levels of student anxiety might be unduly elevated after the period of “lockdown”, it had been observed that students are pleased to be back in College and that new students are settling in more quickly than in previous years. The College’s increasingly positive reputation in the communities it serves does not appear to have been vitiated by the period of closure.  There is, however, the risk of parents perceiving greater levels of danger in the context of increased infection levels in the community, with a particular apprehension about safety on public transport. The College is attempting to provide reassurance over the matters within its control, and is assiduous in informing parents of the mitigation measures being undertaken in the College to promote the safety of students.  It is recognised that difficulties would result if a substantial number of teachers have to self-isolate, either because of infection or the health status of others in their household. If classes are cancelled, more students would have to be accommodated within the limited spatial resources of the College, making adequate physical distancing hard to achieve.  It was particularly reported that where Maths is not a student’s principal subject (e.g. in the instance of GCSE resits), a greater degree of “catch-up” is likely to be needed.  In response to the Committee Chair’s question concerning the level of engagement being shown by students, it was reiterated that a positive attitude is observed in most cases though, at this early stage in the year, in the absence of sufficient meaningful data, the observation is essentially impressionistic. Students’ work is monitored on a sample basis by senior management using Microsoft Teams, and the standard is in general gratifying.  In response to a question from the Chair of the Corporation, the Principal explained the procedure attending the suspicion of a Covid-19 case, and that any unexplained absence would be quickly investigated by a telephone contact from the College and the procedures attending Covid-19 control would, where relevant, be activated. It was recognised that delays in reporting Covid-19 test outcomes might put a strain on the system, but it was stated that the College, although following central guidelines, has an important degree of discretion in terms of requiring students to study from home. Additional measures such as fixed seating plans will, it is hoped, help to focus more accurately those at greatest collateral risk where positive cases are either suspected or confirmed. The College has the capacity to support students with online teaching where such incidents occur.  It was clarified, in response to a question from Jagdev Kenth, that likelihood in the context of the risk assessment is measurable on a Likert-type scale, with a series of answers from which to select, ranging from one extreme to another, with a moderate or neutral option. Impact is measured against the potential of a risk to have adverse effects that may be either principally financial and non-financial, though it is recognised that non-financial consequences are often reflected in financial outcomes.  In response to a question from Caroline Evans, it was reported that a high priority is accorded to providing students with accurate information and in encouraging their ability to exercise critical judgement in assessing information from other sources. Use is made of opportunities afforded by the curriculum to give students the skills to test information in terms of its reliability.  In response to a question from Tanha Ahmed, the importance of adequate ventilation in classrooms was emphasised. As the weather becomes colder, greater use will be made of the College heating system as compensation for open windows.  In response to a question from the Committee Chair, it was admitted that the College has limited resources for assisting students in “digital poverty” who may be affected by the need to self-isolate. It would not be possible to give out more than a limited number of laptops. However, in such circumstances it would be the College’s intention to remain open to enable use of its digital resources for independent study under physically distanced conditions.  It was noted that there is the potential to use Saturday opening for “catch-up” teaching if more College time is lost or in the lead-up to examinations. At present the main focus of Saturday activities is on art/design and sporting activities.  The College has also extended its weekday opening hours, in particular between 4.00 and 5.00pm, with Talent Lab activities spread over the entire week.  The Committee agreed that the assessment prepared by the College provides a ready tool for managing risks to both students and staff, and for minimising adverse College impacts.  It was noted that the document is “live”, and members agreed that its update be circulated electronically to the Committee so that they may keep abreast of future measures. |
| **6** | **Dates and Times of Remaining Meetings: 2020-21**  The following approved dates and times were noted:  ***Tuesday 1 December 2020 (6.30pm)***  ***Tuesday 9 February 2021 (6.30pm)***  ***Tuesday 8 June 2021 (6.30pm)***  It was also noted that the 1 December meeting will be held online. Whether subsequent meetings are held physically or online will be determined by the public health situation obtaining at the time as it affects participants. |
| **7** | **Any Other Competent Business**  None. |

**List of Actions Arising from This Meeting**

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| ***Minute*** | ***Person Responsible*** | ***Action*** |
| **5** | Principal (or as delegated by him) | Circulate electronically updates of the Covid-19 risk assessment to the Committee. |