

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on
Tuesday 18 October 2022**

Present: Damien Bourke, Simon Boyle, Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce, Kirk Cornwall, Jonathan Frankham, Rachael Frankland, Karen James, John Lyne (Chair), Jackie Moores, Elaine Price, Saariah Qureshi, Chris Rushton

Nils Elgar, Clerk to the Corporation

In Attendance: Dave Dobson (Executive Director Finance and Estates), Leon Dowd (Deputy Principal Quality and People), Steven Pritchard (Head of Estates and Property Strategy), Nicola Welland (Deputy Principal Curriculum)

ACTION

22/23.01 Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting by reflecting on the fact that this was the first face-to-face Board meeting since February 2020. He opined that it was great to see everyone in person and that we were in fact meeting for the first time in person some new Governors.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to accept the apologies of Shayer Hussain. **Accepted**

22/23.02 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**

22/23.03 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 5 July 2022

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022. **Approved**

22/23.04 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising **Noted**

22/23.05 Key Discussion Topic – Estates Strategy Update

Key points highlighted by the Executive Director Finance and Estates included:

- (i) the College needed a Corporation approved Estates Strategy to participate in the capital bidding process. An updated Estates Strategy was presented to facilitate this and act as a framework for capital investment;
- (ii) the College had seen significant capital investment over the past seven years that had resulted in a large proportion of the estate that was in good condition and functionally suitable. However, there were still parts of the Beaufort Road campus that required further investment and the works associated

- with the FE Capital Transformation Fund (FECTF) would address some of these areas;
- (iii) the Strategy included an analysis of floor space requirements, which concluded that the College was over spaced across all sites. However, some 2,262m² of excess space at the Beaufort Road campus would be removed as part of the FECTF works and the College continued to experience strong recruitment of learners that would increase the Department for Education (DfE) theoretical space;
 - (iv) while the phases identified in the Strategy reflected recent discussions on priority of works, these might need to be amended in light of emerging funding opportunities and recruitment;
 - (v) there remained approximately £32.7m of further projects to be undertaken. Beyond the current approved projects, the level of reserves was limited and so any new capital programmes would require the reallocation of in-year capital or high levels of grant funding;
 - (vi) in September 2022, the DfE launched the Capacity Development Fund, which was to support additional capacity linked to local demographics. Bids were due by 11 November 2022, with any works completed by September 2024. The College was proposing to submit a bid for the expansion of Clarendon Sixth Form. Recruitment had been strong since the last space review and there was limited ability to increase spaces in line with demographic increases. The area of expansion was not currently part of the lease with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC), with discussions underway with them for an extension of that lease. The indicative capital cost of this project was £2.5m.

A presentation was shared that summarised details and visuals of the approved T-Level and FECTF projects:

- (i) T Level (Childcare) – £1.0m refurbishment of Victoria D Floor (January 2023 to April 2023);
- (ii) FECTF – £11.5m capital investment at Beaufort Road, investing in:
 - building refurbishment for Animal Management and Brickwork facilities. (April 2023 to August 2023);
 - new purpose built Automotive Centre. (June 2023 to August 2024).

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) that extent to which inflation had been factored into approved projects. It was noted that this was the case and had been discussed earlier in the day with the College's cost consultants;
- (ii) the extent to which planned and preventative maintenance had been factored into the Strategy. It was noted that a maintenance plan would be incorporated for each new and refurbished building;
- (iii) the extent to which a campus heating strategy had been incorporated into the Estates Strategy. It was noted that the

College had engaged a consultant to provide a Net Zero service that included a Heat Decarbonisation Plan, which was expected to have been completed by September 2022.

