

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on Thursday 18 November 2025

Present: Subhaan Ali, Damien Bourke, Amanda Bromley, Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce, Jonathan Frankham, 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: Jennie Arnold (Assistant Principal), Dave Dobson (Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure), Leon Dowd (Deputy Principal Quality and People), Nicola Welland (Deputy Principal Curriculum)

ACTION

25/26.15 Apologies for Absence

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to accept the apologies **Accepted** of Simon Boyle and Mariam Rana.

25/26.16 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 Department for Education (DfE), the College's principal funder and regulator;
- (ii) that in relation to the Proposed Pay Review 2025/26, Senior Post Holders and the Staff Governor would benefit should the recommendation be accepted;
- (iii) that College managers and the Student Governors would withdraw from the meeting for the consideration of the Confidential Minutes of the Remuneration Committee Meeting, 4 November 2025.

25/26.17 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 October 2025

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes **Approved** of the meeting held on 14 October 2025.

25/26.18 Matters Arising

On minute 25/26.05 (Matters Arising) – Sufficiency Project Approval), it was noted that the College had secured an additional £1.694m in funding from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) – this would be taken forward later in the agenda (see minute 25/26.25 – Estates and Capital Update).

25/26.19 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 4 November 2025;

- (ii) the Remuneration Committee considered, amongst other things:
 - Senior Post Holder performance against objectives in 2024/25 and objectives for 2025/26;
 - Senior Post Holder remuneration, which was to be taken forward within the final confidential item of the Board meeting (see minute 25/26.28);
 - the Remuneration Annual Report 2024/25, which was to be considered later in the meeting (see minute 24/25.26);
- (iii) the Search Committee considered, amongst other things:
 - membership issues, which covered Board and committee membership, succession planning and Board diversity;
 - the Search Committee Annual Report 2024/25, which was approved;
 - although outside of the Search Committee's remit, the term of office of Jemma Newton as Staff Governor would end in December. An election process had taken place for a successor and Jemma had been re-elected. However, the Board, as the appointing authority, needed to formally confirm this appointment.

Governors were content with the report as presented, welcomed Jemma back for a second term of office and thanked her for her ongoing commitment to the Board.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the business transacted by the Corporation's committees since the date of the last Board meeting.

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 4 November 2025.

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Search Committee Annual Report 2024/25.

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to appoint Jemma Newton as Staff Governor for a further two-year term of office ending 10 December 2027.

Approved

25/26.20 Key Discussion Topic: 16-18 Sufficiency Update – Management of Growth

Amanda Bromley joined the meeting during this item.

Key points from the presentation by the Deputy Principal Quality and People and Deputy Principal Curriculum included:

- (i) the projected rise and then fall in school leavers in the period to 2032/33, which was expected to peak in 2026/27;
- (ii) the combined Year 12 and Year 13 numbers within Tameside that were projected to not return to 2024/25 levels until 2031/32, and peaking in 2027/28;
- (iii) the significant growth in student numbers at Tameside College since 2018/19;

- (iv) the impact of the increase in entry, level 1 and level 2 students on student support – which was expected to be in the areas of safeguarding, pastoral, well-being and mental health. Increased support staffing was anticipated in areas of inclusion, attendance and behaviour. The Student Hubs would need to be revamped to optimise space for additional staff;
- (v) the continuing significant growth in the number of students taking GCSE Maths and English;
- (vi) the infrastructure developments required to support the anticipated increased numbers of both staff and students;
- (vii) curriculum planning was already underway for 2026/27 to address the expected growth, with increased number of courses in sought after curriculum areas and efficient timetabling that optimises staff and use of resources.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) the decline in the number of students taking A levels at College between 2021/22 and 2025/26. It was noted that while A levels still formed an important part of the curriculum, and were still viewed by some parents as the best option for their child, there were some vocational alternatives that had emerged as better alternatives. An example of this was Applied Science (Vocational A level) which, due to its component of assessed coursework, offered a less high-stakes final assessment model than the A level programme with similar outcomes;
- (ii) a view was offered that some students were beginning to realise that higher education and accompanying debt were not always the best option for securing a job and the vocational route and higher level apprenticeships were becoming increasingly attractive
- (iii) another view offered was that there was increasing parity in status between vocational, higher level apprenticeships and A level subjects, especially because many of the current jobs and those expected in the future were coming from the vocational courses, especially vocational apprenticeships.

