

## Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on Tuesday 20 May 2025

**Present:** Subhaan Ali, Damien Bourke, Amanda Bromley, Malcolm Bruce, Jonathan Frankham, Nicky Littler, John Lyne (Chair), Jackie Moores, Remell Thompson-Bell

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)

### ACTION

#### 24/25.69 Apologies for Absence

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to accept the apologies of Simon Boyle, Phill Brown, Kirk Cornwall, Michael Ginger, Jemma Newton and Atta ul Rasool. **Accepted**

#### 24/25.70 Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interest noted included:

**Noted**

- (i) Jonathan Frankham's standing declaration that he is an employee of the Department for Education (DfE), the College's principal funder and regulator;
- (ii) Amanda Bromley and Nicky Littler in respect of recommendations in the Committees' Report.

#### 24/25.71 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 1 April 2025

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2025. **Approved**

#### 24/25.72 Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

**Noted**

#### 24/25.73 Potential In-Year Staff Pay Award

*Malcolm Bruce joined the meeting during this item.*

The Chair indicated that this additional item was for all Governors to understand the issue and to agree a way forward.

A verbal update from members of the Executive Team included the following points:

- (i) that although some recent funding announcements made by the DfE had helped clarify the College's financial position, the College was still waiting to be advised on how much it would receive from the DfE to compensate for the increase in employers' National Insurance from April 2025;
- (ii) the College had received a one-off grant from the DfE covering the period 1 April to 31 July "to respond to current

priorities and challenges, including workforce recruitment and retention". While this was a one-off grant, the Executive Team had been considering an option to pay a consolidated pay award. However, without greater detail on the College's financial position, it was not possible to bring forward any proposal at the current time;

- (iii) that although an in-year pay award was unique in the recent history of the College, there was a desire to follow the established process of securing approval from the Board prior to informing staff and advising the trade union. However, the timeframe to do this was very short to conclude the process before the summer. The reason for making a pay award now, rather than waiting to consider within the normal cycle during the autumn term for implementation in January 2026, was that it could help with recruitment over the summer.

Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) the process that management wanted to follow;
- (ii) options for approving any recommended pay award between scheduled Board meetings, which included approval by Chair's Action or convening a Board meeting at short notice. The preferred option was for a decision to be made by a quorate Board convened immediately before the Audit Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday 10 June but, if this meeting was inquorate, it would then be approved via Chair's Action;
- (iii) that a paper would be circulated to Governors and any comments and queries could be shared by email in advance of the meeting;
- (iv) that a decision by Board by mid-June would potentially allow for a pay award to be paid in July and backdated to 1 April.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve that the decision on a potential in-year pay award could be made at an additional Board meeting held immediately prior to the Audit Committee meeting on Tuesday, 10 June. Should this meeting be inquorate, it would then be taken forward by Chair's Action.

**Approved**

## 24/25.74 Committees' Report

This report covered the meetings of the Remuneration Committee and the Search Committee, both of which were held on Tuesday 6 May.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) the resignation of Rachael Frankland effective 18 May and the proposal to offer a sabbatical to Kirk Cornwall;
- (ii) the appointment of Nicky Litter as Chair of the Remuneration Committee. It was noted that this would help the Corporation meet the requirements of The Colleges' Senior Post Holder Remuneration Code, which was clear that the Remuneration Committee should not be chaired by the Chair of Governors. It was noted that this issue had been kept under review by the

Remuneration Committee for some time and, with the relevant experience offered by Nicky Littler, this was a good time for her to take on the chairing role and fully comply with this aspect of the Remuneration Code.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the resignation of Rachael Frankland from the Board, effective 18 May 2025. **Noted**

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the granting of a sabbatical period for Kirk Cornwall to start immediately and end 31 August 2026. **Approved**

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the reappointment of Amanda Bromley for a further three-year term of office ending 31 July 2028. **Approved**

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the appointment of Nicky Littler as Chair of the Remuneration Committee. **Approved**

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 6 May 2025. **Noted**

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the Committees' Report. **Noted**

## **24/25.75 Key Discussion Topic: Annual Accountability Statement 2025/26**

The Deputy Principal Curriculum reported the following points:

- (i) that the Annual Accountability Statement 2025/26 was a short public facing document to be published on the College's website;
- (ii) the document format followed DfE guidance and set out the College's Strategic Priorities that aligned with national, regional and local skills agendas.

Governors were content with the document as drafted and agreed with a view offered that the document does what was asked of it.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Annual Accountability Statement 2025/26. **Approved**

## **24/25.76 March Finance Report**

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;
- (iv) support for Employers' National Insurance was still to be confirmed;
- (v) as at 31 March 2025, the management accounts showed an operating surplus of £1,170k a favourable variance of £82k;
- (vi) the College's financial health is planned to be 'outstanding' in 2024/25;
- (vii) a cash balance of £6.5m was expected at year-end;
- (viii) 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;
- (ix) additional capital expenditure for the remainder of 2024/25 included the purchase of a generator for Animal Management;
- (x) £1.5m condition fund grant and £300k of unspent capital funding would be used to refurbish the Medlock Building (Beaufort Road site). This would be completed over two summers;
- (xi) three other projects were also prioritised, but progress on these depended on affordability.

