

TRAFFORD & STOCKPORT COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the Corporation
held on Wednesday 27 March 2024 at 5.30pm
in the Boardroom at the Altrincham Campus**

Present:	Graham Luccock	(Chairperson)
	James Scott	(Principal and Chief Executive Officer)
	Charlotte Barratt	
	Jill Bottomley	
	Olivia Bussey	
	Sarah Drake	
	Janet Grant	
	Jed Hassid	
	Alison Hewitt	
	Heather Lang	
	Emily McIntosh	
	Blerta Shira	(Student Member)
	Louise Richardson	
In Attendance:	Rebecca Clare	(Corporation Secretary)
	Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava	(Deputy Principal)
	Naomi Harrop	(Director of Human Resources and Performance)
	Michelle Leslie	(Vice Principal Corporate Services and Planning)
	Henry Taylor-Toone	(Chief Finance Officer)
	Alison Duncalf	(Deputy Corporation Secretary)

Minute No.**COR/01/24 Apologies for Absence**

The Corporation Secretary (CS) reported that apologies for absence had been received from Fatema Desai (Member), Michelle Mclaughlin (Staff Member), Jonathan O'Brien (Member), Marcia Reynolds (Member) and Uswah Sayyed (Student Member).

It was further noted that Jeremy Woodside (Member) was currently undertaking a period of sabbatical leave.

Ayo Oyeboode (Member) was not in attendance at the meeting.

COR/02/24 Declarations of Direct or Indirect Interests in any of the meeting's business items

Members noted the declaration of Jill Bottomley (Member) in relation to agenda item 5.2 (re-appointment to a further term of office). There was agreement that JB remain in the meeting during consideration of the item.

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

Minute No.**COR/03/24****Minutes of the Board of the Corporation Meeting held on 13 December 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.

COR/04/24**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/123/23 – Chief Finance Officer’s Report and Management Accounts

There was confirmation that a revised format would be progressed as part of the Chief Finance Officer’s (CFO) reporting taking place later in the meeting.

(ii) COR/124/23 – Board Assurance and Risk Management Update – December 2023

The CFO confirmed that work was taking place around the risk register and the placement of AI.

(iii) COR/130/23 – Higher Education Self-Evaluation Curriculum and Quality Committee

The Deputy Principal (DP) confirmed that this action (summary of HTQs and T Levels) had been progressed via the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee and that the associated presentation was available to members.

(iv) COR/137/23 – Equality and Diversity Committee Meeting held on 29 September 2023

The CS confirmed that a calendar of celebration events pertinent to members had been circulated accordingly.

(v) COR/142/23 – Governance Self-Assessment Report 2022-2023 and Quality Improvement Plan including the Draft External Governance Review Action Plan

The CS referred members to the Governor Mentoring Guidance attached to the papers and confirmed that the guidance had been produced with input from the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board of the Corporation.

Minute No.**(vi) COR/143/23 – Adoption of the AoC Code of Good Governance**

The CS confirmed that further to the adoption of the Code of Good Governance, compliance on the part of the Board of the Corporation, would be revisited accordingly to ensure the embedding of all aspects.

(vii) COR/145/23 – Committee Membership 2023-2024

The CS confirmed that an extended update would be provided later in the meeting by the Chairperson of the Search Committee.

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

COR/05/24**Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2024**

The Principal and CEO (PCEO), in the absence of the Director of Marketing and External Relations, referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the proposed Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for 2024.

There was confirmation that Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 required large businesses and organisations to produce a statement annually setting out the steps that they had taken to ensure that their business and supply chains were slavery free and/or for the statement to say that they had taken steps to do this.

It was further confirmed that the statement was being presented for consideration in advance of its publication on the Group's website.

Clarity was provided that the Group's name had been updated within the Statement.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member asked as to whether there had been any specific changes since the publication of the previous statement in 2023.

Following discussion members were requested to approve the statement subject to there being no significant changes over and above that of the previous iteration. **There was agreement that should there have been significant revisions further consultation would be progressed via email as necessary.**

Action: Corporation Secretary

Members recorded their best wishes to the Director of Marketing and External Relations following his appointment to a new position.

The PCEO expanded upon the planned changes to marketing responsibilities which, moving forward, would come under the remit of the Assistant Principal Adult Skills and Employer Engagement. There was confirmation that any salary savings accrued would be reinvested back into the marketing function.

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There were no further questions and comments raised by members and following due consideration, and subject to there having been no significant changes from the previous iteration, it was resolved that the Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2024 be approved prior to its publication on the website.

COR/06/24 Annual Gender Pay Gap Report

The Director of Human Resources and Performance (DHRP) referred members to the previously circulated report and the Gender Pay Gap Report for the Group using a snapshot of 31 March 2023.

