

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on
Tuesday 2 July 2024**

Present: Simon Boyle, Amanda Bromley, Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce (Chair), Kirk Cornwall, Michael Ginger, Nicky Littler, Jackie Moores, Jemma Newton, Elaine Price, Arsana Subba, 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

23/24.82 Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed Amanda Bromley and Michel Ginger to the meeting. Michael Ginger was Dean of Applied Sciences at the University of Huddersfield. He would provide specialist higher education expertise to the Board and be a member of the College's HE Academic Standards Committee. Amanda Bromley worked as the Director of People and Organisational Development at Tameside and Glossop ICFT and Stockport NHS Foundation Trust. As well as bringing HR and business leadership experience to the Board, she would also help maintain the close link between the College and hospital.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to accept the apologies of Damien Bourke, Jonathan Frankham, John Lyne and Atta Ul Rasool. **Accepted**

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the appointment of Amanda Bromley as an Independent Governor for an initial one-year term of office ending 31 July 2025. This appointment was subject to satisfactory eligibility, DBS and reference checks. **Approved**

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the appointment of Michael Ginger as an Independent Governor for an initial one-year term of office ending 31 July 2025. This appointment was subject to satisfactory eligibility, DBS and reference checks. **Approved**

23/24.83 Declarations of Interest

It was noted that Malcolm Bruce had an interest in the agenda item on the Appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors (see minute 23/24.98). **Noted**

23/24.84 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 21 May 2024

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2024. **Approved**

23/24.85 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising. **Noted**

23/24.86 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report

The Deputy Principal Curriculum reported the following points:

- (i) the report provided a review of the impact of the EDI Policy and related strategies on staff, students and the College community;
- (ii) the impact of EDI was considered in relevant reports throughout the year; the EDI Annual Report pulled this information together;
- (iii) the age and gender profiles of staff and students were appropriate. The ratio of female to male staff was greater in business support and learning support;
- (iv) there were no significant gaps in the achievement rates for males and females or between 16-18 and adult;
- (v) there were excellent case studies which showed the success of the College's approach to EDI, the variety of activities undertaken and of the success male and female students;
- (vi) there were no issues to report in regard to sexual orientation of staff. Two new LGBTQI+ student groups were having a positive impact;
- (vii) there were no issues to report regarding staff or students who had a disability and / or learning difficulty;
- (viii) there were no significant gaps in the achievement rates for students with disabilities and / or learning difficulties and those that did not and for students receiving additional learning support (ALS) and those that did not;
- (ix) learning support was effective. However, it was a challenge to provide the additional learning support required for the increased number of low cost, Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) learners on mainstream without additional funding;
- (x) the pass rates of LAC (Looked After Children) learners and learners with safeguarding related issues were similar to the 16-18 College average, however the retention rate had narrowed but remained lower for both groups, i.e. more LAC learners and learners with safeguarding related issues left College than the average 16-18 cohort. This would remain a focus for 2024/25;
- (xi) 70% of qualifications were undertaken by students from wards that were rated in the top three Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles. There were no significant gaps between the achievement rates of students in each decile;
- (xii) the ethnicity profile of staff, particularly of teachers, was similar to the community the College served. There were no significant gaps in the achievement rates of students from different ethnic minority groups when compared to the achievement rate of White – British students;
- (xiii) staff and students had defined appropriate values and behaviours that supported the College's EDI aims and their positive impact was evident;
- (xiv) the management of inappropriate behaviour regarding the College's EDI aims was robust and well-managed.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) whether COVID was the cause of the increased number of health issues that students were facing today. It was noted that these had been on the rise prior to COVID, but that COVID had not helped;
- (ii) whether sixth form colleges were seeing the same rise in the number of students presenting with health problems. It was noted that while cases were also rising, most of the cases were linked to students at entry level or level 1.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report. **Noted**

23/24.87 Committees' Report

The Clerk to the Corporation reported that two 'committees' had met since the date of the last Board meetings: the Budget Scrutiny Working Group on 11 June and the Audit Committee on 18 June. The Budget Scrutiny Working Group considered the draft budget and underpinning assumptions. Amongst other things, the Audit Committee reviewed the draft Risk Register 2024/25 and recommended this to the Board of Governors for approval. It also recommended the Audit Planning Memorandum for the Year Ended 31 July 2024 to the Board of Governors for approval. This would be taken forward later in the agenda (see minute 23/24.94).

