

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER 2024 IN THE EXCHANGE BOARD ROOM / VIA MICROSOFT
TEAMS

PRESENT:

Mark Allanson	Chair
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Ram Gupta	Member
Michael Lee	Business Support Staff Governor
Andrea Machell	Member
Paul Morris	Member
Ridwaan Omar	Member
Arif Patel	Member
Darren Ratcliffe	Member
Clare Shaw	Academic Staff Governor
Taiyab Sufi*	Member
David Swift	Member
Steve Waggott*	Member
Bryan Welch	Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Nathan Rogan	Associate Board member
Jennifer Eastham	Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
Rachel Tarplee	Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Nicola Clayton	Director of Business Development and External Engagement
Matthew Robinson	Director of Student Support and Experience
Sarah Horeesorun	Director of Governance

* indicates attendance via Microsoft Teams

The meeting started at 14:00 and was quorate.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including those joining via Teams.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Governors Catherine Hill OBE, Fran Crossland, Arif Patel, and Nadeem Memon. In her absence, Catherine Hill OBE had shared comments on some of the Reports in advance and the Chair would share these where needed throughout the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair advised those in attendance that should members of the Corporation Board become aware of any potential conflicts of interest, they should be disclosed at the earliest opportunity during the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETINGS HELD ON 5 JULY 2024

The Board agreed that the Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 5 July 2024 were accurate. The meeting Minutes would be signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no new matters arising, the Board having noted the status of actions from the previous meetings.

The Director of Governance added that since the last meeting Chris Johnson had resigned as a Corporation Board member and that the new Student Governor elections were underway with the results due the following week. The Chair and Principal had written to Mr Johnson thanking him for his support of the College and the Board wished him well.

5. CHAIR'S MATTERS

The Chair provided a verbal update and shared with members his thoughts and experience of the recent HE Graduation ceremonies adding that they had the necessary formality and celebratory feel. The Chair thanked Governors Ram Gupta, Ridwaan Omar, and Arif Patel for attending the ceremonies.

The Chair said that he had found the meetings with individual Governors really useful and thanked the Governors for their time and warm welcome when visiting places of work.

Reflecting on the Seminar earlier that day and the discussions about the development of the new College Strategy, the Chair said that it would be useful for Governors to participate in Quality Summits or arrange a Learning Walk to see how teaching and learning was delivered and get a feel for the student experience. This would help inform the Strategy, and there was more work to do on prioritising the College risks, and this too, was an essential consideration in future plans.

6. PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

The Principal had provided a comprehensive Report for his Item and highlighted the following:

- 1986 exam resits last year and anticipate around 200 in 2024/25.
- Apprenticeships actual achievement was 68.5%, 10% above national target and in a strong position, yet there is more to do
- Student recruitment and FE was just over 100 up on figures to meet the contract and HE had a shortfall of 100. Apprenticeship numbers had made a good start and needed to continue to achieve the target.
- Employers had been in College speaking to students and advising on curriculum developments.
- Changes to BTECs, and the new Government was undertaking a review of the proposed changes to the curriculum and defunding of BTECs.
- 93 students were taking a T level.
- Finances remained outstanding and thanks extended to the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services and Team for managing the Colleges finances effectively.
- Capital, and the campus projects had completed over the summer. Governors had the opportunity to see the developments and refurbishments for themselves over lunch. The scaffolding on the Victoria Building had completed and there would be a 'Topping Out' ceremony once coverings in place.
- The Staff Survey results were positive and highlighted the need for more and better Team level communications. The Principal had reinstated monthly meet the Principal Staff meetings.
- Recruitment was underway for a Health and Safety Manager and Director of MIS.

The Chair thanked the Principal and Chief Executive for the comprehensive Report and update.

7. ITEMS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

7(i) Risk Register 2024/25

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services talked the Board through the Report informing them that no new risks had been identified, and three risks were rated as being 'Red'. The Risk Register had been considered by the Audit Committee at its September meeting.

The Board **AGREED** the Risk Management Report.

7(ii) Risk Management Annual Report 2023/24

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services summarised the risk management activities listed in the Report and reminded members that the Governance related risk had been removed from the Risk Register during the year as it now scored low. The year commenced with the usual challenges regarding recruitment numbers and ensuring financial stability.

No new risks have been added to the risk register during the year.

The Board was reassured to know that a series of controls and monitoring arrangements had been put in place to minimise and mitigate against the impact of the risks within the Report.

The Board **APPROVED** the Risk Management Annual Report 2023/24 as recommended by the Audit Committee.

7(iii) Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/24

The Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2023/24 was received and provided a summary of the activity that had taken place relating to the financial year under review, in line with the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice (ACoP) and included how the Audit Committee had performed against its Terms of Reference. The Report had previously been considered by Audit Committee at its meeting on 17 September 2024 and would be submitted to the ESFA with the final accounts.

