

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on Tuesday 4 July 2023

Present: Simon Boyle, Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce, Jonathan Frankham, Shayer Hussain, Karen James, John Lyne (Chair), Jackie Moores, Elaine Price, Arsana Subba

Nils Elgar, Clerk to the Corporation

In Attendance: Dave Dobson (Executive Director Finance, Estates MIS and IT), Leon Dowd (Deputy Principal Quality and People), Nicola Welland (Deputy Principal Curriculum)

ACTION

22/23.84 Apologies for Absence

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to accept the apologies of Damien Bourke, Kirk Cornwall and Rachael Frankland. **Accepted**

22/23.85 Declarations of Interest

It was noted that Jonathan Frankham had a standing declaration that he was an employee of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the College's principal funder and regulator. **Noted**

22/23.86 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23 May 2023

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023. **Approved**

22/23.87 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

22/23.88 Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting Held on 20 June 2023

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2023. **Noted**

22/23.89 Key Discussion Topic: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report

The Deputy Principal Quality and People reported the following points:

- (i) the impact of EDI was considered in relevant reports throughout the year and summarised within the EDI Annual Report. More attention could be paid to the EDI section of SLT and Governor reporting, to clearly show that attention was paid to EDI within planning (curriculum and estates) and the impact of the EDI Policy was clear in strategic and performance reporting;
- (ii) the age and gender profiles of staff and students were appropriate. The ratio of female to male staff was greater in business support and learning support;

- (iii) there were no significant gaps in the achievement rates for males and females or between 16-18 and adult learners;
- (iv) there were no issues to report in regard to sexual orientation of staff;
- (v) there were no issues to report regarding staff or students who had a disability and / or learning difficulty. The process for implementing and monitoring any adaptations required by staff had been improved;
- (vi) there were no significant gaps in the achievement rates for students with disabilities and / or learning difficulties and those that did not and for students receiving additional learning support (ALS) and those that did not;
- (vii) learning support was effective. Providing additional learning support for the increased number of low cost EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) learners on mainstream provision without additional funding was challenging;
- (viii) the pass rates of LAC (Looked After Children) learners and learners with safeguarding related issues were similar to the 16-18 College average, however the retention rate was lower for both groups. This would remain a focus for 2023/24;
- (ix) 71% of qualifications were undertaken by students (all ages) from wards that were rated in the top three Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles. There were no significant gaps between the achievement rates of students in each decile. This was similar when comparing students on bursary with those that were not on bursary;
- (x) the ethnicity profile of staff, particularly of teachers, was similar to the community the College served. There were no significant gaps in the achievement rates of students from different ethnic minority groups when compared to the achievement rate of White – British students;
- (xi) staff and students of the College had defined appropriate values and behaviours that supported the College's EDI aims and their positive impact was evident;
- (xii) the management of inappropriate behaviour regarding the College's EDI aims was robust and well managed.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) whether the College spoke with departing LAC students about their reasons for leaving. It was noted that the College had a good relationship with the local authority and was aware of students' reasons for leaving;
- (ii) for LAC students, whether there were any identifiable trends;
- (iii) that the report clearly demonstrated the impact of the College's EDI work.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022/23.

Noted

22/23.90

May Management Accounts

The Executive Director Finance, Estates, MIS and IT reported the following points:

- (i) as at 31 May 2023, there was a favourable variance of £1.286m between actual to revised budget and a balance sheet of £12.694m;
- (ii) given, the favourable variance expected outturn, it was proposed to purchase materials in advance and to bring forward repairs and maintenance to the current financial year;
- (iii) a proposal to increase capital expenditure in 2022/23 by £150k for IT equipment, which would give staff an additional four weeks for installation before classes began in September. If approved, the capital expenditure budget for 2023/24 would reduce by £150k (to £500k);
- (iv) an update on the Further Education Capital Transformation Fund (FECTF) project, due to the magnitude of expenditure:
 - the main contractor for Project A (Animal Management and Brickwork) was already on site and the tender for Project B (Motor Vehicle) was with the market;
 - the current cost estimate for the project was £11.958m, with an additional £465k in adjustments including:
 - £66k in value engineering options identified by the contractor for Project A;
 - Project A and B fixtures and fittings were currently forecast at £120k less than the cost estimate;
 - other grant income had been allocated for increases in scope of the original submission for internal brickwork dust extraction (£104k), external brickwork canopy (£125k) and meercat enclosure (£50k);
 - the original budget of £11.5m was still felt to be achievable with a £474k contingency remaining within the £11,958m cost estimate;
 - Project B (Motor Vehicle) tender responses provided assurance that the project cost estimate was accurate.

Governors noted the current significant positive variance and proposal to bring forward some capital expenditure. It was agreed that this made sense and would assist the College operationally.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the May Management Accounts.