There was confirmation that following its consideration by the Board of the Corporation the report would be published on the Group's website.

The following key issues were highlighted:

- that the gap between the median gender pay gap had increased from 2.31% in 2022 to 3.86% in 2023, however this continued to compare favourably with the median pay for the whole economy which was 14.3% for 2023
- the improvement in the number of females within the upper quartile of 5% compared to 2022 and an 8% increase on 2021
- the lower and lower middle quartiles had seen a slight increase on the number of females who were within these groups due to there being more roles at the lower scales which were occupied by females
- confirmation that this was indicative of an increase in the number of learning facilitators and invigilators, roles that were typically more attractive to women due to the flexibility around work patterns.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member, with reference to the gender pay gap, asked if there were any available comparator matrices.

The DHRP responded that she was not aware of any specific KPIs adding that there would be a need to focus upon where an issue had been identified.

- Another member asked as to whether data was captured within the sector for comparison purposes.

The DHRP confirmed that this information was not available however she suggested that this aspect could be progressed via the HR Network.

Action: Director of Human Resources and Performance

The DHRP added that for the current academic year the Group had sought to capture information in relation to protected characteristics but that disclosure rates had only been in the region of 30%. The need to address how individuals could be encouraged to disclosure this information was recognised.

There were no further comments or questions raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Annual Gender Pay Gap

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Report 2024 (snapshot of 31 March 2023) be approved in advance of its publication on the Group's website.

COR/07/24**Operational Plan and Key Performance Indicators Update Report – Term 2 2023-2024**

The Principal and CEO (PCEO) referred members to the previously circulated report and a mid-year update on progress against the Operational Plan 2023-2024 and the Group's four Strategic Priorities and three Strategic Enablers.

An overview of the Operational Plan, as of term 2, was provided within which the areas of significant concern or risk against each of the objectives were outlined.

The significant concern in relation to meeting the needs of students was referenced. The change in aspects such as attendance and behaviour during the course of the current academic year was highlighted, an issue which was pertinent across the wider education sector.

The PCEO stated that behavioural and attendance issues were taking up a significant amount of time and that the focus through to the end of the academic year continued to be supporting students to achieve.

The stronger approach to behaviour was highlighted but it was also stated that students were presenting with a number of other issues. Members noted that the Group was committed to working with Trafford Local Authority around a whole organisational approach to being a "trauma informed" college to improve how behaviours and attitudes were addressed in a relational way.

The PCEO further stated that Apprenticeships continued to be "front and centre" for the Group in terms of the quality of education across the provision, as well as in terms of outcomes and financially. It was stated that this area presented the biggest risk to the Group in terms of income and outcomes. The view was shared that positive progress was being made but that the area continued to be classified as "requires improvement."

In terms of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2023-2024 and an update for term 2 the following was highlighted:

- that the main risk continued to be financial (EBITDA and Adjusted Current Ratio) driven by overspending in non-pay and the risk to income, especially Apprenticeships
- confirmation that this risk had been highlighted to the DfE as part of the Group's termly conversation recognising however the Group had been in a similar position the previous year
- the risk in relation to the quality of Apprenticeships noting that the overall achievement rate for Apprenticeships was predicted to be over 60% (above the national rate) and that most measures had improved under the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework
- under People the key risk was staff sickness, reflective of a sector trend
- that staff utilisation was under target, the impact of which was being reviewed, in terms of curriculum and resource planning for the following year, recognising that this was in part being driven by the position at Marple.

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Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A question was asked by a member as to whether it was known if those students that were not attending lessons were making progress.

The DP responded that the recent attendance at mock examinations had been better than expected. It was further suggested that some learners appeared to be making choices in terms of the ways in which they learnt which included studying independently. The DP added that this approach did not apply to only English and maths.

The view was expressed that there was a need to determine how this change i.e. not attending but continuing to engage, translated into outcomes. There was recognition that the development of Microsoft Teams and its utilisation by students was very effective.

The PCEO added that the AoC was currently undertaking an attendance survey and it was proposed that when the results became available that they be reported to the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee.

Action: Deputy Principal/FE Curriculum and Quality Committee

- A further question was asked by a member in relation to staff absence and the proportion of long-term sickness and the impact upon learners.

The DHRP responded that that data was not collected in this format and that she was not aware of any issues being flagged.

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Operational Plan 2023-2024 and Key Performance Indicators mid-year update be received and noted.

COR/08/24**Quality Improvement Plan and Performance Indicators 2023-2024 – Update Report**

The DP referred members to the previously circulated reports in respect of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2023-2024 update report. There was confirmation that the reports as presented had been discussed in detail at the most recent meeting of the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee.

