

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on Tuesday 14 October 2025

Present: Subhaan Ali, Amanda Bromley, Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce, Jonathan Frankham, Michael Ginger, Nicky Littler, John Lyne (Chair), Jackie Moores, Mariam Rana, 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), Rob Goldstone (Head of Estates), Nicola Welland (Deputy Principal Curriculum)

ACTION

25/26.01 Apologies for Absence

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

25/26.02 Declarations of Interest

It was noted that Jonathan Frankham had a standing declaration that he was an employee of the Department for Education (DfE), the College's principal funder and regulator. **Noted**

25/26.03 Health and Safety Annual Report 2024/25

The Head of Estates reported the following points:

- (i) there had been a significant improvement in the health and safety culture. Participation at Health and Safety Committee meetings had improved considerably under new leadership;
- (ii) there had been no RIDDOR reportable accidents in College in 2024/25. Accident numbers were up however. This was being attributed to an increased number of staff and students and a more user friendly reporting system;
- (iii) due to the nature of their work, first aid training had been made compulsory for all Technical Support Officers (TSOs) in College. There were no RIDDOR reportable accidents in-year. These were set out in a table by accident type and programme area. 'Illness' was included as a category and typically included when a first aider attended to anyone that was found to be due to illness rather than accident;
- (iv) a new lockdown system was currently being installed and this would be tested in December.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) whether compliance with mandatory training was actively monitored. It was noted that this was the case;
- (ii) how lone working was managed in College. It was noted that this had been picked up by Governors during a Governor Learning Visit to the Animal Management a couple of years previously. Staff from Animal Management were required to

attend College every day of the year to check and feed animals. Staff attendance out of hours was monitored by the College's contracted security provider, with staff contacting them on arrival and departure. It was noted that this might be done via App in the future;

- (iii) lockdown testing. This would be done across the College's four sites. The new system would allow for lockdowns by zone and not necessarily for the whole campus, which was particularly important for the large Beaufort Road site;
- (iv) there had been no recent lockdowns or evacuations, although the recent incident in Manchester (stabbings at the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue), had led to live testing of the College's pre-lockdown processes. It was noted that the College might seek external expertise via JESIP (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles) in this regard. It was noted that fire and lockdown testing was not done in the Dovestones Building when students were present, due to the vulnerable nature of these students; testing was done here out of hours. However, the building did have silent alarms (flashing lights);
- (v) the College had a fire evacuation recently where three students needed to be left behind in a refuge area as per normal practice.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Health and Safety Annual Report 2024/25. **Noted**

The Head of Estates left the meeting at the end of this item.

25/26.04 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 1 July 2025

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

25/26.05 Matters Arising

On Minutes 24/25.95 (Matters Arising – Pay Review 2024/25 Update – Additional Payment), the Chair asked about the impact of the additional pay award made from 1 April 2025. It was noted that this has been well received, with no issues raised by the trade unions. The College's approach to pay was having a positive impact on recruitment and retention, for example, with far fewer new teachers starting in September than in the previous year. This payment underpinned the message given previously by the Principal to staff that the College would seek to improve the pay of staff where affordable. The Principal reported that the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) had written to 76 colleges stating that unless their pay demands were met by 3 October, the college would face a declaration of a trade dispute. Tameside College was not one of these 76 colleges.

On minute 24.25/107 (Sufficiency Project Approval), it was reported that the College had received verbal assurance from the local authority that it had secured an additional £1.5m for this. The College had bid for some £660k above this, but the fund was

oversubscribed and so it was likely that any additional monies received would be less than this. It was reported that a publicity event would be held at the end of October in respect of the outgoing Local Authority Chief Executives role in supporting this project approved, although the lease agreement would not be signed until the College had received written confirmation of the additional £1.5m in funding. The planning application in respect of the project would be going to the Tameside Planning Committee the following day. The Principal indicated that thought needed to be given as to how this project, once approved, would be communicated to staff.

25/26.06 Principal's Report

Phill Brown left the meeting during this item (due to poor internet connectivity).

