Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Corporation

Date:	Monday 8 July 2024 R	oom number	Boardroom
Present:	Andy Forbes (Chair) Natalie Davison (Principal/CEO) Carole Ditty (CD) Katharina De Vita (KDV) Geoff Hall (Staff Governor) (GH) Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe (EK) Nick Kavanagh (NK) Alex Keay (AK) Bal Panesar (BP) Paige Summers (Student Governor) (PS)		
Via Teams:	Esther Thompson (ET) Forhad Altafi (Staff Governor), Molly Makota (MM), Charles Tennant (Vice-Chair)		
In attendance:	Jason Turton (Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality) Victoria Eastwood (Chief Governance Officer) Michelle Allen (Executive Director – HR & Safeguarding) Hiten Savla (Deputy Principal – Finance & Resources) Amy De Campos (Head of Safeguarding) – Agenda Item 6 only		
Apologies	Bim Osunsami, Shaafee Uc	ddin.	

The meeting was preceded by a discussion on strategic priorities, led by the Principal/CEO. The following key points were discussed:

- Strategic planning workshop
- Task to review Vision, Mission, Organisational Values and Strategic Objectives
- Current vision statement
- What are the current organisational values?
- Draft strategic objectives: Productivity through partnerships, People, Pedagogy, Performance, Prudence
- Challenges HE (digital paths being explored)
- Aspirations for Broadway Theatre
- Thoughts and areas for attention for the strategic plan.

KDV stated that there had been previous discussions regarding the USP and local and eco system of the College, but it was unclear whether these strengths were being fully translated. In terms of HE, competitors needed to be mapped against strengths. It was noted that generalist programmes brought the largest cohorts and often quality and distinctiveness of the specialist subjects offered brought smaller numbers. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality (DPCQ) stated that the Institute of Technology (IoT) was focussed on around the specialist subjects which aligned to the College more. KDV replied that 'combination' subjects eg business 'with' or niche subjects alongside more traditional routes could be considered.

AK advised that the College needed to be intentional about the strategy rather than allow the strategic drift. There was a need to evaluate the best offering and how this compared to the competition including online and private provision. The initial draft provided focussed areas around where the

College differentiate but there was a need to articulate the ambition and the ways in which the College was better than the local competition.

CD stated that the fundamental question was what the purpose/drive was and whether greater consideration was being given to community needs or contribution rates. The draft curriculum plan responded to local employment needs and the Board needed to be clear on key drivers.

The Chair referred to the use of the word technical, stating that this was partly pragmatic due to the change in Government but also the perception that the College was unusually big on the technical areas compared to other colleges. This was a USP and it was important to ensure the College was set apart from other London Colleges. In terms of HE, future decisions needed to be made re the Office for Students (OfS) and the IoT etc but if there were areas of the curriculum the College was strong in then there also needed to be a demand at that level. The two big drivers for the College were demand and LBBD. The College was committed to the economic development and agenda of the Council which may mean prioritising the partnership over financial. Emerging areas in the economy were the ones that could initially result in a loss but also align with the authority ambitions.

BP stated that the Board needed to understand strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and a full SWOT analysis was needed before improvements could be driven forward. There had been difficulties to recruit in some areas but there was space for a lot of vocational training and part-time evening classes alongside hybrid teaching modes to provide productivity enhancements. The College could be a force within the local eco system and needed to consider its portfolio.

The Vice-Chair advised that the Board would benefit from scenario planning for opportunities and threats e.g what was the size of the opportunity to be able to pin the strategy on? Does the College want size and scale? How long term is the vision/strategy? Is the College hoping to become one of the largest colleges or achieve the highest level of positive outcomes? The Vice-Chair questioned whether the College could capitalise on some of the creative and digital initiatives through the Broadway Theatre. It was agreed that there was a need to explore Media and the Borough had big ambitions in this area.

KDV suggested that direct entry programmes for HE at Level 5 and 6 could be an opportunity if there was a focus on Level 4 for progression. The Chair advised that a subset of the Board focussed on HE to discuss the detail would be beneficial.

The Board discussed the demographics of students and the current travel to learn trends. AK stated that the College needed to consider its position vs others colleges particularly as there were few large independent GFE's. Focus was needed on the business model and how this would be sustained over time.

The Chair advised that the high level focus was good. The information presented was a good start but portfolio could be considered to sit underneath. CD added that time around the Broadway needed more focus. NK volunteered to look over the lease which was accepted with thanks.

Actions to be considered: SWOT analysis and scenario planning to be considered
The inclusion of portfolio within the strategic priorities
Subset/Task and Finish Group to be created to focus on the HE detail
NK to look over the Broadway lease

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Bim Osunsami.

2. Declarations of Interest

Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare an interest in relation to specific items on the Agenda if appropriate. NK and CK registered an interest in discussions regarding the Broadway Theatre.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Corporation – 20 May 2024

The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 20 May 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Approved: The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 20 May 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters arising

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update
9.	Management accounts to include monthly capital projects progress (actual spend vs project budget).	DPFR	ASAP (P10 accounts)	Complete
12.	Direct comparison of starters and leavers in each area (including agency) data to be provided.	EDHS	ASAP	To update at the meeting
12.	Data on turnover of staff (teaching and support) to be provided.	EDHS	ASAP	To update at the meeting
14.	Draft risk register in new format to be circulated for comment.		ASAP	Included on Agenda

The Chief Governance Officer (CGO) confirmed that the Annual Accountability Agreement was approved at the additional meeting held on 25 June 2024.

5. Chair's Actions

There were no Chair's actions to report.

Agreed: that the current position be noted.

The Head of Safeguarding joined the meeting.

6. Safeguarding Update

The Head of Safeguarding providing the following key updates:

- Updated report
- Annual report provided in the Autumn
- Forward focus to the new academic year

- Lot of changes taking place moving from the line management of HR to Student Experience/Student Support
- Firm focus on issues such as safer recruitment
- Change to structure of Safeguarding Officers restructure of the team for September 2024 considerations re voluntary positions
- New Police Liaison Officer for new academic year
- Staff induction plan for revised induction providing interactive safeguarding scenarios
- External safeguarding training NSPCC online training for Governors to be put in place

The Chair noted that there had been over 2000 interventions this academic year which confirmed the system was working. In terms of the restructure it was advised that it was unusual for safeguarding to report to HR but the Board would monitor the change as this settled down.

The Board discussed safer recruitment and ensuring colleagues understood expectations, working together to maintain safeguarding standards.

CD referred to the lack of safeguarding officers and queried whether it was customary for a lot of safeguarding issues to arise at the start of the academic year. The Head of Safeguarding replied that the Autumn term was very busy and it would take time to identify staff who could undertake the safeguarding officer role and ensure proper training, mentoring etc was in place. The Principal/CEO added that the intention was to formalise the previous loose arrangement.

NK asked if benchmark/comparisons with other colleges were available in terms of the data. The Head of Safeguarding responded advising that there were no published benchmark figures. Colleges did not usually share safeguarding data but it was also hard to compare like for like. Volume was not an issue as it was more important that concerns were being raised. CD supported the roll out of additional NSPCC safeguarding training for Governors but also advised Governors that the safeguarding modules within the ETF training were also useful.

The Chair thanked the Head of Safeguarding for the report, noting it was key for the Board to maintain the level of vigilance.

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

Action: NSPCC Safeguarding Training for Governors to be put in place.

The Head of Safeguarding left the meeting.

7. External Board Review – Final Report

The CGO reported that the final report had been agreed with the Principal/CEO and Chair. The Chair advised that the report was pleasing and the process had been very thorough and transparent.

The CGO asked the Board to approve the timeline for the draft action plan of 1 September 2024, noting that all actions were currently in progress and an update on progress would be provided at the November Strategy Event. This was approved.

Discussion took place on the format for publishing the report and it was agreed that the Executive summary including recommendations would be the preferred format.

The Chair thanked all Governors involved in the process, advising that good assurance had been received.

Approved: Draft External Board Review action plan to be completed and circulated to the Board by 1 September 2024. Follow up to take place at the November strategy event.

8. Draft Annual Budget 2024-25/Three Year Forecast/CFFR

The Deputy Principal – Finance & Resources (DPFR) highlighted the following:

- Initial budget reviewed by Policy & Resources (P&R) Committee and key movements made to predict a surplus
- Pay award reviewed as 1% in August 2024 with a further 1% in Jan/Feb 2025 which allowed extra time to review the position to be able to consider if there was the option to give more
- Robust working around the budgeting process
- · Reduced income lines
- Turing won c300K to support the scheme College can retain c10% admin fees
- · Potential in year improvements
- Multiply allocated c300K for 2024/25
- Potential risks
- · Three year plan
- CFFR

CD, as the Chair of the P&R Committee, reported that when the budget was reviewed there was a modest deficit and the Committee scrutinised and interrogated that position but reassured the Board that the scrutiny was focussed on where realistic improvements could be made without the impact on quality. There had been a robust budgeting process against the curriculum plan and sensitivity analysis and it was pleasing to hear further in year improvements. The Chair added that there had been a thorough process for both curriculum and budget planning.

In response to a query from BP relating to vacancy utilisation factor opportunities, the DPFR advised that the budget was constructed on the basis of reviewing the staffing in every department – additional staffing requests had been taken on board and there was a clear plan around the recruitment process. The budget allowed for the cost associated with curriculum requirements and what they currently had. There was overstaffing in some areas and opportunity to redeploy some staff.

The Chair stated that staffing costs and agency costs were relatively high and would need to be monitored and also noted that Apprenticeships generated 3% of College income and HE c1%. The DPFR responded that money could easily be lost in the area of Apprenticeships, current budget did not show any contribution. NK added that the focus should not always be about the money – the College was judged if not providing these areas (Apprenticeships and HE) and it was essential not to lose sight of this.

In response to a query from AK, it was noted that the P&R Committee had agreed that it would be useful to look at the percentage contribution vs costs and this would be scheduled.

Approval: The Corporation approved the Draft Annual Budget 2024/25 (including current pay award position), Three year forecast and CFFR without amendment.

9. Tuition Fees Policy 2024/5

The DPFR reported that the Tuition Fees Policy 2024/24 had been approved the College's Policy Committee. HE had not been included as the College did not collect feed directly.

The Chair questioned whether the outstanding student debt issue was now resolved. The DPFR responded that it had now been recognised that the way the fees were being recorded was not completely correct and Apprenticeships had been charged as fees instead of apprenticeship income. This had now been tidied up and the current debt position stood at £350-500K. It was noted that this was not necessarily a bad debt write off as the fees should not have been charged.

NK noted that it had previously been reported that the bad debt provision went back to 2017. The DPFR replied that there was still a provision for £400K from previous years which will offset the none

collectible fees. The Chair stated that it would be useful for the Board to be provided with an update. This was agreed.

Approved: The Tuition Fees Policy 2024/25 was approved. Action: Update on bad debt position to be provided.

10. Curriculum & Quality Update including Draft Curriculum Plan 2024/25

The Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality (DPCQ) presented the plan, highlighting:

- Plan was taken from the 2024-27 curriculum strategy which would be finalised when the strategic priorities process was agreed
- Business planning very robust
- Strategy looked at each area
- Plan for next academic year focussing on key areas the College was a vocational College with skills
- Skills big driver support from MSA, Business London, AoC and World Skills
- Key priority and growth areas
- Labour Market intelligence (LMI)
- Draft plan had been agreed by the Curriculum & Quality (C&Q) Committee to recommend to the Board for approval.

CD stated that the plan was really informative and the Board had previously discussed the requirements to focus on internal progression which was referenced. There was a need to understand more about complex needs in terms of facilities and teaching staff as this was a new area. The DPCQ replied that the complex needs provision had not been confirmed at the time of writing the plan but this was now in place and a paper would be provided to the Board to provide further information and clarity.

AK advised that the work that had taken place was a really good forward looking piece which now needed to be considered against the KPI dashboard which provided the RAG status and also the Risk Register which showed the threats and weaknesses.

The Chair stated that it would be useful for Heads of Division/Directors to attend the beginning of C&Q meetings to update on their areas. This was agreed. The Chair recorded his thanks to AK for chairing C&Q as the Committee had been the process for shaping the plan.

The Chair thanked the DPCQ for a well written and thorough Curriculum Plan.

Approved: That the Curriculum Plan 2024/25 be approved.

Action: Paper on complex needs to be provided to the Board.

Action: Directors/HoDs to be invited to C&Q meetings in 2023/25 to present on their areas as appropriate.

11. Subcontracting/Partnership Update including Subcontracting Plan 2024/25 and Supply Chain Policy 2024/25

The DPFR advised the Board on the following key points:

- Current year £1.33m for subcontracting reduced to 960K next year
- Based on curriculum plan, performance may do better internally therefore £500k would be allocated as phase 1 in the first instance
- Overall achievements both at 96%
- Not moving from the current subcontractors
- Supply Chain Fee Policy minor amendments including ONS

Approved: The Corporation approved the Subcontracting Plan 2024/25 and Supply Chain Fee Policy 2024/25.

12 (a). Management Accounts as at May 2024

The Board were updated on the following by the DPFR:

- Slight improvement from previous month
- Accounts were not including insurance claim still on balance sheet overall value was an additional £800K once confirmed
- Real terms insurance monies would help support capital work
- Inclusion of capital and projects in the paper
- · Apprenticeship income revised down as agreed

The Chair noted that the accounts highlighted the impact of the Theatre but were very good on the income side and a lot of the expenditure was legacy issues. Congratulations were recorded on achieving the GLA Adult allocation. The DPCQ replied that some of the Directors had really driven this, and their efforts were acknowledged.

Agreed: that the current position be noted.

12 (b) Capital Projects Update

The DPFR highlighted the areas where grant funding had been received and discussion took place on the College contribution to the grant funded decarbonisation scheme. The College had received a grant allocation of c£1.5m from Salix to deliver but, after detailed discussion, it was noted that the College contribution had not been presented to the Policy & Resources Committee or the Corporation.

The DPFR reported that he had delayed signing off on any consultancy agreements until clear guidance had been received from the Board. There were seven RIBA stages before final delivery of the scheme and the College was current at stage four. There were ways of funding this e.g. potential lease agreements and the College had the option to only partially deliver. The current need was to get something in place to establish the clear picture then agree the way forward to make savings around energy use and costs.

BP advised that the College already had solar panels that were not working and several buildings without double glazing and the installation to move towards this. The heat pump would be the crunch points and the College should consider discussions with the GLA as they had funding to support sustainability. Given the current Government there could be more encouragement/support. GH added that the fitting of the solar panels etc could be combined with a teaching and learning experience.

The Chair asked whether the DPFR was confident the grant would not need to be returned. The DPFR replied that as long as the College had a clear trail of intent of work taking place, the grant would not need to be returned if all works were not undertaken on further review. BP added that the College could pace the project based on resource and expertise.

The Chair advised that, in principle, it would be beneficial to proceed but further discussion was required, and the Board needed to have a paper providing all the options. NK queried the fee for RIBA Stage 4 which was confirmed at c£140K. It was agreed that NK would be provided with the RIBA Stage 4 specification before proceeding.

Discussion also took place on the EV workshop and proposed improvement for the TSA. The Chair advised that the College needed to consider optimising publicity for the workshop and a relaunch of the TSA.

Action: RIBA Stage 4 specification to be provided for NK to review.

Board to be provided with a paper providing all options for the project.

12 (c) Subsidiaries Update

The DPFR advised:

- The College had three subsidiaries two were dormant
- Broadway predicting a loss of £283K including the £100K subsidised from the College therefore total of £383K
- c40 students in Performing Arts at Broadway
- Board agreed to support the position for another two years. Need to discuss with LBBD re the future of the Theatre/lease
- · Viability of the Theatre

The Chair queried the small profits that were shown for 2021/22. The DPFR replied that this was during Covid when there were grants in place. The key issue at present was to move forward with the lease discussions to agree the term. The Board agreed that urgent action would be needed if a meeting was not scheduled with LBBD asap.

NK asked if there was a plan for the dormant subsidiaries. The DPFR replied that these would be reviewed in year and would be closed unless being utilised for another purpose.

Agreed: that the current position be noted.

13. KPI's 2023-24 Monitoring Report 3/Dashboard

The Principal/CEO highlighted the following key issues:

- Domain 2 range of actions in progress to improve quality. Problematic nature of agency staff converted a number of agency staff to permanent BDC contracts other agency staff contracts had ended, and jobs were being advertised
- Teacher recruitment campaign to target people in industry, teachers in other colleges, graduates
- 10K market supplement for teachers in high demand, specialist skills areas eg Engineers, Electricians as neighbouring colleges were paying more for teachers in these areas. The Union had asked for the EDI perspective and were informed that protected characteristics would not have any influence but the skill areas that would attract the supplement were predominantly male dominated which could widen the gender pay gap
- Domain 3 student outcomes apprenticeship achievement rate quarterly meeting with the DfE and feedback was encouraging that they had confidence and were less worried about overall achievement rates this year – DfE target for apprenticeships had moved up to 67%
- Maths and English starting to see some positive movement, improving achievement rates
- Domain 4 student feedback end of year survey from students reporting 90% satisfaction

In response to a query from BP, the Principal/CEO advised that the applicant tracking system was being replaced and the next report would provide a new level of transparency.

The Chair stated that most London Colleges used market supplements. The Principal/CEO replied that this would explain why the College had difficulty recruiting. AK referred to the strategic intent advising of the need to build the capability.

Agreed: that the current position be noted.

14. Student Services Restructure – Update

The Principal/CEO updated the Board on the following:

- End of the year structure consultation well supported by HR Operations Manager
- · c20 staff involved
- Helpful discussions with staff about how to shape the area
- One member of staff had resigned
- Head of Safeguarding conversations ongoing

- Lot of vacancies as this was a restructure to put more resource into key areas of activity, enrichments, careers, work placement
- Tighter relationships between student support key workers, students and their parents

The Chair suggested that it would be useful for the Board to receive a presentation from the Head of Student Services during the Autumn Term. This was agreed.

Action: Head of Student Services to provide presentation to the Board during the autumn term.

15. Health and Safety Update

The CGO reported that due to data issues, the report would be sent to the Board via email.

Action: Health & Safety update to be emailed to be Board.

16. HR Update

The Executive Director – HR & Safeguarding (EDHS) provided the following data:

- Noted that the new Director of HR had started at the College background provided
- 243 starters this year 97 were agency and 146 directly employed including voluntary positions and ambassadors
- Staff turnover tracking at c18%
- New applicant tracking system
- · Majority of current vacancies in student support, health and social care and adult core skills
- Case volumes 9 cases of capability
- Three restructures ongoing
- · Six historic cases
- Lot of long-term absences 35 cases not been addressed fully but would be a priority moving forward
- Four grievances and four disciplinary cases were ongoing

NK queried how many new starters had remained with the College. The EDHRS replied that this information would be followed up after the meeting alongside a comparison of starters and leavers.

KDV asked how many of the portals for recruitment reached staff currently working in HE, as the current issues affecting HE could be used for the benefit of the College. The EDHRS replied that the Director of Marketing was tracking the increase in traffic, and this would be explored.

The Chair asked when the staff survey would be issued. The Principal/CEO replied that this had been prepared and was ready to be issued this week.

The Chair noted the number of cases had reduced. The EDHRS advised that this was now the end of the legacy cases. The Chair thanked the EDHRS for the report and wished her well for the future.

Action: A comparison of starters and leavers and the number of staff who had remained at the College after starting this year to be provided.

Staff recruitment data targeting HE and number of HE applicants to be provided

17. Risk Register

The DPFR updated Governors as follows:

- Two key risks funding body policy not likelihood of any current changes reduced RAG
- Partnerships and subcontracting RAG rating also reduced down
- Introduced English and Maths and Health and Safety as specific agenda items
- PIAP linked into Quality

The Board were advised that the proposed format of the risk register was to be amended going forward in line with guidance from the Internal Auditors and to provide further clarity re measuring the risk. A template of the new risk register had been included for approval.

AK stated that the new version was very useful and it would be good to have a document of tracked changes to the register and the assumptions. The DFPR replied that the chart within the register would show the movement of risk.

Approved: the Board approved the new format Risk Register for future use.

18. ONS Reclassification

The CGO advised that this was a standing agenda item and the College was currently compliant with ONS requirements.

Agreed: That the current position be noted.

19. AoB

The CGO advised that self assessment feedback from 2023/24 Board meeetings would be issued after the meeting for review.

20. Date and time of next meeting – TBC – estimated 21 October 2024 – 2024/25 meetings scheduled to be issued for comment.

The Chair recorded his thanks to all in attendance for their contributions, noting improvements were being made. He advised that the contributions of all Governors were valuable and looked forward with cautious optimism.

The meeting closed at 7.00pm.

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update
Strategic Priorities Discussion	SWOT analysis and scenario planning to be considered The inclusion of portfolio within the strategic priorities to be considered.	Principal/CEO	August 2024	Draft Strategic Plan to be presented at November Strategic Planning Event
	Subset/Task and Finish Group to be created to focus on the HE detail	CGO	August 2024	Included in HE Academic Board
	NK to be provided with the Broadway lease to consider and feedback	DPFR	ASAP	Complete
5.	NSPCC Safeguarding Training for Governors to be put in place.	CGO	August 2024	In Progress
9.	Update on bad debt position to be provided.	DPFR	October 2024	Included on Agenda
10.	Paper on complex needs to be provided to the Board.	DPCQ	ASAP	Complete
10.	Directors/HoDs to be invited to C&Q meetings in 2023/25	CGO	October 2024	Included on business cycle for 2024/25

	to present on their areas as appropriate.			
12 (b)	RIBA Stage 4 specification to be provided for NK to review.	DPFR	ASAP	Complete
	Board to be provided with a paper providing all options for the project.	DPFR	ASAP	Update to be provided at the meeting
14.	Head of Student Services to provide presentation to the Board during the autumn term.	CGO/Principal/ CEO	October 2024	Included in the agenda
15.	Health & Safety update to be emailed to Board.	DPFR/CGO	ASAP	Deferred to P&R
16.	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	Deferred to next report
16.	Staff recruitment data targeting HE and number of HE applicants to be provided.	EDHRS	ASAP	Deferred to next report

Signed	Date
Andy Forbes (Chair)	