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| **MINUTES** | | | | | | |
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| *Corporation No 151* | | | | | | |
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| Date: |  | *17/03/2020 (Tuesday)* |  | Time: |  | *18:00–20:00* |
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| Venue: |  | *Bowland Suite* |  | Committee: |  | *Corporation* |
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| Notes: |  | *Vouchers will be issued to enable refreshments to be obtained from the College restaurant prior to the meeting. Tea and Coffee will be available in the meeting.* | | | | |
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| Present: |  | *Alison Robinson (Principal), Allan Foster (Vice Chairman), Allison Jones, Barbara Godby, Clare James, David Hall, Debbie Clayton, Ian Higginbotham, Jane Booker, John Morphet, Louise Bell, Richard Furnival, Robert Wallace, Robin Newton-Syms, Stuart Heys (Chairman) and Sue Collinge* | | | | |
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| Attending: |  | *Joanne Sherrington (Deputy Principal), John Wherry (Deputy Principal) and Steven Downham-Clarke (Vice Principal)* | | | | |
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| Clerks: |  | *Ron Matthews (Clerk)* | | | | |
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| Apologies: |  | *Kevin Burke* | | | | |
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| ***Public* Minutes** | |
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| Item number: | Item description: |
| (and category) |  |
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| **25.20** | ***Attendance of College Management Staff*** |
| ***Decision*** | Standing Order 13 states that:  As a matter of policy all meetings of the Corporation and its Committees will be held in private. The agendas and minutes and supporting papers of its public business will be made available to the general public.  However:  (a) The Principal shall be authorised to invite members of staff to attend in their employed capacity for both public and confidential business as appropriate and in accordance with Standing Order 25.  (b) The Corporation may however, exclude members of staff from attending any business that it deems necessary.  (c) Attendance by other persons shall be at the discretion of the Corporation following advice from the Principal or Clerk.  **Resolved:**  **That Management attend for the public and confidential agenda items.** |
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| **26.20** | ***Apologies for Absence*** |
| ***Information*** | Apologies had been received from Barbara Godby, Clare James, Debbie Clayton, Louise Bell and Sue Collinge. |
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| **27.20** | ***Public Minutes of Previous Meeting*** |
| ***Decision*** | The public minutes of meeting number 150 held on Monday 25 February 2020 and published on the extranet were agreed and signed as a true and correct record of the meeting. |
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| **28.20** | ***Declarations of Interest*** |
| ***Record*** | There were no declarations of interest made in respect of items on the public agenda. |
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| **29.20** | ***Opening Remarks of the Chair*** |
| ***Information*** | The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and referred to the recent COVID-19 outbreak and the response of the College which would be dealt with in greater depth later in the agenda.  He also complemented Carol Kirkham, the College Health and Safety Advisor, who had been working tirelessly to ensure the College met all requirements during the crisis. |
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| **30.20** | ***Appointment of Chair and/or Vice-Chair*** |
| ***Decision*** | Corporation had been informed by the Chair, Stuart Heys, that he intended to retire from the Board at the conclusion of the current meeting.  The Clerk therefore invited nominations for the position of Chair for the remainder of the current academic year and the 2020/2021 academic year.  Should the current Vice-Chair be appointed Chair there would also be a requirement to appoint a Vice-Chair along similar lines.  In addition, the changes in Chair may require amendments to the various membership of committees. Circulated with the agenda was a revised schedule of Committee Membership, which had been discussed informally at the Governors Away Event.  **Resolved:**  **1. That Allan Foster be elected Chair of the Myerscough Corporation**  **for the remainder of the 2019/2020 academic year and also the**  **2020/2021 academic year.**  **2. That Jane Booker be elected Vice-Chair of the Myerscough**  **Corporation for the remainder of the 2019/2020 academic year and**  **also the 2020/2021 academic year.**  **3. That the revised schedule of Committee Memberships, including**  **the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs, be agreed.** |
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| **31.20** | ***Correspondence*** |