The Principal reported the following items:

- (i) enrolment:
 - the latest position on 16-18 enrolments reported in the paper was 4,064 (reducing to 3,931 as at 20 October), against an allocation of 3,592. Under the lagged funding model, the College would therefore be carrying out teaching and learning which, if fully funded would be worth £2.3m, for which it might receive £600k to £800k in in-year growth funding. As there was growth in student numbers across the country, this would put pressure on DfE budgets and its ability to pay any in-year growth funding;
 - the College was planning on delivering 110% of its devolved budget with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (the maximum it can be funded for);
- (ii) sufficiency. The College had already received £760k in sufficiency funding from the GMCA with another £1.5m confirmed verbally. As indicated in minute 25/26.05 (Matters Arising), the College had bid for £660k above this, but as the fund was oversubscribed it was felt unlikely the College would receive the full amount of its bid;
- (iii) results:
 - the results would be covered in minute 25/26.07. Due to some excellent progress in the quality of teaching and learning, there would be fewer conversations required with individual teachers in subject areas that needed improvement;
- (iv) GB Energy Net Zero Accelerator Project:
 - this was covered in an update at the Governor Development Session on 23 September;
 - the College had been selected for a fully funded project (estimated at £760k) to install 1,192 solar panels at the Beaufort Road site, which would result in significant reductions to the College's grid electricity requirements and CO₂ emissions. The project also includes a behavioural change programme as well as the College being a partner in the project's aim to understand how to

- upskill workforces in green technology and a general awareness of net zero;
- (v) funded projects:
 - the College had recently secured £562k capital grant to invest in a renewable energy training hub, designed to meet the growing demand for green skills and sustainable technologies. This would include solar and wind power training systems. It would also enable investment in three state of the art 3D printers to support additive manufacturing;
 - the College had also secured £35k for a fully funded project working alongside World Skills UK and engineering employers to upskill employees and teachers;
- (vi) conclusion:
 - it had been a strong start to the new academic year. The College continued to grow with turnover expected to be £40m+ in 2025/26.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) details of the GB Energy Net Zero Accelerator Project:
 - the expected lifespan of the solar panels. It was noted that the solar panels had a 25 year product warranty and a 30 year linear power output warranty (maintaining a certain level of efficiency);
 - the timeframe for the installation of the solar panels, which was expected to take about 21 weeks. Some remedial work was being done on the roof of Dovestones building prior to this taking place;
 - that the installed solar panels should reduce the College's electricity costs by approx. £100k per year;
 - that better data was needed on electricity usage across the Beaufort Road site, which currently had only one meter that covered all buildings.

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

25/26.07 Closure of Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25 and Provisional Outcomes 2024/25

The Deputy Principal Quality and People and Deputy Principal Curriculum reported the following points:

- (i) Leadership and Management:
 - attendance:
 - Attendance Strategy reviewed and implemented for 2024/25, revised College targets focused on known issues and impact. Targets were set in curriculum evaluations and IMRs (appraisals). Effective monitoring of progress was evident;
 - good progress made towards targets, particularly A Level (4%-points above last year);

- College attendance: overall = 86.0%, 16-18 = 85.9% (87.1% excl. E&M), 19+ = 87.2%;
- attendance at GCSE remained a focus. Also continued with strategies to work with learners who had attendance issues at school;
- sustained improvements in the attendance of care experienced and EHCP learners;
- good progress made in further improving the Apprenticeship achievement rate to 65%, which was slightly below the target of 67%, but a 5%-point improvement since last year (60%). This was also above the current (2023/24) national average (NA) of 60.5%;

(ii) Quality of Education:

- good progress made to support a small minority of staff to improve aspects of their teaching to ensure learners were making at least the expected progress in their lessons;
- improvements made to the accessibility of resources in employability settings for students with complex needs;
- good progress ensured there were improved outcomes in:
 - ESOL (16-18 and Adult), L3 Childcare, L2 and L3 Engineering, L2 Welding, L2 & L3 Travel and Tourism, L1 & L2 Catering, Hospitality and Bakery, L2 Business and Management, L3 AAT, Apprenticeships and high grades in Travel and Tourism, Health and Social Care, Childcare and Graphic Design. GCSE Maths – high grades much improved and above target;
- good improvements made, but targets not quite achieved:
 - L1 Health & Social Care / Childcare, L2 Childcare, TIG Welding
- areas which would continue to be a focus:
 - GCSE English, MIG Welding, A Level retention and progress / value added, L2 AAT, and high grades or progress on Plumbing, Electrical and Photography;

(iii) Personal Development:

- good progress ensured all students, and appropriate staff, knew the viable apprenticeship options open to them, particularly higher-level apprenticeships;

(iv) Safeguarding:

- good progress made to further develop and promote wellbeing and support activities for students;

(v) Contribution to Meeting Skills:

- good progress made to sustain strong employer relationships and contribution to meeting skills.

The Deputy Principal Quality and People also provided a summary of the provisional outturn for 2024/25:

- all College achievement rate was 88.6%, a 1.1%-point improvement since last year and 3.1%-points above NA;
 - at 86.6%, the 16-18 rate was high, had improved by 0.8%-points since last year and was 3.2% above NA;
 - at 92.4%, the 19+ rate is high, had improved by 2.2%-points since last year and was 4.6%-points above NA;

- the main priorities for improvement, which would be covered in more depth within the 2024/25 SAR and 2025/26 QIP included:
 - GCSEs: Maths, but particularly English;
 - A Level retention and value added;
 - Adult AAT;
- the detail of specific qualification achievement rate improvement would be included in the SAR and QIP.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) that, overall, the report made for very positive reading;
- (ii) attendance, which was not just an issue for the College or indeed the further education sector, but for the entire education sector;
- (iii) the opportunities for students that were presented by apprenticeships and high level apprenticeships;
- (iv) Maths and English:
 - the numbers enrolled for 2025/26. It was noted that some 1,300 students were enrolled in English with a higher number in Maths. This presented a logistical challenge for the College with some 400 groups;
 - around 700 grade 3 students would be resitting their exams in November. A particular challenge here was that sitting students needed to continue with their studies until January, when results would be known;
 - it was noted that GCSE resit students had 'spiky' profiles with differing levels of need in different areas of the qualification;
 - students were grouped according to ability. As there was insufficient time to teach the full GCSE curriculum again, the focus was on filling identified gaps in knowledge;
 - that access arrangements was a significant issue for GCSE exams;
- (v) their thanks to the Assistant Principals and wider staff for the progress made and outcomes achieved.

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

25/26.08 Provisional Outturn 2024/25

The Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure reported the following points:

- (i) at its meeting on 2 July 2024, the Board approved a budget in 2024/25 with a deficit of £352k (before FRS 102 pension costs). Following the mid-year review, the Board approved a revised budget of a £167k surplus. The provisional outturn reported in the paper was for a surplus of £658k, but this was subject to year-end adjustments. The very latest position presented at the meeting was for a surplus of £582k, giving a favourable variance of £417k. The improved provisional outturn was due to a combination of additional income, notably from apprenticeships and in-year partial growth

funding, and favourable variances for both pay and non-pay costs. Increased apprenticeship income was not due to increased starts but for retention and achievement that was better than forecast;

- (ii) the external audit had commenced that week and would conclude by the end of the month;
- (iii) the overall financial health grade for the College was expected to remain 'outstanding' for 2024/25;
- (iv) cash reserves at the year-end were higher than expected (£10,633k versus £5,930k). The increased cash reserves included monies that were not available for general expenditure, such as bursary support for learners and grants earmarked for capital expenditure;
- (v) cash was expected to stay strong past the year-end, which would ensure that the College could continue to operate effectively on a day-to-day basis.

