

THE TRAFFORD COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the Corporation
held on Wednesday 18 October 2023 at 5.30pm
in the Aspire Restaurant at the Altrincham Campus**

Present:	Graham Luccock	(Chairperson)
	James Scott	(Principal and Chief Executive Officer)
	Charlotte Barrett	
	Sarah Drake	
	Janet Grant	
	Alison Hewitt	
	Heather Lang	
	*Emily McIntosh	
	Michelle McLaughlin	(Staff Member)
	Blerta Shira	(Student Member)
	Ayo Oyebo	
	*Marcia Reynolds	
	*Uswah Sayyed	(Student Member)
In Attendance:	Rebecca Clare	(Corporation Secretary)
	Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava	(Deputy Principal)
	Richard Harris	(Interim Chief Finance Officer)
	Michelle Leslie	(Vice Principal Corporate Services and Planning)
	Alison Duncalf	(Deputy Corporation Secretary)

* Attended the meeting via Microsoft Teams

Minute No.**COR/92/23****Apologies for Absence**

The Deputy Corporation Secretary (DCS) reported that apologies for absence had been received from Louise Richardson, Jill Bottomley, Jonathan O'Brien and Jed Hassid.

Olivia Bussey, Fatema Desai and Jeremy Woodside were not in attendance at the meeting.

The Chairperson of the Corporation welcomed Blerta Shira, who had recently been elected to the position of Student Governor, Richard Harris (Interim Chief Finance Officer) and Rebecca Claire (Corporation Secretary) who were all attending their first meeting of the Board of the Corporation.

COR/93/23**Declarations of Direct or Indirect Interests in any of the meeting's business items**

There were no declarations of Direct or Indirect Interests in any of the meeting's business items.

COR/94/23**Minutes of the Board of the Corporation Meeting held on 19 July 2023**

There were no issues raised by members and it was resolved that the minutes of the meeting be approved and accepted as a correct account of the meetings proceedings.

Minute No.**COR/95/23****Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Chairperson of the Board of the Corporation referred members to the previously circulated summary and progress update concerning the actions arising from the minutes and earlier meetings of the Board of the Corporation.

It was confirmed that the majority of actions were closed and those that remained open were largely in the future in terms of their action.

The following additional updates were provided:

i) COR/61/23 – Outcomes from the Consultation Process for Change in the Corporation Name

The Principal and CEO (PCEO) reported that the Department of Education (DfE) had approved the Group's name change over the summer, adding that it was proposed that notification and the launch of the new name take place in January 2024.

It was noted that consideration was being given to the official launch of the name to take place in conjunction with that relating to the Accountability Statement. There was confirmation that further information would be provided to the next meeting of the Board of the Corporation.

Action: Principal and CEO/Board of the Corporation agenda item

ii) COR/49/23 – Policies approved for implementation and their publication on the website

The PCEO reported that a new Group website was to be launched in tandem with the launch and change in name of the Group. Assurance was provided that the new website was currently operating in the background in advance of its official launch.

iii) COR/74/23 – External Governance Review 2023 – Progress Update

Members noted that consideration of the final report and the development of an associated action plan was to be progressed at a meeting of the Board of the Corporation scheduled to take place on 2 November 2023

Action: Board of the Corporation

iv) MIS Related Issues

A member commented on the references made in the supporting papers to IT and MIS staffing issues and an update was requested.

The PCEO responded that MIS was in a much-improved position from that of previous years and reference was made to its improved effectiveness and service. It was added that the key risk, moving forward, related to exam capacity in terms of both examination officers and invigilators.

Minute No.

The Vice Principal Corporate Services and Planning (VPCSP) reported that there had been a number of financial “windfalls” of which IT had been one of the main beneficiaries. It was added however that demand in this area was ever growing.

Reference was made to issues in relation to infrastructure (Stretford) and the inheritance of old stock via the mergers, as well as issues linked to the pending estates programme which had meant investment at Cheadle had been delayed.

It was noted that there may be caveats associated with how the IT windfalls could be spent and further that there was also a need to consider where monies were directed in terms of attaining the right balance across the Group.

The PCEO further outlined the issues encountered in the relation to the delay in progress associated with a number of IT actions, which in part related to consultancy support. Assurance was provided that lessons had been learnt.

- A question was asked by a member as to whether it was felt, from the learner perspective, that the Group was making the most of the available IT equipment.

The PCEO responded that progress was being made around this aspect including exploring the maximisation of available technology.

v) COR/62/23 – Strategic Focus Discussion – Skills Accountability Committee

The PCEO referred members to the previously circulated proposed terms of reference of the Skills Accountability Committee.