Governors were content with the report as presented.

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

**Noted**

## **24/25.77      Update on Progress Against Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25**

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

- (i) Leadership & Management
- attendance
    - the Attendance Strategy had been reviewed and implemented for 2024/25. Targets had been set and effective monitoring of progress was in place;
    - good progress was being made towards targets, particularly A Level (+4%-points above last year);
    - current College attendance was 86.0% overall, 85.9% for 16-18 and 87.2% for 19+;
    - attendance in GCSE Maths and English remained a focus;
    - improvements made in the attendance of care experienced and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) learners had been sustained;
  - good progress was being made in further improving the apprenticeship achievement rate. The current rate was 57.3%, with a target was 69%. This compared with 60.2% achieved in 2023/24;
- (ii) Quality of Education:

- good progress was being made to support a small minority of staff to improve aspects of their teaching;
- improvements had been made to the accessibility of resources in employability settings for students with complex needs. Progress was now clearly identified and tracked;
- curriculum areas where good progress was being made to improve outcomes;
- curriculum areas where attendance / retention and / or progress continued to be closely monitored;
- (iii) Personal Development:
  - good progress was being made to ensure all students knew the viable apprenticeship options open to them, particularly higher-level apprenticeships;
- (iv) Safeguarding:
  - good progress was being made to further developing and promoting wellbeing and support activities for students;
- (v) Contribution to Meeting Skills:
  - good progress was being made to sustain strong employer relationships and contribution to meeting skills.

Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) that good work was being done on improving apprenticeships achievement rates;
- (ii) that the work on developing teachers was ongoing, especially those teachers from industry;
- (iii) attendance at the GCSE Maths and English examinations. It was noted that this had been good to date at 93%, which was 2%-points more than in the previous year;
- (iv) the actions that had been taken to improve attendance of the A level students. It was noted that this included taking a firmer approach to the College's fitness to study initiative, in terms of a student's social and behavioural requirements, including attendance and resilience. Furthermore, a creative tension had been established between the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Deputy Principal Quality and People following the establishment of the new Pastoral Manager post, that had allowed the issue to be considered from a more holistic viewpoint.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the Update on Progress Against the Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25.

**Noted**

## 24/25.78 Behaviour Management

*Nicky Littler left the meeting during this item.*

Points raised by the Deputy Principal Quality and People included:

- (i) the report provided evidence of the College's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), through timely intervention and action when behaviours do not meet the

College's Values and Behaviour Framework or the EDI Policy;

- (ii) there were four themes the College focussed on with students and parents to prevent unacceptable behaviour:
  - consider the consequence before you act;
  - respond (do not react, take time and think);
  - entitlement (you are not entitled to behave like that);
  - expected professional and personal behaviours (developing the behaviours expected in the workplace and as a responsible citizen);
- (iii) a summary of the sanctions taken to date in 2024/25 with respect to behaviour;
- (iv) curriculum areas were identified for behaviour issues. The curriculum areas with the most behaviour issues included Construction, Computing and Springboard. (The latter being an alternative learning provision designed to prepare students for College life).

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) that the report represented a thorough review of the issues and how these were being addressed. The case studies were felt to be very useful in contextualising the issues;
- (ii) the reasons for the apparent increase in the number of recorded behaviour incidents. It was noted that the overall number of sanctions in 2024/25 would be an increase on previous years due to the increase in the lowest sanction (Notice to Improve, NTI). It was noted that behavioural trends were being picked up from local schools. For example, attendance and internal truancy and vaping in toilets were identified as key behavioural issues over the last 12 months. The Deputy Principal Quality and People opined that the College's role was to get students ready for work and it was dealing with student behaviour on this basis;
- (iii) that poor behaviour of students was a recognised problem nationally and that Governors needed to be aware of the mental health impact this had on teachers, staff and leaders;
- (iv) that the work of the receptionists, as the first point of contact in College, was critical in behaviour management. They had been empowered to challenge students at the front door, where appropriate, for example, those without ID badges.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the Behaviour Management report.

