

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on
Tuesday 26 March 2024**

Present: Damien Bourke, Simon Boyle, Phill Brown, Kirk Cornwall, Rachael Frankland, Karen James, Nicky Littler, John Lyne (Chair), Jackie Moores, Jemma Newton, Arsana Subba, 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), Nicola Welland (Deputy Principal Curriculum), Fiona Chalk (FE4Governance)

ACTION

23/24.54 Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed Fiona Chalk to the meeting. It was noted that Fiona was observing the meeting as part of her engagement to undertake the College's External Governance Review. Brief introductions were made.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to accept the apologies of Elaine Price. **Accepted**

23/24.55 Declarations of Interest

It was noted that:

Noted

- (i) 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;
- (ii) in relation to Agenda Item 17 (Confidential Minutes of the Remuneration Committee Meeting, 7 May 2024), Staff and Student Governors and College officers would withdraw from the meeting for the consideration of this item.

23/24.56 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 6 February 2024

Resolved: Subject to one correction, the Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024.

Approved

23/24.57 Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

Noted

23/24.58 Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting, 5 March 2024

It was noted that the key items considered at the meeting included:

- (i) the appointment of an Internal Audit Service for the College starting from 2024/25. From an initial invitation to tender, three tenders had been received. Of these, two were shortlisted for interview, which took place immediately prior to

- the Audit Committee meeting. Both firms were appointable, but one had the advantage both in terms of cost and in their ability to undertake a full suite of audits;
- (ii) approval of the Whistleblowing Policy and Anti-Fraud and Corruption (including Bribery) Policy and Response Plan.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 5 March 2024.

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the appointment of ICCA-ETS as the College's Internal Audit Service provider for a period of three years commencing 2024/25 with the option to extend by a further two years.

Approved

23/24.59 Feedback From Governor Learning Visit to Animal Care and Floristry

Karen James joined the meeting during this item.

Prior to the Board meeting a Governor Learning Visit took place in Animal Care and Floristry, with Simon Boyle, Phill Brown, Nicky Littler, Remell Thompson-Bell and Atta Ul Rasool attending. Some feedback included:

- (i) Animal Care:
- the staff were professional and knowledgeable;
 - there appeared to be a strong student-centred approach, which seemed to be working well;
 - there appeared to be a strong relationship between teachers / staff and students;
 - the new facilities were excellent;
- (ii) Floristry;
- a small space that previously accommodated Animal Care – was a very calming environment;
 - the provision appeared to cater well for students with special educational needs;
 - the provision included a significant amount of adult / full cost recovery courses.

23/24.60 Inspection Outcome

The Deputy Principal Quality and People and Deputy Principal Curriculum provided detailed feedback from the College's recent Ofsted Inspection. Key points included:

- (i) the Ofsted inspection took place from 5-8 March 2024;
- (ii) a draft report had now been shared with the College Executive and feedback had been given;
- (iii) the summary judgements were as follows:
- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Overall Effectiveness | 2 |
| Leadership and Management | 2 |
| Quality of Education | 2 |
| Behaviour and Attitudes | 2 |
| Personal Development | 1 |