Governors were content with the report as presented.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the key issues, decisions taken and recommendations made at committee meetings. **Noted**

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to recommend the Risk Register 2024/25 to the Board of Governors for approval. **Approved**

23/24.88 May Finance Report

The Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure reported the following:

- (i) March management accounts:
 - the budgeted outturn for the year was for a surplus of £138k. This was revised upward at the October Board meeting to a £496k surplus. In the Board meeting in March, a revised budget was approved that included a surplus of £1.335m;
 - monthly pay costs had increased from £1.449m in the first six months of the year to £1.699m in the second six months of the year – this being due to reduced turnover and a reduction in vacancy management savings (which was viewed as a positive development);
 - the overall forecast surplus before pension costs had now reduced from £1.335m to £633k;
 - the forecast cash position at year-end was £7.988m against the original budget of £6.223m;

- the expected outturn for the year was to achieve an 'outstanding' ESFA financial health;
- (ii) capital projects:
 - the College's £11.7m Further Education Capital Transformation Fund (FECTF) project was on track, with £123k remaining in contingency;
 - summer capital works that included refurbishment of the Victoria Building E floor for Maths and English;
 - reconfiguration of the Tameside Centre for Enterprise (TFCE) to support the move of Adult ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages);
 - configuration of two rooms in the Waterloo Building for better use for Construction and Apprentices;
 - refurbishment of Ryecroft teaching rooms for Construction;
 - reconfiguration of rooms in Clarendon to improve PC access;
 - the proposed works on the Beauty treatment rooms at T1 had been put on hold as permission had not yet been granted by the Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC). This work would proceed as soon as was practicable once approval was received.

Governors considered the progress on Project B (Motor Vehicle) of the FECTF project. It was noted that this was expected to complete on time, allowing the College to fit out the building ready to move in by late August / early September. Demolition of the remaining buildings would then take place through to November.

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

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the reforecast position (year-end surplus of £633k).

Approved

23/24.89 Budget for the Year Ending 31 July 2025 (incl. Capital Budget) and Two Year Financial Plan

The Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure reported the following points:

- (i) the draft budget had been scrutinised by Governors at the Budget Scrutiny Working Group meeting on 11 June;
- (ii) the Audit Committee, at its meeting on 18 June, considered two internal audit reports on 'Financial Strategy and Curriculum Planning' and '16-18 Student Journey – Enquiry to Enrolment' review, which looked at financial planning and student number planning, both of which resulted in a 'substantial' assurance opinion and provided further support to the approach to the 2024/25 budget;
- (iii) a proposed budget of a £352k deficit in 2024/25, followed by a budget of a £365k deficit in 2025/26, which reflected a decision to invest in staff, particularly teaching and teaching

- support, linked to increasing 16-18 students and increases in depreciation;
- (iv) that despite setting deficit budgets for these two years, there would be net cash generation from operating activities;
 - (v) key assumptions underpinning the budget;
 - (vi) the College's ESFA financial health would remain 'outstanding' for these two years;
 - (vii) a forecast minimum cash balance of £4.575m in September 2024, rising to £5.930m by July 2025;
 - (viii) the rationale for the investment in staff during a period of growth and deficit budgets, was to provide a better experience for students from the very start of the academic year and help minimise withdrawals.

Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) the prior scrutiny given by Governors to the budget for 2024/25 and estimate for 2025/26, including the underpinning assumptions. While a budget surplus would have been desirable, it was noted the positive cash generation was the more important metric;
- (ii) that the higher risk approach adopted by the College was mitigated through some of the planned growth in student numbers coming from internal progression (and therefore being more certain);
- (iii) the College was under pressure to take as many students as possible as, for some, the College might be their only option within the borough.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the 2024/25 budget and subsequent estimate for 2025/26, which comprised: **Noted**

- (i) a pre-pension deficit of £352k;
- (ii) general capital funds of £850k;
- (iii) continuation of approved capital projects, specifically:
 - FECTF, partially grant funded;
 - Additional FE Capital funding (sustainability focussed), 100% grant funded;
 - College share of T-level Wave 3 underspend;
 - Additional approved capital funds of £954k.

