

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on Tuesday 1 July 2025

Present: Subhaan Ali, Damien Bourke, Simon Boyle, Amanda Bromley, Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce, Michael Ginger, Nicky Littler, John Lyne (Chair), Jackie Moores, Jemma Newton, Remell Thompson-Bell, Atta ul Rasool

Nils Elgar, Clerk to the Corporation

In Attendance: Dave Dobson (Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure), Leon Dowd (Deputy Principal Quality and People)

ACTION

24/25.92 Apologies for Absence

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to accept the apologies of Jonathan Frankham and the Deputy Principal Curriculum. **Accepted**

24/25.93 Declarations of Interest

It was noted that within Matters Arising, a recommendation from the Search Committee would be taken forward on Michael Ginger's re-appointment for a further term of office. **Noted**

24/25.94 Minutes of the Meetings Held on:

(i) 20 May 2025

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2025. **Approved**

(ii) 10 June 2025 (Additional)

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the additional meeting held on 10 June 2025. **Approved**

24/25.95 Matters Arising

Damien Bourke joined the meeting during this item.

On minute 24/25.90 (Pay Review 2024/25 Update – Additional Payment), the Deputy Principal Quality and People reported that the trade unions were content with the proposed additional 1% (consolidated) pay award for 2024/25, taking the overall staff pay award (excluding Senior Post Holders) in 2024/25 to 7.1%. This would be paid in July and backdated to 1 April. He added that pay was now having a positive impact on staff recruitment and retention. Senior Post Holders (not including the Principal) would also receive the additional 1% pay award.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the appointment of Michael Ginger for a further three-year term of office ending 31 July 2028. (See minute 24/25.93.) **Approved**

24/25.96 Committees' Report

Michael Ginger joined the meeting during this item.

Key points reported by the Clerk to the Corporation included:

- (i) the report covered the Audit Committee meeting held on 10 June and the Budget Scrutiny Working Group meeting held on 17 June;
- (ii) the Audit Committee had considered and recommended to the Board of Governors for approval the draft Risk Register for 2025/26. Consideration of the Risk Register by the full Board was important as it retained overall responsibility for risk management;
- (iii) the Audit Committee also considered the External Audit Planning Memorandum for the Year Ended 31 July 2025 and recommended it to the Board of Governors for approval (see minute 24/25.101);
- (iv) the Budget Scrutiny Working Group met to consider the Three-Year Financial Plan, Including Budget 2025/26 and recommended it to the Board of Governors for approval (see minute 24/25.99). It also considered the College's Sufficiency Project, the confidential notes of which would be considered at the end of the meeting.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Risk Register 2025/26.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 10 June 2025.

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the (non-confidential) notes of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group meeting held on 17 June 2025.

Noted

24/25.97 Key Discussion Topic: Final Draft Strategic Plan 2025-30

The Principal reported the following points:

- (i) the Strategic Plan 2025-30 had been in development since May 2024, comprising multiple workshops with Governors, the Senior Leadership Team and wider College Management Group, as well as with smaller groups of staff and students. In addition, the College's Strategic Priorities and underpinning 'Priority Objectives' were shared with external stakeholders for comment, from which there had been a good level of response;
- (ii) that College staff had seen the final draft Strategic Plan the previous Thursday;
- (iii) once approved, a context statement regarding Tameside would be added and the final Strategic Plan would be sent to the design team for publishing;
- (iv) the Deputy Principal Quality and People was now working on reporting that would underpin the Strategic Plan;

- (v) a new booklet comprising the Strategic Plan 2025-30 and the College Values and Behaviours would be ready for staff by mid-August.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) their previous input into the draft Strategic Plan with revised Strategic Priorities grouped into excellence themes:
- Excellence in Curriculum;
 - Excellence in People and Culture;
 - Excellence in Professional Services and Infrastructure;
 - Excellence in Performance;
- (ii) a view from the Staff Governor that the 'excellence' themes represented an improvement on that which was currently in place;
- (iii) that the College Values and Behaviours visuals had been refreshed. The content remains the same.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Strategic Plan 2025-30.

Approved

24/25.98 May Finance Report

Subhaan Ali joined the meeting during this item.

The Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure reported the following:

- (i) the Corporation had set a budget in 2024/25 for an operating deficit of £352k, before pension costs (FRS102);
- (ii) at the Board meeting on 1 April the Board had approved a revised budget of an operating surplus of £167k (before FRS102 pension costs);
- (iii) some uncertainties on various income streams had now been confirmed:
- 16-19 in-year growth, estimated at £494k, had been confirmed as £454k;
 - the College's share of the additional £50m allocated to further education, estimated at £254k, was confirmed as £264k;
 - support for Employers' National Insurance with an in-year cost of £168k and a (conservative) £84k grant assumed, which had been confirmed as £153k;
- (iv) as at 31 March 2025, the management accounts showed an operating surplus of £1,249k a favourable variance of £507k. Much of the variance was a timing issue, with a forecast year-end outturn of a £119k surplus;
- (v) the College's financial health was planned to be 'outstanding' in 2024/25;
- (vi) a cash balance of £7.0m was expected at year-end;
- (vii) the Further Education Capital Transformation Fund (FECTF) for Project A (Brickwork and Animal Management) and Project B (Motor Vehicle) was complete with £61k project contingency remaining within the overall £11.740m budget;

- (viii) summer 2025 planned works that included phase 1 of the refurbishment of Medlock Building, utilising £1.5m condition grant and c.£300k of capital underspent from previous projects. Phase 2 would be in summer 2026. A number of other smaller projects were also planned.

Governors were content with the report as presented.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the May Finance Report.

Noted

24/25.99 Financial Plan for 2025 to 2028, Including 2025/26 Budget

The Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure reported the following:

- (i) in the absence of any confirmed additional funding, the financial plan was necessarily based on the College entirely self-funding the sufficiency project;
- (ii) the financial plan included the following outturns:
 - £96k surplus in 2024/25;
 - £4k surplus in 2025/26;
 - £4k surplus in 2026/27;
 - £243k surplus in 2027/28;
- (iii) a financial health grade of 'good' in 2025/26.

Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) the prior scrutiny given to the 2025/26 budget by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group;
- (ii) that, at 73%, the College's budgeted staffing costs as a percentage of income was above the FE Commissioner's benchmark of 65%. It was noted that any in-year funding received by the College would reduce this percentage. It was suggested that the lagged funding model, where the College had to pay for additional staffing capacity to manage growth in advance of funding, inevitably led to a higher staffing cost as a percentage of income;
- (iii) capital funds and associated summer works.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the 2025/26 budget and subsequent estimate for 2026/27 which comprises:

Approved

- (i) a pre-pension surplus of £4,407
- (ii) general capital funds of £850,000
- (iii) continuation of approved capital projects, specifically:
 - refurbishment of the Medlock Building;
 - summer 2025 works;
 - sufficiency capital project.

24/25.100 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report and Policy

Key points reported by the Deputy Principal Quality and People included:

- (i) the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy includes EDI objectives and impact measures;
- (ii) the principles of the EDI Policy would be applied beyond those with protected characteristics to include to students that the College considers vulnerable;
- (iii) 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. There were significant gender related pay gaps. There was a lack of gender mix in the teaching staff in Automotive, Construction, and Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy. Positive actions were in place to try and improve this. There was no apparent impact on the gender mix of students in these areas;
- (iv) there were no significant gaps in the achievement rates for males and females or between 16-18 and adult;
- (v) there were no issues to report in regard to sexual orientation of staff;
- (vi) there were no issues to report regarding staff or students who have a disability and / or learning difficulty. HR had been instructed to identify and contact the 'not known' staff to significantly reduce the number of unknowns and therefore any potential risk of the College not knowing and acting on support needs of staff;
- (vii) there were no significant gaps in the achievement rates for students with disabilities and / or learning difficulties and those that do not and for students receiving Additional Learning Support (ALS) and those that do not;
- (viii) learning support was effective, however, funding remained challenging;
- (ix) the achievement rate of Children in Care learners had improved and, like learners with safeguarding related issues, was now similar to the 16-18 College average;
- (x) attendance and retention of Children in Care learners, students with safeguarding related issues and those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) would remain a focus during 2025/26;
- (xi) 70% of qualifications were undertaken by students from wards that are rated in the top 3 Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles. There were no significant gaps between the achievement rates of students in each decile;
- (xii) the ethnicity profile of staff, particularly of teachers, was similar to the community the College serves;
- (xiii) 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;
- (xiv) the management of inappropriate behaviour regarding the College's EDI aims was robust and well managed.

Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) a view that both the EDI Policy and Report read well. It was noted that the Policy had been benchmarked against other colleges, with an overall desire to keep things simple. This approach was endorsed;

- (ii) feedback that at a Governor's place of employment, applicants were reluctant to raise any disability at the interview stage but (once employed) could update this information. It was noted that this could also be done at the College through its existing HR systems. The high percentage of 'not known' for disability could be a consequence of recent high turnover;
- (iii) a view that a consequence of the government's push to get people into work could see an increasing number of reported disabilities;
- (iv) that some subject areas experienced significant gender differences. For example, Health and Social Care attracted very few male staff. However, there was a high proportion of female students in Painting and Decorating. It was also reported that the College had previously had female teachers in Automotive and Construction, but these staff had moved on to other jobs.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Approved

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

Noted

24/25.101 External Audit Planning Memorandum for the Year Ended 31 July 2025

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) that the Audit Committee had recommended the External Audit Memorandum to the Board of Governors for approval;
- (ii) that in a change from previous years, the External Auditor wanted the External Audit Memorandum and associated Letter of Engagement to be signed by the Chair of Governors;
- (iii) the timing of the audit. It was noted that this would take place over September / October and be reported to the Audit Committee on Tuesday, 25 November.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the External Audit Planning Memorandum for the Year Ended 31 July 2025 and the signing of the External Audit Planning Memorandum and External Audit Engagement Letter, Year Ended 31 July 2025.

Approved

24/25.102 Governance Matters

(i) Review of Governance Arrangements

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) the proposed change to the College's Instrument and Articles of Government was related to guidance that had been issued by the Department for Education (DfE) on a legacy clause in college instrument and articles of government that restricts student governors under the age of 18 from voting on financial and contractual matters. The Charity Commission

and DfE agreed that this was incompatible with charity law as it prevents student governors under 18 from fully exercising their role as charity trustees. It was proposed to remove the relevant clause and this would ultimately give a greater voice to the College's Student Governors;

- (ii) proposed changes to the College's Standing Orders included clauses related to the issue described above in the Instrument and Articles of Government, but also reflected some change in working practices;
- (iii) each committee had reviewed their terms of reference and made recommendations to the Board as appropriate.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the proposed change to the Instrument and Articles of Government.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the proposed changes to the Standing Orders.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the proposed changes to the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the proposed changes to the Remuneration Committee's Terms of Reference.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve no changes to the Search Committee's Terms of Reference

Approved

(ii) **Draft Calendar of Meetings and Schedule of Business 2025/26**

Governors noted that the Draft Calendar of Meetings and Schedule of Business 2025/26 followed the format adopted in recent years.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Draft Calendar of Meetings and Schedule of Business 2025/26.

Approved

24/25.103 Update on Governor Engagement and Development Activities

The following Governor development and/or engagement activities that had taken place since the last Board meeting were reported:

- (i) 22 May – Visit to Apprenticeships Provision – Malcolm Bruce;
- (ii) 17 June – Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Simon Boyle, Malcolm Bruce, Nicky Littler, Jackie Moores and Remell Thompson-Bell.

Key issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) that Malcolm Bruce had provided a brief written report on his visit to apprenticeships, which had been shared with Governors. Malcolm indicated that the College's apprenticeships provision had improved further from the time of the Ofsted inspection in March 2024;

- (ii) the view of the Principal that staff welcome Governor engagement. The Staff Governor added that students also enjoyed visits by Governors, citing an example of three of her students engaging well with the Chair of Governors in a recent visit to Early Years.

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

24/25.104 Items to Note

(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) **Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2024/25**

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2024/25 (78%). **Noted**

24/25.105 Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Any Emerging Risks

No emerging issues were identified.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions as well as their work over the past academic year.

Subhaan Ali left the meeting at the end of this item.

24/25.106 Confidential Notes of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group Board Meeting Held on 17 June 2025

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the confidential minutes of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group meeting held on 17 June 2025. **Noted**

24/25.107 Sufficiency Project Approval

This minute is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

24/25.108 Time and Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 14 October 2025

Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:

Chair

Date