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| | Safeguarding | Effective |
| | Contribution to Meeting Skills Needs | Strong |
| | Education Programmes for Young People | 2 |
| | Adult Learning Programmes | 2 |
| | Apprenticeships | 2 |
| | Learners with High Needs | 2 |
- (iv) these judgements notably included improvements in three areas compared with the College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2022/23:
- Personal Development was judged to be 'outstanding' ('good' in the SAR);
 - Contribution to Meeting Skills Needs was judged to be 'strong' ('reasonable' in the SAR); and,
 - Apprenticeships had been judged to be 'good' ('requires improvement' in the SAR);
- (v) detailed feedback was provided on each of the main areas;
- (vi) identified areas for improvement included:
- continue to improve the proportion of apprentices who achieve and ensure that more apprentices remain on their apprenticeship;
 - improve the accessibility of resources in work experience settings for high needs students with complex requirements;
 - improve feedback following assessment on programmes for young people, so that students know what they need to do to improve their work.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) the nature of Aspirations students. It was noted that Aspirations 'A' students were those with particularly high needs for which choice was the extent of their communication and who might also be non-verbal. Aspirations 'B' students might be those who could undertake independent travel and take part in supported internships;
- (ii) within the consideration of Behaviour and Attitudes, the finding that attendance was not yet 'exceptional'. It was noted that 'exceptional' attendance had not been defined;
- (iii) the views of Governors who had met with inspectors was that things had gone well; Governors were able to demonstrate they had provided both effective challenge and support to the Executive Team, that they had good links with local businesses and other stakeholders;
- (iv) that Governors had been well briefed by the Executive Team and Clerk prior to the inspection;
- (v) a view that the College had received a rigorous inspection from a strong team of inspectors led by a capable lead inspector who had required firm evidence to support all of the proposed judgements;
- (vi) how the areas for improvement would be taken forward. It was noted that while there had been no surprises arising from the inspection, the areas for improvement would be incorporated into the Self-Assessment Report / Quality Improvement Plan, as required;

- (vii) the experiences of other Governors involved in the inspection;
- (viii) the thanks of the Chair of Governors to all staff working in College who together ensured a successful inspection outcome and to those Governors who had made themselves available during inspection;
- (ix) the Principal thanked both the Deputy Principals for their key roles during inspection and to Governors for their ongoing support and challenge.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Inspection Outcome presentation. **Noted**

23/24.61 Sustainability Update

Points raised by the Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure included:

- (i) the context in which the College operated, which included a UK target to be carbon neutral by 2050 and a more ambitious Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) target to be carbon neutral by 2038, which the College had also adopted;
- (ii) the College had adopted the FE Roadmap to Net Zero in March 2022; it had also approved a sustainability strategy;
- (iii) the College was seeking Salix grant funding for Clarendon Sixth Form carbon reduction;
- (iv) Hillside Environmental had been engaged to advise on the College's carbon reduction plan. The report was now in its final draft, with costed options presented for consideration. It looked at the key areas of heating and power supply across the estate and made a number of recommendations covering:
 - heating – improving building thermal efficiency and installation of low carbon heat generation (heat pumps);
 - power supply – self generation through solar panels and battery installation to store excess generation for use or sale back to the grid;
- (v) there was a need to upskill the College's Estates team so that they could be better informed about issues relating to sustainability. He added that there also needed to be greater engagement with the local community.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) a view that the installation and maintenance of ground source heat pumps was considerably more complex than that of air source heat pumps;
- (ii) a view that a payback period of 15 years for various options for the installation of heat pumps would be unlikely to be commercially attractive. It was noted that the payback periods indicated were based on the College securing grants and borrowing 100% of monies (i.e. not putting in any of its own funds) and therefore involved an interest expense;
- (iii) the College's strategy for electric vehicles. In terms of the College's own fleet of vehicles, which was limited to four minibuses, the Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure indicated that he had not identified a viable electric alternative

solution as yet. He added that the College was trialling some cargo e-bikes for use between sites. On whether the College was providing electric charging points for staff electric vehicles, it was noted that staff had not requested this through any feedback mechanisms. However, the College had planned to install two electric vehicle charging points as part of the new Motor Vehicle Centre. It was noted that staff commuting was also included within the target of net zero carbon by the end of 2038. While some businesses offered electric vehicles to their staff on a lease or hire purchase basis, this would have pension implications if offered to College staff;

- (iv) the College was seeking to balance expenditure on estates and sustainability related areas with expenditure on staff and the curriculum (e.g. T-levels).

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

23/24.62 Principal's Report

The Principal tabled the outcome letter from the College's Annual Strategic Conversation with the Further Education Commissioner and highlighted some key points from her report that included:

- (i) the maximum achievement rate for apprenticeships that the College could achieve for 2023/24 was 69.7%. The current national average was 54%. While Governors had set a target of 57%, the College was aiming for an outturn of 61%-65%;
- (ii) the findings of the staff and learner surveys undertaken by Ofsted closely matched those of the College's own surveys;
- (iii) enrolment. The College had 269 16-18 learners above its allocation (105%). Funding growth for 16-18 learners was 14% or £2.7m, based on the budgeted expectation in March 2023. The College would also achieve 110% of its GMCA Adult Education Budget, which would be fully funded;
- (iv) sickness absence, which was running at 3.9% and impacted mainly by seven staff that were on long term sick leave;
- (v) staff turnover was not due to be reported until the end of term 2. However, vacancies had reduced and this was attributed in a large part to the pay award of 10%, which was thought to have been the highest in the sector;
- (vi) that British Pie Week (4-10 March) coincided with the Ofsted inspection and provided an excellent opportunity for the College to exemplify how it was embedding Maths into the wider curriculum. This included a number of mathematical questions for catering students relating to pi.

Governors were content with the report as presented.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Principal's Report.

Noted

23/24.63 January Finance Report and Mid-Year Review

Damien Bourke left the meeting during this item.

The Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure reported the following:

- (i) the Corporation had set a budget in 2023/24 for an operating surplus of £138k. The mid-year review resulted in a reforecast surplus of £1.335m;
- (ii) 16-19 income was up by £2.185m, with £1.365m due to an increase in funding rates and £820k in-year funding for recruitment above allocation;
- (iii) income for apprenticeship provision had been revised down by £300k to reflect revised estimates of funding from recruited learners in prior years and a small amount due to in-year recruitment being behind target;
- (iv) pay costs were expected to be £388k favourable to budget, due to high staff turnover. Some of this was offset by increases in recruitment costs and agency staffing (non-pay);
- (v) non-pay costs were showing an increase of £1.069m due to recruitment (finders' fees, advertisement costs and DBS checks) and increased learner numbers (materials and exam fees) and general inflationary pressures;
- (vi) the expected outturn was due to deliver an 'outstanding' ESFA Financial Health and cash balance of £10.690m (against a budget of £6.223m), due to an increased opening balance, increased in-year surplus and estimates for movements in current assets.

Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) that the College wished to bring forward recruitment of teaching staff in Construction, Hair and Beauty, and Health and Social Care, where it was known there would be growth in 2024/25;
- (ii) the College's vacancy position had improved. The number of in-year leavers had reduced. From a budget perspective, for every experienced leaver that was replaced by a less experienced joiner there were average savings of £9,000.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the January Finance Report and Mid-Year Review.

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Mid-Year Review (with revised outturn of a surplus of £1.335m).

Approved

23/24.64 Estates Development Update

The update from Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure included the following points:

- (i) completed and planned capital works:
 - T Level Wave 4 (Education and Childcare), agreed project value of £1.200m with a £499k grant was completed in August 2023. This involved the refurbishment of Victoria

Building D-floor. The project was completed under budget with unused grant monies returned to the DfE and College monies utilised for summer 2024 works (see below);

- Institute of Technology project with grant funding of £1.141m was completed in October 2023, with work including the development of the Engineering, Mechatronics and Maintenance curriculum, against a budget of £1.231m. This project included the purchase, delivery and installation of engineering equipment and the refurbishment of Fabrication and Weld in the Ryecroft Building and the Mechatronics Laboratory in the ATC. A forecast overspend of £91k was covered through existing capital allocations;
 - FE Capital Transformation Fund project of £11.654m with £5.263m grant. Project A (Brickwork and Animal Management) was completed in October 2023. Project B (Motor Vehicle) was due for completion in September 2024. The current cost estimate for the programme was £86k above budget. £63k would be vired from general capital expenditure and a £360k contingency remained within the cost estimate;
 - FE Reclassification Capital Work allocation of £631k. This funding was provided to spend on capital projects that prioritised improvements to the College estate. This was used to refurbish the Waterloo Building ground floor and the old Animal Management space for Floristry, and to improve the flexibility of social space at T1 and fund the Victoria Building E floor Phase 1 project, including the provision of an immersive teaching environment;
 - Additional Capital Funding to improve energy efficiency (£252k). £226k had been reserved against this grant in relation to the Salix funding bid, with the balance being held for potential projects to replace boilers in the Waterloo and Medlock Buildings;
 - Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) agreed project value of £569k, which was 100% grant funded for the creation of an immersive teaching area on Victoria Building E-floor (as part of E-floor Phase 1), refurbishment of the Physics laboratory at Clarendon and an Anatomage table and other related equipment for Clarendon. Works commenced in February 2024 and were due to finish by August 2024;
 - Spring/Summer 2024 Works included Victoria Building E-floor (Phase 2) at £575k to be refurbished to permit all English and Maths classes to be held in the same place; and T1 Hair and Beauty Salon (£92k), where individual beauty treatment areas would be turned into a classroom;
- (ii) other areas for investment under consideration include:
- TCFE reconfiguration. ESOL provision was being moved to TCFE and works would allow use of underutilised areas for provision of a social space and food provision, as well as additional classrooms;
 - Clarendon Sixth Form reconfiguration of the ground floor space to create a new Student Services Hub and café

