

## Corporation Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023  
5.00pm -8.00pm Blossomfield Campus

**Present**

Barbara Hughes – Chair of Corporation  
Tony Lucas – Joint Vice Chair  
Christine Abbott  
Tasleem Chaudary  
Mehak Farooque – FE Student Governor  
Rebecca Gater – Principal and Chief Executive  
Ravi Kumar  
Lucy Lee  
Mehreen Mirza  
Jo Moorcroft – HE Student Governor  
Amirun Nehar  
Cheryl Pidler  
Donna Poole – Staff Governor  
Geraldine Swanton  
Harrison Thompson  
Sally Thompson

**In Attendance**

Heather Evans – Deputy Principal and CFO, Pete Haynes – Vice Principal HR & Student Services, Lee Jamieson – Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum, Nancy Buckley - Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills & Partnerships, Sam Bromwich – Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance. Tina Taylor – Senior Governance Officer (minute taker)

Adam Thomas - Director of Student Services, Susan Homer – Head of School Education & Childcare, Mohammed Maher – Head of School Computing and Emerging Technologies.

**Apologies** Paul Assinder, Sarah Horton-Walsh

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly the newly appointed Governors, the Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills & Partnerships, and the Senior Governance Officer.

Apologies were received and accepted from Paul Assinder and Sarah Horton-Walsh.

The Chair explained the recent changes to the format of the board papers which were implemented following feedback received during Governor 1:1's. The changes enabled the structure of the pack to be more effective and reduced the number of papers within the agenda with links being added to agendas for papers to be noted. Governors were informed that the summary reports held the key information for Governors to review in advance of each meeting.

A review of the Cycle of Business enabled meetings to be more succinct to ensure papers included were mandatory and enabled Governors to discharge their duties effectively.

## 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no items declared.

## 3. Minutes of the previous Corporation meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023

The previous minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were circulated and **APPROVED**.

### Actions.

The Cyber Incidents confidential paper was shared and provided the Corporation with further information on cyber incidents following the discussions at the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023. **A Governor commented that it gave a helpful breakdown of incidents within the report.**

The Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance confirmed that the Head of Sustainability was finding the most suitable training programmes and Governors will be advised as soon as it has been confirmed. **The Chair asked Governors if they could recommend a suitable course, they may have used during their current employment to let us know.**

The Strategic Plan will be shared with the new Student Voice Executive Committee in November as the Principal and Chief Executive is attending the student voice conference in November. A further update about the Strategic Plan will be discussed under Item 5.

Following the External Board review the summary results have been added to the website and will be included in the Members Report and Financial Statements.

A hard copy Curriculum Provision Map 2023/2024 and a Glossary of Terms was shared at the meeting.

### 3.1 Top Risks

The Top Key Risks report was reviewed, and an update provided.

“College IT systems are compromised due to a Cyber-attack” will remain the top risk in the report due to the high risk of cyber-attacks; an update was provided giving assurance on how the College was managing the risk.

The Principal and Chief Executive confirmed the SLT risk “efficiency and effectiveness of the college’s operations are compromised due to being unable to fill SLT posts” was no longer considered a risk and Governors **agreed** it should be removed.

The Chair confirmed Governors would receive briefing sessions on how to prepare for an Enhanced Ofsted Inspection. **ACTION**

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum provided an update about the defunding of Level 3 and the reform in T Levels. He noted they were long-term risk entries due to environmental changes out of their control and the unpredictability due to government changes on how it impacted the reform. **A Governor asked how long they would remain a risk.** The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum confirmed that as a sector it was impossible to say and changes will come in phases, however there were a number of actions that would need to happen with government to fulfill that reform.

The Deputy Principal and CFO provided an update on student safety following the recent incident at campus and processes in place to mitigate further risks. A further update was provided under item 5 – Principal’s report.

There was a discussion regarding the confidential people risks and Governors were satisfied actions were completed. The Corporation **agreed** people risks were closed.

The top risks were **noted**.

#### 4. Meeting Local Skills Presentations

*Susan Homer (SH) – Head of School Education & Childcare and Mohammed Maher (MM) – Head of School Computing and Emerging Technologies were welcomed to the meeting.*

##### **Presentation 1: Early Years**

The Head of School Education & Childcare gave a presentation on the following topics:

- Solihull Council Plan
- Priority One; Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People
- Spring Budget 2023
- How do we match employers needs with our provision
- An update regarding the educational reform
- Adult provision
- The Skills Gap Trent Report (2021)
- Engagement with employers and development of practical skills and its success
- Our responsibility

The Chair gave thanks for the informative presentation.