The DP stated that the QIP and accompanying summary was also an extension of the report made by the PCEO under the last agenda item.

A summary and progress against the eight key objectives or Areas for Improvement (Afls) was presented. There was confirmation that the appended KPIs marked in red were largely due to student attendance.

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In terms of the next steps, it was stated that:

- there would continue to be a drive to attain in-year improvements in the quality of education, providing effective interventions to support student achievement; and
- to continue to mentor and support staff in the most “at risk” areas within the Group (Construction, Health and Social Care, English and maths, Computing and A Levels at Cheadle and Marple).

Members were referred to the enclosed National Achievement Rate 2022-2023 Data Review Table which had been published the previous week. It was reported that the table was an indicator of where the Group stood and it was confirmed that overall the Group was 1.5% above the national average; minus 0.5% for under 19s; and 3.9% above for adults. With respect to GCSE Maths and English, for all ages, the Group was 2.9% above the national average.

Members were further referred to the breakdown of information by qualification type and level. In addition, the comparator data to neighbouring colleges was highlighted.

The DP indicated that there were two key areas driving the data referencing the Group’s 16-18 Construction and Health and Social Care provision. There was confirmation that outcomes were below the average with the position further exacerbated by the number of students. The DP stated that further work was taking place to determine how the Group compares and as to why and how some colleges were performing much better, with a view to assessing what could be learnt and applied locally.

There was agreement that further consideration of this aspect be progressed via the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee.

Action: Deputy Principal/DE Curriculum and Quality Committee

In relation to the KPIs and the attendance issue it was recognised that students continuing to engage with learning was positive.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member, with reference to the Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) KPI data highlighted the negative position, in relation to the completion of the PPD hours target, by 95%.

The DP confirmed that this target related to personal and professional development as distinct from work experience and non-core programmes. It was stated that on average students were required to complete 90 hours and that to date only 5% of students had attained this threshold at this stage in the academic year. There was confirmation that others had partially achieved this target and that there were no significant concerns to report.

It was suggested that it may be beneficial, in future reports, to provide a breakdown of the hours completed across 30%, 50% and 70% of the overall target.

Minute No.**Action: Deputy Principal**

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Quality Improvement Plan and Key Performance Indicators 2023-2024 Update Report, including the National Achievement Rate 2022-2023 Data Review, be received and noted.

COR/09/24**Chief Finance Officer's Report and Management Accounts for the period ending 28 February 2024**

Members were referred to the previously circulated CFO Report and Management Accounts for the period ending 28 February 2024. The CFO advised that the Management Accounts for this period had also been considered in detail by the Resources Committee at its meeting on 21 February 2024.

It was confirmed that the following was appended to the covering report:

- a copy of the CFO's presentation
- the Dashboard
- Period 7 Management Accounts
- Period 7 Management Accounts Supporting Schedules.

The CFO made a presentation in relation to the key issues from his report and the management accounts under the following headings:

- Investment and Expenditure Forecast 2023-2024
- Risks and Opportunities
- Cash
- KPIs and the Current Ration
- 16-19 Allocation for 2024-2025

Investment & Expenditure Forecast 2023-2024

The following was highlighted:

- that the Education EBITDA forecast should be at the £3-4m mark but that for the current year it was projected to be £2m
- Apprenticeships were £3.3m against a budget of £4.1m with progress being made in relation to D-locks and a reclaim of 50% was being forecasted
- that in respect of AEB, should delivery be over allocation that would be accompanying costs
- the Group was in receipt of additional High Needs funding however the incoming receipt would be offset via staff costs notwithstanding the issues associated with the recruitment of Learning Facilitators
- £0.5m had been released from the risk reserve
- there were increased pay costs associated with High Needs and the increased agency costs offset by staff sickness and vacancies
- examination costs had increased consistent with increased student numbers and the number of maths and English re-sits
- the ongoing work in relation to the control of escalated administration costs (Estates, IT and General Admin)
- for the current year the Group had accommodated between 300 and 400 extra students with no additional funding which presented an in-year challenge but

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placed the Group in a better position income wise going into the new academic year.

The following questions and comments were raised by members:

- A member sought clarity around the increase in exam costs particularly in relation to SHU.

The DP confirmed that this related to the pricing model within which there was a set amount per student per programme however there was a minimum of 15 students per cohort and where cohorts were less than this threshold additional costs were incurred. There was confirmation that a lot of work had taken place around this aspect and that changes would be made for the next academic year. It was noted however that large class sizes would not be achieved.

- A member commented on finance versus quality and asked as to the impact of using agency staff and whether this had any bearing upon quality.

The CFO suggested that there was an impact, in particular, in respect of maths and English but added that moving forward one solution could be for the Group to employ its own cover staff.

The Vice Principal Corporate Services and Planning (VPCSP) added that there was also a need to attain a balance between quality and flexibility. The DP further commented upon the close correlation between course underperformance and staffing. The view was also expressed that in some instances areas were competing for the same staff.

The DHRP added that it could sometimes be difficult to procure permanent staff as agency work usually offered higher financial returns.

Risks and Opportunities

In relation to risks the CFO brought the following to the attention of members:

- AEB, whilst over delivery of the GMCA contract was forecast (payment of 110%) if only 100% was delivered income would fall by £240k
- Apprenticeships and the ongoing issues in relation to D-locks and Additional Learner Support (ALS), it is assumed that 75% of the D-locks would be cleared and £50k of ALS generated but should this not be achieved income would fall
- HE provision and maximisation of the remaining cohorts, with failure to deliver the remaining cohorts having a negative impact on income by £150k
- non-pay, whilst stabilisation has been achieved over the last few months ongoing vigilance was required
- failure to deliver High Needs should there be insufficient recruitment and retention of Learning Facilitators.

It was confirmed that should all the above risks materialise there would be a requirement to release the remaining risk reserve of £0.5m, which in turn would impact on the Group's EBITDA and financial health score.

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In terms of covenants members noted that even in the materialisation of the worst-case scenario the Group's covenants would not be compromised.

The CFO went on to highlight the areas of opportunity which included Apprenticeships (should 90% of D-locks be cleared, £150k of ALS income be generated, and additional starts into 2023-2024 be brought forward, a further £246k of income could be generated) and AEB whereby over delivery of 110% would present an opportunity of generating further income of £355k (currently forecasting 104%).

Cash

The CFO confirmed that cash was currently £4m higher than budget which was largely attributable to the Cheadle project and which would be spent as the project progressed. It was noted that the underlying cash position was where it was expected to be.

KPIs – Current Ratio

An overview was presented in respect of the budget versus forecast and the current ratio.

16-19 Allocation for 2024-2025

There was confirmation of the good news that moving into the new academic year there would be headline growth of £5.9m (16.6%). It was cautioned however that the increase in income would be offset by additional spending upon pensions and High Needs (£1.5m) and additional hours associated with English and maths (£0.3m).

In respect of the remaining additional income of between £3m and £4m additional areas for consideration were detailed which included pay awards for 2024-2025 and beyond; the total costs of maths and English requirements; investment in curriculum support (workload); investment in enabling; the impact on underlying cash balances (building up of reserves); and the 3-year outlook.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A question was asked by a member in relation to administrative support and whether AI was being explored.

The CFO responded that not enough was yet known in terms of what may be possible, adding that this area would continue to be explored as part of the Group's Digital Strategy.

- A member commented on the content and presentation of the financial reporting and the ability it offered to hone in on the KPIs. It was suggested that this approach could be extended to other areas of reporting.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration and deliberation it was resolved that: -

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- a) the Chief Finance Officer's Report and presentation be received and noted;**
- b) the Management Accounts for the period to 28 February 2024, including the 2023-2024 year-end forecast, be duly approved; and**
- c) the position in respect of the 2024-2025 16-19 allocation be noted.**

COR/10/22**Assurance Review of the Subcontracting Standard**

Members were referred to a copy of the letter from the Department for Education (DfE), dated 13 March 2024.

It was noted that further to the submission of a report from the Group alongside consideration of other information held by the Department, there had been confirmation that the organisation had achieved the standard for 2022-2023 funding year.

It was further noted that the Group could continue to subcontract subject to following the subcontracting rules. With respect to any points raised by the external audit it was required that the action points be addressed accordingly.

There was confirmation that the next date for the submission of an assurance review of the subcontracting standard would be 31 July 2026.

There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the letter on respect of the Assurance Review of the Subcontracting Standard as undertaken by the Department for Education be received and noted.

COR/11/24**Minutes of the Search Committee held on 24 January 2024**

The minutes of the meeting were received and the Chairperson of the Committee provided a brief overview of the business items considered by the Committee as follows:

- the position in relation to the External Governance Review and the initial outcomes of the Governor Survey arising
- confirmation that alumni had not yet been resolved but continued to be progressed
- consideration of the terms of reference of the Committee which included clarity around the composition and balance of the Board and its serving committees and an increase to the membership of the Search Committee, all of which were consistent with recommendations from the External Governance Review
- to note that a number of members terms of office would be ending during the 2025/2026 academic year which would need to be addressed moving forward
- consideration of pending re-appointments in relation to Jill Bottomley (Independent Member of the Board of the Corporation) and Co-opted membership of the Search Committee (Graham Briscoe) each of which had been considered in respect of their contribution and ongoing commitment
- proposals in relation to the future membership of the Search Committee as a means of attaining greater flexibility and to support succession planning and the appointment to the Committee of Sarah Drake and Marcia Reynolds (Independent Members)

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- to receive and note the resignation of Kurt Allman as a Co-opted Member of the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee
- a proposed change in the membership of Fatema Desai from an Independent Member of the Board of the Corporation to a Co-opted Member of the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee
- the proposed appointment of Olivia Bussey to the membership of the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee
- the proposed appointment of Emily McIntosh to the membership of the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee
- to note the appointment of Alison Hewitt to the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Resources Committee until the end of the current academic year
- confirmation that outstanding expressions of interest made by governors in respect of committee membership would be progressed in the summer term as part of the Non-Executive Governor Review meetings
- constitution of the Appointments Panel which had met with two potential candidates in relation to an Independent Member vacancy
- the plans in place to progress mentoring arrangements in the summer term
- consideration of the Appointment and Succession Planning for Members of the Board of the Corporation – Policy and Procedure.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member highlighted the mentoring initiative and indicated that they would be happy to act as a mentor prior to stepping down as a governor at the end of the summer term.

The CS, with reference to the Mentor Guidance, reported that she had met with the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson with a view to progressing a plan, supported by a checklist, with a view to the commencement of mentoring early in the summer term.

Action: Corporation Secretary/JG

There were no further issues or comments raised by members following the update and it was resolved that the minutes be received and noted.

COR/12/24

Matters Arising from the Minutes including Approval of the Search Committee Terms of Reference

(i) SEA/05/24 – Search Committee Terms of Reference and Membership Appointments

There were no questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration, on the recommendation of the Committee:-

- (a) the updated Terms of Reference of the Search Committee 2024-2026 be duly approved and adopted; and**
- (b) the appointments of Sarah Drake and Marcia Reynolds to the membership of the Search Committee be approved.**

(ii) SEA/07/24 Re-appointment of Independent Member of the Board of the Corporation

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There were no questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration, on the recommendation of the Search Committee, it was resolved that Jill Bottomley be re-appointed to a further four-year term of office as an Independent Member of the Board of the Corporation

(iii) SEA/07/24 Search Committee Co-opted Member Re-appointment

There were no questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration, on the recommendation of the Search Committee, it was resolved that the Chairperson be authorised to progress the re-appointment of Graham Briscoe to a further four-year term of office as a Co-opted Member of the Search Committee

(iv) SEA/07/24 HE Curriculum and Quality Membership Appointments

There were no questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration, on the recommendation of the Search Committee, it was resolved that:

- (a) the membership of Fatema Desai as an Independent Member of the Board of the Corporation cease and she be appointed a Co-opted Member of the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee for a four-year term;
- (b) the resignation of Kurt Allman as a Co-opted Member of the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee be received and noted; and
- (c) Olivia Bussey (Independent Member) be appointed to the membership of the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee.

(v) SEA/07/24 Appointment of Independent Member of the Board of the Corporation

There were no questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration the recommendation of the Appointments Panel to appoint Lewis Ormston as an Independent Member of the Board of the Corporation for a 4-year term of office be duly approved.

(vi) SEA/07/24 FE Curriculum and Quality Membership Appointment

There were no questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration, on the recommendation of the Search Committee, Emily McIntosh be appointed to the membership of the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee.

(vii) SEA/07/24 Resources Committee Membership

Members endorsed the interim appointment of Alison Hewitt as Vice-Chairperson of the Resources Committee for the remainder of the current academic year.

(viii) SEA/09/24 - Approval of the Appointment and Succession Planning for Members of the Board of the Corporation – Policy and Procedure

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There were no questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration, on the recommendation of the Search Committee, the Appointment and Succession Planning for Members of the Board of the Corporation – Policy and Procedure be approved and adopted.

COR/13/24 Minutes of the Resources Committee held on 21 February 2024

The minutes of the meeting were received and the Vice Chairperson of the Committee provided a brief overview of the business items considered by the Committee as follows:

- the proposed changes to the terms of reference of the Committee
- consideration of the adoption of a more risk-based approach to financial reporting consistent with the progression of the Cheadle project and the associated diminishing cash position
- considerations in relation to the Digital Plan and an update on the Accommodation Strategy
- the deferral of the People and Culture Strategy Mid-Year Review until the next meeting of the Committee.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

The CFO referenced the recent release of a new Finance Handbook and confirmed that this would be reported in greater detail at the next meeting of the Audit Committee.

Action: Chief Finance Officer

- A member with reference to the 900 extra applications asked how they were likely to translate and if there were any concerns as to how they may be met.

The PCEO responded that conversion was the key, adding that in terms of their spread the majority of the applications related to Stockport and Trafford.

The PCEO further expanded upon the position in relation to under recruitment at Marple and a targeted campaign to reach potential students from Derbyshire.

Reference was also made to two significant strategic considerations. The current crisis across the Manchester Local Authority was highlighted in which there was insufficient 16-19 places. It was noted that applications from this source accounted for in the region of one third of the increased applications.

The PCEO stated that the other more pressing issue related to Construction for which there had been a big increase in applications in an environment where the Group were unable to accommodate this demand, due to both space/ accommodation and staffing constraints. The PCEO added that in order to manage the position effectively only those students that had been through the application process would be considered with the process also supported via a managed waiting list i.e. there would be no queue jumping.

- The member asked a further question in relation to whether any link had been

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determined between attendance and the distance travelled particularly in the context of increased student numbers from Manchester.

The PCEO confirmed that this work had not yet taken place and the DP undertook to progress this aspect further.

Action: Deputy Principal

There were no further issues or comments raised by members following the update and it was resolved that the minutes be received and noted.

COR/14/24

Matters Arising from the Minutes including the Approval of the Resources Committee Terms of Reference

(i) RES/06/24 - Terms of Reference of the Resources Committee

There were no questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration, on the recommendation of the Committee, the updated Terms of Reference of the Resources Committee 2024-2026, were approved.

COR/15/24

Minutes of the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 22 November 2023 and 6 March 2024

The minutes of the meeting were received and the Chairperson of the Committee provided a brief overview of the business items considered by the Committee at its meeting held on 22 November 2023 and 6 March 2024.

The Chairperson of the Committee commented on the vibrant discussions undertaken and the work taking place to make the agenda more manageable.

The increase in applications was highlighted particularly in relation to the numbers now studying at Stockport and reference was also made to the succession planning for the outgoing Assistant Principal Higher Education and Skills; the work taking place to recruit a new Co-opted Member; positive retention; and the new prospectus.

There were no further issues or comments raised by members following the update and it was resolved that the minutes be received and noted.

COR/16/25

Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes in addition to those considered earlier in the meeting.

COR/17/24

Minutes of the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 13 March 2024

The minutes of the meeting were received and the Chairperson of the Committee provided a brief overview of the business items considered by the Committee as follows:

- the input from students to the Group prospectus and website
- the delivery of a presentation around curriculum reform and the impact this was likely to have upon the Group moving forwards

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- consideration of the Quality Improvement Plan noting the progress being made in relation to Apprenticeships
- the concerns in relation to the low response rates to Apprenticeship surveys and the actions being taken internally to address
- the adoption of a new approach by the Quality Team via uplift activity taking place alongside CDARs, enabling closer intervention and support of all courses that were underperforming
- the progression of Enabling Team SARs and assessment of their impact in terms of supporting teaching and learning
- an informative Student Governor Report and the high level of student engagement beyond their curriculum
- a short presentation from student attendees, by campus, in relation to what was working well and where there were challenges
- the increase in safeguarding numbers and the effort and support to help students succeed
- participation and the hosting of the Greater Manchester World Skills Event
- consideration of the Quality Assurance Policy (later agenda item).

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member referred to the excellent student engagement she was able to observe during attendance at the Apprenticeship Conference. The positive initiatives being progressed with apprentices was highlighted.

There were no further issues or comments raised by members following the update and it was resolved that the minutes be received and noted.

COR/18/24**Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes in addition to those considered earlier in the meeting.

COR/19/24**Key Issues of the Safeguarding Committee Meeting held on 22 February 2024**

The DP with reference to the actions from the meeting of the Safeguarding Committee held on 22 February 2024 highlighted the following:

- the introduction of an Annual Safeguarding Conference which would present an opportunity to share good practice and provide key updates to staff
- an application for funding to support work around hate crime with local groups and the identification of hate crime champions
- the sharing of local and regional updates in relation to safeguarding
- a 53% increase in individual safeguarding referrals compared to the same point last year with mental health remaining the top referral category
- the impact upon students in respect of the length of time it could take to access health services
- the increase in the number of learners attending the college from Manchester and the need to establish a relationship with the Manchester Safeguarding Committee
- the action plan arising from a Safeguarding Risk Assessment and the updates since the last meeting which included partnership with the Trafford Belong Project and progress in terms of the Trauma Informed Project

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- impending new guidance in relation to a Group Gender Questioning Procedure which was currently in draft format and under consultation
- consideration of the issues raised with regards to multi-faith spaces
- confirmation that the AoC had recently updated the Mental Health Charter
- the plans for a Safeguarding Newsletter for parents and carers as well as the offer of information and advice sessions.

The Deputy Principal undertook to share a copy of the Safeguarding Newsletter for parents and carers with members.

Action: Deputy Principal

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member asked if it was intended that the Safeguarding Newsletter be made available to employers as a means of increasing awareness of safeguarding from the student perspective.

The DP responded that currently work was undertaken with both employers and students in respect of safeguarding. It was added that there was also a process to be followed pre an apprentice going in to a work place.

- The member suggested that by sharing the newsletter there would be potential for an extra level of awareness.

The DP added that priority was placed on ensuring that young apprentice learners were fully prepared from a safeguarding perspective when going to the work place particularly in areas such as Construction. Reference was also made to the importance of mental health awareness.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the key issues, actions and matters arising be received and noted.

COR/20/24**Key Issues of the Equality and Diversity Committee Meeting held on 8 March 2024**

The CS, in the absence of the Link Governor, with reference to the actions from the meeting of the Equality and Diversity (EDI) Committee held on 14 March 2024, highlighted the following:

- the analysis of student suspensions from the first half term which indicated that 72% of excluded students were from a minority background
- consideration of the EDI calendar in relation to EDI activities and events which had included Widen Our World week and a special edition of the student newsletter during black history month
- an increase in EDI activities across all sites
- the holding of Macfest during Colleges week which provided an opportunity to share the work undertaken with political leaders around social cohesion
- an update in relation to community partnerships which had included partnering with a forum for discussion of Israel and Palestine and the activities undertaken by the Community College kitchen.

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The VPCSP added that a Head of Studies, as part of their professional development, was producing a EDI Leadership Management Report looking in more detail at student suspensions which included a review of the data as to why students were more likely to be suspended if they were from a non-white background.

There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the key issues, actions and matters arising be received and noted.

COR/21/24**Key Issues of the Health and Safety Committee Meeting held on 14 March 2024**

The VPCSP with reference to the actions from the meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on 14 March 2024 highlighted the following:

- confirmation that there were no significant issues to report
- in relation to accident analysis there continued to be an issue in relation to accidents occurring off-site and then being dealt with in college
- the comprehensive training schedule and the need to focus on targeting toward the correct staff
- the ongoing work to support pursuit of a RoSPA/Green Gown award and campus specific ISO accreditation.

There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the key issues, actions and matters arising be received and noted.

COR/22/24**Key Issues of the Sustainability Committee held on 7 December 2023 and 13 March 2024**

The VPCSP with reference to the actions from the meetings of the Sustainability Committee held on 7 December 2023 and 13 March 2024, the following was highlighted:

- the work taking place in conjunction with local colleges
- the progression and tracking of the action plan for which promising progress was being attained
- the launch of the Green Hub at the Stockport campus offering greater opportunities for students, the official launch of which had included its opening by the Greater Manchester (GM) Mayor.

The PCEO highlighted the hustings taking place to which invitations had been extended to the main political parties.

There were no further questions or issues raised and following due consideration it was resolved that the key issues, actions and matters arising be received and noted.

COR/23/24**Meeting of the Skills and Accountability Committee Meeting held on 25 March 2024**

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The PCEO referred members to the previously circulated summary of actions from the meeting of the Skills and Accountability Committee held on 25 March 2024.

Reference was made to the large agenda and the breadth of the areas under consideration.

Attention was drawn to the review of progress against the Group's Accountability Statement (AS) and the need to commence consideration of the setting of the Statement for the next academic year.

Members were reminded that alongside the AS a Duty to Review had been introduced, initially requiring reviews to be conducted every three years to address how the Board was meeting its objectives. There was confirmation that this aspect had now been drawn into the AS and would take place annually.

There was recognition that the AS and Local Skills Review and the evidencing of how provision was reviewed formed part of Ofsted's remit alongside how need was being met on locally, regionally and nationally.

It was noted that it was a funding requirement that the Statement be published on the Group's website in advance of 30 June 2024. There was confirmation the matter would be considered further at the 15 May 2024 meeting of the Board of the Corporation, following initial consideration of the objectives for 2024-2025 by the Skills and Accountability Committee.

Action: Principal and CEO/Board of the Corporation

There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the key issues, actions and matters arising be received and noted.

COR/24/24**Governor Links and Learning Walks 2023-2024**

Members were referred to the previously circulated reports arising from Governor link visits as follows:

- Employer Engagement
- Apprenticeships and Adults Skills
- CEIAG
- FE Student Engagement
- Education Programmes
- Progression Curriculum and SEND (including High Needs).

