

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on  
Tuesday 14 November 2023**

**Present:** Damien Bourke, Simon Boyle, Malcolm Bruce, Kirk Cornwall, Jonathan Frankham, Rachael Frankland, Shayer Hussain, Karen James, John Lyne (Chair), Elaine Price, Evelyn Rayne, 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), Lorna Fegan (Assistant Principal), Nicola Welland (Deputy Principal Curriculum)

**ACTION**

**23/24.15 Apologies for Absence**

It was noted that Jackie Moores was away on inspection.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to accept the apologies of Phill Brown and Jackie Moores. **Accepted**

New Student Governor (Tameside College), Evelyn Rayne, was welcomed to the meeting. Brief introductions were made.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the appointment of Evelyn Rayne as a Student Governor (Tameside College) for a period of up to two years. **Approved**

**23/24.16 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**

**23/24.17 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 17 October 2023**

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023. **Approved**

**23/24.18 Matters Arising**

*Damien Bourke and Elaine Price joined the meeting during this item.*

On minute 23/14.10 (Pay Review), Leon Dowd reported that following the Board's decision on the annual staff pay award, this had been shared with managers the next morning and then directly with all staff. He subsequently met with the trade unions who had agreed to the proposal without challenge; the pay award was subsequently accepted by their members.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) feedback from staff had been very positive. Staff had been genuinely surprised at the scale of the pay award and were

- aware that the College had offered the most that it could afford;
- (ii) at a minimum of 10%, with some staff receiving more, the College's pay award was thought to be the highest in the sector to date and it was hoped that this would help to recruit and retain staff;
  - (iii) a comment from the Chair that during a recent visit to College he had witnessed a member of staff coming into the Principalship area to thank the Principal for the pay award;
  - (iv) that the College was keen to improve not only staff pay but also working conditions as well. Focus groups had been convened to consider ways to make jobs as easy as possible;
  - (v) the Chair's thanks to the Executive Director Finance, Estates, MIS and IT for the financial modelling that ensured that the pay award was affordable in the long run.

**23/24.19** **Minutes of the Search Committee Meeting Held on 31 October 2023**

The Clerk to the Corporation reported the following points:

- (i) within the Membership Issues agenda item, the Search Committee considered the re-appointment of Simon Boyle for a further term of office;
- (ii) the Search Committee had considered and approved the Search Committee Annual Report 2022/23. This was due to be taken forward later in the agenda (see minute 23/24.25);
- (iii) the Search Committee had considered the new FE Code of Good Governance and recommended it to the Board of Governors for adoption. This would also be taken forward later in the agenda (see minute 23/24.26).

Governors noted that the Corporation currently held one vacancy for an independent member and that there were potentially three interested Governor candidates.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 31 October 2023.

**Noted**

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the re-appointment of Simon Boyle as an Independent Governor for a further four-year term of office ending 5 November 2027.

**Approved**

**23/24.20** **Study Programme Recruitment and Curriculum Overview**

*Karen James joined the meeting and Rachael Frankland left the meeting during this item.*

The Deputy Principal Quality and People gave a presentation on the 16-18 recruitment trends and projections going forward. Key points included:

- (i) a trend of steadily increasing numbers of Study Programme students since 2016/17, with more rapid growth over the last three years;

- (ii) an increasing market share of students from Tameside schools, together with details of the numbers coming from neighbouring boroughs;
- (iii) details of the trends of student numbers from individual Tameside schools and certain schools in neighbouring boroughs;
- (iv) the trend of increasing enrolments from 17-18 year olds;
- (v) the forecast number of school leavers in Tameside, that would peak in 2026/27 but remain higher than present numbers through to the end of the forecast period in 2032/33;
- (vi) the risks and opportunities of the increased number of school leavers. These included curriculum offer, accommodation, staffing, increased demand for pastoral support and competition, especially from new Multi-Academy Trusts opening school sixth forms in the borough.