**Following a question from the Chair**, the Head of School Education & Childcare confirmed that it was only her department that was testing the Skills Builder programme.

Governors were invited to ask questions. It was confirmed that the proportion of 16-18 provision is the largest and HE is the smallest. **Following a question from a Governor**, the Head of School Education & Childcare confirmed they were taking steps towards ensuring the pay structure and benefits within the industry and on work placements, incentivised students to join the course, however it was a challenging aspect within the industry.

Discussions took place regarding the early years and its funding and whether there were enough nurseries for the increased placements. The Head of School Education & Children commented to say that nursery owners were concerned about the service they could offer however there were some good links on which to build.

**A Governor asked if the College should introduce an entrepreneurial option so that students can have the skills to set up their own nursery.** It was confirmed distance learning in business startup skills is available for students to apply for. Governors were informed about a teacher at the College who set up their own nursery at the age of 21.

##### **Presentation 2: Computing and Emerging Technologies**

The Head of Computing and Emerging Technologies gave a presentation on the following topics:

- Skills Gap Local Priorities
- Local Labour Market Intelligence
- Employer involvement in Curriculum Design
- Programmer & Software Development Pathway
- Networking and Cyber Security Pathway
- IT Systems Analyst & A.I Pathway
- Responding the current reforms
- 2022/2023 Success stories

The Chair gave thanks for the informative presentation and informed Governors that each department's Self-Assessment Annual Report was a helpful document for Governors to review in identifying the range and quality of provision.

*A Governor referred to the impact of A.I on the Sector and if there was analysis in terms of pathways available at the College.*

**Following a governor question**, the Head of Computing and Emerging Technologies confirmed some students were working collaboratively with the IoT and have been networking and reviewing data, however it was clear there was more opportunities for collaboration.

**Following a comment that it was clear there was a demand for digital skills that touched all areas.** The Principal and Chief Executive confirmed they were looking at the industries on offer.

Discussions took place regarding legacy systems and identifying skills gaps and whether the FE Sector was investing enough in physical resources and infrastructure, and if the College should look at further investing in these. The Principal and Chief Executive commented that the LSIP provided a view across colleges in the area and explained how joint working and sharing resources would take place. A number of bids had been made against the LSIP funding. Governors were advised there is a recognition from the DfE on these matters.

*With there being no further questions or comments, SH and MM left the meeting.*

**There was a break for food for 15 minutes.**

## **5. Principals Introduction & Update Report**

The Principal and Chief Executive's report summarised the Strategic Plan progress update volume 1 to be published shortly.

An explanation about the following strategic ambitions was provided.

- Achievement
- Recruitment
- Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF)
- Culture survey
- Recent incidents
- Funding

Governors were made aware of a series of events which recently took place at the College. A detailed explanation was provided of the immediate steps taken to mitigate the risks of such events in the future.

### **Strategic Plan progress update volume 1 for 2022-2025**

The Strategic Plan progress update volume 1 for 2022-2025 was shared and **APPROVED**.

**Following a Governor question**, it was confirmed that a copy of the Strategic Plan Update will be shared with Stakeholders **ACTION**

It was confirmed that the National Average for qualification rates will be published in the Spring Term.

### **Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF)**

The Project Approval Report West Midlands and Warwickshire Local Skills Improvement Fund was shared, the Principal and Chief Executive provided a detailed explanation.

**Following a Governor question**, it was confirmed there would be no claw back of the money given in retrospect.

**When a Governor asked about timescales and implications of "slippage"** discussions took place regarding potential risks. The Principal and Chief Executive advised there are 23 institutions

within the LSIF which ensured the bidding process was thorough. However, the key risk would relate to inflation which could incur additional costs to the College.

With there being no further questions or comments, Governors **APPROVED** the bid for the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) for West Midlands and Warwickshire with a total budget of £10.2m.

## 6. Safeguarding and Prevent Update Presentation

*The Director of Student Services was welcomed at the meeting.*

The Safeguarding Annual Report was presented which provided an essential update for Governors on Safeguarding and Prevent. In addition, an explanation was provided regarding safeguarding referrals by curriculum area. The following topics were presented:

- The three key changes to the 2023 KCSiE guidance
- Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy. An update on the revised changes for 2023/24 was confirmed and Governors were asked to note the key changes advised.
- Volume & Nature of Referrals
- Academic Engagement
- Embedding of Safeguarding
- Training and Resources update
- Safeguarding and Board Assurance
- Prevent update.
- Future priorities

The Chair gave thanks for the informative presentation. She confirmed that Tasleem Chaudary would take over as Safeguarding Governor from January 2024 and should be updated in the Safeguarding policy. **ACTION**

**Following a question from the Chair**, the Director of Student Services confirmed how the nature and volume of referrals impacted staff and provided an explanation of processes in place to support them. The College is in the process of recruiting additional Safeguarding Officers to support the workload. An explanation was given regarding “air dropping” and the protect duty - “Martyn’s Law”.

