

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on Thursday 21 November 2024

Present: Subhaan Ali, Amanda Bromley, Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce, Jonathan Frankham, Michael Ginger, Nicky Littler, John Lyne (Chair), Mariam Rana, Remell Thompson-Bell, Atta Ul Rasool

Nils Elgar, Clerk to the Corporation

In Attendance: Jennie Arnold (Assistant Principal), Dave Dobson (Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure), Leon Dowd (Deputy Principal Quality and People), Nicola Welland (Deputy Principal Curriculum)

ACTION

24/25.14 Apologies for Absence

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to accept the apologies of Damien Bourke, Simon Boyle, Jackie Moores and Jemma Newton. **Accepted**

The Chair welcomed new Student Governors, Subhaan Ali (Tameside College) And Mariam Rana (Clarendon Sixth Form College). Introductions were made.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the appointment of Subhaan Ali and Mariam Rana as Student Governors for a term of office up to two years. **Approved**

24/25.15 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were noted:

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) that in relation to the Committees' Report, there was a recommendation from the Search Committee that Nicky Littler, Remell Thompson-Bell and Atta Ul-Rasool be re-appointed for a substantive term of office;
- (iii) that in relation to the Pay Review 2024/25, Senior Post Holders would benefit should the recommendation be accepted;
- (iv) that College managers and the Student Governors would withdraw from the meeting for the consideration of the Confidential Minutes of the Remuneration Committee Meeting, 12 November 2024.

24/25.16 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15 October 2024

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2024. **Approved**

24/25.17 Matters Arising

On minute 24/25.06 (Principal's Report), it was reported that the Principal and Chair had written to the Local Authority regarding growth funding.

24/25.18 Committees' Report

The Clerk to the Corporation reported the following:

- (i) the report covered two committee meetings: The Remuneration Committee and Search Committee meetings on 12 November 2024;
- (ii) the Remuneration Committee considered, amongst other things:
 - Senior Post Holder performance against objectives in 2023/24 and objectives for 2024/25;
 - Senior Post Holder remuneration, which was to be taken forward within the final confidential item of the Board meeting (see minute 24/25.28);
 - the Remuneration Annual Report 2023/24, which was to be considered later in the meeting (see minute 24/25.24);
- (iii) the Search Committee considered, amongst other things:
 - membership issues, which covered Board and committee membership, succession planning and Board diversity. Recommendations were made to the Board in respect of Board and committee membership;
 - the Search Committee Annual Report 2023/24, which was to be considered later in the meeting (see minute 24/25.25).

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) the suggestion from the Remuneration Committee to include within Senior Post Holder objectives for 2024/25 an objective on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), which had been actioned for the Principal and Deputy Principal Quality and People;
- (ii) the attendance at meetings and development sessions and willingness to take on additional committee roles of the three Governors that were due to complete their initial one year term office and had agreed to serve an additional substantive term, if this would be useful to the Board;
- (iii) the resignations of Kirk Cornwall from the Audit Committee and Phill Brown from the Remuneration Committee and Search Committee, and the vacancy created on the Audit Committee following the resignation of the Elaine Price at the end of her term of office.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 12 November 2024.

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the re-appointment of Nicky Littler, Remell Thompson-Bell and Atta Ul-

Approved

Rasool as Independent Governors for a further three-year term of office ending 4 December 2027.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the appointment of Damien Bourke as a member of the Remuneration Committee.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the appointment of Amanda Bromley and Remell Thompson-Bell as members of the Audit Committee.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the appointment of Atta Ul-Rasool as a member of the Search Committee.

Approved

24/25.19

Key Discussion Topic: 16-18 Sufficiency and Curriculum Challenges

Michael Ginger, the Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure and the Assistant Principal joined the meeting during this item.

The Deputy Principal Quality and People and Deputy Principal Curriculum gave a presentation on the 16-18 Sufficiency and Curriculum Challenges. Key points included:

- (i) the projected rise and then fall in school leavers in the period to 2032/33;
- (ii) future sufficiency considerations, where the College was effectively at full capacity;
- (iii) that the issue of sufficiency had been discussed with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC), the Department for Education (DfE) and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), and while there had been an acceptance of the challenges, there had been no financial support offered at present;
- (iv) the impact that the growth in 16-18 numbers was having on other provision;
- (v) that the increase in student numbers, especially at lower levels, also brought additional strains with an increasing number of students with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND), and issues relating to safeguarding, pastoral, wellbeing and mental health;
- (vi) the academic standards, particularly in Tameside, that meant there were a greater number of students at Entry Level to Level 2 attending and students that needed to continue to study GCSE English and Maths;
- (vii) the growth of capacity at local competitors and sufficiency issues in neighbouring boroughs;
- (viii) how the College planned for growth in 2024/25;
- (ix) how the College was planning for 2025/26, including managing risk;
- (x) challenges in the curriculum, including pending reform decisions in:
 - English and Maths;
 - Level 3;

- Level 2;
 - Alternative Academic Qualifications;
- (xi) while the College was initially planning to have a draft Curriculum Plan for 2025/26 ready by Christmas, the delay in some decisions required at the national level, meant that this has been put back until January 2025.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) that the additional students that Tameside College would probably recruit in future years would likely have greater needs than, for example, the average student starting at a sixth form college. This needed to be impressed upon the DfE and TMBC, when the issue of funding was considered;
- (ii) whether any decision on the location of possible capital works at College was dependent on funding. It was noted that any decision on the location for any capital works would be linked to the identified areas of growth. It was possible that the capital works could be required at both Beaufort Road and at Clarendon Sixth Form. It was noted that the growth in the provision in the town centre was currently in T1 rather than Clarendon Sixth Form. If the growth was in specialised curriculum areas, such as Construction, then teaching capacity would come back to the numbers that the specialised teaching areas could accommodate;
- (iii) that it was clear to see that the physical constraints to future growth for the College posed a clear problem. However, this had been clearly shared with Governors on what managers were trying to deal with. Indeed, it was suggested that it was a very difficult environment in which to plan, but that management had seemingly done so effectively to date;
- (iv) it was suggested that although the delay to much needed decisions was at the national level, this would have a local impact and potentially could prove to be an embarrassment for the government and individual MPs. Without timely decisions, the College would find it difficult to advise potential students at Open Days on their options for September 2025. Production of the College's prospectus might also have to be delayed. It was asked whether there would be a benefit in the College having a meeting with the three local MPs, which might help accelerate the required decision-making process. It was agreed that this would be referred to the Principal;
- (v) that depending on the timing of Board meetings, any update papers being considered by management on this issue could also be shared with Governors, to keep them apprised of the situation.

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

24/25.20 Principal's Report Including KPI Report

Governors were content with the report, which included an overview of performance against 2023/24 KPIs, current performance against

KPIs for 2024/25, the proposed timeline for the development of the next Strategic Plan and the latest 'Top News Stories'.

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

24/25.21 Higher Education Self Evaluation Document 2023/24

Phill Brown left the meeting during this item due to a lost internet connection.

The Assistant Principal gave a presentation that covered the following points:

- (i) there had been 185 enrolments onto the College's higher education programmes in 2023/24. 174 (94%) had been retained;
- (ii) there was an overall pass rate of 94% and an achievement rate of 92%;
- (iii) the provision offered, which was aligned to local and national skills shortages;
- (iv) the profile of students taking higher education courses at the College differed from that nationally, with only 14% being full-time, the majority were not studying a first degree and 25% of students were apprentices;
- (v) the overall number of enrolments in higher education at College had declined in line with the national trend of higher education students enrolled at further education colleges;
- (vi) the College had commenced a review of its higher education offer to ensure that its offer was aligned to local skills priorities, relevant to the College's progressing students and local employers;
- (vii) performance in each of the subject areas;
- (viii) planned changes to the College's provision;
- (ix) a summary of findings on the student and staff voice;
- (x) staff development;
- (xi) changes to Initial Teacher Training from September 2024. This would include an ITT Ofsted inspection at the College between January and June 2025.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) that John Lyne, Malcolm Bruce and Michael Ginger (subject to confirmation that there was no conflict of interest) were all content to be involved in meeting with Ofsted as part of their expected inspection of the College's Initial Teacher Training (ITT). All Governors would receive briefing documents prior to the ITT Ofsted inspection to ensure they were fully aware and informed;
- (ii) whether the Student Governors could be involved in the Ofsted inspection. It was noted that there was no reason why they could not be involved. However, Ofsted would be meeting with the College's ITT students as part of the inspection process and would gain the student voice directly from these individuals.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 2023/24.

Approved

24/25.22 Annual Human Resources Annual Report 2023/24

The Annual Human Resources Annual Report 2023/24 was taken as read. This included the following key points:

- (i) the College was managing and developing its staffing effectively during a period of significant challenge due to significant growth, economic uncertainty, a highly competitive job market and continuous local and national policy and strategy reform;
- (ii) a number of key aspects of HR operations and systems had been improved and these improvements would continue to ensure its services were effective and efficient and could support the College's People Strategy. The People Strategy would become an intrinsic part of the 2025-2030 College Strategic Plan in order to ensure our workforce was equipped and well placed to achieve continued success and safeguard the performance and sustainability of the College.

Governors were content with the report as presented. A view was expressed that the report showed some really positive improvements in staff experience and improving performance metrics. Governors noted that the Deputy Principal Quality and People would be working with Amanda Bromley and Nicky Littler in the development of the College's People Strategy.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Annual Human Resources Annual Report 2023/24.

Noted

24/25.23 Pay Review 2024/25

The Deputy Principal Quality and People reported the following points:

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- (i) the overall context:
 - the recommendation from the Association of Colleges for a pay award of 2.5%. A higher pay award had not been recommended because there had been no additional funding provided by government;
 - schools and academized sixth form colleges had received a government-funded 5.5% pay award;
 - sixth form colleges were in the same situation as further education colleges (no additional funding provided);
 - the University and College Union (UCU) had put in a pay claim for 10% or £3,000, whichever was greater. Unison (support staff) had not put in a pay claim;
- (ii) the key factor for the College in determining a pay award was affordability and a detailed financial analysis had been undertaken. In 2023/24, the College had made a 10% pay award, which was thought to be one of the highest in the sector;

- (iii) a comparison of current College pay with other colleges in Greater Manchester and the average pay for sixth form colleges;
- (iv) the proposed pay award for 2024/25, which was for a consolidated pay award of 6% for all staff except Senior Post Holders and a consolidated 4% pay award for Senior Post Holders;
- (v) the proposed pay award, if approved, would ensure that the College would continue to meet the Living Wage. However, if pay awards in future years were smaller, then this might become an issue;
- (vi) staff had really appreciated the pay award in 2023/24, with good staff satisfaction, improved staff recruitment and retention and a reduction in sickness absence;
- (vii) following the removal of the cap at scale 12 which limited progression for some teaching staff, teachers on that scale moved to scale 13 in January 2024 and would be able to move to scale 14 in January 2025. For those teachers moving to scale 14, their total pay award would be 10% in January 2025;
- (viii) the proposed pay award was significantly above the key inflation indices;
- (ix) the proposed pay award would likely narrow the gap with those FE colleges in Greater Manchester that currently paid more and narrow slightly the pay gap with school teachers;
- (x) the proposed process going forward, should the pay award be approved by Governors.

The Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure provided details of the financial analysis to determine the affordability of the proposed pay award. The higher-than-expected income meant that the College was expecting to outturn 2024/25 better than that set in the budget and would be considerably more so, if there was any in-year funding received for growth (which had not been predicated in the analysis).

The Chair opined that staff remained the College's greatest asset and the proposed pay award would demonstrate the value placed on them by Governors and management. He thanked the Executive Team for the data collection and detailed financial modelling that underpinned the proposed award.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the following pay award from 1 January 2025:

Approved

- (i) a consolidated pay award of 6% for all staff other than Senior Post Holders.
- (ii) a consolidated pay award of 4% for Senior Post Holders.

24/25.24 Remuneration Annual Report 2023/24

Governors noted the prior scrutiny of the report by the Remuneration Committee.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Remuneration Annual Report 2023/24.

Approved

24/25.25 Search Committee Annual Report 2023/24

Governors noted the prior scrutiny of the report by the Search Committee.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Search Committee Annual Report 2023/24. **Noted**

24/25.26 Items for Noting

(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) DfE Governors' Finance Dashboard Report

Governors noted, in particular, the graph that showed the various income streams which clearly showed the significant growth that had taken place in recent years in 16-19 income.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the DfE Governors' Finance Dashboard Report. **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 (91% to date). **Noted**

24/25.27 Confidential Minutes of the Remuneration Committee, 12 November 2024

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

24/25.28 Time and Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 10 December 2024

Governors were reminded that before the date of the next meeting, there was a joint session with the Audit Committee on Tuesday 26 November (6.00pm) to consider the Annual Report to Governors on the External Audit for the Year Ended 31 July 2024. This session would be held via Teams and should last no more than 30 minutes.

Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:

Chair

Date