

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Corporation

Date:	Monday 16 December 2024	Room number	Boardroom
Present:	Charles Tennant (Vice-Chair) Natalie Davison (Principal/CEO) Carole Ditty (CD) Alex Keay (AK) Nick Kavanagh (NK) Bal Panesar (BP) Paige Summers (Student Governor) (PS) Esther Thompson (ET)		
Via Teams:	Forhad Altafi (Staff Governor), Andy Forbes (Chair)		
In attendance:	Jason Turton (Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality) Victoria Eastwood (Chief Governance Officer) Diana Olafsdottir (Director – HR) Hiten Savla (Deputy Principal – Finance & Resources) Anthony Braithwaite (Director of Student Support) – Agenda Item 6 only Mina Rehman (Potential Student Governor) – Observer		
Apologies	Katharina De Vita, Bim Osunsami, Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe, Akeel Ahmed, Molly Makota.		

1.	Welcome and apologies for absence The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Katharina De Vita, Bim Osunsami, Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe, Akeel Ahmed, Molly Makota. Mina Rehman was welcomed as an observer to the meeting and introductions were made.
2.	Declarations of Interest Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare an interest in relation to specific items on the Agenda if appropriate. The Principal/CEO and College staff declared an interest in agenda item 8 – Remuneration Committee update.
3.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Corporation – 21 October 2024 and Notes from the November Strategic Planning Event The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 21 October 2024 and Notes from the Strategic Planning Event were agreed as a true and accurate record. Approved: The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 21 October 2024 and Notes from the Strategic Planning Event were agreed as a true and accurate record.

5.

Matters arising

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update
c/f	A comparison of starters and leavers and the number of staff who had remained at the College after starting this year to be provided.	EDHRS	ASAP	To be included in full HR Update to P&R – March 2025
c/f	Staff recruitment data targeting HE and number of HE applicants to be provided.	EDHRS	ASAP	To be included in full HR Update to P&R – June 2025
7.	Updated Safeguarding Policy to be issued to all Governors.	CGO	ASAP	Complete
10.	Management accounts to be issued to the Board before half-term.	DPFR	25 October 2024	Complete
10.	Pay award recommendation to be brought to December Corporation Meeting.	DPFR	16 December 2024	Included in Agenda
10.	Bad debt analysis to be discussed at the Policy & Resources Committee and Audit & Risk Committee to explain the adjustments.	CGO	December 2024	Complete
14.	Data to clarify actions that have pushed improvements for 2023/24 to be provided.	DPCQ	ASAP	Provided via email.

The Chief Governance Officer (CGO) recommended that Akeel Ahmed be appointed to the Audit & Risk Committee and Bal Panesar be appointed to the Remuneration Committee to strengthen the committee membership. This was approved.

Approved: Akeel Ahmed to be appointed as a member of the Audit & Risk Committee; Bal Panesar to be appointed as a member of the Remuneration Committee.

The Deputy Principal – Finance & Resources (DPFR) updated the Corporation on the EV project advising that the Department for Education (DfE) had requested assurance from the Board that the project would be funded to completion. The Board were advised of the college contribution increase of £330K from the sum originally approved but the College would minimise the contribution as much as possible. It was noted that any further capital projects in the original plan had been stopped to ensure the EV project was in place. Discussion took place on affordability, highlighting the confirmed additional income from 2023/24 over delivery of the Greater London Authority (GLA) AEB grant, funds from the development of the K Block and the awaited insurance claim.

In response to a query from AK concerning preventing further costs increases, the DPFR advised that the figures presented for college contribution related to timing difference, the costs had not increased from previous approval.