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

Subhaan Ali withdrew from the meeting at the end of this item.

25/26.21 Principal's Report

The Principal reported that her report included the following:

- (i) KPI Report Closedown for 2024/25:
 - performance against the majority of these KPIs had been previously discussed by Governors;
 - A level value-added had out-turned with an Alps score of 7 against a target of 6. While the score remained unchanged from that achieved in 2023/24, it was now at

the top of the band. This had been identified as an area for improvement;

- Vocational value-added had out-turned with a One Grade score of 0.6, defined as 'well above average' (the highest possible score);
- growth in HE remained challenging, not just for the College but for the wider sector;
- apprenticeships growth was also challenging. While the College had seen growth in income, it was not significant in overall numbers;

(ii) Closedown of Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025:

- this narrative had been included as it had been a recommendation of the External Governance Review. This report pulled together information that had been provided in other reports;

(iii) Progress Report on 2025/26:

- the apprenticeship achievement rate to date for 2025/26 was 21%;
- retention was strong to date: 96% for 16-18 and 98% for 19+ classroom-based learners (CBL);
- attendance was also strong to date: 90% for CBL (both including and excluding English and Maths);
- adult learners would be funded to 100% of allocation. While 100% was included in the budget, the College would seek to enrol to 110% as it was thought likely that the College would receive this additional funding due to under recruitment by other providers in Greater Manchester;

(iv) Report on Progress Against Strategic Priorities (2025 – 2030) with Draft KPI Targets:

- it was proposed that targets for some KPIs be set for one year rather than the full five years of the Strategic Plan, as this had been shown to be inaccurate in the past.

Governors were content with the report as presented. The narrative of College performance against the Closedown of the Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025 was welcomed. A view was offered that under the new inspection framework, Ofsted might view College performance as very strong if not exceptional given its inclusivity.

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

Noted

25/26.22 Higher Education Self Evaluation Document 2024/25

Jonathan Frankham and Michael Ginger left the meeting towards the end of this item.

The Assistant Principal reported the following points:

(i) that it had just been announced that the College had been successful in securing £562,533 in capital funding from the Office for Students (OfS). The project included the creation of a high specification computing laboratory and an engineering

- laboratory equipped for 3D printing (additive manufacturing) and renewable energy skills training;
- (ii) the College's HE provision was closely aligned with local skills priorities, providing primarily local learners with access to vocational, skills-based programmes;
- (iii) the current offer was focused on engineering, digital, and teacher education pathways;
- (iv) enrolments reflected the national two-year decline in HE and HE-in-FE participation, falling from 185 to 157 learners in 2024/25;
- (v) headline performance indicators remained very strong, with retention at 96%, pass rate at 96%, and achievement at 93%;
- (vi) nationally benchmarked data confirmed that the College's HE outcomes exceeded all OfS thresholds;
- (vii) part-time first-degree continuation stood at 81% (26% above the threshold) and PGCE progression and achievement rates were also significantly higher than national averages;
- (viii) priorities for 2025/26 included expanding part-time provision, strengthening staff development, and ensuring robust preparation for an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Ofsted inspection, which was expected in the period January to June 2026.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) whether the new OfS regulatory regime proposed for HE providers would make the College's small provision sustainable. It was noted that the College remained committed to sustaining high-quality provision and rebuilding numbers through responsive curriculum design, flexible delivery models, and strong partnerships with employers;
- (ii) that Malcolm Bruce and Michael Ginger were content to be involved in meeting with Ofsted as part of their expected ITE inspection.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 2024/25.