Members were further referred to the previously circulated progress report in respect of the planned Governor Link visits for 2023-2024. There was confirmation that the report presented a summary of the visit activity undertaken to date and further offered support to members in their timely completion of their link governor visits.

There were no questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the reports, arising from the Governor Link

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visits conducted to date and the Governor Links Mid-Year Report, be received and noted.

COR/25/24**Governance Action Plan Progress Update**

The CS referred members to the previously circulated mid-year report in relation to the Governance Action Plan for 2023/2043.

There was confirmation that good progress had been made to date against the RAG rated actions detailed in the report and attention was drawn to the following:

- confirmation that the Governor Strategic Development Day took place on 6 March 2024 from which a further update would be provided at the 15 May 2024 meeting of the Board of the Corporation
- the provision of a mid-year update in respect of Governor Links and Learning Walks
- the newly appointed CFO and CS had completed their inductions and were settling well into their roles
- the car parking facilities at the Stockport Campus had been completed and positive progress was being made in relation to the Cheadle campus redevelopment.

In respect of the Governance External Review Action Plan the following was highlighted:

- the progress that had been made in relation to a review of the terms of reference of the committees of the Board of the Corporation
- the work ongoing to review and realign agendas accordingly
- confirmation that EDI objectives now featured on the covering reports to the Board of the Corporation
- that a governance survey had been completed and the responses reported to the Search Committee
- the expressions of interest received from members in serving on additional and/or alternative committee were being progressed
- that a succession action plan had been shared with the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board of the Corporation
- a new Mentor Guidance document had been adopted
- a yearly programme of shared events planned throughout the academic year had been shared with members.

The CS confirmed that the impact report associated with the Action Plan would be reported in greater detail at the autumn term meeting of the Board of the Corporation.

Action: Corporation Secretary/Board of the Corporation

Questions and comments were invited from members

- A member raised the issue associated with agendas and the avoidance of duplication.

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The CS responded that the agendas of the HE Committee and Audit Committee had been reviewed to date and then further work was planned in relation to the Resources Committee agendas.

Discussion followed in relation to the presentation of reports and the need for succinct front pages to draw out key messages.

There was recognition of the balance required in terms of the communication of key information whilst not losing the oversight aspect.

Members were cautioned of the need to remember that the Board of the Corporation was the decision-making body and that in order to make informed decision a level of information and detail may be required. It was reiterated that the Board was the decision-making body unless delegated otherwise to a committee.

There were no questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Governance Action Plan 2023/2024 mid-year update be received and noted.

COR/26/24**Governor Code of Conduct**

The CS referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the new Governor Code of Conduct (Eversheds 18th edition) as published in January 2024 and for which adoption by the Board of the Corporation was invited.

A summary of the key changes from the previous edition was shared. There was confirmation that in addition to updates to terminology references and/or commentary were now included in relation to aspects such as the Accountability Statement, ONS classification and external governance reviews. It further stated that references to the ESFA Conditions of Funding Agreement had been removed.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the new Governor Code of Conduct as published in January 2024 be duly approved and adopted.

COR/27/24**Appointment of Independent Member of the Board of the Corporation May 2024 – May 2028**

There was agreement that this item had been addressed under an earlier agenda item.

COR/28/24**Quality Assurance Policy**

Members were referred to the previously circulated Quality Assurance Policy as recently considered by the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee at its meeting on 13 March 2024 (FEC&Q12/14).

It was noted that the changes to the Policy largely related to the updating of terminology and a more accurate reflection of current practice.

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The DHRP requested that section 3 be updated to include the Staff Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

Action: Deputy Principal

There were no further questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Quality Assurance Policy 2024-2027, incorporating the above revision, be approved and implemented.

COR/29/24**Any Other Business**

The CS referred to the Privacy Statement as circulated prior to the commencement of the meeting. Attention was drawn to the minor amendment in relation to the recording of meetings. **It was requested that the Privacy Statement be signed accordingly by members and returned to the CS.**

Action: Members of the Board of the Corporation/Corporation Secretary

There were no further matters raised under any other business.

COR/30/24**Date of the Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Board of the Corporation would be held at 5.30pm on Wednesday 15 May 2024 in the Boardroom at the Altrincham Campus.

Action: Corporation Secretary

The CS further highlighted the following forthcoming events:

- Governor Training Event on Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 5.30pm

Action: Members/Corporation Secretary

The meeting closed at 7.38pm

Blerta Shira (Student Member) left the meeting at 7.25pm during consideration of agenda item 6.2.