| ***Decision*** | The Corporation considered a letter from the Director of Competition and Regulation at the Office for Students, which requested colleges to inform them of any reported instances of staff or students reporting signs of having contracted CORVID-19.  The Principal reported that she had complied with the request.  **Resolved:**  **That the correspondence be noted.** |
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| **32.20** | ***Report of the Myerscough Students Union*** |
| ***Decision*** | The Corporation considered the report of the Myerscough Students Union, which provided details of the social and leisure activities available between January and March 2020.  **Resolved:**  **That the report of the Myerscough Students Union be received.** |
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| **33.20** | ***Governor Engagement Programme*** |
| ***Information*** | The Clerk reported that a number of external events linked to the College had already been cancelled in the light of CORVID-19. He confirmed that until further notice Governors should not visit the College unless specifically invited by the Principal or Clerk.  **Resolved:**  **That the report be noted.** |
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| **34.20** | ***Report of the Audit and Governance Committee 4 February 2020*** |
| ***Decision*** | The Corporation considered the Audit and Governance Committee report of its meeting of 4 February 2020.  **Internal Audit Reports** – November 2019 Audit & Governance Committee considered three reports.  **Cash Handling** - The audit of cash handling was undertaken for the ten commercial outlets operated by the College, seven of which were catering facilities. All were predominantly cash based. The audit resulted in two low and one medium priority recommendations.  The low priority recommendations related to procedural documentation and the segregated authorisation of duties being noted on the paperwork. Both had been implemented by Management prior to 31 January 2020.  The medium recommendation related to a review of monthly banking reconciliation procedures. Whilst this was undertaken electronically there was no provision within the system to identify that this had been done. Consequently, it was recommended that a paper copy should be produced as evidence that the review had been undertaken.  Governors questioned this requirement as it appeared a retrograde step from electronic processes back to paper documentation. The Auditor explained that the current finance system had no provision for this to be undertaken within the system. Management had already implemented the recommendation by 31 January 2020.  **Student Mental Health Framework** The second audit related to College provision with regard to a framework to help students in dealing with mental health issues.There were seven low priority recommendations. Governors recognised that mental health was an emerging strategy both nationally as well as within the education environment. Management agreed to implement all the recommendations by 31 May 2020 and acknowledged that they would assist in the overall development of the framework.  **Internal Audit Progress Report** The report provided an update on progress with regard to the Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20.  Two assignments had been completed, as detailed above. Audits on Student Recruitment and School Liaison and Student Tracking/Monitoring would be undertaken in early March 2020 with a Follow Up report later in the year.  In light of the timing of the outstanding reports it was confirmed that it would be unlikely that they would be available for the scheduled meeting of the Committee on 7 April 2020. The Committee noted the reports and agreed to cancel the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 7 April 2020.  **Internal Audit Progress Report and Summary Report Update** The Committee received and noted the above report, which contained information detailing progress to date on all recommendations made.  In total 10 recommendations were made for 2019/2020 of which 3 (30%) had been implemented, 7 (70%) were not yet due.  The Summary Report also detailed the outcomes of recommendations for 2017/2018 and 2018/2019. It indicated that two recommendations relating to Disaster Recovery and Cyber Security were outstanding from October 2017 and January 2018 and one on GDPR from January 2019. The Committee expressed concern that these remained outstanding despite registering similar views at the last meeting. Explanations were given but Management also acknowledged that these issues should have been resolved. The Committee noted the report and sought assurance that the outstanding issues would be resolved by the next meeting.  **Strategic Risk Management Summary Plan** Audit and Governance Committee considered the Strategic & Governance Risk Report for 2019/2020 as presented by the Interim Deputy Principal, Finance and Corporate Services. Their deliberations were aided through reference to the Risk Appetite Statement, Risk Assessment Framework and Risk Heat Map. Risks were referenced to the College's strategic objectives, scored using a 5x5 matrix and scored according to pre-mitigation actions, 'inherent' and post mitigation actions, 'residual'. Changes were summarised. The Risk Registers for Strategic Risks, Governance and Cross College risks were presented for review. These risks recognised the importance of higher education within the College strategy. The Office for Students has considerably greater regulatory powers than the previous body, the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). Members questioned if the failure to implement the earlier audit recommendations was reflected in the register. Questions were also asked about the level of risks on specific issues and management responded accordingly. Comment was also made on the excellent report with information presented in a meaningful way to aid scrutiny.  The Strategic Risk Register Report was received.  **Data Returns Report** The Committee considered the report of the Interim Deputy Principal, Finance and Corporate Services, which indicated that all returns for current academic year had been submitted on time. The Committee received the report.  **Sub-contractor Arrangements 2018 - 2019** Audit & Governance Committee considered the report on the current level of Subcontracting for 2019/2020, which was issued to the Committee as required by the funding body. The budget for this delivery had been approved by Corporation in July 2019. Monitoring of the various activities contributes to the Board’s assurance framework.  The report detailed the various contracts, numbers enrolled, the funding value, success rates for 2018/2019 and the reasons for subcontracting the provision. Audit arrangements ensured that the College complied with ESFA requirements regarding providers who subcontract to a value in excess of £100k funded provision.  Members noted that subcontracted provision widened participation and served local community needs. It was noted that there was no intention to continue with two of the providers listed as their students were carry over learners finishing their studies.  The College was seeking to reduce subcontracting provision with students being enrolled on courses within existing College provision.  The Committee received the Subcontractors Arrangements Report for 2019/2020.  **Governance Quality Improvement Plan 2019/2020** Audit & Governance Committee considered and noted the updated QIP and expressed satisfaction on progress against agreed actions.  **Governor Training Away Event** The date of the Governor Away Event for 2020 was confirmed as Friday 28 February 2020. The Principal and Clerk outlined the proposed agenda for the day. Whilst it was accepted the elements of the day were necessary, opportunities for Governors to engage and talk would be appreciated.  The Committee received the report.  **Interim Deputy Principal, Finance and Corporate Services** The Chair referred to the fact that this would be the last meeting of the Committee that Janet Whiteside would attend in her capacity as Interim Deputy Principal, Finance and Corporate Services. She thanked Janet for her work and assistance to the Committee over the last few months.  Janet would return to her position as Director of Finance at the beginning of March 2020.  The Committee concurred with the Chair's comments.  Janet responded accordingly.  **Resolved:**  **That the report be received.** |
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| **35.20** | ***Report of the Quality and Standards Committee 11 February 2020*** |
| ***Decision*** | Corporation considered the report of the Quality and Standards Committee from their meeting held on Tuesday 11 February 2020.  **Appointment of Vice Chair** The Committee resolved to appoint Allison Jones as Vice Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the academic year.  **Performance Data 2019/2020** The Committee had reviewed performance data as follows:  **Strategic Plan Progress Report 2019/2020.** Recruitment to FE was meeting target. Recruitment to Apprenticeships at this mid-point period indicated targets would be challenging. Overall, numbers on Higher Education programmes should reach target following recruitment at Semester 2. Standards of teaching on FE and HE were meeting and exceeding expectations with walkthrough observations now at 57.8%. Student responses to the induction survey scored well over 90%, meeting College targets. Retention and attendance figures were high for both Further Education and Higher Education.  **Further Education** recruitment was 1704 against a target of 1636. Preston AEB 19 plus income was on target and Liverpool/Manchester was on profile for the period. Attendance, retention and punctuality, precursors of success, were strong with monitoring in all areas ensuring pockets of concern were identified and addressed. Overall attendance was at 92.41%, against a College target of 95% (including authorised absences). Attendance at GCSE/Functional Skills English and Maths classes was currently 87% for English and 84% for Maths, with a greater incidence of unauthorised absence, which was being monitored across all sites in Performance Monitoring Meetings. Punctuality was excellent across all centres at 99%. Retention for all FE programmes (16 to 18 and 19 plus) was excellent at 99% and this exceeded the College retention target of 95%. Continued high retention would be a feature of performance. Retention for 14 to 16 year old students was 89% overall.  **HE In-Year Performance** reported high levels of HE student retention (98.7%), progression to year 2 (90.6%) and attendance (89%). The key priority was to ensure continued high levels of retention for students across both full and part time courses for the remainder of the year. The following new courses were being developed for 2021:  • BSc (Hons) Competition Motorcycle Technology Top-up  • BSc (Hons) Top-up/Graduate Certificate Veterinary Nursing  • FdSc/BSc (Hons) Top-up Animals and Horticulture as Therapy.  HE applications for September 2020 entry were currently down compared with the same period last year and it was more important than ever to maximise the conversion of applicants to enrolments. Emphasis remained on increasing recruitment. The Committee also considered a report on the continued requirements from the Office for Students. The paper indicated that the College had continued to meet all the requirements and deadlines of the Office for Students. The Access & Participation Plan has now been approved but the approval notice included a number of areas for improvement. These were to reduce gaps in performance for the following groups:  • Recruitment to full time programmes for students from different ethnicities, mature students and students from POLAR 4 group 1 (the most disadvantaged area).  • Gaps in achievement or degree outcomes for students with a learning difficulty or disability and students from POLAR 4 group 1.  • Gaps in progression to highly skilled employment for students from POLAR 4 group 1.  **The In-year Performance Report for Apprenticeship and Skills** showed current achievement was at 47.8% with a best case scenario of 79.5%, which would be above College target. Timely was at 19.3% with a best case of 72.9%, again above College target. Income target of £3.2m would remain challenging. A total of 203 observations of 37 staff had taken place with 97.6% meeting expected standards. The College has now reached the maximum level available in terms of its non-levy apprenticeship contract and, until March, would be accessing the new non-levy DAS contract. This was likely to be challenging for some employers and the Employer Services Team was offering support in this new initiative. The Advanced Golf Greenkeeping Standard has now been approved, which was anticipated to bring about significant growth. The Committee, after questions, accepted all the reports.  **Quality Performance and Standards Report** The Quality and Standards Committee considered the report on Quality Performance and Standards. The report included details of sixteen successful External Verification visits that had taken place so far this academic year. Preparations for an imminent Ofsted visit were underway. A Landex Peer Review was scheduled for the 12/13 February 2020 and a Teaching and Learning Fair was to be held on 14 February 2020. Details of all Walkthrough Observations were included in the report. The Committee received the report.  **Quality Improvement Plan 2019/2020 – Update** The Committee considered progress on the Quality Improvement Plan 2019/2020. English and Maths remained high priorities. The Clerk also expanded on the improvements in the Governors Engagement Programme.  **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (FREDIE) Action Plan** The Committee considered the FREDIE Action Plan, which included details of changes since the last meeting. It was also reported that the Internal Auditors, RSM, had recently undertaken an audit of the Student Mental Health Framework, which would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.  **Learner Voice** The Committee considered the report on Learner Voice which focused on the Student Induction Surveys. Results remained strong with 95% of FE and HE, and 96% of Apprenticeships & Skills students enjoying their first six weeks of College. However, there was need to consider the other 5% and what could be done to help rectify the situation. Other results indicated that 100% of HE learners and 97% of FE learners said that they felt safe whilst on campus. It had been explored why 3% did not. The report also detailed recent Course Representative meetings and the results of the MyStar Awards. The Committee received the report.  **Curriculum Risk Register** Quality & Standards Committee considered those elements of the Statutory Risk Register applicable to the Committee. The review found that no risks had been added or risk scores amended since the previous meeting. However, the register had been updated and the updates were highlighted in blue text within the register. The Apprenticeship provision and income generation remained a high risk. The likelihood of an Ofsted visit in the near future was still on the agenda. The Committee received the report.  **Resolved:**  **That the report be received.** |