23/24.90 Curriculum 2024/25

The Deputy Principal Curriculum gave a presentation that covered the following points:

- (i) changes to the curriculum for 2024/25:
 - overall, there were no changes to the main curriculum structure;
 - a summary of the courses that were ending and new courses that were starting;
- (ii) the challenges facing the College which included:
 - space / timetabling;
 - recruiting high quality teachers;

- increased level 1 provision;
- restricted progression pathways;
- balance of the curriculum (between adult and 16-18);
- qualification reform;
- (iii) changes to Maths and English, including the introduction of minimum teaching hours as a condition of funding expected in 2025/26, and the challenges these posed;
- (iv) an update on skills and apprenticeships and associated challenges;
- (v) an update on changes to the College's higher education provision;
- (vi) the College's Adult Community Education offer. It was reported that the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) was moving away from 'community learning' to 'tailored learning', with the aim of better meeting the needs of learners by providing more customised and flexible educational opportunities;
- (vii) staff development, including the development of the Professional Learning Mentor roles, increased mentoring for in training teachers and details of a Teaching and Learning Conference.

Issues considered by Governors included:

- (i) whether management were aware that training providers could potentially undertake End Point Assessment (EPA) in the future. It was a current pilot activity in some providers. This was known;
- (ii) whether apprentices might suffer knowledge decay while waiting for their EPA. It was noted that this should not be the case, with some students now booked for their EPA just a couple of days into August and therefore unfortunately just outside the 31 July deadline to be counted for timely achievement;
- (iii) the view of the Staff Governor that the College's Teaching and Learning Conference, held on 26 June, had received positive feedback from those attending, with the sharing of learning within teams.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Curriculum 2024/25 report. **Noted**

23/24.91 Summary of Staff Feedback, Learner Feedback and Complaints

The Deputy Principal Quality and People reported the following points:

- (i) teaching and learning survey – December 2023:
 - return rate of 92%;
 - overall 93% satisfaction with their course (2-percentage points above national average);
 - students were satisfied they felt safe in College, including when they were online;

- there were no significant differences between the responses of different groups of students;
- (ii) apprenticeships survey (induction and on programme) 2023/24:
- apprentices felt they were on the right apprenticeship and that they had received good advice and support;
 - apprentices were satisfied that expectations and standards were high and are made clear to them and arrangement for assessments and progress reviews were made clear to them;
 - satisfaction was generally high and much improved regarding learning, assessment and support;
 - satisfaction was generally high regarding completing the apprenticeship at their workplace and with the progress they made;
 - apprentices were satisfied they understood requirements regarding health and safety and that they felt safe in the workplace and when in College;
- (iii) complaints 2023/24:
- no complaints or appeals were made to funding bodies. One complaint was communicated to Ofsted and this was managed appropriately;
 - where applicable, issues relating to safeguarding or equality and diversity were acted on quickly and appropriately;
 - all formal complaints were well managed. The significant majority of complaints were dealt with in a timely manner and addressed appropriately;
 - analysis indicated that there were no specific issues relating to age, gender, ethnicity or equality;
- (iv) staff survey – December 2023:
- good response rate of 75%;
 - overall satisfaction improved on the previous year and was +4 percentage-points above national average. It was evident that the various actions and strategies taken to support staff with the cost of living issues had had a positive impact;
 - the significant majority of staff were positive about the College being welcoming and the values of the College, including feeling that they were treated fairly and with respect by colleagues;
 - staff felt that the College continued to improve on a number of fronts, e.g. quality of provision, support provided to students and the learning environment;
 - key areas for improvement included IT facilities and Wi-Fi, some of our systems and workflows and how we could improve communication both across the College (inter-departmental) and within teams. There were also useful suggestions to manage the increased numbers of students being recruited.