It was reported that the PCEO, Chairperson of the Board of the Corporation, the Chairperson of the Audit Committee and outgoing Corporation Secretary had duly met arising from which the terms of reference had been drafted. There was confirmation that it was intended that the Committee would draw together a number of strands and offer the opportunity for greater governance oversight of the work taking place with employers.

It was further confirmed that the work of the committee would have cognisance of the Group’s Accountability Statement as well as the Employer and Community Responsiveness Strategies.

Members noted that governor representation on the committee would be equivalent to that of the Safeguarding, Equality Diversity and Inclusion and Health and Safety committees.

There was confirmation that it was proposed governor representation on the Skills Accountability Committee comprise the of JH, and JB. It was further noted that HL had also expressed interest in sitting on the Committee.

A member queried the lack of reference within the terms of reference to the involvement of outside bodies. The PCEO referenced the final bullet point under business items in relation to external input/presentations as

Minute No.

appropriate and indicated that whilst there were no formal places on the committee it was intended that external bodies would have periodic input as appropriate. The PCEO undertook to revisit the wording with a view to providing greater clarity.

It was resolved that the proposed terms of reference of the new Skills Accountability Committee be approved subject to the revisiting and provision of greater clarity in respect of the involvement of external bodies.

Action: Principal and CEO

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the minutes.

COR/96/23**Operational Plan and Key Performance Indicators – Outcomes 2022-2023 and Targets 2023-2024**

The PCEO referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to:

- Annual Operational Plan (OP) 2022-023 and Final Outcomes (October 2023)
- Annual Operational Plan 2023-2024 (Draft September 2023)
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2021-2024 and Final Outcomes (October 2023)
- Key Performance Indicators Revised Targets 2023-2024.

In relation to the OP 2022-2023 and the final outcomes there was confirmation that the RAG ratings indicated areas achieved or partially achieved with 4 objectives not having been achieved or had progress made against:

- SP3 and the recruitment of apprenticeships which had been impacted upon by a pause in the programme due to workforce issues and further by the D-lock issues
- SP4 and the application of calculating social value from community partnership not having been achieved within which work had commenced but had not been embedded and which it was proposed be revised for 2023-2024
- SE2 (2 objectives rated as not achieved) the non-achievement of the Cyber Essentials+, notwithstanding Cyber Essentials was retained, plus the milestone target of completing an accessibility assessment of digital systems which had also not been achieved.

In relation to the OP for 2023-2024 it was stated that the targets aligned with the current 3-year Strategic Plan (SP) of which 2024 was the final year. The following proposed fine tuning to the proposed targets from the original SP impact measures were outlined:

- under SP2, a change in the target from achievement to confirmation of an external accreditation to demonstrate the Group's commitment to wellbeing
- for SE1, the original impact measures included achievement of BS8300 (or equivalent) for the Cheadle Campus, which given the current timeline of the redevelopment would not be achieved by the end of July 2024.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

Minute No.

- A member commented on the high degree of consistency between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 as well as the challenging agenda presented.
- A further comment was made in relation to the transformational work with schools in Trafford and it was asked as to whether this could be regarded as a community benefit.

It was suggested that greater formalisation of the transformational relationships was required in place of the current largely adhoc approach. The links to the agenda of the Greater Manchester Mayor and the needs of schools were also highlighted. The view was expressed that by engaging with schools at an early point a better understanding of their needs would be attained, particularly in relation to Year 10 and 11 learners.

In terms of the KPI outcomes for 2022-2023, members were directed to the RAG rating KPIs and the overview of those targets which had not been achieved. The following was highlighted:

- Quality, within which apprenticeships were likely to be judged as Requires Improvement as part of the SAR validation process notwithstanding achievement rates had improved over the last year
- Student Outcomes, within which achievement rates for young people (including those for High Needs) were likely to be below target by more than 5%; apprenticeship rates were below target by more than 5%; and positive destinations for adults were below 5% and had dropped against last year's outcomes
- Learner Numbers and Funding, Higher Education numbers were below target; apprenticeships were significantly below target due to paused recruitment and D-lock errors; the income position presented was the worst-case scenario pending further reconciliation; and full cost income was below target mainly due to reduced managing agent contracts
- Finance, the EBITDA was below target due to reduced income and increased cost pressures and the debt cover breach partly due to a technicality and subsequently a bank waiver was received.