The Chair commented that the Ofsted Special Interests Group (SiG), which reviewed Safeguarding, recently met and were assured with the work completed and the improvements made in Safeguarding practice within the team. Through addressing the points from the consultant, it has helped to see the value of that information. The Chair praised the Safeguarding team for the positive outcome.

**A Governor commented there is no definition of vulnerable adults in the Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy.** The Director of Student Services responded to say that due to the complexities of the category it was difficult to define each one. Further discussions took place regarding the mental health categories and how they were defined and managed.

**A Governor commented on single sex focus groups and if they should be nonbinary.** Governors were informed that having single sex focus groups enabled students to have discussions more openly which was also a recommendation by Ofsted.

The Vice Principal HR & Student Services confirmed that Governor development sessions linked to Safeguarding would be provided once a term. **ACTION**

To ensure the meeting was kept to time, the Chair asked that any further questions on this topic should be put in writing.

### Policy Approvals

The Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy was **APPROVED**.

There were no significant recommended changes to the Prevent policy. It was noted the policy would be updated to indicate there were three multi faith rooms and not two. The policy was **APPROVED** noting requested changes will be updated **ACTION**.

*With there being no further questions, the Director of Student Services left the meeting.*

## **7. Quality, Curriculum, Teaching & Learning.**

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality presented an update on the Quality Improvement Strategy and Quality Improvement Plan for 2023/2024. Governors were asked to approve the annual review of the Quality Improvement Strategy and note the content of the Quality Improvement Cycle

7a – the Quality Improvement Strategy and Quality Improvement Cycle for 2023/2024 was received. Governors **APPROVED** the annual review of the Quality Improvement Strategy

7b – the Curriculum Plan for 2023/2024 was circulated and provided Governors with an overview of the curriculum by faculty, for information. **Following a question from a Governor**, it was confirmed that performing arts was linked to the Stratford campus and RSC. Considerations were made whether there are enough level 1 courses.

The report was **noted**.

7c – the updated Evaluation of Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy for 2023/24 was presented and **APPROVED**.

7e – the Governor Involvement in Quality Activities was circulated, and outlined Governor involvement in quality cycle activities, including SAR validations and curriculum visits. Governors were asked to note the information in the report and identify schools they intend to engage with.

Feedback from Governors was positive, and it was clear the hard work had gone into it. The Chair emphasised that all activities can be completed in pairs.

The report was **noted**.

## **8. Sub-Contracting Policy and update on Plan**

The Sub-Contracting Plan for 2022/23 and 2023/24 was received. The Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills and Partnerships provided an explanation of the sub-contracting plan and income.

Governors **APPROVED** the RMF contract value of £992,000K for 2022/23 and £773,600 for 2023/24 subject to final funding figures.

The Sub-Contracting Policy for 2023/24 was circulated. The Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills and Partnerships confirmed key changes were in line with ESFA funding guidelines. The policy was **APPROVED**.

## **9. Property Papers (including investment expenditures and approval)**

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – NOT FOR PUBLICATION

## **10. Governance**

Item 10 deferred

## **11. Draft Agenda for Governors Development Day 11<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

Item 11 deferred

## **12. Policies**

Safeguarding and Prevent policies (item 6) and Sub-contracting policy (item 8) were **APPROVED** above.

*The Student Governors and Staff Governor left the meeting for the confidential items.*

**13. Bids and Projects – Confidential Item**

*CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS – NOT FOR PUBLICATION*

**14. Pay Award Presentation – Confidential Item**

*CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS – NOT FOR PUBLICATION*

**15. Any Other Business**

Feedback

The Corporation were asked to give feedback on the structure of the evening to the Chair in writing.

**16. Future Dates**

- Tuesday 28/11/2023 5pm - Woodlands Campus (with Annual Audit and Risk Committee)
- Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November – Development Morning at Blossomfield Campus
- Thursday 14/12/2023 5pm – Stratford Campus
- Wednesday 31/01/2024 5pm – IoT Birmingham
- Wednesday 20/03/2024 5pm – Blossomfield Campus
- Thursday 23/05/2024 5pm – Stratford Campus
- July Corporation date to be agreed– Blossomfield Campus

*The Chair thanked everyone for their time and the meeting ended at 8.15pm*

**Signed:**



**Dated:**

**28/11/2023**