**Noted**

## 24/25.79 Summary of Staff Feedback, Learner Feedback and Complaints

Key points raised by the Deputy Principal Quality and People, included:

- (i) teaching and learning survey:
  - teaching and learning survey – December 2024
    - overall satisfaction with their course was 93% (above national average, NA);



- overall satisfaction with the organisation of their course was 92% (above NA);
- overall satisfaction was consistently high (>90%) in the majority of curriculum areas;
- the significant majority of students were satisfied with the professional standards in the classroom, and learning environment, planning for learning, facilitation of learning and assessment of learning. Where students were less satisfied, actions had been taken;
- the significant majority of students were satisfied that they were safe while in College and online;
- in the significant majority of responses, there were no significant differences regarding the responses from different groups of learners;
- apprenticeships surveys (induction and on programme) 2024/25
  - there had been a significant improvement in the satisfaction of apprentices. All questions had satisfaction rates for on programme apprentices higher than NA;
- higher education on programme survey – March 2025
  - most HE learners would recommend the College, agree that this is a good college and are satisfied with their course;
  - HE learners feel safe at College and when working online;
  - HE learners are satisfied that assessment of their work is fair and that they can access course specific resources when they need to;
  - areas identified for improvement included library resources, assignments being spread evenly across the course and the HE ethos;
- (ii) complaints:
  - to date 36 complaints had been received, with the significant majority not upheld;
  - complaints were managed effectively
  - where applicable, issues relating to equality and diversity were acted on quickly and appropriately;
  - of the two safeguarding complaints, one was a very serious, vexatious complaint against a College manager. Neither were upheld;
- (iii) staff survey:
  - overall satisfaction of 87% was up +2%-points on the previous year;
  - 93% of staff were happy to be working at College. This was up 3%-points on the previous year and 9%-points above national average;
  - key areas for improvement included IT facilities and Wi-Fi and some systems and workflows.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) that it was good to get positive feedback;

- (ii) whether there were any concerns reported from staff. It was noted that there were no areas of concern, but that there were things to work on, for example College infrastructure (e.g. Wi-Fi in some areas of College). There had also been some comments on Continuing Professional Development, especially for support staff and the College was working on this. The College had made significant progress on systems and working practices to reduce the administrative burden;
- (iii) parental complaints:
  - it was reported that where parents work with the College, this improved the life chances of students. However, if the parent defended their child's behaviour, then this made things more difficult to resolve;
  - that the sense of entitlement was also a national issue
  - a view that the vast majority of students were well behaved;
- (iv) that Governors had been able to engage with staff and students and triangulate what was reported by management.

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

**Noted**

## 24/25.80 Tuition Fees Policy 2025/26

Key pointes reported by the Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure included:

- (i) that there were no significant changes proposed to the Tuition Fees Policy 2025/26. However, the College was still awaiting advice from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) on any changes;
- (ii) that there were no significant changes to the HE Programme Suspension, Termination and Compensation Policy for 2025/26;
- (iii) that HE fees had been held at £5,995 for a number of years and it was now proposed to increase these to the maximum allowed of £6,185 (without Teaching Excellence Framework accreditation or an Access and Participation Plan), a relatively modest increase of 3%. The increase in fees would be from academic year 2026/27 and would only apply to new entrants, not returning students.

Governors noted the College's small HE provision and were content with the proposals as outlined.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Tuition Fees Policy (Excluding Apprenticeships) 2025/26.

**Approved**

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the HE Programme Suspension, Termination and Compensation Policy 2025/26.

**Approved**

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the increase in HE tuition fees from £5,995 to £6,185 to new entrants for September 2026.

**Approved**



## 24/25.81 Procurement Activities and Approvals

In accordance with the Financial Regulations, the Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure reported some procurement exemptions and upcoming material contracts / orders. The latter included that tender documents had been issued for the refurbishment of the Medlock building.

Governors noted the expiry of the current security / guarding contract and enquired about interim arrangements. It was noted that a short extension had been arranged through the College's procurement consultant.

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

**Noted**

## 24/25.82 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) 2 May – Official Opening of Animal Management Centre, Automotive Skills Centre and Brickwork – John Lyne and Atta UI Rasool;
- (ii) 6 May – AoC Student Governor Network Meeting – Subhaan Ali;
- (iii) 13 May – Adult Student of the Year Awards – Nicky Litter, John Lyne, Jemma Newton, Remell Thompson-Bell and Atta UI Rasool;
- (iv) 16 May – Public Services Students Passing Out Parade – Malcolm Bruce, John Lyne, Jackie Moores, Remell Thompson-Bell and Atta UI Rasool.

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

**Noted**

## 24/25.83 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) Annual Strategic Conversation Letter

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the Annual Strategic Conversation Letter.

**Noted**

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

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2024/25 (79%).

**Noted**

**24/25.84 Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Any Emerging Risks**

No emerging issues were identified.

**24/25.85 Confidential Minutes of the Board Meeting Held on 1 April 2025**

A query was made on whether the safeguarding incident reported at the last meeting had been reported to the appropriate authorities. It was noted that both the DfE and Ofsted had been advised.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2025.

**Approved**

**24/25.86 Confidential Minutes of the Remuneration Committee Meeting Held on 6 May 2025**

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the confidential minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 6 May 2025.

**Noted**

**24/25.87 Time and Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 10 June 2025**

The Chair reported the next scheduled Board meeting would be on Tuesday, 1 July. Before then, there would be the additional Board meeting to consider an in-year pay award on Tuesday 10 June (immediately prior to the Audit Committee meeting). There was also a Budget Scrutiny Working Group meeting to be held on Tuesday, 17 June.

**Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:**

**Chair**

**Date**