It was confirmed that the Audit Committee had met its obligations during the year.

On the recommendation of Audit Committee, the Board **APPROVED** the Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2023/24 and noted that it would now be signed by the Chair of Audit Committee.

7(iv) Regulatory Audit – Self Assessment Questionnaire

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services introduced the Report and talked the Board members through the requirement to make a statement on regularity, propriety, and compliance with the annual Financial Statements. The completed questionnaire attached to the Report had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 17 September 2024 and once approved by the Board would need to be signed by the College Accounting Officer and Chair of the Corporation Board before submission to the External Auditors as part of their year-end work.

The Board thanked the Vice-Principal and Director of Governance for completing the questionnaire as it involved a large amount of work.

The Board **APPROVED** the Regularity Audit 2024 - Self-Assessment Questionnaire and this was signed by the Chair of the Corporation.

8. ITEMS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

8.(i) DRAFT Management Accounts – Year end position 2023/24

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that the College remained at a breakeven position, cash balances remained healthy, and the FE Commissioner metrics continued to be met.

The Report had been considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 23 September 2024.

The Board **APPROVED** the Management Accounts for the period ending 31 July 2024 (pre-finalisation), as recommended by Policy and Resources Committee.

The Chair thanked the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services and her Team for their work on managing the College finances effectively.

8.(ii) Management Accounts – period ending 30 September 2024

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services provide a verbal update to the Board.

8.(iii) Human Resources Annual Report 2023/24

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Report and talked through the headline information.

The Board **APPROVED** the Human Resources Annual Report 2023/24.

8.(iv) Modern Slavery Act (re: Board Statement)

The Board **APPROVED** the use of the Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement as proposed in the Report and recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee in its meeting on 23 September 2024.

The Statement would be signed by the Principal and Chief Executive as Accounting officer and would be published on the College website to ensure continuing compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The statement was duly signed by the Principal and Chief Executive.

8.(v) Going Concern Statement

The Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented the Report. Board members discussed and confirmed that there were no material uncertainties leading to significant doubt about going concern and confirmed that going concern be assumed when preparing the Financial Statements, with a statement to this effect included in the Financial Statements.

The Board **APPROVED** the Going Concern Statement as proposed in the Report and recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee in its meeting on 23 September 2024.

8.(vi) Scheme of Delegation

The Director of Governance introduced this Report and highlighted the key changes proposed to the attached Scheme of Delegation and explained that the changes were identified in the annual review of each Committees Terms of Reference.

The Board **APPROVED** the proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee in its meeting on 23 September 2024.

8.(vii) Conflicts of Interests Policy

The Director of Governance talked members through this Report and explained the biennial review of the Conflicts of Interest policy. Only one small amendment was proposed with the mention of the

new Financial Handbook for Colleges. The policy remained fit for purpose as deemed by the Policy and Resources Committee in the meeting 23 September 2024.

The Board **APPROVED** the Conflicts of Interests policy.

9. STAFF GOVERNOR'S REPORT

The Staff Governors provided a general update to Board colleagues listing many positives including the summer exam results successes, staff coming together as a Team to support enrolment and the newly refurbished HE library.

A number of employers had participated in events around the College, and external guests had delivered guest lectures, and events to promote personal safety and crime prevention.

There was acknowledgement that marketing of the College had greatly improved through the use of social media, LinkedIn and promotional activities to establish the College as the provider of choice.

The Chair thanked the Staff Governors for the update.

10. COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- (i) 2023/24 – pre-finalised
- (ii) 2024/25 – proposed targets

(i) 2023/24

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services introduced the KPI Report for the period ending 31 July 2024 and explained that some of the KPIs were not yet reportable. The final Report would be tabled at the December Board meeting.

The detailed performance information was provided in Annex A, and summarising the KPI performance, the Board noted that:

- 7 were on target
- 2 were on target in part
- 8 were under target
- 5 were not yet reportable.

The Board **APPROVED** the Key Performance Indicator Report for the period ending 31 July 2024.

ii) 2024/25

The Vice-Principal Finance and Corporate Services explained that the proposed targets were based on the outcomes listed in the previous Item, and that once the KPIs performance for 2023/24 had been confirmed, the proposed targets would be considered again by the Policy and Resources Committee and Learning and Quality before coming to the December Corporation Board.

The Board noted the content of the Report and that this would be revisited at the December Board meeting.

11. STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services introduced the Report which covered a progress update on the Annual Operating Statement as at 31 July 2024 and the proposed targets and actions for 2024/25.