There was confirmation that the KPIs had been set at the commencement of the SP in 2021 and over that period some had become redundant or had been deemed to be over aspirational. A summary of the proposed changes for 2023-2024 was outlined:

- Headline Measures, to bring the Overall Effectiveness target to Good to reflect a more realistic position against the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF); to increase the income target to £50m reflecting the increase in the 16-19 allocation and the High Needs income from local authorities; and the Cultural Survey would not take place in this academic year.
- Quality, to bring the targets for 16-19 Study Programmes and High Needs to Good; and to reduce the overall FE Student Satisfaction Survey measure to 92% which would represent improvement on the previous year
- Student Outcomes, to bring the achievement rate targets for 16-18, High Needs and apprenticeships in line with a more realistic, although ambitious

Minute No.

position, as well as a slightly reduced 16-18 retention rate to a more realistic position

- People, to reflect more ambitious targets for Overall Staff Satisfaction reflecting the previous year's position
- Learner Numbers and Funding, to bring targets in line with the latest 2023-2024 budget.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member highlighted the change in the target for staff satisfaction from 70% to 90%.

The PCEO responded that this was based on one key question "are you proud to be a member of staff at the Group." The PCEO undertook to include the actual question within the KPIs.

Action: Principal and CEO

In terms of the Staff Survey, it was noted that the Resources Committee had given consideration to the results within which there was variation. It was noted that there was recognition of the work that continued to be required.

- It was asked by a member, as to whether the culture survey could be incorporated within the KPIs.

The PCEO responded that the survey was provided by The Pacific Institute and that they were only one-fifth of the way through the programme. It was stated that, at this time, a good measure in terms of impact was not currently available and that the emphasis was to increase the number of people having access to the programme.

The PCEO further undertook to review the Staff Survey in terms of the type of question asked and the steer that could be given i.e. it was not that there would not be a measurement of culture but that there was a need to identify an appropriate question in the Staff Survey.

Action: Principal and CEO

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration and deliberation it was resolved that:

- (a) the Operational Plan Outcomes for 2022-2023 be received and noted that the proposed targets for 2023-2024 be approved; and**
- (b) the Key Performance Indicators Outcomes for 2022-2023 be received and noted the proposed Key Performance Indicators for 2023-2024 be approved.**

Minute No.

The Deputy Principal (DP) referred members to the previously circulated report and Draft Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2023-2024 and Quality Performance Indicator (KPIs) outcomes for 2022-2023 and proposed indicators to 2023-2024.

There was confirmation that the QIP was a key document in the Group's quality improvement cycle and was set in the autumn term in response to the key areas for improvement identified within the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for the previous academic year. It was noted that the report provided an update on the final position for the 2022-2023 QIP and outlined the key areas for improvement identified for 2023-2024.

The DP confirmed that the QIP outcomes, for the last academic year, were in line with that reported to the Board of the Corporation at its 19 July 2023 meeting. The following areas of progress made against the 8 objectives were outlined and the following was highlighted:

- positive overall retention (93%, 96% for adults and 88% for 16-19) and an overall high satisfaction rate of 90% however overall attendance was 83% for adults and 84% for 16-18, below the KPI of 90% and a concern that would continue to be addressed in 2023-2024
- an expected final achievement rate for apprentices of 57%, a +10% achievement on 2022-2023 and +4% compared to national rates but below the in-year adjusted target
- a retention rate for High Needs learners of 88% and achievement of 80%, -2% compared to 2021-21 and -5% against a KPI of 85%
- an achievement rate for young people of 81% compared to 79% in 2021-2022 and a KPI of 85%
- the effective support of students' personal, social, emotional, and cultural development via the creation of additional capacity in the Student Experience team
- the development of the Group's adult offer informed by the skills needs of local businesses, employers and both Stockport and Trafford local authorities
- the driving of a culture of continuous professional development across the merged college Group
- further developing an offer that meets local needs including an offer for learners at risk of becoming NEET through the Engage programme.

In terms of the proposed QIP for 2023-2024, with the caveat that the SAR had not yet been validated, it was reported work had commenced on the areas for improvement (Afl) with 9 areas identified.

It was noted that the Afl were largely a continued trajectory of the previous year's QIP with the ninth Afl having been superseded by the new Skills Accountability Committee which would provide oversight of the meeting of local needs and ensure alignment with the LSIP and progression against the Accountability Statement.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

It was commented that further consideration of the QIP would take place as the SAR Validation Panel which was scheduled to meet on 8 November 2023.

Minute No.

In respect of the KPIs and the final position for 2022-2023 and proposed targets for 2023-2024 the updated position in terms of 16-19 achievement rate of 81% was highlighted as well as the likely outturn position of 91% for adults (1% below target).

There was recognition that attendance continued to be a significant concern including that in relation to disadvantaged students which would be explored further at the Validation Panel.

There was confirmation that the Self Evaluation Documents and Quality Improvement Plan would be presented for approval by the Board of the Corporation at its meeting on 13 December 2023.

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Quality Improvement Plan 2022-2023 update and proposed Quality Improvement Plan 2023-2024 be received and noted.

COR/98/23**GCSE, A Level and T Level Results 2023**

The DP referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the GCSE, A Level and T Level results in 2022-2023.

The following was highlighted:

- GCSE English and maths pass rates had declined for 16-18 and 19+ learners from 2018-2019 and from last year (English by -2.9% and maths by -5.7%) with both being below national rates (English by -1.6% and maths by -4.1%)
- 4-9 outcomes for 16-19 compare positively with national figures in both subjects however outcomes were lower than in 2022 and 2019
- for 19+ achievement had declined for both English and maths although Stockport was positive for both
- full-time GCSE results remained strong compared to 2019 delivering very similar pass and 4-9 rates, with Altrincham continuing to have the highest 4-9 outcomes and with Stockport having significantly improved
- the A level pass rates had declined by -3.7%, A*- C declined by -6.9% and A*- B by -3%, value added achievement also declined across the 4 campuses
- T level results presented a mixed picture with T Level Digital Support Services having a 100% pass rate for all learners achieving Merit or above whilst for T Level Building Services all learners finished with Partial Achievement.

There was recognition that there had been highlights but also that there were areas where there was further work to do. Disparities across campuses were also highlighted.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A question was asked by a member in relation to T Levels and how the performance of the Group compared to other institutions across the North West.

Minute No.

The DP responded that the data was not yet available for comparison purposes however anecdotally it would appear that similar issues were being experienced with respect to retention and progression.

- A further question was asked by the member in relation whether there were plans to expand the T Level offer.

The DP confirmed that more pathways were to be introduced with plans for the introduction of further T Levels next year. It was added that recruitment was not as high as the Group would want it to be and that was in part linked to GCSE results.

- A member commented that it would be interesting to have early feedback from the learner voice.

The PCEO concurred with the comment in terms of gaining early feedback from T Level students. It was added that the aim moving forward was to differentiate Stockport College from other 16-19 providers of T Levels from which it was hoped an impact would be seen.

- Members referenced the progress measures in relation to English and maths and in particular the positive progress made at Stockport.

The DP concurred, adding that the focus would now be directed to Cheadle and Stretford.

Discussion followed in relation to ALPs and its efficacy as a measure for the Group. It was noted that they were primarily a comparator for sixth form colleges however regardless there was a desire to add value. The DP stated that the A Level offer of the Group was very inclusive compared to traditional sixth form colleges.

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the report in respect of GCSE, A Level and T Level Results 2023 be received and noted.

COR/99/23**Learner Numbers and Funding Update 2023**

The DP referred members to the previously circulated report and a summary update on recruitment, learner numbers and predicted funding income. There was confirmation that this information complemented that which was presented within the Management Accounts.

The following key issues were reported:

- 16-19 recruitment was currently 400 students above the allocation and 25 above the internal target noting that between 100 and 150 were currently not attending and likely to withdraw prior to the funding qualifying period (42 days)
- 16-19 T Level recruitment was 113 against an allocation of 187 presenting a risk against the contract and in-year clawback of £5k

Minute No.

- Adult recruitment continued to be ongoing however there were no concerns to report
- Community enrolments were currently being processed for September starts
- there was similar position in relation to Apprenticeships where enrolments continued to be processed for Septembers starts
- Higher Education recruitment was currently under plan (286 versus an allocation of 331)
- Advanced Learner Loans were currently at 89% and unlikely to change significantly.

In terms of Higher Needs (HN) students it was reported that numbers were 282 against an allocation of 191 and the challenges this brought were highlighted.

- A member asked as to where the HN students were drawn from.

The DP responded that the students were largely drawn from Stockport and the Manchester and Trafford local authorities. It was noted that the biggest “spike” had come from the Stockport area.

- It was further asked as to whether there would be financial challenges associated with the increased number of HN students.

The PCEO stated that students with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs) were prioritised in terms of support from a staff perspective. It was added in relation to the increase in HNs students from Manchester that it was believed that this was due to the lack of provision in the area.

The governor commented on the improved reputation of the Group in terms of the support being provided. It was further suggested that HNs numbers had doubled at Cheadle which had been attributed to parental choice.

- In respect of the 100 plus learners who had not yet attended college, a governor asked as to how many of these students were likely to have be part of the College Ready programme.

The DP was unable to provide a figure but stated that the conversion rate from College Ready on to programmes had been very successful.

In terms of the body of students who had not attended at all it was stated that for some students the college could have been their second or third choice, that they may have gone into employment or their family circumstances may have changed. The view was further expressed that of those non-attending students a significant proportion will have decided to study elsewhere and there was assurance that the issue was unlikely to be due to their experience.

There were no further questions or comments and following due consideration it was resolved that the Learning Numbers and Funding Update be received and noted.

Minute No.**COR/100/23 Subcontracting and Partnership Outcomes 2022-2023 and Updated Arrangements 2023-2024**

The DP referred members to the previously circulated report and an update on the subcontracting partnerships for 2022-2023 and the updated arrangements for 2023-2024. Reference was made to the appended copy of the Subcontracting and Partnership Procedure 2023-2024.

The following key issues were highlighted:

- the Group had worked towards reducing subcontracting over the last few years in line with the guidance from the ESFA whilst also taking into consideration the intent of the curriculum and the strategic reasons for working with each partner
- the Group was responsible for all aspects of quality assurance and quality improvement, capacity, capability and monitoring of subcontracted and partnership provision
- the importance of governors' awareness of the reasons for working with a partner were emphasised, including how they supported the strategic aims and contribute to meeting local needs
- confirmation that it was the responsibility of the Board to ensure that the provision was monitored and controlled appropriately consistent with it being a greater risk than college-based provision, both reputationally and financially.

A summary of the arrangements and funding outcomes for 2022-2023 was presented as well as the projected activity for 2023-2024.

Reference was made to the following partnership arrangements:

- a new partnership with Staff Power Group towards the end of 2022-2023 in response to meeting regional skills needs as part of the ESFA Adult funding allocation
- the introduction of a new subcontractor, Organisational Learning Centre (OLC) Europe, to support growth in Higher Education (HE), as previously approved by members
- in response staff recruitment challenges in Pharmacy, the Group had partnered with Skills4Pharmacy to support the delivery of the L3 Pharmacy Technician apprenticeship, for which ESFA support had been secured
- the introduction of a Subcontracting and Partnerships Procedure which detailed the activities carried out prior to the commencement of contracts including where responsibilities lie
- arising from financial due diligence carried out in advance of the issuing of contracts two subcontractors, Debut Performance Academy and Stockport County, concerns were identified and whilst assurances had been gained around financial sustainability work would continue to take maintain close oversight.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member, with reference to the Subcontracting and Partnership Procedure 2023-2024, highlighted an inconsistency in respect point 13.4.

Minute No.

The DP undertook to revisit and update the procedure accordingly.

Action: Deputy Principal

The PCEO added to the reporting of the DP and highlighted a potential risk around partnership work undertaken in the latter part of the 2022-2023 academic year. It was stated that whilst internal testing, by the DP and outgoing Chief Finance Officer, had been undertaken to ensure the accuracy of the classification of the contract arrangements, there was potential for challenge on the part of the funding body.

It was noted that a communication had recently been received from the ESFA flagging £300k of AEB underperformance. There was confirmation that the Group's engagement with Staff Power had subsequently delivered a surge in AEB activity in the final part of the year. The view was expressed that it was anticipated the ESFA would seek to robustly test out this partnership. It was added that whilst internally the process had been reviewed, members may wish to gain additional assurance via an internal audit of the arrangement.

Members endorsed the proposal that additional internal audit work in this area be commissioned accordingly.

Action: Interim Chief Finance Officer/Deputy Principal

- Clarity was sought by a member in relation to the ESFA's interpretation of the difference between subcontracting and partnerships.

There was confirmation that subcontracting involved the handing over of funding to the contractor whilst the Group retained an amount in the form of an administration fee. With respect to partnerships, it was stated that there was a greater share of responsibility in relation to delivery and within which a greater proportion of the funding would be retained by the Group. In respect of Staff Power there was confirmation that the Group's programme was delivered by Staff Power using their own staff.

The PCEO expanded upon the potential for conflict between the ESFA's desire to minimise partnerships as a vehicle to satisfy AEB contracts versus the DfE's nationally stated priority in relation to warehousing.

Members were further assured that Staff Power had in place equivalent arrangements with other colleges that had not been designated to be subcontracting.

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration and deliberation it was resolved:

- (a) that the reporting in respect of Subcontracting and Partnership Outcomes 2022-2023 and Updated Arrangements 2023-2024 be received and noted; and**
- (b) additional Internal Audit work be commissioned to provide additional assurance in respect of the designation of the Staff Power partnership arrangements 2022-2023.**

Minute No.**COR/101/23 Annual Safeguarding Report 2023**

The DP referred members to the previously circulated Annual Safeguarding Report 2022-2023. There was confirmation that this was the second year of this style of the report within which the comments previously made by members had been incorporated.

The following aspects from the report were highlighted:

- that total safeguarding referrals had increased by 33% when compared to the previous year;
- mental health, risk of suicide and self-harm continued to be the highest referral categories totalling 35%, an increase of 1% from 2021-2022;
- the focus had continued to be upon prevention and self-management with a view to better preparing students for life outside of college;
- the effectiveness of the work that had taken place to empower young people to self-regulate and to better manage their open emotions and mental health;
- that there has been an increase in referrals at Stockport, Stretford and Cheadle with a reduction at Altrincham and Marple; and
- the report presents a break down the number of referrals per category, campus and by different protected characteristics and further provides good examples of initiatives and strategic approaches to better safeguard students.

Members recognised the breadth of work undertaken in relation to the safeguarding of students and recorded their thanks to the Safeguarding Team.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member asked a question in relation to Keeping Children Safe in Education and sought clarity as to the date of the document referenced in the report.

The DP undertook to revisit and confirm the position accordingly.

Action: Deputy Principal

- A member commented on the cumulative referrals which appeared to be much higher in term one than in other terms. It was suggested that this was consistent with the positive impact of the work taking place to support students at an early point in the academic year.

The DP highlighted the support offered around self-regulation and the identification of issues at an early point.

- A member asked a question in relation to the overall high numbers of referrals and the marked differences between some campuses.

The DP highlighted the extensive awareness training made available to students, adding that higher numbers at some campuses were indicative of the student cohort and the number of vulnerable students many of whom had complex issues.

Minute No.

- A member raised the issue of loneliness and asked if associated initiatives were pursued with students.

There was recognition that young people who were lonely could in the longer term have many implications including lower levels of achievement and endurance of life long issues.

Reference was made to a partnership with the Starlight Project who were currently working with the pastoral teams at the Stockport campus to identify and support those students that may “go under the radar” via a 6-week rolling project which operated throughout the academic year.

The Chairperson of the FE Curriculum & Quality Committee added that in her link role meeting with the Assistant Principal Study Programmes Academic reference had been made to changes to timetables and the introduction of one hour lunch breaks and an associated offer targeted toward the support of students who may be finding it difficult to integrate. It was added that this offer was being led by the Student Engagement and Support teams. Members further noted the Breakfast Club managed by the Pastoral Team.

- A member asked a question in relation to whether the offer to students was face-to-face or via telephone appointments.

There was confirmation that students benefited from a blended approach. The DP added that there was a huge demand for counselling services and that there was a need to be very creative as to how the service was delivered. It was noted there was an emphasis upon creating the right environment for students.

Reference was further made to the peer support available to students.

- A member commented that the report communicated the holistic and integrated approach adopted by the Group and further that the case studies offered an insight into the complexity of the issues and the impact of support made available to students particularly within the challenges around resourcing and implementation.

The Chairperson highlighted the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023 document and reminded members that they needed to confirm by email that they had read the document.

Action: Members of the Board of the Corporation

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Annual Safeguarding Report 2023 be received and noted.

COR/102/23

Minutes of the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting held on 28 June 2023

The Chairperson of the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee referred members to the previously circulated minutes from the meeting held on 28 June 2023.

Minute No.

There was confirmation that comprehensive reporting on behalf of the Committee had been undertaken at the 19 July 2023 meeting of the Board of the Corporation.

There were no questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Minutes be received and noted.

COR/103/23 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

COR/104/23 Financial Update and Management Accounts Year Ending 31 July 2023

The Interim Chief Finance Officer (ICFO) referred members to the previously circulated Financial Update and Management Accounts for the year ending 31 July 2023 as considered at the recent meeting of the Resources Committee held on 11 October 2023.

There was confirmation that the accounts continued to be subject to the outcome of an audit process and submission of the Group's final ILR return in October 2023 and further that the report as presented was at this stage an indicative outturn.

With the caveat that there may be further changes included prior to the presentation and consideration of the Financial Statements to 31 July 2023, at the 13 December 2023, the headlines for the year were reported as follows:

- the EBITDA was significantly lower than budget (£1.2m against plan of £2.9m)
- there had been income shortfall in key areas (including apprenticeships, with provision for non-recovery)
- pay costs were in line with forecast, although pressures were expected for 2023-2024
- there had been an overspend on non-pay due to legal fees and other estates costs
- that the Group remained covenant compliant albeit with one agreed waiver
- the Group remained within the ESFA Financial Health Grade of "Good" by a relatively small margin.

The ICFO referenced the Management Accounts to 31 July 2023 (Period 12), as previously circulated to members. The ICFO reported that he was pleased to report that based on the latest data set, the Group had achieved its AEB allocation, both devolved and non-devolved.

The ICFO went on to highlight a new risk and the inclusion of a provision (of £500k) for the year end non recovery of apprenticeship funding due to data errors. It was reported that extensive work had taken place to minimise the impact of the data errors with significant progress having been made and which would continue to take place until the last possible point of the R14 submission in October 2023. Assurance was provided that a comprehensive review of systems and processes had taken place to ensure there was no recurrence during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Minute No.