	<p>CD suggested that the Board consider the finance elements of the meeting and revert after these discussions to make a final decision. This was agreed.</p> <p><i>The Board considered agenda item 7 and returned to discussions.</i></p> <p>After further discussion it was noted that the timing of the project had affected the costs – the cost of the project had not increased but the timing of the payments was the issue. The Chair stated that there was a continuing risk which had been outlined and would need to be monitored closely. Given the level of risk and uncertainty it was requested that the EV project become a standing agenda item for the Policy & Resources Committee to monitor and Governors to be kept informed if costs increased and advised how this will be managed. CD added that the Board needed to see the updated contract and fixed costs – this was agreed.</p> <p>Approved: The Corporation approved the commencement of the EV project and confirmed their commitment to ensure the project was completed in full. The Board confirmed they would support the college funding any costs post March 2025 when the DfE grant runs out to ensure the project is delivered in full. Any cost over runs from contracted price will need further approval from the Board, however, Governors have recognised that the delay in starting the project has meant the College contribution has increased to above the £450k initially approved for the project to start in November 2024.</p> <p>Action: EV project to be a standing agenda item for the Policy & Resources Committee Governors to be immediately informed of cost increases and how these are managed for the EV project. Updated contract and fixed costs to be circulated to the Board.</p>
5.	<p>Chair's Actions There were no Chair's actions to report.</p> <p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p> <p><i>The Director of Student Support joined the meeting.</i></p>
6.	<p>Safeguarding Update The Director of Student Support provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding consultant undertaken an audit – recommendations being actioned • Advertised for volunteer safeguarding officers – staff needed to have the capacity and genuine interest to support • 2 or 3 safeguarding officers in training • Safeguarding champions to bridge gaps in horizons – rolled out across college • Reporting to include increased clarity on referrals • Categories updated in CPOMS – family conflict and peer conflict • Safeguarding mandatory within staff inductions • Students feeling safe – piloted a knife arch to be a visual deterrent – purchased a knife pole going forward • Improve delivery for monitoring of online safety • Low level concerns of staff - using this to build a picture of emerging concerns <p>The Chair asked if there were any recommendations to be followed up from the consultant. The Principal/CEO replied that a thorough audit of the single central record would take place and the College needed implement a Quality Assurance (QA) process for safeguarding to reflect and improve on responses to cases. It was noted that the Link Governor for Safeguarding would be involved in the QA process.</p>