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| **36.20** | ***Report of the Finance and Resources Committee 10 March 2020*** |
| ***Decision*** | The Corporation received the report of the Finance and Resources Committee from its meeting held on 10 March 2020.  **Financial Regulations** – **Annual Review** The Financial Regulations required review and a report was presented including a schedule of amendments, which had been broken down into two sections, namely substantive changes and minor changes. The substantive changes principally fell into two broad areas:  Procurement Rules. The Brexit arrangements required the College to maintain EU Procurement Regulations until the end of the transitional arrangement at 31 December 2020. The revised procurements thresholds were included in the revision.  Disposal of Assets. The procedure for the disposal of assets had been incorporated into the Financial Regulations under section 10.6. The minor changes were in the main related to procedural/nominated officer issues.    **The Committee recommended Corporation to accept the revised Financial Regulations with effect from 1 April 2020.**  **College Funding Update**  The Committee received the report of the Director of Finance, detailing the notification from the ESFA, received on 28 February 2020, on the funding provision for 2020/21. The report outlined the main points of the allocation as follows:  • The FE Funding Allocation for 2020/21, including high needs funding but excluding bursaries, was £13,256,131. This was £1,460,001 higher than in the current year.  • Within the total FE allocation was an High Needs ‘element 2’ Funding of £1,896,000 in respect of 316 learners, which represented an increase of £372,000 and 62 learners, in comparison to the current year.  • Excluding the positive effect of High Needs Funding the FE allocation is £10,618,701 that is £1,253,138 higher than in the current year. The principal reasons for the increase were:  - £20.8k increase for new funding streams for High Value Courses;     - Increase to the base rate funding of £188 per FTE;  - Increase in student numbers due to lagged funding of 71;  - Level 3 programme Maths and English £97k.  Principalship was working on both short- and medium-term measures to improve efficiency and attract additional students. In considering the report the Committee expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that a great deal of officer time had gone into preparing the ESFA Financial Model, which had been forwarded to their office on the 27 February only for the forecasting of finances to be impacted the day after by the increase in funding notification.    **The Committee received the report and resolved to forward a copy to Corporation for information.**  The Committee then considered:  **The Principal's Strategic Plan Progress Report 2019/2020;**  **Financial Position Statement for Period Ended 31 January 2020 including Investment Funds and Interest and Capital and Revenue Cash Flow;**  **Capital Expenditure Report for Period Ended 31 January 2020; Myerscough Ventures Report for Period Ended 31 January 2020.**  The Committee received all of the above regular reports on the various aspects of the College finances for the period ended 31 January 2020. It was pleasing to note that the finances of the College remained in a healthy state although the current and future budgets were challenging. The balance sheet remained strong.  The surplus as a percentage of income was £402k (pre FRS 102) against a phased budget surplus of £416k with a current ratio of 1:1.39 (1:1.31 January 2019) and cash days of 78.9 (71.7 January 2019). Turnover was slightly behind target at £15.21m but above last year of £14.82m (January 2019).  Recruitment for 16 – 18 year-olds was ahead of target by some 68 students. Adult classroom-based income would be close to target by the end of the year. Full time HE numbers were on track to meet target although full time Year 1 may fall just short. Apprenticeship income remained challenging as did full cost course recovery. Staff costs as a percentage of income was 56.1% against a phased target of 56.4%. Income from Myerscough Ventures was £0.03m behind a profile target of £0.64m. Overall income to date was lower than budget by £434k (2.8%) but above last year by £398k (2.7%).  The key income variances were:  • Education including sub-contract income was £142k (1.3%) less than budget  • Apprenticeship and Skills including sub-contract income was £230k (1.4%), less than budget, and  • Other activities income was £48k (17.0%) above budget. Direct pay costs were £227k (3.7%) less than budget and £171k lower than the same time last year. There was an on-going process to thoroughly review all recruitment arising through natural turnover.  The Farm income was being closely monitored and to date the gross margin was £51k adverse to budget and 23k less than last year. The report on the Farm also included a copy of the Farm Improvement Plan, which was welcomed by Governors. The report indicated that the capital plan projects were meeting targets.  The report on the Strategic Plan also included some of the results from the student induction survey, which indicated a high level of satisfaction.  **Strategic Risk Register** The Committee received a report on risks associated with their area of operation. Members asked questions and sought clarification in a number of areas. The Committee received the report.  **Student Bursary Fund Allocation** The Director of Finance presented a report on the provision of Bursary Funds for 2020/2021. The ESFA had increased provision by £53,604 for the year giving a total of £783,772. This sum covered: Discretionary 16 – 18 and Residential figures for Free School Meals but not for Advanced Learners at this stage. The increase was partly due to increased student numbers and also to a change in methodology.  Following discussions last year with the ESFA residential bursaries would not be made available to students on non-specialist sports courses or public service courses as these were widely available in 6th Form schools and Colleges.  The Policy and Procedure covering the allocation of the funds for both FE and HE students was also presented for consideration. The latest guidance had not yet been received from the ESFA and this may affect the policies for both HE and FE. However, it was necessary to agree the policies so that they could be published as soon as possible. Any necessary amendments would be made at a later date via Chair’s Action. Both policies would be published on the College website but details of Bursary Fund Awards (also circulated with the papers) would be retained as an internal document.  The Committee received the report and confirmed that the Policy and Procedures remained fit for purpose.  **Human Resources** **for the Period Ending 31 January 2019** The Committee considered the above report, which contained analysis of staff turnover, breakdown analysis of leavers, staff stability index and staff sickness statistics. The Committee noted that staff turnover was 16.8%, a slight reduction from the last period and was below national average. Overall staff sickness was at 2.9% a slight increase from the last quarter although it remained below the north west average of 3.1%. There were 8 employees currently on long term sickness absence, which was above the target of 6. The Committee received the report.  **Safer Recruitment** The Committee considered a report indicating that HR had reviewed all pre-employment background checks and vetting processes to provide clarity on the safer recruitment requirements for different categories of workers or engagements – such as third parties and contractors - which take place across the College. This would provide clarity and consistency for managers and should help to enhance levels of understanding and compliance. HR had also introduced a safer recruitment audit checklist, which now had to be completed for every new starter and would provide clear and timely oversight of compliance with all safer recruitment responsibilities. In addition, the recent introduction of DBS Online would provide a secure means of undertaking DBS checks going forward, whilst reducing waiting times for clearance. The Committee received the report.  **Health and Safety Report for the Period Ended 31 January 2020** Members considered the Health and Safety Report for the period ended 31 January 2020, which included a summary of key strengths, areas for improvement, actions taken and further actions planned. The number of accidents had reduced considerably compared to the same period last year and there was nothing pointing to a significant area of concern. Slips, trips and falls remained the main cause of accidents or incidents. The number of near misses had increased but this was due, it was felt, to the improved reporting arrangements. Only 4 RIDDOR reportable accidents occurred, none of which required further investigation. Details of audits undertaken and planned were included in the report. The Committee received the report.  **Janet Whiteside** Finally the Chair and Committee expressed their thanks to Janet Whiteside, Director of Finance, who had stepped into the role of Interim Deputy Principal, Finance and Corporate Services, during the recent vacancy.  **Resolved:**  **1. That the revised Financial Regulations , as presented, be**  **approved.**  **2. The Corporation were pleased to note the funding approvals for**  **2020/2021.**  **3. That the report be received.** |
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| **37.20** | ***Key Strategic Risks*** |
| ***Decision*** | The Corporation considered a report on the Key Strategic Risks for the College.  **Resolved:**  **That the report be received.** |
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