The ICFO further referred members to the previously circulated briefing note in respect of a proposed amendment to the budget and associated financial plan for 2023-2024 following notification from the ESFA of an increase in funding of £1.8m in the 16-19 funding allocation. There was confirmation that the additional government funding had been awarded to help address recruitment and retention issues in Further Education, with the expectation that the total amount would be directed toward staff pay.

The ICFO confirmed that it was proposed that as this was a material change to both income and pay totals, the management information and in-year reporting be amended to ensure budgets were monitored and managed appropriately.

The ICFO further reported one further substantive change to the Group's expected financial position for 2023-2024 following the September enrolments and a significant increase in the number of High Needs learners across the Group. There was confirmation that this was likely to result in increased Element 3 (local authority) income, with a corresponding increase in costs.

The ICFO confirmed that the expected increase in income from the local authorities was £1m with the additional staffing required likely to impact on pay costs by £0.9m, with a smaller increase in non-pay of £0.1m. It was noted that the net impact of these changes on the EBITDA was zero consistent with the monies being spent on students.

Clarity was provided that as the increases were expected but not yet confirmed, the Group's budget for income and pay would not be amended and instead the additional £1m would be shown in the forecasts for the year.

There were no additional questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that:

- (a) the budget for 2023-2024 be amended to reflect impact of the additional £1.8m funding received from the ESFA; and**
- (b) the position in relation to the increase in the number of Higher Needs learners and the expected, but not yet confirmed, increase in funding from the local authority be noted and the appropriate changes to forecasts endorsed.**

Action: Interim Chief Finance Officer

COR/105/23**Marple Campus – Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Update**

The VPCSP provided a verbal report in respect of the national issue around Reinforced Autoclave Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and its application to the Group's estate.

The VPCSP reported that nationally there had been awareness of a potential issue for some time and that the situation had escalated over the summer. There was confirmation that RAAC applied to only one area of the Group estate at the Marple campus. It was noted that it was confined to one area of the campus namely the science block.

Minute No.

The VPCSP reported that the Department of Education (DfE) had appointed a project manager and that all remedial works and alternative accommodation was to be externally funded.

Assurance was provided that once there was awareness of the existence of RAAC at the Marple site, the use of the building ceased and the business continuity plan was initiated. It was reported that students had been able to continue to attend college for face-to-face learning and the only aspect impacted upon had been the practical aspects of learning. There was confirmation that plans were in place up to the end of term and temporary accommodation had been commissioned which it was anticipated would be available to students prior to the Christmas break.

In terms of a longer-term solution, it was noted that this was to be addressed by the DfE going forward.

Members recorded their thanks to the VPCSP and her team in relation to the work they had undertaken and the prompt action.

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration the RAAC update report was received and noted.

COR/106/23**Resignation of Independent Member of the Board of the Corporation**

The DCS reported the resignation of Adele Carney as Member of the Board of the Corporation with immediate effect.

There was confirmation that the Search Committee was scheduled to meet early in the new year at which time the vacancy arising, along with the two other Member vacancies, would be considered accordingly.

There were no questions or comments from members and following due consideration the resignation of Adele Carney was received and accepted.

COR/107/23**Appointment of Student Governor 2023**

The DCS reported on the outcomes of the recent election which had been carried out consistent with Student Governor Appointment Process. There was confirmation that 8 students had been nominated for the positions and that outcome of the election and the student with the highest number of votes was as follows:

- Blerta Shira (Trafford College - Altrincham campus).

It was also advised that in order to secure student representation across the Group the following Deputy Student Governors appointments had also been made:

- Evie Wainwright (Marple College) and Sapphire Ofei-Anakwa (Cheadle College)

Minute No.

It was further advised that the duration of the Student Member period of office would be until they conclude their studies at the Group.

There was confirmation that Uswah Sayyed would continue in her role as Student Governor.

There were no questions or issues raised by members and it was resolved that the following appointments be approved:

- **Blerta Shira (Trafford College – Altrincham Campus) to the position of Student Member; and**
- **Evie Wainwright (Marple College) and Sapphire Ofei-Anakwa (Cheadle College) to the positions of Deputy Student Governor.**

COR/108/23**Board of the Corporation Annual Self-Assessment Outcomes 2022-2023 and Draft Action Plan 2023-24**

The DCS referred members to the previously circulated Board of the Corporation Self-Assessment 2023 and the following reports:

- Final Governance Action Plan Outcomes 2022-2023
- Draft Governance Action Plan 2023-2024.

There was confirmation that the documents had previously been shared with members by the outgoing Corporation Secretary and their comments sought.

Members noted that the Action Plan Outcomes for 2022-2023 had largely been achieved and were classified as green. There was agreement that overall the actions had been successfully completed.

