

Corporation Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14 December 2023

5.00pm -7.00pm Stratford Upon Avon Campus

Present

Barbara Hughes – Chair of Corporation
Tony Lucas – Joint Vice Chair of Corporation
Paul Assinder – Joint Vice Chair of Corporation
Christine Abbott
Tasleem Chaudary
Rebecca Gater – Principal and Chief Executive
Sarah Horton-Walsh
Ravi Kumar
Lucy Lee – Chair of A&R committee
Mehreen Mirza
Amirun Nehar
Cheryl Pidler
Sally Tomlinson
Geraldine Swanton

In Attendance

Heather Hunt – 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.

Mary Younan – Director of Higher Education and Research, Tina Taylor – Senior Governance Officer (minute taker)

Apologies

Mehak Farooque (FE Student Governor), Jo Moorcroft (HE Student Governor), Donna Poole – Staff Governor, Harrison Thompson.

1. Welcome and any announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Mehak Farooque, Jo Moorcroft, Donna Poole and Harrison Thompson.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no items declared.

4. Minutes of the previous Corporation meeting held on 28th November 2023

The previous minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 28th November 2023 were received and **APPROVED** as a true record.

The actions were reviewed, and an update was provided.

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

The top risks were **NOTED**.

5. Committee Minutes for Information

The following minutes were circulated for information:

- Financial Oversight Group (FoG) 16.11.23
- Joint Annual Audit & Risk Committee 28.11.23

Financial Oversight Group (FoG) Minutes

A governor recommended for the minutes to be updated so that it is clear the approval of the changes to the Terms of Reference, and any delegated powers of authority, should be recommended to Corporation to discuss and approve. **ACTION**

Annual Audit & Risk committee (joint Corporation) Minutes

A governor comment was received to update item 6, paragraph 5 to read: "Following a governor's comment, it was noted that the Corporation recognised the need for the recent change in pay percentage and encouraged the College to take steps to reduce the percentage to a maximum of 65% as soon as practicable. The Deputy Principal and CFO confirmed an activity was underway to achieve this". It was explained the minutes should be clear on the Corporation's expectation to future secure more income or (if necessary) to reduce costs. **ACTION**

In response, the Deputy Principal and CFO confirmed that it was in the financial plan to return to 65% as soon as possible. The Principal and CEO noted that the sector is lobbying with the FE Commissioner regarding flexibility around keeping within 65%. Governors were also advised the Teachers' Pension scheme will increase, which is a cost that will be reviewed.

The Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance advised that the minutes of the Remuneration committee held on 6th December 2023 would be submitted at the next meeting in January. **ACTION**

The Chair of the Remuneration committee confirmed the meeting was positive, it was an opportunity to speak to senior colleagues of the college and felt that discussions were very rewarding. A detailed report was presented under item 11.

6. Principal's Update Report

The Principal and CEO's report had been circulated in advance of the meeting which provided governors with a mid-term update on key areas of the college in relation to the strategic ambitions. The following key points were noted:

- Feedback following the Stratford showcase event on 30th November 2023 was positive; the community and local residents were impressed by the facilities.
- A detailed explanation to the strategic ambitions was given as detailed within the report.
- An attendance project group led by the Principal to review a perspective on attendance has been launched with staff. The first meeting has been scheduled and an update will be provided at the Corporation meeting in January. **ACTION**
- The FE Commissioner – Shelagh Legrave (SL) visited Blossomfield campus and gave positive feedback following her meeting with a HTQ student who was in his 6th year. Whilst at the college SL reviewed the early years facilities to show where T level funds were used, and discussions took place with SEND students who were accessing STEM learning. It was confirmed SL plans to visit the Stratford Upon Avon campus and to complete a case study on racial equality referencing the Colleges West Midlands steering group.

7. Self-Assessment & Quality Improvement Plan 23/24 (including Final Achievement Report and Governance SAR)

The draft Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2022/23 and the Quality Improvement Plan (QiP) for 2023/24 had been circulated previously.

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum gave detailed context and background to the Self-Assessment Report and the key features and outcomes of the report were presented. He advised governors the SAR informs of the college's actions for improvement, which is linked to the QIP, and enabled Ofsted to conduct deep dives upon inspection. **The Chair** explained that Ofsted will inspect by subject area, which is to the college's advantage.

The Chair gave thanks for the detailed explanation of the SAR and QiP. She requested comments and questions on the reports from governors noting the importance of ensuring their accuracy, and that it is the responsibility of the Corporation to have full understanding of both reports.

Considerable discussion took place concerning the SAR and QIP and a detailed explanation was given regarding the RAG rating within the QIP report. Governors asked questions concerning why attendance and student satisfaction seemed low in a high number of subject areas, reasons for not achieving learner numbers, low attendance targets and student satisfaction outcomes. The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum clarified target numbers and how they were impacted when students were not achieving results on their programmes. Further clarification was given regarding how the college was tackling non-attendance. **A governor queried** whether the student satisfaction results were linked to low attendance targets.