seating relocated to the front. Limited works in the Performing Arts, Dance and Music studios would facilitate their use as classrooms;

- Medlock Building Phase 1 refurbishment (£550k estimate). This would start on the ground floor and heating systems. IT infrastructure would also be updated;
- Waterloo Building second floor refurbishment (£77k);
- Multi-Use Gaming Area (MUGA) (£265k). The area adjacent to Motor Vehicle was an option for a MUGA, which would save on ground works costs. This would be used for the Sports curriculum and would save on external ground hire for training. This project would replace the plans for a full size 5G pitch;

(iii) fundings bids:

- Salix net zero. This project would see the installation of air source heat pumps at Clarendon Sixth Form to replace boilers. It would also require the installation of a building management system. The project value was £422k with a College contribution of £226k, allocated from the Additional FE Capital Funding grant. A decision on the bid was expected by 26 April;

(iv) future developments:

- Victoria Building cladding;
- Dovestones demolition and rebuild;
- Medlock refurbishment;
- Carparking and landscaping at Beaufort Road;
- 5G sports pitch development at Beaufort Road.

Governors were content with the report as presented.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note progress of capital works and funding bids.

Noted

23/24.65 **Update on Governor Engagement and Development Activities**

The Clerk had recorded the following Governor development and engagement activities that had taken place since the last Board meeting:

- (i) 6 February – Meeting with Nicola Welland in respect of apprenticeships – Malcolm Bruce
- (ii) 20 February – Attended an AoC / ETF Regional Governor Induction – Nicky Littler
- (iii) 2 March – Visit to all three campuses in the weekend prior to Ofsted inspection – John Lyne
- (iv) 5 March – Met with the Meeting Skills Needs Inspector during Ofsted inspection – Malcolm Bruce and John Lyne
- (v) 6 March – Met with the L&M Inspector during Ofsted inspection – Malcolm Bruce, Kirk Cornwall, John Lyne and Elaine Price
- (vi) 6-9 March – Phone conversation with Ofsted inspector re. employer / stakeholder engagement – Rachael Frankland
- (vii) 8 March – Attended the feedback session at the end of the Ofsted inspection – Malcolm Bruce and Kirk Cornwall

- (viii) 18 March – Attended an AoC / ETF Regional Governor Induction – Jemma Newton

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

23/24.66 **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) **Procurement Activities and Approvals**

It was noted that the reprographics contract was due for renewal. This would not require a Governors decision, but would be reported at a future meeting.

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

(iv) **Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2023/24**

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2023/24 (87%). **Noted**

23/24.67 **Time and Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 21 May 2024**

The Chair reported that the date of the next meeting was Tuesday 21 May 2024, to be held remotely via Teams.

The Staff Governor and Student Governor withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of the next item.

23/24.68 **Confidential Minutes of the Meeting Held on 7 February 2024**

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Confidential Minutes of the Meeting Held on 7 February 2024. **Approved**

Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:

Chair

Date