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve an additional £150k capital expenditure in 2022/23 (with a corresponding reduction in 2023/24 capital expenditure).

Approved

22/23.91

Budget for Year Ending 31 July 2024 (incl. Capital Budget) and Two-Year Financial Plan

The Executive Director Finance, Estates, MIS and IT reported the following points:

- (i) the Governor Budget Scrutiny Working Group met on 13 June and reviewed a draft version of the budget papers. Key issues considered at that meeting included:
 - the major assumptions, risks and mitigations;

- the risk posed by the proposed small surpluses to allow for increased staffing and utility costs;
 - the limited investment in the Estates Strategy as a result of reducing the planned surplus;
 - the risk associated with the proposed increases in apprenticeships income;
 - the risk on energy costs;
 - whether the College needed to be financially outstanding;
- (ii) a proposed operating surplus for 2023/24 of £159k (reduced by £499k when compared to the revised budget for 2022/23) due to planning assumptions over a pay award and increases in depreciation (following planned capital investment);
- (iii) overall income in 2023/24 was forecast to rise by £1.4m to £29.780m. This would rise further to £30.836m in 2024/25;
- (iv) key assumptions / points in relation to the 2023/24 budget;
- (v) the budget plan had been extended by a further two years to 2026/27 due to significant expenditure on capital projects;
- (vi) the College was forecast to remain financially 'outstanding' throughout the budgeted planning period to 2026/27.

Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) the prior detailed scrutiny given by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group to the draft budget;
- (ii) that the curriculum plan 2023/24 underpinned the budget plan;
- (iii) a clear change in emphasis in the proposed budget to address the significant staffing risks. The Principal commented that while the College currently paid better than some other colleges, it could not compete with the higher salaries offered by sixth form colleges that did not have high cost provision such as Construction and Engineering and three other Greater Manchester FE colleges.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the 2023/24 budget and subsequent estimate for 2024/25, which comprised: **Approved**

- (i) a pre-pension surplus of £158,520;
- (ii) general capital funds of £500,000;
- (iii) continuation of approved capital projects, specifically:
 - FECTF, partially grant funded;
 - Institute of Technology (IoT), 100% grant funded;
 - additional FE Capital funding (sustainability focused), 100% grant funded;
 - FE reclassification capital allocation (building condition focused), 100% grant funded;
 - College share of T Level Wave 3 underspend;
 - commencement of Wave 4 capital project (subject to approval).

22/23.92 Curriculum 2023/24

The Deputy Principal Curriculum gave a presentation. Key points included:

- (i) curriculum changes in 2023/24:
 - the move to two semesters for the quality focus with three terms of delivery;
 - expansion of T-levels;
 - Institute of Technology launched;
 - an increased community offer by TACE with a planned presence in every Tameside borough;
- (ii) curriculum planning covering:
 - rooming challenges;
 - Maths & English;
 - additional curriculum hours;
 - staffing challenges;
 - financials;
 - work experience;
 - mandated study / Covid catch up;
- (iii) curriculum CPD, which included:
 - use of a video-based learning platform for teachers;
 - two industry / professional update days;
 - bespoke training to teachers in need of improvement;
 - teaching and learning conference;
- (iv) tracking learner progress:
 - learner risk tracking overview, through line management, It's My Responsibility (IMR), curriculum evaluations and performance reviews;
 - use of One Grade and ALPS to track vocational and A level / sixth form value added respectively;
 - simplified approaches to work scrutiny to reduce staff workload;
 - use of Mark book to provide reports to students and parents;
- (v) skills:
 - stakeholder endorsed schemes of work;
 - collaboration with stakeholders in sequencing and selecting units / approaches;
 - key stakeholders prepared for curriculum areas;
 - student and employer case studies.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) the College appeared to have a thorough approach to curriculum planning;
- (ii) the Teaching and Learning Conference represented a positive development;
- (iii) the curriculum areas under pressure from a staffing perspective. It was noted that these included Travel, Construction, Computer Science and some single teacher subject areas. It was further noted that the College might have to limit enrolments in some areas to that which could be managed by available staff.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Curriculum 2023/24. **Noted**

22/23.93 Summary of Staff Feedback, Learner Feedback and Complaints

The Deputy Principal Quality and People reported the following points:

- (i) Teaching and Learning (Student) Survey, December 2022:
 - a return rate of 82% was achieved;
 - satisfaction with both their course and the organisation of their course was 94%, a +2%-point increase and +4%-point above National Average (NA) respectively;
 - overall learner satisfaction was high (>90%) in all curriculum areas other than Computing (88%), Engineering (81%) and Travel & Tourism (83%);
 - learners feel safe in College (+3%-points above NA);
 - survey results had been disseminated for evaluation and actioning and inclusion in curriculum evaluation;
- (ii) Complaints:
 - all formal complaints were well managed. The very significant majority of complaints were dealt with in a timely manner and addressed appropriately;
 - analysis indicated that there are no specific issues relating to age, gender, ethnicity or equality;
- (iii) Student Champion Focus Groups:
 - three student champion focus groups (Clarendon Sixth Form, Tameside [Beaufort Road and T1]) and Apprentices had met termly. Feedback had been positive and, where necessary, actions had been instigated to address issues;
- (iv) Staff Survey, December 2022:
 - 340 staff responded, 14 more than 2021;
 - at 83%, the overall satisfaction of staff was +1%-point above NA but 3%-points below the previous year;
 - high levels of satisfaction were reflected in each theme, with a small number of exceptions;
 - staff satisfaction regarding the purpose and direction of the College remained high and above NA. Focus groups were held at the Clarendon site to explore some of their responses, with a number of actions being put in place;
 - staff satisfaction regarding the impact of the Values and Behaviours Framework was very positive, with the significant majority of key aspects being above NA;
 - satisfaction regarding the effectiveness and impact of communications had declined slightly and was an area for improvement;
 - further actions had been identified regarding a small minority of staff feeling undervalued, the need to continue to improve communications in certain areas and improve the impact of appraisals for a minority of staff;
 - the new IMR (appraisal) process had resulted in improved satisfaction levels for staff, particularly teachers;
 - satisfaction regarding IT and room resource, particularly for teachers and Beaufort Road staff was partly down to the impact of the estates work being undertaken at Beaufort Road. This had been discussed with staff and

some of the issues raised would be considered during the next phase of estate works;

- the very significant majority of staff feel the College is a friendly place to work and they were happy to be working at the College. These were slightly lower than last year, but above NA;
- staff feel that learners are well supported and generally they are supported with their own wellbeing. Further actions were in place to consider how to improve teacher satisfaction regarding their wellbeing;
- staff were familiar and highly satisfied with the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) the 10% decline in perception that the Governing Body was in touch with what is happening in the College. The Deputy Principal Quality and People opined that this was unlikely to have been a statement on the lack of confidence in the Board, but there was a very small group of staff who had acted to stop the pay award and to start industrial action in December 2022, which was unsuccessful. This happened at the same time as the Staff Survey was taken. The Chair opined that Governors had been more visible in College during 2022/23 than since before COVID. It was noted, however, that the staff survey was completed in December, which was less than a term into the current academic year. The Staff Governor added that staff could see the investment being made in the College estate but not necessarily into staffing. It was suggested that staff might not understand that the funding the College had received was for capital projects and not for staffing, and that this funding was contingent on College matched funding (from reserves);
- (ii) whether the Teaching and Learning Survey was completed by both TACE learners and sub-contracted learners. It was noted that this was the case and, additionally, that the Student Focus Group work also included TACE and sub-contracted learners;
- (iii) the commendably high (82%) return rate for the Teaching and Learning Survey;
- (iv) the Principal's view that the overall results of the Staff Survey were not as good as she wanted, but better than what they could have been given the wider economic context and the challenges staff face;
- (v) the timing of the Staff Survey, which was at the end of the first term, traditionally a hard term for staff. Last year this period was impacted by trade union activity in respect of the pay award whereby a small group of teachers did not want to accept the pay award offered. This held up payment of the non-consolidated element that the College wanted to pay before Christmas;
- (vi) whether the Staff Survey results regarding the Governing Body being in touch with what was going on in College and communications might be interrelated;

- (vii) that given the staffing crisis, it was good to see that staff were largely happy with their experience at the College. It was noted that some staff had left because they needed to find higher paid work. Some staff had left for a career change;
- (viii) a view that while the Department for Education was aware of the staffing crisis, they would not change the Ofsted approach to inspections. Ofsted, however, might note any relevant (staffing) issues in their report;
- (ix) benchmarking work on pay currently being undertaken by the College would be included in the HR Annual Report;
- (x) a view that rather than seeking to improve sector pay, ministers might seek further efficiencies.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Summary of Staff Feedback, Learner Feedback and Complaints Report.

Noted

22/23.94 Subcontracting Annual Report and Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy

Shayer Hussain left the meeting during this item.

The Principal reported the following points:

- (i) subcontracted provision in 2022/23 remained a very small part of overall College provision (£112k or 0.4% of income) – well below the cap of 25% mandated by the ESFA;
- (ii) provision was limited to three providers: Groundwork (Prince's Trust), Holy Trinity Community Centre and Manchester Digital. During the year, the College helped Manchester Digital secure its own prime contract and the College's students transferred across in-year;
- (iii) planned subcontracting provision in 2023/24 was with Groundwork and Holy Trinity Community Centre. Groundwork provision was aimed at disengaged young people. Holy Trinity Community Centre provision aimed to engage people in the local community, mainly BAME women, who would not directly access mainstream College provision but required engagement activity to build confidence and develop English skills towards progression. Proposed subcontracted provision in 2023/24 was for £72k or 0.25% of College income;
- (iv) an external audit of subcontracting controls was undertaken during 2022/23. The report and certification had been to the Audit Committee. The College was found to be fully compliant with the subcontracting standard. There was one advisory action on risk management; to develop a plan to handle subcontractor failure and to further develop the dispute resolution processes through mediation in the subcontracting contract;
- (v) as required by the ESFA, no brokers were used for subcontracting provision.