Governors commented on the following points:

- (i) that, overall, the report was very pleasing and supported the findings in the recent Ofsted inspection report;
- (ii) what the College was doing in response to the finding that the response regarding knowing who to speak to for help, particularly on peer-to-peer abuse and help with mental health was below national average. It was noted that actions in response included focus groups with students to understand the issues raised and to better signpost where support was provided. The effectiveness of these actions was validated via deep dives, student voice activities and during inspection.

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

Noted

23/24.92 **Subcontracting Annual Report for 2023/24**
Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy, Including
Subcontracting Proposal for 2024/25

The Principal reported the following points:

- (i) the ESFA had set a limit for subcontracting of 25% of college turnover. The College’s subcontracting in 2023/24 amounted to 0.26% of income (£85k). Budgeted subcontracting for 2024/25 was 0.32% of income (£112k);
- (ii) two subcontractors were used in 2023/24: Groundwork (Prince’s Trust) and Holy Trinity Community Centre;
- (iii) there had been no change in ESFA guidance with respect to subcontracting.

Governors were content with the report as presented, noting that the College’s subcontracting provision represented a tiny proportion of income and was delivering good results for the community.

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

Noted

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the proposed supply chain subcontractors for 2024/25.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approved the Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy 2024/25.

Approved

23/24.93 **Estates Development Update**

The Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure reported the following points:

- (i) significant progress had been made on the College estate during the year, with a number of projects completing and a number nearing completion. These included:
 - T-Level Wave 4 (Education and Childcare), £1.0m project with £0.5m grant, involved the refurbishment of Victoria Building D-floor. This was completed in August 2023;

- Institute of Technology, £1.2m 100% grant funded project for engineering equipment and limited building works in Fabrication and Welding and the Advanced Technology Centre to support the development of Engineering, Mechatronics and Maintenance provision that was completed in October 2023;
 - FECTF, £11.7m project with a £4.6m grant. Project A (Brickwork and Animal Management) was completed by September 2023 and Project B (Motor Vehicle) was due for completion in November 2024 (with building operational by September 2024);
 - Further Education Reclassification Fund, £630k grant, included the refurbishment of Waterloo Building ground floor, the creation of a Floristry classroom in the old Animal Management building and reconfiguration of a Beauty Salon in T1. The Waterloo Building ground floor and Floristry classroom were completed as part of the summer 2023 works programme. The Beauty Salon work was now planned for 2024/25, subject to approval from TMBC;
 - Additional Capital approved by Governors (£945k) and vired funds from the underspend on D-floor refurbishment (£124k) had been allocated to the refurbishment of Victoria Building E-floor and the reconfiguration of the TCFE, both included in the summer 2024 works programme;
 - Additional FE Capital grant, £251k. This had been allocated to the replacement of the boiler in the Medlock Building with a Hybrid Variable Refrigerant Flow (HVRF) system. This was scheduled for 2024/25;
- (ii) the value of estates projects under construction during the year and coming summer amounted to £16.6m, with current cost estimates within budget;
- (iii) future developments that were not included within current financial modelling but which would be considered in future long-term planning and funding opportunities included:
- cladding of the Victoria building;
 - demolition and rebuild of Dovestones (for high needs provision);
 - refurbishment of the Medlock Building;
 - Car park and landscaping at Beaufort Road;
 - 5G sports pitch development at Beaufort Road.

Governors noted the significant number of estates projects that had taken place over the past year that had been well managed and were content with the report as presented.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Estates Development Update.

Noted

23/24.94

External Audit Planning Memorandum for the Year Ended 31 July 2024

Governors considered the following points:

- (i) the External Audit Planning Memorandum for the Year Ended 31 July 2024 had been scrutinised by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 18 June and recommended to the Board of Governors for approval;
- (ii) the risks identified within the audit plan were sector related with none specific to the College;
- (iii) the name change of the external auditors from Bisset and Wylie LLP to WBG (Wylie Bisset Group).