A governor provided feedback following their recent learning visit regarding low student attendance in some areas. Discussions took place whether consideration should be made regarding the timings of courses to fit around personal domestic commitments or to work more remotely. It was noted that cost-of-living impacted on students more now than previously before.

The Chair explained that following a full review of the SAR and QIP it was evident the SAR gave a more positive view than the QIP. The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum provided an explanation for the differences within the report; detailed discussions took place clarifying how the reports have very different purposes. To ensure that it was clear for governors to understand the link between the two reports, governors were referred to the Executive Summary within the SAR report. The Chair noted there is a protocol to how the SAR should be written and that it is an Ofsted format.

Following a question from the Chair, it was confirmed that the SAR Executive Summary would be revised to include an overall summary of the SAR and QIP to assist governors with their understanding of both reports and in preparation for interviews with Ofsted inspectors **ACTION**.

Detailed discussions took place regarding how Ofsted review the QIP noting that any improvements made are seen as a positive. The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum confirmed Ofsted were appointing a new Chief Inspector in January and assured governors that any changes to the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) would be unlikely to impact the next Ofsted inspection.

Following a question from a governor, the Chair confirmed the principal's project group meeting with staff which discusses attendance will be reported back to Corporation. This project is an operational and not a special interest group with governors. **ACTION**

The draft Self-Assessment Report was **approved** by the Corporation.

8. Quality Update

The following reports and linked documents were circulated previously for information.

1. Quality Report – Term One provided a review of the quality performance of individual schools.
2. Quality Report Data source identifier.
3. Autumn Student Satisfaction Survey 2023 results.
4. Complaints report noting complaints received in 2022/23

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum provided a detailed overview of the reports. He explained why the results for "I feel safe" dropped and noted the difference between safeguarding and how students felt safe in College is not directly correlated to safeguarding.

He confirmed the steps which have been taken to make students feel safe since the previous incidents on campus noting that security has increased, and all learners received a debrief about what took place. Knife detectors have been used around college with no knives found and 1700 learners have received knife crime workshops to date. It was confirmed the Heads of Schools are working with the students who have reported that they don't feel safe.

Feedback received following a visit by the Association of Colleges (AoC) President confirmed the college is a "calm and orderly environment". The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) prioritise learner anxiety and conduct SLT walks around college to challenge behaviours and observe. A new member of staff has been appointed to "the link" who will conduct more constructive activities with students. It was noted that common themes from the learner journey was that students felt safe and are happy.

Following a governor comment, a copy of the Culture Survey results will be presented at the next Corporation meeting in January. **ACTION**

A governor commented that the number of upheld complaints (29%) was an increase from the previous year and discussions took place regarding the increase.

The Deputy Principal and CFO confirmed that the college is developing a Communications Strategy and provided an update.

With there being no further comments or questions the reports were **noted**.

9. Higher Education Report including presentation.

The Director of Higher Education and Research gave a detailed presentation on the following key points informing the Corporation on Higher Education Quality and the Office of Students reporting requirements.

- 1 Higer Education Student Outcomes (B3)
- 2 Higher Education Recruitment (A)
- 3 NSS Results 2022 (B2)
- 4 TEF Outcomes (B6)
- 5 Office for Students Update

The AoC Policy Paper: Higher Technical Education and Lifelong Learning Entitlement was received for information and discussions took place regarding the outcomes. Governors welcomed the positive update on HE particularly the improvements in student satisfaction. The Chair thanked MY for her contribution and great leadership throughout her time at college. She will be missed. Governors wished her every success for the next stage of her life as she retires.

10. Bids and Projects Report including termly KPI report.

The Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills & Partnerships gave an update on bids and projects and included Bids and Projects tracker. A paper was presented, and a brief explanation was given informing the Corporation regarding the WMCA Pre-Apprenticeship Tender.

The WMCA DPS10 Path 2 Apprenticeships – Pre-apprenticeship programme was **approved**.

11. Governance Items

The Annual Report of the Remuneration Committee 2022-2023 was received. The Remuneration Committee Annual Report was circulated for information and **noted**.

Feedback was provided following the recent Equality, Diversity, and Integrity Special Interest Group meeting (EDI SiG). The Chair of the group confirmed the final meeting took place and the EDI SiG have fulfilled the Terms of Reference requirements. The EDI SiG felt comfortable with the progress made and that no further meetings were required.

Feedback on Governor Learning Visits/Focus Group was provided noting some reports were still outstanding. The Chair gave thanks to governors who had attended their learning visits. It was noted that small focus groups will take place in the next term.

12. Confidential

There were no items discussed.

13. Policies

There were no policies to be approved.

14. Items for Information

The Gifts and Hospitality report was circulated for information and **noted**.

15. Any Other Business

The Bank Mandate change report was circulated previously and **approved**.

16. Future Dates

- Wednesday 31/01/2024 5pm – IoT Birmingham
- Wednesday 20/03/2024 5pm – Blossomfield Campus
- Thursday 23/05/2024 5pm – Stratford Campus
- June 26/06/2023 4pm (4 hours) - Corporation and Dinner - Blossomfield Campus

The Chair thanked everyone for their time and the meeting ended at 7.20pm



Signed:

Dated:

31/01/2024