The Deputy Principal Curriculum gave a presentation that focussed on the changes to the curriculum and the challenges this would cause the College. Key points included:

- (i) curriculum strategy:
  - a broad, inclusive, responsive and purposeful curriculum;
  - aligned to College values and Target Outstanding;
  - industry standard learning environments;
  - developed and endorsed by key stakeholders who influence and support the design and delivery of a responsive curriculum that supports progression into local, regional and national jobs, industries, higher education and training and apprenticeships;
  - specialist skills sectors;
  - provided wider skills for learning and work;
  - strategically placed and purposeful HE offer;
  - accessible community learning offer that supported economic growth and development of the local community;
  - reactive to national policies;
  - national, regional and local drivers;
- (ii) curriculum reform and pending changes:
  - the post-16 vocational qualifications landscape was undergoing reform from now and over the next 10 years. Students would choose either an 'academic' or 'technical' pathway made up of either A Levels or T Levels;
  - A levels would form the core of the academic offer at level 3. BTECs would continue to be available in many subject areas to be taken alongside, or as alternatives to, A levels. These would be known as Alternative Academic qualifications (AAQs);
  - T Levels would form the core of the technical offer at level 3 and would cover most occupations that a learner might study at 16-19. A limited range of other qualifications would also be available alongside or as alternatives to T Levels;
  - Adults – under review but expected to remain unchanged;
  - Apprenticeships – would remain unchanged;

- (iii) challenges in 2023/24:
  - rooming and staffing with 40+ new teachers recruited over the summer;
  - most courses were closed after two weeks. Some adult provision had been reduced;
  - streamlined work-based learning – introduced Health, removed some Engineering pathways;
  - Tameside Adult and Community Education (TACE) now supported progression into College and was in line with Greater Manchester priorities;
  - increased Maths and English numbers;
  - additional Looked After Children (LAC) and mainstream SEND within the College and an increased number of unaccompanied LAC ESOL students;
- (iv) teaching and learning improvements in 2022/23:
  - improvements identified in most areas, but with further staff training still required in behaviour management and professional standards, effective questioning techniques / range of assessment methods and feedback.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) a view that the College could try and secure more taster days for Year 10 and 11 students. It was noted that the College was sometimes limited by what schools were willing to agree to. An example, at the moment was a struggling school where the overwhelming focus was on the students securing better grades in their GCSE examinations. However, the Gatsby Benchmarks and Baker Clause did require schools to ensure students were exposed to the full range of future study options, rather than just the traditional A levels. The College had developed 'Explore Days' where the College went into key Tameside schools with as much practical 'kit' as possible. Students from Year 7 through to Year 11 could meet College staff and gain a variety of practical experiences;
- (ii) that the national curriculum plans required students to decide at an earlier stage what they wanted to do for a career;
- (iii) the extent to which the teaching and learning needs of teaching staff linked to the high number of new teachers at the College. It was noted that new teachers get an induction to teaching and learning at College (the 'Tameside Way');
- (iv) that the T-level course structure did not permit for resits in respect of the final examination, with the consequence that students could potentially fail at this point on their two-year course. As well as providing a high-stakes environment for students, this could also put staff under significant pressure;
- (v) the issue of defunding qualifications where there were no routes available to students that did not meet the entry criteria for T-levels. It was noted that this was a national issue and could unintentionally lead to an increase in NEETS (those not in education, employment or training) and negatively impact student numbers.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the presentation on Study Programme Recruitment and Curriculum Overview.

**Noted**

### **23/24.21 Principal's Report and KPI Report**

The Deputy Principal Quality and People reported the following points:

- (i) outcomes, including retention, pass rate and achievement rate represented a good outcome for the College and was above national average;
- (ii) apprenticeships were the key area of focus;
- (iii) the outcomes would be presented in detail within the College's Self-Assessment Report;
- (iv) attendance, overall, was good, although this was within the wider context of a sector where attendance was a key issue post-COVID;
- (v) College finances were strong and forecast to remain so;
- (vi) the College had recruited well, including to adult learners.

Governors were content with the report as presented.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the contents of the Principal's Report and KPI Report.

**Noted**

### **23/24.22 Higher Education Self Evaluation Document 2022/23**

The Assistant Principal reported the following points:

- (i) the College's HE offer remained modest and was centred primarily on Engineering and Teacher Education pathways. It was mapped to local skills needs and offered predominantly to local learners the opportunity to study vocationally relevant programmes;
- (ii) some key statistics from 2022/23:
  - 218 enrolments onto Higher Education (HE) Programmes on all courses;
  - 195 (89.4%) of these learners were retained to the end of academic year. There was an overall pass rate of 97.4% and an achievement rate of 87.2%;
  - 138 completers enrolled (final year of study), 131 (94.9%) were retained and 100% passed giving an achievement rate of 94.9%. This represented a significant success for the College and was +11.9 percentage-points on 2021/22;
- (iii) both teaching and learning and assessment and internal verification was strong;
- (iv) student satisfaction was good, but less so in Engineering (where there had been a significant turnover of staff at the start of the year) and Computing where some shortcomings in IT facilities were raised;
- (v) minor actions had been recommended via the External Examiners in Computing and Travel;

- (vi) the HNC in International Travel and Tourism was not being offered in the current year due to low retention and achievement in 2022/23.