Governors were content with the report as presented, but requested that future disclosure of cash separate out free College cash, from cash related to designated schemes.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Provisional Outturn for 2024/25. **Noted**

25/26.09 TRET Update

The Deputy Principal Quality and People gave a presentation that covered the following points:

- (i) that the College was originally the sponsor of Droylsden Academy (DA), a single academy trust. On 1 January 2022, DA converted to a multi-academy trust (Tame River Educational Trust – TRET) with the one school within the Trust and Mossley Hollins High School (MHHS) as an Associate School;
- (ii) that TRET had now grown to become a three school MAT, with Hyde High School (HHS) and MHHS joining during 2024/25. Both of these schools were Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schools and their conversation to academy status had been delayed due to the risks associated with their PFI contracts;
- (iii) the enlarged Trust now had a combined budget of £22.9m, with 2,947 students and 356 staff;
- (iv) the current status of the schools in terms of Ofsted inspections judgements, quality outcomes in respect of GCSE results over the past three years and financial position;
- (v) the next phase, which included consolidation following growth, a focus on strong performance in both student outcomes and finance, and ensuring strong governance. The Trust could then look to further sustainable growth (adding new schools). Partnership working was also considered an option, where the Trust could work with a struggling school without it having to join TRET.

Issues considered by Governors included the risks associated with sponsorship of TRET. It was noted that the risk was reputational and not financial in any way as the two organisations had no financial links.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the TRET Update. **Noted**

25/26.10 Reserves Policy

Key points from the report included changes to the policy, which included:

- (i) cash balances – updated to include the minimum balance to be after adjusting for any monies held for distribution to learners and amounts due to be repaid to the DfE;
- (ii) reserves – updated from £17.1m to £18.5m to reflect increased income;
- (iii) a review period of every two years was applied to the Policy.

Governors were content with the Policy as presented, but see also the request made in respect of cash balance disclosures in minute 25/26.08 (Provisional Outturn 2024/25).

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Reserves Policy. **Approved**

25/26.11 Procurement Compliance and Spend Approvals

The report covered contracts orders over £150k, which covered two separate contracts: one for desktops, laptops and laptop trolleys and the other for cleaning services. Also reported were upcoming material contracts / orders, which included that for security / guarding and a minor works framework.

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

25/26.12 Update on Governor Engagement and Development Activities

The Clerk to the Corporation reported the following Governor engagement and development activities had been recorded since the date of the last Board meeting:

- (i) 21.08.25 – visiting College during Enrolment – John Lyne. Feedback on this had been shared with Governors via email;
- (ii) 16.09.25 – ETF Governor Training Sessions on 'Leading a Committee – Remell Thompson-Bell;
- (iii) 23.09.25 – Governor Development Session, covering session on Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, Role of the Link Governor College IT Account and Update son GB Energy Net Zero Accelerator Project and Sufficiency Project - (most Governors);
- (iv) 14.10.25 – Governor Learning Visit – Engineering – John Lyne, Remell Thompson-Bell and Atta Ul Rasool. A class of

Level 2 students working on metalwork lathes was visited. The Department's facilities were also viewed which included Computer-Aided Design and Computer-Aided Manufacturing (CAD-CAM) equipment, and the £500k 'Industry 4.0' simulated production line equipment installed with the Institute of Technology capital funding, as well as additive printing.

John Lyne reported that he had visited the Maths and English Department and spoken with staff and students.

25/26.13 Items for Noting

(i) Chair's Action

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note that there had been no Chair's Actions since the date of the last meeting. **Noted**

(ii) Use of the Seal of the Corporation

There were two instances of the use of the Seal of the Corporation since the date of the last meeting, including: (i) a Deed of Variation with Transport for Greater Manchester in respect of a Grant Agreement for Community Cycle Parking Grants Programme; and, (ii) the agreement accompanying £743k in capital monies from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) for the sufficiency project.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the use of the Seal of the Corporation since the date of the last meeting. **Noted**

(iii) Final Report on Governor Attendance 2024/25

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

25/26.14 Time and Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 18 November 2025

Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:

Chair

Date