Approved

25/26.23 Annual Human Resources Report 2024/25

The Annual Human Resources Report 2024/25 was taken as read. This included the following key points:

- (i) the College was managing and developing its staffing effectively during a period of 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 able to support the College's excellence in People and Culture Strategy (part of the new College Strategic Plan 2025 – 2030). This would ensure the College's 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. It was noted that there were some positive key staffing metrics, such as reduced turnover and reduced sickness absence. A view was presented that this report, together with the past few reports (Principal's Report, HE Self-Evaluation Document) all presented a positive picture for the College.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Annual Human Resources Report 2024/25.

Noted

25/26.24 Pay Award Proposal 2025/26

The Deputy Principal Quality and People reported the following points:

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- (i) the overall context:
 - the College's Strategic Plan 2025 – 2030 included an intent to implement the best pay award possible in recognition that staff make a significant contribution to the success of the College;
 - the September 2025 inflation indices;
 - the recommendation from the Association of Colleges was for a pay award of 4.0%, but it was acknowledged that some providers, particularly those weighted towards adult provision, would struggle to be able to afford this;
 - teachers in schools had received a 4% pay award;
 - the pay element of the University and College Union claim was for 10% or £3,000, whichever was greater;
- (ii) the key factor for the College in determining a pay award was affordability and a detailed financial analysis had been undertaken. A pay award of 4.5% had been included in the budget but, following enrolment, it had been determined that 5.5% was affordable;
- (iii) a comparison of current College pay with other further education (FE) colleges in Greater Manchester, where it was shown that the College was now competitive;
- (iv) the proposed pay award for 2025/26, which was for a consolidated pay award of 5.5% for all staff;
- (v) it was expected that the pay award, if approved, would mean that the College would continue to meet the Real Living Wage;
- (vi) staff had appreciated the pay awards of the past couple of years and this had been reflected by good staff satisfaction, improved staff recruitment and retention and a reduction in sickness absence.

The Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure provided details of the financial analysis to determine the affordability of the proposed pay award. The budget for 2025/26, approved by the Board in July 2025, included provision for a 4.5% pay award and assumed no in-year growth funding. The revised proposal for a 5.5% pay award assumed the College would now receive £300k in-year growth funding. Modelling showed that if the College received all of its

(formula driven) in-year growth funding that was due, it would receive an additional £781k to £868k. However, while the government had signalled that there would be in-year growth funding in 2025/26, this was subject to affordability and therefore the exact amount to be received remained uncertain. With increased enrolments at colleges across the country, it was felt that this was likely to be less than the full amount. If the College received no in-year growth funding, it would result in a deficit of £250k to 300k. However, receipt of full in-year growth funding would result in a £700k to £800k surplus.

Governors considered the risks and benefits of the proposed 5.5% pay award and agreed that this represented a manageable risk for the College.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve a consolidated pay award of 5.5% for all staff, payable from 1 January 2026.

Approved

25/26.25 Estates and Capital Update

This minute is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

The Principal, Deputy Principal Quality and People, Deputy Principal Curriculum and Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure left the meeting at the end of this item.

25/26.26 Remuneration Annual Report 2024/25

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

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Remuneration Annual Report 2024/25.

Approved

25/26.27 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

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

Noted

(iv) OfS Emerging Sector Risks

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the OfS Emerging Sector Risks report.

Noted

(v) Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2025/26

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2025/26 (83% to date).

Noted

25/26.28 Confidential Minutes of the Remuneration Committee, 4 November 2025

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

25/26.29 Time and Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 9 December 2025

A joint session with the Audit Committee would be held on Tuesday 25 November (6.00pm) to consider the Annual Report to Governors on the External Audit for the Year Ended 31 July 2025.

Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:

Chair

Date