Issues considered by Governors included the:

- (i) strong results in 2022/23;
- (ii) new opportunities being developed with Salford University (first year of a Nursing degree), the Institute of Technology (Engineering, Computing and Construction) and the Open University (Psychology and Criminology).

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 2022/23.

**Approved**

### **23/24.23 Human Resources Annual Report 2022/23**

The Deputy Principal Quality and People reported the following points:

- (i) the College was managing staffing effectively during a period of significant challenge due to economic uncertainty, a highly competitive job market, College growth and to a lesser extent COVID;
- (ii) the College out-turned on its staffing KPI (staffing costs as a percentage of income) at 61% against a target of 64%-65%. This was due to recruitment challenges and its ability to fill vacant posts quickly in all cases. Offsetting this was an increased spend on agency staff. It was hoped that the significant staff pay award would help recruit and retain staff. The 65% sector target going forward was unlikely to be realistic for the College and it was currently forecasting an outturn of 67.3% in 2023/24, with increased staffing required to meet growth;
- (iii) sickness absence in 2022/23 was 5.6% against a sector average of 3.4%. Absences related to COVID remained. Work-related stress was up in 2022/23 compared with the previous year, but this related to a small number of staff who were being managed by various HR processes;
- (iv) the volume of case management, particularly tribunal cases had reduced in 2022/23;
- (v) the College was now much better placed in respect of HR with a more stable and proactive team and would facilitate the development of a People Strategy.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the HR Annual Report 2022/23.

**Noted**

### **23/24.24 Remuneration Annual Report 2022/23**

The Clerk to the Corporation reported that:

- (i) the Remuneration Annual Report 2022/23 followed the same format used in previous years;

- (ii) the report sets out the approach used by the Remuneration Committee in setting Senior Post Holder remuneration;
- (iii) the Remuneration Committee had scrutinised the report and had recommended it to the Board of Governors for approval.

Governors were content with the report as presented and that it could be published on the College website unamended.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approved the Remuneration Annual Report 2022/23.

**Approved**

**23/24.25 Search Committee Annual Report 2022/23**

The Clerk to the Corporation reported that the report provided a summary of the work of the Search Committee over the past year and an outline of the work planned for the year ahead.

Governors were content with the report as presented.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the Search Committee Annual Report 2022/23.

**Noted**

**23/24.26 FE Code of Good Governance**

The Clerk to the Corporation reported the following points:

- (i) a new FE Code of Good Governance had been published. The Corporation needed to adopt this code or another specified code, such as the UK Corporate Governance Code or Charity Governance Code;
- (ii) as the FE Code of Good Governance had been developed 'by the sector for the sector', this was the Code that was being recommended for adoption;
- (iii) the new Code represented a streamlined version of the previous version, was principle-based and much less prescriptive.

Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) the prior scrutiny given by the Search Committee;
- (ii) the timeline for completing the accompanying template. It was noted that the Clerk would complete the accompanying template that would:
  - set out the evidence of College behaviours and governance practices that demonstrate each of the six principles;
  - set out how the evidence was verified to provide assurance that practices were fit for purpose and deliver good governance;
  - identify any areas for improvement;
  - determine actions to be taken forward as part of a governance improvement plan;This could be reviewed by the Search Committee at its next scheduled meeting on 7 May 2024.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to approve the adoption of the FE Code of Good Governance. **Approved**

**23/24.27 Items for Noting**

**(i) Procurement Compliance and Spend Approvals**

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

**(ii) 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**

**(iii) 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**

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

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the Final Report on Governor Attendance 2022/23 (82%). **Noted**

**(v) DfE Governors' Finance Dashboard**

Governors noted the ESFA's confirmation of the College's ongoing 'outstanding' financial health.

**Resolved:** The Board of Governors resolved to note the DfE Governors' Finance Dashboard. **Noted**

**23/24.28 Minutes of the Remuneration Committee Meeting Held on 31 October 2023**

*This minute is confidential as it contains personal information about members of the College staff.*

**23/24.29 Time and Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 5 December 2023**

This meeting would be held in person at the College. Before then there was to be a joint session between the Board and the Audit Committee, to consider the Draft Annual Report to Members of the Corporation on the External Audit for the Year Ended 31 July 2023. This meeting was scheduled to be held the following week on Tuesday 21 November (6.00pm) – via Teams.

**Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:**

**Chair**

**Date**