	<p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Director of Student Support for the update.</p> <p><i>The Director of Student Support left the meeting.</i></p>
7.	<p>Management Accounts October 2024 including Pay Award 2024/25</p> <p>The DPFR advised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Period 3 numbers – period 4 complete but not yet reviewed • Overall position at period 3 –loss was due to additional depreciation charge • Depreciation increased by 836K • Tracking ahead of budget • Period 3 numbers allow for 1.67% pay award • Additional GLA income and insurance money not accounted for within this period <p>AK stated that it would have been helpful to see a summary of the pay award, depreciation, EV project costs, GLA income etc instead of being asked to approve items in isolation. The DPFR replied that the period 4 accounts would show the actual movements from where the budget had changed including the cashflow. It was agreed that an updated summary would be provided.</p> <p>CD queried whether the depreciation had been overlooked by the auditors. The DPFR responded that the College tracked assets through the fixed asset register which automatically calculated the depreciation charge. Over the last 2.5 years there had been an issue with the system where the tick to depreciate the asset had not been made therefore, they were not captured. The adjustment to the accounts was requested by the auditors and an amendment to the system had been made to prevent future errors.</p> <p>The Chair stated that period 4 and 5 accounts would provide a more settled picture of how the year was rolling out.</p> <p>Discussion turned to the pay award, and the DPFR highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing for depreciation, in cash terms still 450K positive position to the original budget • Most colleges in London offering between 2.5%-3.0% • Consider further recommendations in the future • Intention to communicate via email by Wednesday and online briefing Thursday • Pay costs stood at 70% of expenditure • DfE reviewing the position as what they deemed staff/pay ratio which was currently 65% of income – most colleges were at c67-70%. <p>After detailed discussion, the Corporation approved a 2.5% pay award for staff backdated to 1 August 2024.</p> <p><i>The Chair thanked the DPFR for his work on this.</i></p> <p>Action: Updated summary of Period 4 accounts to be provided to the Board. Approved: a 2.5% pay award back dated to 1 August 2024 was approved.</p>
8.	<p>Remuneration Committee Update including Annual Statement/Terms of Reference</p> <p><i>It was agreed that Senior Postholders would not need to leave the meeting for this agenda item.</i></p> <p>The Chair of the Remuneration Committee updated the Board on the following key points from the meeting:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved the Annual Statement of SPH Remuneration and Committee Terms of Reference • Re-appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair • Strengthening Committee membership • AoC - appraisal good practice guide • Considered performance reviews for CGO and DPCQ and probationary review updates for Principal/CEO and DPFR • Reconvene January 2025 once probationary reviews completed <p>Approved: the Corporation approved the Annual Statement of SPH Remuneration and the Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference 2024/25.</p>
9.	<p>College Self-Assessment Report (SAR)</p> <p>The Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality (DPCQ) explained the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment process that had been followed • Post-Christmas – position statements written by curriculum areas to look at distance travelled, strengths etc • Backward look at last academic year • Key judgements <p>The Chair stated that he had sat in the final SAR validation panel which had been a thorough and good process run by the DPCQ and Faculty Director – Apprenticeships & Quality. It was noted that it was extremely likely that the College would be inspected between now and Easter. The Inspectors would consider the SAR but would be most interested in where the College was currently, student and staff experience and progress made.</p> <p>CD advised that she had attended one of the SAR days and found it one of the most useful ways to enhance understanding of the curriculum and the College. Board level focuses on areas that required improvement and it had been incredible to meet staff who were driving excellent results and great achievements. There had been elements on the trajectory to being outstanding.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair referred to the overall SAR report noting that some areas were classed as Requires Improvement (RI) but had not included areas of weakness eg education programmes for young people and apprenticeships. The DPCQ replied that this would be addressed and added that the skills element of the SAR had also be included and this would be shared with Governors.</p> <p>Approved: the College Self-Assessment Report for 2023/24 was approved, subject to the amendments to the areas for improvement.</p> <p>Action: Areas for improvement to be clarified for RI areas and updated SAR (including Skills element to be shared).</p>
10.	<p>Financial Statements Update</p> <p>The DPFR Updated the Board as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College was awaiting confirmation from the DfE re writing off the bad debt under Managing Public Money (MPM) regulations • Extension for filing the accounts had been agreed to 31 January 2025 or as early as possible once the confirmation was received or otherwise • Financial statements were complete other than regularity audit • Final position was -£41K overall including £652K depreciation that had not been previously allowed for <p>It was agreed that the draft Financial Statements and finance report would be provided to the Board for review prior to receiving communication from the DfE. Once DfE confirmation had been received, a Teams Board meeting would be convened to formally approve the Financial Statements.</p>

	<p>Action: Draft Financial Statements and finance report to be provided to the Board for review Teams Board meeting to be convened to formally approve the Financial Statements.</p>
11.	<p>Principal/CEO Update – KPI Dashboard 2024/25 The Principal/CEO highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff survey (discussed later in the agenda) – much work to do • Domain 2 – learning walks and outcome that 21% teaching staff (36 individuals) not yet met the recently enhanced minimum standards in terms of teaching practice. For some staff it was around strengthening behaviour management – each member of staff had a clear improvement plan. • Domain 2 – attendance – continually strengthening focus – indications that new intervention regime was having affect – attendance in Maths and English was a difficult area but there was a strong focus at the moment – vocational attendance was strong • Domain 3 – indicators of student progress – full time students on study programmes – 95% on track and compliance with progress review – much stronger position • Apprenticeships – robust systems in place • Domain 2 – positive destinations at 90.8% vs 82% for previous year <p>BP asked what corrective actions were taking place to improve teaching. The Principal/CEO explained that the College had not a recent record of managing capability. All staff concerned were in informal capability and on an informal capability plan - a supportive developmental approach was being taken, providing clear targets to improve. The Director of HR (DHR) added that timelines would be individually based – most staff were responding well to the interventions, but two members of staff were progressing to the formal level as they were not engaging with the learning walks.</p> <p>In response to a query from CD, the DHR advised that the staff ethnicity profile and vacancy rate had increased from Octobers data as the data was now more accurate and the systems could be better relied upon.</p> <p>AK stated that linking the SAR validation information back to the KPI areas was key to be able to provide a framework for which subject areas had moved on. The Principal/CEO agreed and advised that the position statements would be able to show areas moving over time.</p> <p>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</p>
12.	<p>Review of Complaints/Compliments The DPCQ presented the review of the complaints and compliments for 2023/24.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair suggested that the complaints should be linked to the SAR broken down by curriculum area to see any patterns. This was agreed. The Chair added that the complaints correlated some of the information provided regarding English and Maths etc.</p> <p>In response to a query from NK, the DPVQ confirmed that the escalation process involved the complaint being submitted to the next level of management. The turnaround time for responding to a complaint was 15 days.</p> <p>The Chair stated that it was good to see timescales and responses improving.</p> <p>Agreed: that the update be received.</p>
13.	<p>Curriculum & Quality Update</p>

	<p>The Chair of the Curriculum, & Quality Committee reported that a lot of the elements discussed at the committee had been featured earlier in the agenda and asked the Board to approve the Committee Terms of Reference. He added that the SAR validation meetings had been very insightful and encouraged Governors to attend in future.</p> <p>The Chair praised the focus of the Committee on HE, L4+ and not just focussing on an Ofsted agenda. The Principal/CEO thanked all Governors for their support.</p> <p>Approved: That the Curriculum & Quality Terms of Reference 2024/25 be approved.</p>
14.	<p>BDC Curriculum & Skills Plan 2024/25 Update</p> <p>The DPCQ highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills strategy previously shared – Board feedback had been recommended to be smarter with the targets which had been revised and strengthened • Money will be focussed on the East London Food school – Council still plan to have food and business hubs but the markets not in force as suggested • College had the branding and website for the London Food School and can launch with the TSA • Good position for the College <p>The Chair stated that he had attended the SAR validation meetings at the TSA and noted the very impressive improvements that had been made to the learning environment.</p> <p>It was agreed that the food school branding would be shared with Governors for information.</p> <p>Action: Food school branding to be shared with Governors.</p>
15.	<p>Policy & Resources Committee Update</p> <p>The Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee summarised key items from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratification of Committee Terms of Reference • Reappointment of Committee Chair and Vice-Chair • Head of Health & Safety attended the meeting - outstanding risk assessment re apprenticeships was discussed. The Principal/CEO confirmed that there were nine outstanding risk assessments at present where paperwork had not been returned or an employer had not been on site. Risk assessments would be a standard part of the onboarding process going forward. • EDI update • Updated financial regulations were approved • Positive subcontracting report -solid achievement and close monitoring of spend • Approved four policies – Freedom of information, Treasury Management, Governor Expenses and the Reserves Policy. <p>The Chair thanked the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee for the update.</p> <p>Approved: The Policy & Resources Committee Terms of Reference 2024/25 were approved.</p>
16.	<p>HR Update – Staff Survey Feedback</p> <p>The DHR provided the following feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low engagement in the survey – could be taken as an indication of low engagement across the college as a whole • Some cynicism around the survey • Meetings taking place alongside the Principal/CEO with each area of the College – deep dive into the three critical areas: wellbeing, leadership and management and internal communication • Career progression was also a gap but falls out from leadership and management • Feedback aligns with some of the plans put forward for the strategy day

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College score is low against other colleges • Confidence in policies and procedures was better than relations with staff and other departments or confidence in management • Strong on the perception of being inclusive and diverse • Relatively strong re perception of feeling safe at work • Good practice in terms of clarity of role – understand departmental roles but room to expand across college • Looking at data from demographics • Relationship driven culture – lots of positives to build on and to expand • Clarifying roles and procedures between departments was key <p>The Vice-Chair referred to areas for further investigation and queried whether there was a link between curriculum areas and demographics across the sector. The DHR replied that there would be a variance depending on the nature of the curriculum area and this would be considered.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair queried the level of involvement for Heads of Department. The DHR replied that alongside the Principal/CEO, she would be visiting every area of the College to discuss the feedback. The intention was not to share the granular detail of the data as some staff had identified as working in areas that differed to their actual departments which could affect the results. The focus would be on critical areas and what 'Good' looked like.</p> <p>FA asked whether there was a variance between business support and teaching staff. The DHR replied that the survey did not break down the results by these areas specifically but there was a variance between departments and a correlation between general satisfaction.</p> <p>The Chair stated that this was an important area and the Board would continue to be updated. The Chair thanked for DHR for the report.</p> <p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p>
17.	<p>Broadway Theatre Update</p> <p>The Principal/CEO advised that a communication had been received late afternoon from the DfE to advise that they would no longer fund the RAAC remediation work at the Theatre as, in their view, it was not a College building. This fundamentally changed the position for the College and up until this point the College had still been working with the Council to move forward.</p> <p>Action: Broadway Subsidiary Board to convene to discuss the position further.</p>
18.	<p>GDPR Update</p> <p>The CGO reported that the College remained at the monitoring level but from next year a deep dive into data held across the College would be undertaken. Freedom of Information requests had been discussed in detail at the Policy & Resources Committee and all GDPR policies had been updated as required for 2024. Governors were informed that there had been no reportable data breaches for 2024.</p> <p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p>
19.	<p>Review of Code of Governance</p> <p>The CGO presented the first draft of the Board compliance against the new format Code of Governance. The Board were advised that the actions would be included as part of the Governance development plan.</p>

	<p>CD noted that there was repetition in some of the actions that could be used for more than one principle. AK added that driving through the risk register needed to be considered. It was agreed that the draft would be reviewed and emailed to Governors.</p> <p>Agreed: the Draft Compliance against the Code of Governance was received. Action: Suggested amendments to be made and revised version emailed to the Board.</p>
20.	<p>Audit & Risk Committee Update The Vice-Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee provided an update on the following from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external audit • Review of bad debt issues – policy must be followed • Fraud as a standing item • Assessed the risk register • Strengthening committee membership <p>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</p>
21.	<p>Risk Register The DPFR highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Risk Register had been presented to the Committees • Linked with Board assurance • Allocated a committee to be linked to the risks but the risks were not exclusive to each committee • Movements going forward would be highlighted by an arrow to indicate up/down <p>AK stated that the changes that had been made were really helpful. CD added that the proposed addition of trends would be useful.</p> <p>Agreed: That the update be received.</p>
22.	<p>AoB There was no further business.</p>
23.	Self-assessment – to be issued after the meeting.
24.	Date and time of next meeting – Monday 31 March 2025, 5pm

The Chair thanked all in attendance for their contributions and wished everyone a good break and Happy New Year. The meeting closed at 7.05pm.

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update
c/f	A comparison of starters and leavers and the number of staff who had remained at the College after starting this year to be provided.	EDHRS	ASAP	To be included in full HR Update to P&R – March 2025
c/f	Staff recruitment data targeting HE and number of HE applicants to be provided.	EDHRS	ASAP	To be included in full HR Update to P&R – June 2025

4.	EV project to be a standing agenda item for the Policy & Resources Committee	CGO	ASAP	Complete – added to business schedule.
4.	Governors to be immediately informed of cost increases and how these are managed for the EV project.	DPFR	Ongoing	On target at present – currently £13K of £30K provision.
4.	Updated contract and fixed costs to be circulated to the Board (EV contract).	DPFR	ASAP	Issued via email.
7.	Updated summary of Period 4 accounts to be provided to the Board.	DPFR	ASAP	Complete
9.	Areas for improvement to be clarified for RI areas and updated SAR (including Skills element to be shared).	DPCQ	ASAP	Complete
10.	Draft Financial Statements and finance report to be provided to the Board for review	DPFR	ASAP	Complete
10.	Teams Board meeting to be convened to formally approve the Financial Statements.	CGO	January 2025	Awaiting DfE approval
14.	Food school branding to be shared with Governors.	DPCQ	ASAP	Deferred until after business planning process
17.	Broadway Subsidiary Board to convene to discuss the position further.	CGO	ASAP	Discussions with the Council ongoing – included on the agenda.
19.	Suggested amendments to code compliance document be made and revised version emailed to the Board.	CGO	January 2025	Complete

Signed.....
Andy Forbes (Chair)

Date.....