

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Corporation

Date:	Monday 20 October 2025	Room number	Boardroom
Present:	Andy Forbes (Chair) Natalie Davison (Principal/CEO) Carole Ditty (CD) Nick Kavanagh (NK) Samuel Nelson (Staff Governor) (SNe) Sarah Noble (SN) Mina Rehman (Student Governor) (MR) Esther Thompson (ET)		
Present via Teams:	Charles Tennant (Vice-Chair), David Baumslag (DB), Katharina De Vita (KDV), Bal Panesar (BP), Molly Makota (MM), Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe (CK), Akeel Ahmed (AA), Forhad Altafi (Staff Governor) (FA)		
In attendance:	Victoria Eastwood (Chief Governance Officer) (CGO) Hiten Savla (Deputy Principal – Finance & Resources) (DPFR) Diana Olafsdottir (Director of HR) (via Teams) (DHR) Tulay Rashid-Grant (Vice-Principal – Curriculum & Partnerships) (VPCP) Cenk Cevizli (Head of Creative Industries) - presentation only (CC)		
Apologies	Bim Osunsami, Michael Smith (Vice-Principal – Quality & Innovation)		

The meeting was preceded by a presentation from the Head of Creative Industries, Cenk Cevizli. The following key topics were presented:

- Department overview of the Creative Industries Department
- Stakeholder involvement
- Position statement
- Curriculum Map 2025/26
- Student Rep Meetings
- This academic year 2025-26
- Proposal – BDC Creative Industries Hubs
- Proposal visualisation
- Foyer visuals and exhibition space

Further discussion, led by Governors, included Outreach projects, BTEC's, profile of the area, the plan for Performing Arts and progression. CC confirmed that progression from Level 3 was predominantly to universities or employment. Most learners who went to university continued to undertake additional work for the employers they had been introduced to. Progression from Level 2-3 had a good conversion rate of 62%.

The Board were informed that a lot of stakeholders wanted to work with the College due to the industry quality standards, software and industry involvement.

The Chair thanked CC for the presentation and the good work taking place.

CC left the meeting.

1.	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Bim Osunsami and Michael Smith (Vice-Principal – Quality & Innovation).</p>										
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare an interest in relation to specific items on the agenda if appropriate. The Chair and Vice-Chair declared an interest in agenda item 3. The Vice-Chair, AA, SN and NK declared an interest in agenda item 4.</p>										
3.	<p>Annual appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporation</p> <p>The CGO advised that discussions regarding the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporation had taken place prior to the meeting and therefore the current Chair and Vice-Chair were not required to leave for discussions.</p> <p>The CGO confirmed that the Board had unanimously agreed the re-appointment of Andy Forbes as Chair of the Corporation and Charles Tennant as Vice-Chair of the Corporation.</p> <p>Approved: That Andy Forbes re-appointed as Chair of the Corporation and Charles Tennant be re-appointed as Vice-Chair of the Corporation for the 2025/26 academic year.</p> <p><i>AA/CT/SNe/NK left the meeting.</i></p>										
4.	<p>Search & Governance Committee Recommendations:</p> <p>The CGO advised the Corporation of the recommendations from the Search & Governance Committee in relation to the re-appointments of AA/CT/SNe and NK. The Corporation unanimously approved the suggested re-appointments.</p> <p>Approved: That AA be reappointed for a further three-year term of office. CT and NK to be re-appointed for a further four-year term of office. SNe to be reappointed for a further one-year term of office.</p> <p><i>AA/CT/SNe/NK rejoined the meeting.</i></p>										
5.	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Corporation – 7 July 2025 and Minutes from the Additional Meeting held on 16 July 2025</p> <p>The Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Corporation – 7 July 2025 and Additional Meeting held on 16 July 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>Approved: The Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Corporation – 7 July 2025 and Additional Meeting held on 16 July 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p>										
6.	<p>Matters arising - update</p> <table><tr><th>Agenda Item</th><th>Action</th><th>Responsibility</th><th>Timescale</th><th>Update</th></tr><tr><td>C/f</td><td>Future reports to include the percentage of students for the whole area alongside the numbers of student cases. Detail on low level concerns, monitoring online activity to</td><td>Director of Student Welfare & Support</td><td>Strategic Planning Event/June 2025</td><td>Considered for presentation at the meeting</td></tr></table>	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update	C/f	Future reports to include the percentage of students for the whole area alongside the numbers of student cases. Detail on low level concerns, monitoring online activity to	Director of Student Welfare & Support	Strategic Planning Event/June 2025	Considered for presentation at the meeting
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	see if there were any emerging trends and an understanding of the quality assurance process to also be included in future reports.			
8.	Ofsted debrief to take place with the Director of Student Welfare and Safeguarding Link Governors.	CGO/DSW	After the summer break	TBA
8.	NK to meet with the Principal/CEO and CGO to discuss the Link Governor role for Health & Safety.	CGO	ASAP	TBA
10.	Subcontracting Plan 2025/26 to be reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee.	CGO	2025/26	Added to business cycle
<p>The DPFR updated the Board on the details of the proposed voluntary redundancy process advising that the additional 25% uplift had been pay proposed to the Department for Education (DfE) for approval and it was being queried whether this was a novel, contentious or repercussive transaction. The scheme had been agreed with the Unions but could not be launched until DfE approval had been sought.</p>				
7.	<p>Chair's Actions</p> <p>The CGO confirmed that the Chair had authorised the Broadway letter to LBBD and the certificate of expenditure for the External Auditors in terms of the spending grant for the Turing Scheme. Both items had previously been communicated to the Corporation.</p> <p>Approved: the Board approved the Chair's actions that had been undertaken.</p>			
8.	<p>Safeguarding Update</p> <p>The Principal/CEO presented the report, highlighting two key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two new appointments to strengthen the team - Internal audit – good recommendations which were being addressed <p>CD asked for confirmation that the new appointments would be able to deal with some of the issues previously reported and asked for clarity on whether the issue with the CPOMS system not being able to produce all of the required data had been resolved. The Principal/CEO replied that the new appointments would be suitably qualified to deal with the previous issues and that the issue with the system was the way that users were tagging cases which was being addressed. The system itself was not a concern.</p> <p>In response to a query from CD, the DHR confirmed that the safeguarding team were the point of contact for low level concerns and HR held the log for any incidents.</p> <p>CD advised that she had recently attended NSPCC training re mandatory reporting for child sexual abuse which needed to be on the College's radar. The Principal/CEO confirmed that the College processes were currently fit for purpose but there was a need to ensure relevant training was considered.</p> <p>NK queried whether staff would be provided with training on the Keeping Children Safe in Education</p>			

	<p>(KCSIE) changes. The Principal/CEO replied that this was provided annually for all staff and would also be included for Governors.</p> <p>DB asked for clarity on why the total number of students being monitored was lower than the incidents that had taken place. The Principal/CEO replied that some of the cases may have taken place in the previous year and had therefore not been recorded as incidents but still required monitoring.</p> <p>AA questioned the envisaged manageable outcome in relation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and HR team working more closely together. The DHR responded that there had previously been a disconnect, however, this was not a major change but would ensure both teams were aware of any concerns and to increase collaboration.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the position would need to be closely monitored to see how it developed.</p> <p>Agreed: that the update be received.</p>
9.	<p>Enrolment Update including Pay Award</p> <p>The DPFR informed the Corporation as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall 16-18 numbers were down compared to budget - Lower numbers would not impact until the following academic year due to lagged funding - Adult numbers were in line with the budget – full time adult numbers were higher which compensated for the 16-18 under recruitment - Looking to achieve adult grant funding - Considering other means of income this year not in the budget - rental income for rooms, working with LBBD to provide ESOL to some of their residents from Ukraine, - Overall position should slightly improve on bottom line compared to last year - 16-18 funding had increased by 5.4% but the adult funding grant allocation had dropped by 3.3% and ESFA funding by 2.8%. <p>The DPFR reported that the College was seeking approval from the Board for a 4% pay award in line with the AoC recommendations.</p> <p>The Chair noted a slight concern that a lot of additional funding was being channelled through 16-18 courses and advised that it would be beneficial to have more detail from marketing as to why the College was under target and to identify any trends over the previous years. The DPFR provided context that the Ofsted inspection had taken place quite late compared to other local colleges which had impacted in terms of marketing. In addition, GCSE grades for the local area had been good which had resulted in more learners being retained in sixth forms. KDV advised that, aside from government funding, there was a need to be aware of the demographic shift and consideration needed to be given to what was being done to further diversify income streams and planning for education that sat alongside the lifelong learning entitlement. It was noted that this could be discussed at the December Strategy Event.</p> <p>BP stated that there was a risk of not being consistent with the pay award but the College needed to ensure scrutiny of efficiencies, non-pay and income streams to counter balance the risks.</p> <p>AA reported that the GLA had tentatively stated they would award up to 103% over performance on adult skills and asked how the College performed in 2024/25. The DPFR replied that the College had hit 97% of target but not over 100% and noted that the 103% was not guaranteed. The GLA were moving towards National Skills Funding (NSF) and the general direction was reverting back to 100% instead of 103%. As the College had delivered over 97% of target, the full 100% funding would be received. For 2025/26 the College would work to the 100% scenario as the forecast for NSF was c30% higher than the allocation.</p>

	<p>DB asked if there was anything that could be done to improve current enrolment figures and queried how this would affect the plan for next year. The Principal/CEO responded that there was scope for mid-year 16-18 enrolment but these were shorter courses. The DPFR added that the budget allowed for some additional vacancies therefore the vacancies not needed were currently being identified which would offset part of the costs against the shortfall in funding before identifying further cuts.</p> <p>After further discussion the Corporation approved the 4% pay award to all staff, backdated from 1 August 2025 and executed between now and Christmas. The Chair recorded his thanks to the DPFR and DHR for their work on this.</p> <p>Approved: the Corporation approved a 4% pay award for all staff, back dated to 1 August 2025 to be paid prior to the Christmas break.</p>
10.	<p>Capital Projects Approval for Technical Skills Academy (TSA) 5th Floor</p> <p>The DPFR highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Background work - Overall cost £380K which would be released from the FE College Condition Allocation from the DfE of £1.5m - 5th floor has remained empty and needs updating - Longer term plan to relocate from Barking Learning Centre - Opportunity to have hospitality space will also help to generate additional income <p>In response to DB, the DPFR clarified that the space had previously been cleared to install a restaurant but the T-level for catering was not approved.</p> <p>AA asked if there was an indication of potential demand and whether it was realistic that income would be generated. The DPFR replied that there had been requests to utilise the TSA for events but there was not currently a sufficient hospitality space. The new space would link in with the existing coffee shop.</p> <p>NK questioned whether there would be the opportunity for any creative design students to get involved. The DPFR responded that the College had a current project with the local authority but was always looking at ways for students to get involved and this would be considered.</p> <p>Approved: the Corporation approved the capital project for the TSA 5th Floor and the cost of £380K.</p>
11.	<p>Corporation Terms of Reference and Corporation/Committee Schedule of Business 2025/26</p> <p>The CGO presented the Corporation Terms of Reference and Corporation/Committee Schedule of Business for 2025/26, advising that the schedule of business was a working document but assured Governors that all statutory business had been included. Agendas would be discussed and agreed in advance of the meeting with the Chair and Committee Chair as appropriate.</p> <p>Approved: the Corporation Terms of Reference and Corporation/Committee Schedule of Business 2025/26 was approved.</p>
12.	<p>Governance Review:</p> <p>Instrument & Articles of Government</p> <p>The Board were referred to the suggested changes to the Instrument & Articles, noting that these were 'housekeeping' changes other than the previously communicated changes from the DfE governance matters communication.</p>

	<p>In response to a query from DB, discussion took place on the Determination of the Corporation noting that this had previously been increased from sixteen to the maximum of twenty.</p> <p>The CGO advised that relevant amendments would also be made to the Standing Orders which was approved by the Corporation.</p> <p>Approved: the Corporation approved all suggested amendments to the Instrument & Articles of Government and the update of the Standing Orders.</p> <p>Confidential Minutes 2024/25 The CGO advised that no confidential minutes had been recorded for 2024/25 and there were no outstanding confidential minutes for review.</p> <p>Approval of obtaining views of students and staff The Board approved the approval of obtaining views of students and staff, without amendment, to be uploaded to the College website.</p> <p>Approved: the approval of obtaining views of students and staff was approved for future use.</p> <p>Governor Development Plan 2025/26 The CGO advised that the governor development plan would be finalised once the annual self-assessment and review of compliance against the Code of Governance had taken place at the December Strategy Event. Governors were reminded to register for the ETF governor development platform if they had not already done so. It was noted that a communication would be issued for Governors to re-engage with their BDC email accounts in order to access the new Governor portal.</p> <p>Agreed: that the update be received.</p>
13.	<p>Principal/CEO Update – KPI Dashboard 2025/26 The Principal/CEO highlighted the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First monitoring report of the academic year - closing out last year and considering early data for the present year - People – staff survey response rate c50% - significant improvement in 'feeling proud to work at BDC' and whether staff would recommend this as a place to work and the gap between the two had narrowed; staff vacancy rate was currently 3.9% - substantial improvement and huge amount of work from HR - High needs was a strong area - Market share data previously not completely accurate but the actual figures showed the College had 15.5% market share – the major market share was amongst the school sixth forms - Priority 3 – attendance was an ongoing issue – huge amount of intervention work taking place including engagement with parents - Great work taking place for work placements - Performance data – 16-18 at 82.2% for last year which was five points higher than the previous year; work taking place on adult and apprenticeship achievement rates - Modelled progress scores for Maths and English - Internal progression was too low from Level 1-2 - EBITDA for last year was c3.2% lower than originally forecast - Staffing cost as a percentage of income – 69.7% against target of 65% - Importance of work on efficiencies – DfE undertook a CEFSS review of planning, financial data to consider scope for efficiencies <p>SNo questioned whether the decline in progression was because there was more selection on students from level to level and whether the criteria had tightened re GCSE results. The</p>

	<p>Principal/CEO replied that this had been the previous way of thinking but this approach could not be adopted. Diagnostic investigation would take place to consider the issues for progression.</p> <p>In response to a query from SNo regarding the low ALPS scores, the Principal/CEO advised that the scores for the College had been very low for several years as this has never been a focus. Level 3 achievement rates had been low which was why the focus had not been on value added.</p> <p>MR asked for clarity on progression for Level 3 learners. The Principal/CEO responded that this was a small cohort where most learners progressed to university but internal progression need to be considered.</p> <p>FA queried whether there had been an increase in students with socio economic issues. The Principal/CEO advised that the number of learners with SEND needs and Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs) had increased which required a vast amount of resource. Performance of learners with EHCPs, Looked after Children (LAC) or from disadvantaged backgrounds was stronger than for other students which was being considered.</p> <p>The Chair stated that there was still a lot of work to do but the College was moving in the right direction.</p> <p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p>
14.	<p>Horizon Scanning</p> <p>The Chair advised that horizon scanning would be discussed in detail at the Corporation Strategy event.</p> <p>Agreed: that the update be received.</p>
15.	<p>Draft Outturn</p> <p>The DPFR reported the following key items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year to date deficit of £1.746K – including £873K exceptional item of actuarial pension loss - Deficit without pension adjustments was due to depreciation charge in year - EBITDA position was better than budgeted for in the first instance - Financial health - Good <p>The Chair asked if there was a risk of any accounting issues. The DPFR replied that the only potential risk was the pension adjustment which could be a breach of covenant relating to the debt cover ratio. The actuarial pension loss was an accounting adjustment provided to show a net zero position despite a pension surplus of £20m. Discussions were ongoing with the bank.</p> <p>CD questioned whether there was any external support or advice that the College should be taking advantage of. The DPFR responded that there was the opportunity to define the adjustments used, however, the issue was that most of the pensions were all sitting in deficit although this had improved in the last three years. There was potential to take the pensions holiday which would support the bottom line.</p> <p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p>
16.	<p>Benchmarking Efficiency Review</p> <p>The DPFR highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas that may impact the College – financial health and the banking covenants - DfE benchmarks for financial health – EBITDA as a percentage of income, adjusted current ratio and borrowing as a percentage of adjusted income

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cash days has increased from 25 to 40 - EBITDA used to be 6% - Pay costs - DfE noted that this was generally higher than 65% in London but retained the current percentage - Operational leverage - Financial health position 2021-2026 – areas of change - 2025/26 and 2026-27 improvement in the financial health position - Cash instead of operating position <p>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</p>
17.	<p>Variation to Barclays Terms of Financial Covenants (Long Term Loan) Update</p> <p>The Chair advised that this agenda item had been discussed previously in the agenda.</p> <p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p>
18.	<p>HR Update</p> <p>The DHR highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trending down on sickness - Staff survey – more positive responses - Leadership visibility and communication being considered at SLT to ensure improvements - Adaptive culture change - Trend analysis to be captured through the PDR process <p>SNo stated that compliance for the PDR process was currently low and asked whether the improvements would increase this. The DHR replied that work was taking place with the digital team to embed employee health dashboard into InfoPoint to ensure there were no barriers to completion. Smart objectives, where AI would help make targets smarter to reduce barriers and increase compliance, would be introduced alongside in-house training around feedback, active listening and difficult conversations. It was confirmed that this would also link into the leadership programme.</p> <p>The Chair stated that all indicators were better than previously reported and this was a more positive picture overall. There was a collective series of thoughts around operational management – culture, training, varying workloads etc and therefore a need to strengthen the management culture and give staff the confidence to act as managers.</p> <p>The Chair recorded his thanks to the DHR for a very useful report.</p> <p>Agreed: that the update be received.</p>
19.	<p>Curriculum & Quality Update – Minutes from the Additional C&Q Meeting (22.09.25)</p> <p>The Chair of the C&Q Committee, Charles Tennant, updated the Board on the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional C&Q meeting had taken place in September 2025 to frame focus for the rest of the year - Recruitment updates - Targets for 2025/26 - Targets to be mapped to the strategic KPI's and benchmarking incorporated to refine data sets - Main focus was to refocus efforts around ensuring focus on areas of strength and not solely areas for improvement <p>The VPCP advised that current areas for improvement in terms of recruitment were Hair & Beauty, Carpentry, Plumbing and Food Studies. Stronger area for recruitment were Engineering, Digital, ICT and Horizons. The Chair stated that, going forward, it would be useful to see the underlying trends year on year.</p>

	Agreed: that the current position be noted.
20.	Broadway Theatre Update The Principal/CEO reported that the College was currently taking legal advice regarding a claim around loss of earnings. Agreed: that the current position be noted.
21.	Audit & Risk Committee Update including External Audit Planning Memorandum The Audit & Risk Committee Vice-Chair, Bal Panesar, highlighted the following points from the additional meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key observation was the need to make sure that staff were responsive within the timelines to ensure smooth performance in terms of cooperation with the audit teams - Good relationship with auditors - Staff need to understand that internal audit process is to ensure improvements The CGO reported that herself and the Principal/CEO were working on a document for the SLT to highlight the importance of internal audit. Approved: the external Audit Planning Memorandum was approved.
22.	Risk Register The DPFR provided the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There had been an increase in some risks due to the start of the new year but these would reduce - Risk appetite has now been included The Chair thanked the DPFR for the report adding that the issue of risk appetite needed to be linked to business diversification, growth etc. Agreed: that the update be received.
23.	AoB There was no further business.
24.	Self-assessment – to be issued after the meeting.
25.	Date and time of next meeting – Corporation Strategy Day – Monday 1 December 2025, 10am

The Chair thanked all in attendance for their contributions. The meeting closed at 7.00pm.

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update
C/f	Ofsted debrief to take place with the Director of Student Welfare and Safeguarding Link Governors.	CGO/DSW	After the summer break	TBA
C/f	NK to meet with the Principal/CEO and CGO to discuss the Link Governor role for Health & Safety.	CGO	ASAP – initial meeting had	Scheduled for November 2025 –Deferred to New Year

			to be re- arranged	
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