However, the consultant had failed in its service level. The College had published on its website the mandatory Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting, which showed a 30% decrease in carbon emissions since 2018/19;

- (iv) whether asbestos removal had been adequately factored into current projects. It was noted that the presence of asbestos was known in the Newton Building and ducting, but this was not at the levels seen in previous projects. Significant provision had been made for this in current project budgets and the overall price for this should come down;
- (v) the extent to which the teaching of certain practical courses informed space utilisation rates. It was noted that this was the case;
- (vi) whether a possible ONS reclassification of colleges from private to public sector would impact on college borrowing. It was noted that the impact of such a decision was not yet known;
- (vii) that the College had experienced significant growth in student numbers over the past few years and this growth was expected to continue for several more years. An agenda item considering this issue would be brought to Governors at the next Board meeting. It was also noted that this growth was across the College and across all levels;
- (viii) whether the College's plans in respect of Clarendon Sixth Form were supported at all levels in TMBC. It was noted that both the new Leader and new Chief Executive had voiced their support for the project;
- (ix) the views of the Chair, which included:
 - that he had seen a number of estates strategies over the years and that any strategy needed to be flexible to meet changing government priorities as well as changing student numbers and interests;
 - the College needed to be ready to submit bids to take advantage of available grant funding.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Estates Strategy as a framework for capital investment over the life of the Strategy.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the submission of the Capacity Development Fund application as outlined in the report.

Approved

22/23.06 Health and Safety Annual Report

The Head of Estates and Property Strategy raised the following points:

- (i) in accordance with government guidance, the College's COVID-19 Risk Assessment was now included within its Business Continuity Plan as a respiratory infection risk assessment;

- (ii) building evacuations had recommenced following two years of virtual training in this area. Retests were needed for the Advanced Technologies Centre (ATC) and Victoria Building at Beaufort Road site. Tameside One also needed to be retested due to confusion caused by the alarm being turned off by another tenant in the building. It was noted that this should not have been possible and was currently being rectified;
- (iii) COVID checks were still being done in terms of hygiene;
- (iv) an update on the number of accidents reported to date in 2022/23;
- (v) that one of the two Health and Safety Champions meetings had been deferred in 2021/22 due to an insufficient number of attendees. Required attendance at future meetings was being amended to include only key individuals.

Governors noted the issue in relation to the evacuation at Tameside One and commented that this was exactly why it was important for evacuation drills to take place.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Health and Safety Annual Report 2021/22. **Noted**

The Director of Estates and Property Strategy left the meeting at the end of this item.

22/23.07 Principal's Report

The Principal reported the following key points:

- (i) an appendix to the paper included a summary of new guidance by the ESFA and DfE on the oversight of colleges;
- (ii) staff absences had started again due to COVID but these were lower than in previous years. Some eight staff were currently absent with either COVID or the flu;
- (iii) the College had a very successful enrolment period, enrolling 3,449 16-18 students against an allocation of 2,906 (+543). Growth in numbers was attributed to both a demographic increase and an increased market share of school leavers;
- (iv) there was no guarantee of in-year growth funding but the College had received about 50% of its in-year growth funding last year;
- (v) adult enrolments were at least the same as last year;
- (vi) provisional outcomes would be reported later in the meeting (see minute 22/23.08). Of note, however, apprenticeships achievement rate improved from 55% to 66.5%. Delays to end point assessments meant that the target of 70% would not be met. Affected students, however, would achieve in 2022/23;
- (vii) grade boundaries were reintroduced in 2022 and this negatively impacted GCSE English and Maths results across the college sector including at Tameside College. Achievement rates were expected to decline further in 2022/23 as grade boundaries moved back to the levels seen pre-pandemic;

- (viii) the ALPS value added software was no longer appropriate for the College's vocational offer and so the College would move to 'One Grade' for 2022/23. Value added for A level provision would continue with ALPS;
- (ix) the A Level single year T score was a 6, which represented a decline from 2018/19 ALPS score of 4 and an action plan was in place to improve this. However, high grades at A levels had increased from 31% in 2018/19 to 49% in 2021/22 with A*-C grades rising from 69% to 79%. The College's A*-B grade rate compared very favourably with Greater Manchester sixth form colleges;
- (x) The BTEC ALPS score was a 5, which was the same as in 2020/21. The College had some high performing courses which sit outside of ALPS. The introduction of One Grade would ensure value added on every level 3 vocational course would be measured in summer 2023;
- (xi) College income had grown to £28.5m (without any in-year growth) and would probably exceed £30m this year.

Governors commented favourably on the strong enrolment figures. A view was expressed that the growth in student numbers was not just a result of a demographic upturn, but due to a trend in improved quality or provision and improved facilities.

22/23.08 Closure of Quality Improvement Plan 2021/22 and Provisional Outcomes 2021/22

The Deputy Principal Quality and People reported the following key points in relation to the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP):

- (i) Leadership and Management:
 - apprentices achievement was 66.5% which was a +10.1%-point improvement on 2020/21 (see minute 22/23.07);
 - the new IMR (It's My Responsibility) appraisal process was successfully developed and implemented for use by all staff in 2022/23;
- (ii) Quality of Education:
 - Deputy Principal – Curriculum successfully led actions to:
 - improve the rigour and impact of work scrutiny activity;
 - better integrate measures for monitoring learner progress, including leading a review to further improve initial assessment (assignment zero) in 2022/23;
 - ensure teachers completed appropriate industrial updating;
 - developed the curriculum for 2022/23 in line with local and national policy and needs;
 - work to further improve attendance in Maths and English and further embed Maths and English in mainstream curriculum would continue in 2022/23;
 - successful actions improved achievement rates in Apprenticeships (+10.1%-points), Business L1 (+40%-points), Creative and Performance Arts (+5%-points), Access to HE (Nursing) (+23%-points), Teaching

- Assistants (+18%-points) and retention on A Level (+2%-points) and Animal Care (+7%-points);
- achievement rates in IT (16-18 – L1 and L3), Business L3 and AAT required further improvement in 2022/23;
- (iii) Behaviour & Attitudes:
 - overall College attendance was slightly below target, with the COVID impact approx. 3-4% earlier in the year, although this decreased as the year progressed;
 - focus on improving attendance in Maths and English to continue in 2022/23;
 - actions undertaken to raise awareness of peer-on-peer sexual abuse and a learner survey and specific focus groups conducted to ascertain impact;
- (iv) Personal Development and Safeguarding:
 - Prevent, British values and wellbeing content developed for apprenticeship provision, however further action was required to ensure consistency of delivery;
 - wellbeing strategies were successfully developed, particularly to address the increase in Social, Emotional and Mental Health issues presenting in learners;
 - successful development of CPOMS system, implemented for 2022/23, to improve recording and reporting of safeguarding activity.

A summary of provisional outcomes for 2021/22 included:

- (i) care had to be taken in regard to trend analysis and use of national comparators due to the impact of COVID;
- (ii) all College achievement rate was 85%, a 5.4%-point decline since 2020/21 and 1.5%-points below 2018/19 (last pre-COVID year).
 - at 82.7%, the 16-18 achievement rate declined by 8.6%-points since last year and was 2.5%-points below 2018/19;
 - at 85.8%, the 19+ achievement rate declined by 2.6%-points since last year and was 2.8%-points below 2018/19;
 - the most significant decline was at L2 (-9.5%-points), which could be primarily attributed to Maths and English.
- (iii) the main priorities for improving achievement rates, which would be covered in more depth within the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and 2022/23 QIP Reporting were:
 - GCSE and Basic Skills Maths and English;
 - Level 3 vocational courses, particularly examined units and A level equivalent vocational provision;
 - Apprenticeships.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) that although there had been an improvement in student outcomes in a number of areas, GCSE Maths and English remained an issue for the College and whether anything else could be done. There was a strong view by members of the Executive Team that the national policy on Maths and English

was 'broken'. It was reported that colleagues in other colleges also felt this was the case. The College had been in contact with a high performing college to see what else could be done. The College would recruit another Head of Department, so that Maths and English could be split. Further work to embed Maths and English into the curriculum would be explored. The College would also stream students so that Grade 1 and Grade 3 students were not in the same class. It was noted that some learners did not want to do Maths or English and this then created behaviour issues. More revision sessions would be done via Teams. It was not possible to run more face-to-face teaching because physically there was no more room to run such classes (there being over 1000 students in each of Maths and English);

- (ii) the College needed to compare against 2018/19 data as the last two years, without grade boundaries could not be used;
- (iii) that student outcomes in 2021/22 and 2022/23 would build going forward. In any inspection, Ofsted would focus mainly on student progress and destinations;
- (iv) the view of the Deputy Principal Quality and People that the serious issues currently impacting Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) students at secondary schools would be impacting the College over the next few years and, as such, there was an urgent need for a change in policy and funding. It was noted that some staff from the DfE would be undertaking an immersion visit shortly and the key issues of Maths and English, SEND and T Levels would be raised;
- (v) that John Lyne would take on the Link Governor role for Maths and English.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the 2021/22 QIP Final Progress Update and Initial 2021/22 Outcomes.

Noted

22/23.09 Provisional Outturn 2021/22

The Executive Director Finance and Estates reported the following key points:

- (i) the Board approved a budget for 2021/22 that was for an operating surplus of £526k. Following the mid-year review the operating surplus was reforecast to £702k. Following further favourable variances (£422k) and the retiming of payments, the provisional outturn for 2021/22 was for a surplus of £1,122k;
- (ii) the outturn included an accrual that would help fund the non-consolidated element of the planned pay award;
- (iii) the overall financial health grade for 2021/22 was expected to remain as outstanding;
- (iv) cash reserves at year-end (£8,226k) were higher than expected (£6,238k) due to a favourable operating surplus and timings on some expenditure. £209k of capital expenditure was due to be carried forward into 2022/23.

Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) that the provisional outturn represented a good set of results;
- (ii) depreciation. It was noted that the favourable position on depreciation for 2021/22 (£83k) was due to savings on delayed capital spend. It was also noted that increased depreciation arising from the completed Construction Skills Centre was partly offset by those buildings that had been demolished to make way for this building and release of capital grants. On the question of whether depreciation had been modelled into the Estates Strategy, it was noted that it had, with depreciation increasing over the next few years, but also being limited by the capital works being partly grant funded;
- (iii) that the FE Commissioner had set a financial target for colleges that staffing costs would be no more than 65% of income. With a growth in student numbers, there was a resultant need for additional staff. The Executive Team had previously discussed the target to remain about 65% of staffing; choosing to invest in staffing to accelerate any improvements. As ever, there was a need to do careful curriculum planning to meet this target.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Provisional Outturn 2021/22. **Noted**

22/23.10 Update on Governor Development and Engagement Activities

The Clerk to the Corporation invited Governors to feedback on any development sessions they had attended since the date of the last meeting. Governors noted the following activity had taken place:

- (i) 25.07.22 – Meeting with the Assistant Principal Student Experience re. Careers Education Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) attended by Kirk Cornwall with follow up conversations being had on Gatsby Benchmarks;
- (ii) 27.09.22 – the Governor Development Session held on 27 September, which covered individual sessions on Safeguarding, Peer-on-Peer Sexual Harassment and Enhanced Ofsted Inspections;
- (iii) 04.10.22 – Education and Training Foundation (ETF) webinar on External Board Reviews attended by John Lyne;
- (iv) 13.10.22 – Link Governor Phill Brown meeting with the Assistant Principal with responsibility for Construction;
- (v) 13.10.22 – Link Governor Elaine Price meeting with Nicola Welland regarding the College meeting skills needs of community;
- (vi) 18.10.22 – Governor Learning Visit to Construction, including Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce, John Lyne and Chris Rushton.

The Governor Learning Visit to Construction was highlighted as a great way for Governors to learn about an area of College activity, meet staff and students, see the condition of the College estate, as well as consider issues such as health and safety, safeguarding etc.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the development and engagement activities attended by Governors. **Noted**

22/23.11 **Items to Note**

(i) **Chair's Action**

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note that there had been no Chair's Actions 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) **Final Report on Governor Attendance 2021/22**

Governors noted the final Governor attendance figure for 2021/22 was 85%. This compared with the informal sector average of 82% and a Corporation target of 80%.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Final Report on Governor Attendance 2021/22. **Noted**

22/23.12 **Time and Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 15 November 2022**

The Chair Governors were reminded that the next meeting was to be held remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:

Chair

Date