Governors were content with the report as presented.

Resolved: The Board of Governors noted the subcontracted delivery for 2022/23.

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the proposed supply chain subcontractors for 2023/24.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy 2023/24.

Approved

22/23.95 Estates Development Update

The Executive Director Finance and Estates provided an update on the following:

- (i) current capital projects, including the T Level Wave 4 (Education and Childcare), IoT and FECTF;
- (ii) a number of additional summer capital works that would go ahead to optimise the use of space across campus. These projects would be funded through a combination of the T Level wave 4 vire, existing capital allocations and utilisation of the condition improvement grant;
- (iii) funding bids. A decision on the T Level Wave 5, £1.7m with a £1.7m grant, project was due in Summer 2023 (*and subsequent to the meeting, the College was unsuccessful in its bid*);
- (iv) an outline of future (currently unfunded) developments;
- (v) College land at Dorset Street previously planned for disposal. Following receipt of land valuations and changing priorities, it was now proposed to retain this land for vehicle parking for the Estates Team following their move to the Waterloo Building.

Governors were content with the report as presented.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Estates Development Update.

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the recommended use of the Dorset Street car park.

Approved

Jonathan Frankham left at the end of this item.

22/23.96 External Audit Planning Memorandum, Year Ended 31 July 2023

The Executive Director Finance and Estates reported that Wylie & Bisset LLP had presented the External Audit Planning Memorandum to the Audit Committee at its meeting on 20 June. There it had been reported that none of the key risks identified were specific to the College but were for the sector as a whole.

Governors noted the prior scrutiny by the Audit Committee and were content with the report as presented.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the External Audit Planning Memorandum for the Year Ending 31 July 2023.

Approved

22/23.97 Governance Matters

(i) Review of Governance Arrangements

The Clerk to the Corporation reported the following points:

- (i) no changes were proposed to the Standing Orders;
- (ii) one change was proposed to the Audit Committee's terms of reference, which was in relation to the requirement for any ESFA mandated assurance review on the College's subcontracting arrangements to be scrutinised by the Audit Committee and recorded in the minutes appropriately;
- (iii) changes to the Remuneration Committee terms of reference were required in response to the ONS reclassification of the English college sector to central government, which included the requirement for colleges to adhere to various Treasury guidance documents, notably Managing Public Money;
- (iv) no changes were proposed to the Search Committee terms of reference.

Governors were content with the report as presented.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the proposed changes to committee terms of reference.

Approved

(ii) Draft Calendar of Meetings and Schedule of Business 2023/24

The Clerk to the Corporation indicated that the schedule of meetings for 2023/24 followed the same pattern as for 2022/23. There would continue to be a mix of in-person and remote Board meetings. Some Key Discussion Topics needed to be finalised for Board meetings. The Governor Learning Visit schedule needed to be finalised.

Governors were content with the proposals as outlined.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Calendar of Meetings and Schedule of Business for 2023/24.

Approved

(iii) Appointment of Vice Chair of Governors

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the re-appointment of Malcolm Bruce as Vice Chair of Governors for a further year of office ending 31 August 2024.

Approved

22/23.98 Update on Governor Engagement and Development Activities

The Clerk to the Corporation reported the following Governor engagement and development activities had been recorded since the date of the last Board meeting:

- (i) 26.05.23 – Public Services Students’ Passing Out Parade: Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce, Kirk Cornwall, Karen James and John Lyne;
- (ii) 13.06.23 – Budget Scrutiny Working Group: Simon Boyle, Karen James, John Lyne, Jackie Moores and Arsana Subba.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the verbal update on Governor Engagement and Development Activities. **Noted**

22/23.99 Items for Noting

(i) Chair’s Action

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note that no Chair’s Actions had been taken since the date of the last meeting. **Noted**

(ii) Use of the Seal of the Corporation

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note that there had been no use of the Seal of the Corporation since the date of the last meeting. **Noted**

(iii) Procurement Activity and Approvals

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Procurement Activity and Approvals report. **Noted**

(iv) Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2022/23

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2022/23 (85%). **Noted**

22/23.100 Time and Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 17 October 2023

The Chair thanked Governors and managers for their hard work over the past year and wished everyone a good summer break.

Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:

Chair

Date