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the External Audit Planning Memorandum for the Year Ended 31 July 2024.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the name change of the external auditors from Wylie and Bisset LLP to WBG.

Noted

23/24.95 Tuition and Refund of Tuition Fee Policy 2024/25

The Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure reported the following points:

- (i) both the Tuition and Refund of Tuition Fee Policy 2024/25 and the HE Programme Suspension, Termination and Compensation Policy for 2024/25, which had previously been approved at the previous Board meeting, had been scrutinised by the Open University with further changes proposed to improve the clarity of the policies;
- (ii) the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) had still not released their funding rules for 2024/25. When these were made available, these would be scrutinised and policies would be brought back to the Board for approval as required.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Tuition and Refund of Tuition Fee Policy 2024/25.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the HE Programme Suspension, Termination and Compensation Policy for 2024/25.

Approved

23/24.96 Annual Review of College Governance Arrangements

The Clerk to the Corporation reported the following points:

- (i) there were no changes proposed to the Corporation's Standing Orders;
- (ii) proposed changes to the Audit Committee's terms of reference were linked to ESFA guidance;
- (iii) there were no changes proposed to the Remuneration Committee terms of reference;
- (iv) a proposed change to the Search Committee terms of reference related to the annex (Policy and Procedure for the Appointment of Governors [Independent, Staff and Student]), which sought to facilitate the appointment process for

individuals that had been specifically targeted or were already known to the College.

Governors were content with the policies as drafted.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the proposed changes to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the proposed changes to the Search Committee terms of reference.

Approved

23/24.97 Draft Calendar of Meetings and Schedule of Business 2024/25

The Clerk to the Corporation reported the following points:

- (i) the calendar was largely similar to that of 2023/24;
- (ii) four Governor Learning Visits and two Governor Development Sessions had been scheduled for the year.

Governors were content with the report as drafted.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Draft Calendar of Meetings and Schedule of Business 2024/25.

Approved

23/24.98 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors

The Clerk to the Corporation reported the following points:

- (i) the term of office for both the Chair and Vice Chair would end on 31 August 2024;
- (ii) the completed Governor Self-Assessments for 2022/23 had indicated that no other Governor had indicated any ambition to take on the role of Chair or Vice Chair at the present time. As such he had approached the incumbents and sought their views. Both had agreed to serve a further term of office if this would be helpful to the Board of Governors.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to appoint John Lyne as Chair of Governors for a further two-year term of office ending 31 August 2026.

Approved

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to appoint Malcolm Bruce as Vice Chair of Governors for a further two-year term of office ending 31 August 2026.

Approved

23/24.99 Items to Note

- (i) **Update on Governor Development and Engagement Activities**

Governor development and engagement activities recorded by the Clerk included:

- 24.05.24 – Public Services Students' Passing Out Parade – Malcolm Bruce and John Lyne

- 05.06.24 – Finance Session with Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure – Nicky Littler and Jemma Newton
- 11.06.24 – Budget Scrutiny Working Group Meeting – Damien Bourke, Simon Boyle, Malcolm Bruce, Jonathan Frankham, Nicky Littler, John Lyne, Arsana Subba and Remell Thompson-Bell
- 04.06.24 to 02.07.24 – AoC Finance Masterclass Sessions (Various) – Nicky Littler, Jemma Newton, Remell Thompson-Bell
- 01.07.24 – AoC Northern Governor Induction – Remell Thompson-Bell and Atta Ul Rasool

Governors reported the following additional instances of development / engagement:

- 22 and 24.05.24 – meeting with the Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure prior to the Budget Scrutiny Working Group meeting – Simon Boyle and John Lyne respectively;
- 02.04.24 – attendance at Taster Day – Simon Boyle.

(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) Procurement Activities and Approvals

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

(v) Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2023/24

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2023/24 (86%). **Noted**

23/24.100 Time and Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 15 October 2024

The Chair reported that the date of the next meeting was Tuesday 15 October 2024. Before that, a Governor Development Session was scheduled for Tuesday, 24 September.

Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:

Chair	Date
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