In respect of the Draft Governance Action Plan for 2023-2024 there was confirmation that the actions followed the format of the previous year and had been consulted on with both members and the Executive Leadership Team. It was noted that the actions may be subject to further enhancement consistent with the External Governance Review Action Plan and the requirements of the new AoC Code of Good Governance.

There was confirmation that moving forward it was anticipated that the actions would be combined with those arising from the External Governance Review and AoC Code with a view to adopting in-year monitoring of a single set of governance actions.

There were no questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Governance Action Plan 2022-23 and proposed Governance Action Plan 2023-2024 be approved.

COR/109/23**Board of the Corporation – Annual Attendance Report**

The DCS referred members to the previously circulated Governance Attendance Report 2022/2023. There was confirmation that the report identified patterns of attendance by members at meetings of the Board of the Corporation and its supporting Committees during the 2022/2023 academic year.

Minute No.

The DCS reported that when compared to the wider sector attendance at both Board and Committee meetings had been very healthy. It was noted that Board attendance had improved marginally when compared to the previous year and was above target whilst overall committee attendance stood at 78%.

It was commented that there had been some excellent committee attendance figures with only one committee performing below the target at 68%.

There was confirmation that individual member attendance was progressed via the Chairperson through the individual non-executive review process.

There were no further questions or comments and following due consideration it was resolved that the report be received and noted.

COR/110/23**Governor Links and Learning Walks 2023/2024**

The DCS referred members to the previously circulated reports in respect of Governor Links and Learning Walks.

The following reports were noted:

- the Governor Links Annual Report 2022-2023 and Proposals for 2023-2024 ;
- a Summary of Governor Link Visits to 31 July 2023;
- the proposed Governor Links and Learning Walk Protocol for 2023-2024.

It was reported that 80% of the available visits had been completed, an improved position over the previous year. Members further noted that all areas had received at least one visit with ten areas having being fully completed.

With respect to the proposals for 2023-2024 members were directed to the updated details of link areas, relevant managers and link governors.

There was confirmation that were three vacant link areas arising from the following appointments were proposed:

- Safeguarding – Charlotte Barratt
- Health and Safety – Ayo Oyeboode
- IT and Governance/Digital Skills – Alison Hewitt.

There were no questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that:

- (a) the overview and annual report in respect of Governor Link Visits 2022-2023 be received and noted: and**
- (b) the Governor Link arrangements and Protocol for 2023-2024 be endorsed and adopted.**

Action: Members of the Corporation

Minute No.**COR/111/23 Health and Safety Annual Report 2022-2023**

The VPCSP referred members to the previously circulated Health and Safety Report 2022-2023 and an overview of key health and safety activities and performance during the previous academic year.

The following key issues were highlighted:

- confirmation that the Group employs competent colleagues and that robust processes were in place to ensure statutory compliance
- that in-year monitoring took place via the Health and Safety Committee
- during the academic year the Group had retained ISO 45001 and ISO 14001 for the Trafford College sites and achieved RoSPA silver accreditation
- analysis of accident and incident reporting which identifies that many recorded incidents relate to medical ill health that occurred off-site
- confirmation that RAAC was not present at the Altrincham, Stretford or Cheadle sites
- RAAC had been confirmed within the science block at the Marple campus the process for which was duly being managed including the management of business continuity contingency measures
- during 2023-2024 further work would be undertaken to further strengthen the business continuity process.

There were no questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Annual Health and Safety Report 2022-2023 be received and noted.

COR/112/23 Any Other Business

- i) The DCS with reference to the Standing Orders for the Conduct of the Board and Committees sought approval for an extension of their review date to December 2023.

There was confirmation that the intention going forward was that, following a review of the Standing Orders, an end date consistent with the other Governance Policies be adopted.

There were no questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that an extension to the review date of the Standing Orders for the Conduct of the Board and Committees until December 2023 be approved.

Action: Deputy Corporation Secretary

- ii) Members recorded their warm congratulations to Michelle McLaughlin (Staff Member) following her investiture at Windsor Castle and award of an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for Services to Education.

There were no further items raised under any other business.

Minute No.**COR/113/23****Date of Next Meeting**

There was confirmation that a meeting of the Board of the Corporation with a single item agenda (External Governance Review Action Plan) was scheduled to take place on Thursday 2 November 2023 at 5.30pm

It was further noted that the next full meeting of the Board of the Corporation would be held at 5.30pm on Wednesday 13 December 2023.

Action: Corporation Secretary

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Uswah Sayyed left the meeting at 6.30pm following consideration of agenda item 8.

The Deputy Principal left the meeting at 7.12pm following consideration of agenda item 14 which was moved forward in the meeting (followed agenda item 9).

Blerta Shira left the meeting at 7.21pm following consideration of agenda item 12.