(i) 2022-2025 – Annual Operating Statement

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services introduced this pre-finalised Report which provided an update on progress to 31 July 2024.

The Report enabled the Board to monitor the College's progress to delivering the Strategic Plan.

The Board noted that of the 23 targets for 2023/24

- 11 were on target to achieve
- 4.5 were on target in part
- 0.5 was under target
- 7 were not yet reportable

The detail was supplied in Annex A and the Board noted the progress made.

The Board **APPROVED** the Strategic Plan Operating Statement Report.

(ii) 2024-25 – proposed targets

The Board noted the proposed targets for the Annual Operating Statement 2024/25 and that, similar to the KPI Reports earlier on the Agenda, that the proposals would go back through the Committees before coming to the December Board meeting.

12. RECRUITMENT UPDATE

The Board agreed that this Item and student recruitment had been covered by the Principal's Report Item earlier on the Agenda.

13. HE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality provided a verbal update on progress of activities within the HE Strategy.

The Board appreciated the challenges and thanked the Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality for the update

14. ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT/LOCAL NEEDS DUTY - UPDATE

The Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement informed members that 440 employers were providing placements for students, and in addition to teaching and learning, the focus was on the knowledge, skills, and behaviours to enable the students to get a job and keep it.

The College continued to work in partnership to deliver on projects in hospitality, digital and cyber, and to meet the skills needs in the LSIP.

The Board acknowledged the huge amount of work and developments around the campus observed when they visited the newly refurbished Scholars, HE Library, Cyber, Heat and the Construction areas on a tour of the campus earlier in the day as part of the Board Seminar.

The Board thanked the Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement.

15. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACT REPORT

The Director of Student Support and Experience introduced this new Report that included case-studies and examples of curriculum enhancement and enrichment activities, demonstrating high levels of engagement across the College, contributing to personal development and to the student experience.

The Board thanked the Director for the interesting Report.

16. MATHS AND ENGLISH IMPACT REPORT

The Director of Student Support and Experience reminded members that last year the decision was made to create and invest in the Maths and English Success Centre, this included staff and materials.

The Board thanked the Director of Student Support and Experience for this Report.

17. CAPITAL PROJECTS

The Board noted the content of this Report having seen the developments for themselves on an earlier campus visit and updates included in other Agenda Items.
No comments were made.

18. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Chair approved Minutes from the following Committees were received for information:

- i. Audit Committee – 17 September 2024
- ii. Policy and Resources – 23 September 2024

The Chair canvassed the members for any additional comments on the meeting Minutes supplied for information. No comments were made.

19. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Director of Governance thanked Board members for completing the Register of Interests declarations and informed the Board that the annual exercise to update the College Register of Interests 2023/24 was complete.

Members were reminded of their responsibility to declare any potential conflicts of interest at each meeting.

The Board received this Report for information.

20. SUBCONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2024/25

This Report provided the Board with the Subcontracting arrangements for 2024/25 and had been discussed at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 23 September 2024. The Committee was satisfied with the arrangements in place.

The Board noted the content of the Report.

21. OVERSEAS VISITS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Report had previously been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 23 September 2024 and confirmed that no overseas business trips or, trips funded through the Research and Scholarship Committee/Staff Development had been made by staff, students, or Governors in 2023/24. There were educational trips to Berlin and Barcelona.

The Board received this Report for information.

22. NET CARBON ZERO UPDATE

The Report provided Board members with information on progress against the 31-step FE Climate Change Road Map. The Report had been presented to the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 23 September 2024, and highlights included LED lighting replacement and the Elizabeth Building heating plant renewal.

The Board received this Report for information.

23. HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Report provided information on the key health and safety activities during the academic year 2023/24. The full report was supplied and contained detailed information on incident statistics, legislative changes, audits, and inspections. The Report and attachments had been considered in depth by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 23 September 2024.

The Board received this Report for information.

24. VALUE FOR MONEY REPORT 2023/24 AND PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25

The Report was produced to update the Governors on purchasing activities for 2023/24 and provided the priorities and objectives for cross-College procurement in 2024/25 to ensure delivery of Value for Money. The Report was received for information having previously been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 23 September 2024.

The Board received this Report for information.

25. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS 2023/24

The Report was for information and had been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 23 September 2024. The Report provided the Board with analysis of the volumes and types of FOI requests received in 2023/24. The tables that supported the Report provided data on compliance with regulations and response. No data breaches had been reported to the Information Commissioner's office.

The Board received this Report for information.

26. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair canvassed members for any other business, of which there was none.

27. REVIEW OF THE MEETING

The Chair thanked all attendees in person and on MS Teams for their valuable contributions to the meeting.

28. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 14 March 2025 at 2pm.

Signed: Date: