

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held at 6pm on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in Room 3-22, Aylesbury Campus**

**Governors Present:** Martin Tugwell (Chair), Jenny Craig (Principal & CEO), David Bainton (Vice Chair), Adam Poland, Amir Khaki, Bethan Waters, Cathie Prest, Eddie Weiss, Ian Harper, Nick Bevan, Tim Marshall

**In Attendance:** John McGrath (Chief Operating Officer (COO)), Hannah James (Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality (VPCQ)), Tracey Matthews (Vice Principal, Commercial & Partnerships (VPCP)), Rachael Murray (Executive Director Digital Transformation & Planning (EDDTP)), Isobel Ellison (Executive Director, Human Resources (EDHR)), Nicky Ellis (Assistant Principal Student Engagement & Support (APSES)), Anna Smith (Director of Governance (DG)), Rob Lawson (Observing as External Board Reviewer)

**Apologies:** Alex Reynolds, Ben Banks, Chris Oakley, Ian Greggor, Martina Porter, Sana Larkin

Minute No.	AGENDA ITEM
39.23	<p><b>CHAIR'S WELCOME</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Rob Lawson who introduced himself and was observing the meeting as part of the External Board Review. Apologies were noted and there were no new declarations of interest relating to the business of the meeting. The Chair noted that the meeting was Nick Bevan's last as a Governor: he passed on his thanks and those of the rest of the Corporation Board for Nick's contributions over the years to the College Group.</p>
40.23	<p><b>DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE REPORT</b></p> <p>As part of discussion, the DG shared a supportive comment provided by the student governor who had been unable to attend in relation to the Corporation Self-Assessment Review. The student governor requested encouragement for governors to visit campuses as much as possible to experience college life directly in support of decision making and the impact decisions have on students.</p> <p>Regarding governor links, Tim Marshall noted how impressed he was with the quality and engagement of students in comparison with other organisations and encouraged more focus on work-ready disciplines such as punctuality. He added that Marlow Film had commented on how impressed they are working with the college and our students.</p> <p>The Corporation <b>Resolved</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ratify</b> the approval of the Remuneration Committee's recommendations which had been sought by Written Resolution.</li> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the appointment of Ian Greggor as Vice Chair of Corporation from 1/8/2024.</li> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the Corporation Self-Assessment Review 2022-23 and actions for improvement 2023-24.</li> <li>• <b>Note</b> the summary of results of the meetings evaluation surveys 2022-23.</li> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the Audit Committee Self-Assessment Review 2022-23.</li> <li>• <b>Note</b> the Governor Links and Engagement 2023-24.</li> </ul>
41.23	<p><b>MINUTES AND BOARD ASSURANCE REPORTS</b></p> <p>The Corporation <b>Resolved</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 12/10/23.</li> <li>• <b>Note</b> the updated rolling actions log.</li> <li>• <b>Note</b> the report of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 7/11/23.</li> <li>• <b>Note</b> the report and draft minutes of the Finance &amp; Resources Committee meeting held on 13/11/23.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Note</b> the report and draft minutes of the Curriculum, Quality &amp; Students Committee meeting held on 22/11/23. Under this item, the Committee Chair encouraged governors to use their networks to host students for work placements (<b>Action: All Governors</b>). Regarding the Law T Level, governor support was offered and welcomed in providing professional support for students (<b>Action: VPCQ/Bethan Waters to liaise offline</b>). Query was raised regarding how governors can be assured of scrutiny and the Committee Chair and Vice Chair both provided confident assurance of the SAR moderation process and the committee’s scrutiny of the SAR and QIP. The Vice Chair of Corporation added his assurance around safeguarding with his regular contact with the APSES.</li> </ul> <p>As the latest meeting of the Audit Committee had taken place on 6/12/13 the Chair invited the Committee Chair to comment who duly provided reassurance of the committee’s scrutiny of the reports being presented under agenda item 8.</p>
42.23	<p><b>STUDENT GOVERNORS’ REPORT</b></p> <p>In the absence of the student governors the APSES took members through the report noting the success of the partnership with Brighter Futures Together on receiving funding to deliver a Young Mental Health Champions project being launched in Wellbeing Week. All governors are welcome to join the student conference on 11/3/24: governors warmly welcomed the conference being held</p> <p>The APSES shared a comment received from one of the student governors regarding tutorials noting students would welcome more information in tutorials about the financial aspects of being independent (mortgages, rent etc.) and that the recent tutorials on driving skills etc had been really well received. The request was noted and would be actioned (<b>Action: APSES</b>).</p> <p>The APSES gave an update providing assurance to the Board regarding a confidential student incident which had been reported on previously, noting the college had been praised for its positive continued support.</p> <p>Query was raised and reassurance provided that students receive various, appropriate, benefits for activities they participate in to encourage engagement: the Board was advised that there is a significant increase in students wanting to engage regardless of these. Further query was raised and assurance provided that student dislikes (in relation to the curriculum) are being listened to and actioned upon. This engagement has been acknowledged by students who are welcoming increased involvement in decision-making.</p> <p>Governors praised the quality and content of the report and the Chair requested this be fed back to the student governors (<b>Action: DG</b>). The Corporation <b>Resolved</b> to <b>Note</b> the report.</p>
43.23	<p><b>KPI Report</b></p> <p>The Principal presented the progress update on the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) noting the change in definition of RAG ratings to ensure a realistic view is presented, and sharing that reporting will be on improvements evidencing the interventions being put in place. Governors welcomed the report being treated as a separate agenda item as requested in order to enable a focused conversation. Members scrutinised the report and discussion of the following took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retention is excellent so far this year and significantly improved on previous years, seen as a result of the right course review process.</li> <li>• ‘Teach to the Top’ percentage was clarified and progress of training and success measures explained.</li> <li>• Financial metrics relating to staff costs as % of income and underlying cash days in hand were queried and explained with assurance of solvency provided.</li> <li>• Interventions were explained relating to staff turnover and assurance was provided of the current position. There is increased Advanced Practitioner support for new teachers now with a focus on clear and robust support to aid teaching staff retention.</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>Resolved</b> to <b>Note</b> the report.</p>

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44.23	<p><b>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</b></p> <p>In addition to the items reported, the Principal briefed governors on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key focus nationally is on the DfE's curriculum reform agenda with careful curriculum planning to ensure the college is future focussed. Catherine Sezen, Director of Education Policy, AoC, will be leading a session on this at the Governors' Strategy Day in January.</li> <li>• The first termly meeting with the DfE had gone well and had been a good opportunity to showcase college initiatives and progress and also have the direct contact to discuss challenges and commonalities around English and maths; staffing etc. as seen nationally in the sector.</li> <li>• Governors were informed of staffing updates at College Leadership Team level.</li> </ul> <p>Governors raised and discussed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors would welcome an invitation to the Bucks Skills Strategy Launch being hosted by the college on 12/1/24.</li> <li>• Assurance was sought and provided on the increase in 'illness and injury' at Aylesbury campus, contextualised as the majority of cases being students feeling unwell in the classroom.</li> <li>• Regarding the qualification reforms, there are some flexibilities for colleges around some of the general qualifications but largely changes are relatively prescriptive. Defunding is going ahead and the sector is awaiting the next general election to see what impact the outcome might have.</li> <li>• Governors praised the significant success of the student activities detailed in the report and an update was provided that the Hair and Beauty Spa Team had now raised over £5k for charity against their target of £1.6k.</li> <li>• Anecdotal feedback was shared on the use of Teachermatic and the Corporation praised the college for its implementation of the AI software trial.</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>Resolved</b> to <b>Note</b> the report.</p>
45.23	<p><b>CURRICULUM, QUALITY AND STUDENTS REPORT</b></p> <p>The VPCQ took members through the report noting a key focus of curriculum planning had been in ensuring students and employers involvement in development.</p> <p>Governors raised and discussed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work readiness average points summary was explained: this is the first time this has been tracked in such a focussed way and was welcomed by the governors as a way of monitoring progress.</li> <li>• The individual learning plan system was explained as a way of students remaining informed of progress with regular reviews taking place throughout the year.</li> <li>• Having confidence to have an influence in the workplace is built into the work experience programme and employers are invited in to support this as a combined approach.</li> <li>• Initiatives for ensuring increased work experience for students going forward were explained.</li> <li>• Feedback on 'Pop-Ins' was provided and observer feedback explained as detailed in the report.</li> <li>• Governors were encouraged to attend the 'Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware' training session which had been circulated, aimed at governors to increase understanding of student issues.</li> </ul> <p>The SAR, QIP and annual safeguarding report had each been reviewed, scrutinised, and recommended by the Curriculum, Quality &amp; Students Committee but Board discussion took place on these as follows:</p> <p><u>Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2022-23 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2023-24</u></p> <p>The VPCQ briefed members on the rigorous process undertaken in preparing the SAR noting her confidence in the moderation. The college had self-assessed overall as 'Good' and explanation given on each judgment area.</p> <p>The Chair of Corporation provided assurance of his involvement in the SAR moderation and confidence in the robust scrutiny of the document. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Curriculum, Quality &amp; Students</p>

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	<p>Committee reiterated their assurance of process and triangulation with the Committee Vice Chair noting high praise for the report. The Committee Chair confirmed the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) view had been taken so although one area (personal development) was graded as 'Requires Improvement' the college should be confident in the steps being taken to improve and achieve 'Good'.</p> <p>The Vice Chair of the Curriculum, Quality &amp; Students Committee echoed her praise at the QIP noting this will be the key document governors will monitor going forward so the detail was most welcomed.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding and Prevent Annual Report 2022-23</u></p> <p>The increase in mental health and suicide attempts is indeed a cause for concern both locally and nationally and the college is working with the appropriate agencies to support students. There has been increased support and training for staff on mental health awareness and first aid. Assurance was provided that staff are fully supported when student incidents occur.</p> <p>Tutorials have included awareness of and training on how to share opinions and debate in relation to the Middle East situation and the college has an open-door policy for students needing support. There have been no incidents to date relating to this.</p> <p>The Corporation <b>Resolved</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Note</b> the Curriculum, Quality and Students report</li> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the Self-Assessment Report 2022-23</li> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the Quality Improvement Plan 2023-24</li> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the Safeguarding and Prevent Annual Report 2022-23</li> </ul>
46.23	<p><b>FINANCE AND RESOURCES REPORT</b></p> <p>The COO briefed the Corporation on his report confirming the key items had been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 6/12/23 and recording his thanks to the EDDTP and the VPCP for the work on completing the funding audit.</p> <p>The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee stressed the importance of internal audits in providing assurances of controls and the use of different specialists for auditing relevant areas was endorsed.</p> <p>In considering the report, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors welcomed the improved position on agency costs compared to last year.</li> <li>• The underlying cash balance for FY23/24 is estimated to be approximately £0.5m above budget and consideration is being given to investment areas. Key investment projects will be reported to governors in due course.</li> <li>• 16-19 recruitment is ahead of the same time last year and ahead of allocation.</li> <li>• The Audit and Risk Committee Chair noted both internal and external auditors had been complimentary of the college's accounting which provides added reassurance for both the committee and the Corporation.</li> <li>• The new format risk register aligned to the strategic plan was welcomed by governors.</li> <li>• Discussion took place regarding staff recruitment and retention initiatives with the Principal confirming a multi-level approach and innovative thinking such as differences in contracts and ensuring competitive salaries where possible. The EDHR added that there has already been an increase in employer engagement, staff are feeling listened to and can see a positive impact.</li> <li>• The Chair sought assurance regarding the LSIF deadline for expenditure and this was duly provided by both the Principal and COO on both capital and revenue expenditure plans.</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>Resolved</b> to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022-23</li> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2022-23</li> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the renewed appointment of the internal auditors for 2022-24</li> <li>• <b>Note</b> the remainder of the Finance and Resources Report</li> </ul>

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47.23	<p><b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HUMAN RESOURCES WORKFORCE REPORT</b></p> <p>The EDHR briefed the Board on her report and was pleased to note the reduction in staff absence which is now lower than national average. Governors were informed of the changes in national living wage and impact this would have on certain staff categories.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed governor membership diversity concerns have been acknowledged and this is the focus for new recruitments throughout 2024.</p> <p>Query was raised regarding staff being impacted by the changing rules around immigration salary thresholds and it was confirmed one staff member had been impacted by this to date and salary guidelines are being considered for this case.</p> <p>Further query was raised regarding the number of employees remaining for less than a year and the EDHR provided reassurance on safer recruitment training and confirmed data on leavers will be split into job family going forward to show greater detail behind this.</p> <p>The Corporation <b>Resolved</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Note</b> the Workforce Update Report</li> <li>• <b>Approve</b> the Diversity, Equality, Wellbeing and Inclusion Annual Report 2022-23</li> </ul>
48.23	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b> 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024</p>
49.23	<p>The Chair reminded governors of the Strategy Day taking place on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at Bucks New University incorporating a visit to the new site in High Wycombe.</p>
50.23	<p>Tim Marshall shared details of the BETT exhibition (free entry for BCG governors) and JISC Digifest (free entry for @buckscolleggroup.ac.uk account holders. The DG would circulate details following the meeting (<b>Action: DG</b>).</p>
51.23	<p><i>Bethan Waters and Adam Poland left the meeting at 8pm.</i></p>
52.23	<p><b>CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA ITEM</b></p> <p>The Corporation <b>Resolved</b> to <b>Approve</b> the confidential minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 12/10/2023 and the Special Corporation meeting held on 8/11/23 and <b>Note</b> the confidential rolling actions which had all been completed.</p>

Approved as an accurate record of discussion: 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Signed by Chair of Corporation:

