

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Corporation

<b>Date:</b>	Monday 25 March 2024	<b>Room number</b>	Boardroom
<b>Present:</b>	Andy Forbes (Chair) Natalie Davison (Principal/CEO) Katharina De Vita (KDV) Geoff Hall (GH) (Staff Governor) Alex Keay (AK)		
<b>Present via Teams:</b>	Charles Tennant (Vice-Chair), Carole Ditty (CD), Forhad Altafi (Staff Governor) (FA), Molly Makota (MM)		
<b>In attendance:</b>	Jason Turton (Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality) Victoria Eastwood (Chief Governance Officer) Michelle Allen (Executive Director – HR & Safeguarding) Wijay Pitumpe (Interim Deputy Principal – Finance & Resources) Amy De Campos (Head of Safeguarding) Agenda Item 6 only		
<b>Apologies</b>	Bim Osunsami, Talha Ahmad, Nick Kavanagh, Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe, Esther Thompson		

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Talha Ahmad, Nick Kavanagh, Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe and Esther Thompson. The Chair welcomed the Student Governor, Paige Summers, to her first meeting of the Corporation.</p>													
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare an interest in relation to specific items on the Agenda if appropriate. Molly Makota and Katharina De Vita declared an interest in agenda item 7. The Corporation agreed that both Governors could remain in the meeting for this item.</p>													
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Corporation – 11 December 2023</b></p> <p>The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 11 December 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p> <p><b>Approved: The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 11 December 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</b></p>													
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>An update on outstanding actions carried forward from the December Corporation Meeting were provided:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Agenda Item</th> <th>Action</th> <th>Responsibility</th> <th>Timescale</th> <th>Update</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>16.</td> <td>Committee risks to be a standing agenda item for each Committee going forward.</td> <td>IDPFR/GGO</td> <td>January 2024</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update	16.	Committee risks to be a standing agenda item for each Committee going forward.	IDPFR/GGO	January 2024	Complete
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	<p>The Chief Governance Officer (CGO) reported that the appointment of the Deputy Principal Finance &amp; Resources had been recommended to the Board by the Selection Panel after the December Corporation meeting. The Corporation had approved this appointment via email.</p> <p><b>Approved: that the Corporation approved the recommendation of the Selection Panel to appoint to the position of Deputy Principal – Finance &amp; Resources.</b></p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Chair's Actions</b> There were no Chair's actions to report.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the current update be noted.</b></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Safeguarding – Update</b> <i>The Chair welcomed the Head of Safeguarding, Amy DeCampos (AD) to the meeting.</i></p> <p>AD referred to the report previously circulated to the Board and advised of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government proposal for Kinship care learners to come under the category of virtual schools – number of students could potentially double and therefore resources would need to be considered</li> <li>• No patterns in the data that are unexpected for this time of year</li> </ul> <p>The Vice-Chair queried why there was a disproportionate amount of White British students with referrals. AD replied that safeguarding matters were primarily concerned with students under the age of 18. The makeup of 16-18 students differed from adult learners and were predominantly more white and male which had increased the proportion of white students. It was also considered that this category of student was more likely to disclose issues but the key was to make sure it was as easy as possible for all students to report concerns and that concerns were followed up correctly.</p> <p>The Chair noted the positive student feedback that the majority of students felt safe on the campus. The Student Governor confirmed that students knew who to speak to if they needed support.</p> <p>In response to a query from the Principal/CEO, AD advised that she was following up whether students who started in February 2024 had experienced the same induction process as those who commenced in September 2023. In addition, a tutorial/personal development programme was being established for apprenticeships.</p> <p>The Chair stated that there were a high number of wellbeing referrals and requests for counselling and asked whether the College had the right level of resources to respond to the issues. AD replied that the College had a strong student support network in place to address issues at different levels. Consideration was also taking place in terms of support for HE learners to ensure they also had low level support. The Chair stated that this needed to be monitored as counselling cases were increasing and it was anticipated that these would increase further.</p> <p>The Executive Director – HR &amp; Safeguarding (EDHS) advised that the College had invested in safeguarding and there was now a dedicated Safeguarding Coordinator in place which was having a very positive impact.</p> <p>The Chair thanked AD for a detailed and clear report.</p> <p><i>The Head of Safeguarding left the meeting.</i></p> <p><b>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</b></p>

7.	<p><b>Search &amp; Governance Committee Update</b></p> <p>The CGO reported that the Search &amp; Governance Committee had met earlier in the month and recommended to the Corporation the re-appointment of MM and KDV for a further three year term of office. In addition, ET had agreed to join the Search &amp; Governance Committee and MM had agreed to sit on the Remuneration Committee.</p> <p>The Corporation unanimously approved the recommendation of the Search &amp; Governance Committee.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the attendance of Governors and requirements against the skills matrix would continue to be monitored.</p> <p><b>Approved: that MM and KDV be re-appointed for a further three year term of office. ET to be appointed to the Search &amp; Governance Committee MM to be appointed to the Remuneration Committee</b></p>
8.	<p><b>External Board Review Update</b></p> <p>The CGO updated the Corporation on the process for the External Board Review which would be undertaken by the Association of Colleges (AoC). Governors were reminded to complete the questionnaire which had been directly issued from the AoC earlier that day. It was anticipated that the final report would be presented at the July Corporation meeting.</p> <p><b>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</b></p>
9.	<p><b>Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee Update</b></p> <p>AK reported on the following key discussions from the Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good progress had been made since last year and continued progress from the Ofsted monitoring visit – thanks recorded to the Deputy Principal – Curriculum &amp; Quality (DPCQ) and team</li> <li>• Focus on apprenticeships – update meeting taking place on 26 March 2024 to discuss progress made</li> <li>• Lot more precision and good quality data available to be able to agree the numbers and evidence</li> <li>• Maths and English – detailed discussion and agreed to make sure this was added to the strategic risk register, adding another C&amp;Q meeting in May as a deep dive for this area</li> <li>• Discussion took place on the value proposition into the external world in terms of Maths and English and where this sat – Governors needed to understand the current position and direction of travel</li> <li>• Ofsted handbook – guiding criteria for what Ofsted Good looked like</li> </ul> <p>GH stated that there was some good work taking place in apprenticeships and smart assessor was still being implemented. However, there was still a shortage of staff, particularly coordinators, which impacted on the workload of managers and assessors. AK confirmed that this would be considered at the update meeting.</p> <p>The Chair stated that it was obvious that the data was clearer providing a clearer sense against the national picture which was an acknowledgement of the amount of work that had taken place. There was a strong correlation between staffing challenges and quality issues in some areas.</p> <p>The Chair noted that there were good parts of the College and therefore a need to learn from the successful areas and share good practice. There was a risk that the Board became too problem focussed. The Principal/CEO replied that the College needed to maintain stability, there were some tweaks to be made and other areas where a fresh look was required. The recent Skills Show event had been great but there were some fundamental issues that were not working.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair stated that the Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee had brought together all the pieces of the puzzle and the next step was to develop communities of good practice, measure the impact and make headway with Maths and English.</p>

Chair advised that there was not enough focus on some of the off main campus activity at the TSA, Barking Learning Centre and the Theatre – there was significant elements of work tied into this and focus needed to be increased.

The Student Governor stated that she was aware of student complaints regarding blocked ID cards as there had been no warning resulting in students being late. The DPCQ clarified that if the card was blocked at the barrier, students were directed to the learner support zone but this should only take five minutes and students should be issued with a late card. It was agreed that further discussion would take place on how to improve the system outside of the meeting.

**Agreed: that the current update be received.**

**10. Policy & Resources Committee Update inc Disaster Recovery**

CD updated the Corporation on the following key highlights from the Policy & Resources Committee meeting:

- Constructive open and transparent discussion had taken place
- Distance travelled over the last 12 months – welcomed Cllr Kangethe as a new Committee member
- Recorded a vote of thanks to the IDPFR for his last meeting
- AoC Finance Masterclass series for Governors – slides to be issued/Governors to attend if interested
- EDI – standing agenda item – keen to revive initiatives. Single Equality Scheme action plan to be taken forward with any other good practice
- Disaster Recovery Policy recommended for approval
- Compliance against financial regulations – number of non compliance issues around agency staff – training taking place to rectify this and ensure it does not remain a going concern
- Subcontracting report was very positive – good quality and feedback
- Health and Safety (H&S) – focus on risk assessments for apprenticeships which had been previously requested. This was now being implemented and resourcing issues needed to be addressed. Training data needed to be considered as this was unacceptably low for the TSA and Broadway.
- Positive infrastructure and sustainability update- College successful for a decarbonisation grant
- Email circulated previously to advise of the College's insurance position particularly in terms of governor liability – unusual for lower premiums to be secured – thanks to IDPFR
- Good review of the College risk register with a focus on P&R areas – Request for H&S risk items to be reviewed to ensure they are elevated to the appropriate level but positive progress with committee risks
- Focus over the past 12 months has been very much in firefighting mode – keen moving forward to develop a more forward looking strategic focus

The Interim Deputy Principal Finance & Resources (IDPFR) presented the Disaster Recovery Policy which was recommended for approval by the Policy & Resources Committee. The Corporation were advised that the Policy & Resources Committee had requested an at a glance summary which had been included alongside reference to legal representation. The IDPFR reported that termly disaster recovery training sessions took place across College and the SLT would be undertaking training on how to handle the media. The DPCQ added that a trial run of disaster management software had recently taken place which provided software that took over all screens and locked down doors etc if required.

In response to a query from the Chair, the IDPFR reported that discussions concerning the Broadway Theatre were ongoing with the Department for Education (DfE) and the Council. The Council had agreed that the RAAC position was a latent defect and the DfE had stated it would be three weeks before a decision was reached. Students were using the Rush Green campus and the TSA and the College had rented a Theatre to ensure education could continue – these additional revenue costs were

	<p>being funded by the DfE. Three quarters of Theatre staff would be redeployed for at least part of the week.</p> <p><b>Approved: that the Disaster Recovery Policy be approved for future use.</b></p>
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Principal/CEO Update – KPI Dashboard</b></p> <p>The Principal/CEO advised the Corporation of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future reports would be divided into the two Committees</li> <li>• Indicated responses to any issues/solutions instead of just highlighting problems</li> <li>• Quality concerns – variable standards of teaching, internal progression rates</li> <li>• Finance issues (discussed within management accounts)</li> <li>• Staffing – high volumes of agency staff; high turnover of staff – expensive and transient workforce in some departments</li> <li>• Moving forward- consider how to differentiate this College as a good place to work</li> <li>• Conversations with other Principals around staffing – some teachers at other institutions at the top of the pay scales – teachers earning more than managers due to the need for technical skills</li> </ul> <p>KDV referred to staff turnover and asked whether exit interviews had provided any useful feedback as this was a starting point to be able to understand effective interventions. The EDHRS replied that there was no clear singular cause arising from the exit interviews. The Chair noted that there was a lot of focus on benefits outside of pay in the sector eg flexible/hybrid contracts which needed to be considered and managed. Contextual figures from the AoC would be useful.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair stated that there had been a large increase of new staff from August 2023 which would present huge challenges to retain the culture of the College. The Student Governor confirmed that staffing arrangements were stable within Childcare and it was noted that this was evident in the data.</p> <p>The quality of the teaching agency staff was discussed and whether staff from the curriculum background should be present at the interviews. It was noted that the quality of staff impacted on the behaviour of students.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</b></p> <p><i>It was agreed that Agenda Item 13 a would be taken at this point in the agenda.</i></p>
<p><b>13(a)</b></p>	<p><b>HR Update</b></p> <p>The EDHS reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More proactively managing staffing which had increased exit of staff – mixed picture on reasons for leaving – attrition was 10%</li> <li>• Number of starters – sharp increase in business support staff was mainly LSP’s but data needed to be clearer to clarify increase in teachers</li> <li>• Staffing numbers – steady apart from August when there was much fewer staff</li> <li>• Recruitment focus – Automotive, Apprenticeships, Maths and English, Accounts</li> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Agency use was high – many agencies were not Preferred Supplier List (PSL) agencies due to the cost – PSL dates needed to be reviewed – aim was to reduce agency staffing</li> <li>• Purpose driven procedures – large number of policies to be brought up to date – first six presented to JCC</li> <li>• Relationship with Union - actively involved in casework</li> <li>• Zellis – almost at the point to sign the contract – made a significant saving moving to the cloud – to be reviewed in the longer term</li> </ul>

	<p>CD referred to the informal picket line that had taken place and asked what the general feeling on the ground regarding the pay award was. The EDHS replied that the pay award had received different responses across the College. The Union had proposed a much higher pay award and posters had been displayed across the College to highlight this. In addition, a number of staff had held a picket line outside of the College. A meeting had taken place with the Union to confirm how much funding the College had received. In general, however, staff had been pleased at the higher percentage received.</p> <p>The Chair stated that it was unlikely that the government would fund a further pay award therefore budgeting would be difficult this year. The Principal/CEO reported that on the basis of the College's allocation increase of 1.9% on 16-18 - 1% was currently affordable to the College. The Chair advised that the College needed to be committed to complete transparency with the unions to share the financial position. This was agreed.</p> <p><b>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</b></p>
13(b)	<p><b>Gender Pay Gap Report</b></p> <p>The Chair advised that an email had previously been issued to explain that this report was not yet complete and would be issued as soon as possible. All requirements on the College to publish the data etc would still be met.</p> <p><b>Agreed: That the position be noted.</b></p>
12.	<p><b>Management accounts as at February 2024</b></p> <p>The IDPFR presented the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cautious forecast based on the current information available</li> <li>• Deficit forecast for the College</li> <li>• Forecast – 16-18 funding the College had an initial allocation which included a high T-level target which had not been fully recruited to and resulted in an in-year clawback –next year's allocation had increased but the target had been reduced and was therefore more realistic</li> <li>• AEB budget – ESFA – 90% of target – train learners outside London</li> <li>• 6.5 million income from GLA – forecasting 92% against target but there was a plan in place to hit 97% or above to avoid clawback</li> <li>• Expenditure – looking at staffing to reduce agency expenditure - only critical non pay expenditure to be considered</li> <li>• High level cash days against benchmark</li> <li>• Broadway – worst case deficit discussed</li> </ul> <p>The Chair stated that it would be disappointing if the College did not hit the 97% AEB target as clawback needed to be avoided. He advised that it would be pleasing to achieve a break- even position year this year given the problems with T-levels and the Broadway Theatre.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</b></p>
14.	<p><b>Capital Projects Update</b></p> <p>The IDPFR highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College agreed annual capital spend through business planning</li> <li>• Capital money had been used to install learner support zone</li> <li>• Projects – through T-level Wave 5 – 3.6 million grant – childcare completed, science lab taking place, engineering and manufacturing should be ready for teaching in January 2025</li> </ul> <p>The Chair stated that improvements were needed at the TSA. The IDPFR replied that work to refurbish all classrooms with new technology would commence in April 2024.</p> <p><b>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</b></p>

<b>15.</b>	<p><b>ONS Reclassification</b> The CGO advised that this was a standing agenda item and there were no updates to report.</p> <p><b>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</b></p>
<b>16.</b>	<p><b>GDPR Update</b> The CGO reported that the College was constantly monitoring compliance against GDPR but work was now taking place to revise current processes and procedures.</p> <p><b>Agreed: That the update be received.</b></p>
<b>17.</b>	<p><b>Risk Register</b> The IDPFR advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each committee had their elements of the risk register presented at each meeting</li> <li>• Risk Register Template would be amended when the new Deputy Principal Finance &amp; Resources was in post – the template was based on recommendations from the advisory internal audit</li> <li>• Risk Committee will review the risk register every 6 weeks</li> <li>• Maths and English to be added in the next review</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</b></p>
<b>18.</b>	<p><b>AoB</b> The Chair stated that the papers for the meeting had been more manageable and transparent. The College was moving from firefighting to a more strategic focus which would open up the capacity to receive additional reports.</p> <p>The CGO advised that a self assessment form to review the meeting would be issued via email.</p> <p>The Chair and the Corporation recorded their thanks to the IDPFR for his hard work and commitment to the College and wished him well for the future.</p>
<b>19.</b>	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting – Board Strategy Event – 29 April 2024</b></p>

The Chair recorded his thanks to all in attendance for their contributions.

The meeting closed at 18.40pm

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update

Signed.....  
Andy Forbes (Chair)

Date.....