

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Corporation

Date:	Monday 21 October 2024	Room number	Boardroom
Present:	Andy Forbes (Chair) Natalie Davison (Principal/CEO) Carole Ditty (CD) Samuel Nelson (Staff Governor) (SN) Alex Keay (AK) Bal Panesar (BP) Paige Summers (Student Governor) (PS) Esther Thompson (ET)		
Via Teams:	Forhad Altafi (Staff Governor), Molly Makota (MM), Charles Tennant (Vice-Chair)		
In attendance:	Jason Turton (Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality) Victoria Eastwood (Chief Governance Officer) Diana Olafsdottir (Director – HR) Hiten Savla (Deputy Principal – Finance & Resources) Amy De Campos (Head of Safeguarding) – Agenda Item 7 only PC Tom Seaward (Safer Schools) – Agenda Item 7 only Anthony Braithwaite (Director of Student Support) – Agenda Item 8 only		
Apologies	Katharina De Vita, Jahaid Zaman, Bim Osunsami, Nick Kavanagh, Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe, Akeel Ahmed.		

1.	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Katharina De Vita, Jahaid Zaman, Bim Osunsami, Nick Kavanagh, Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe, Akeel Ahmed.</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.</p>
3.	<p>Annual Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporation</p> <p>The Corporation agreed that the current Chair and Vice-Chair did not need to leave the meeting for this agenda item. The Corporation unanimously approved the re-appointment of Andy Forbes as Chair of the Corporation and Charles Tennat as Vice-Chair of the Corporation, respectively.</p> <p>Approved: That Andy Forbes be re-appointed as Chair of the Corporation and Charles Tennant as Vice-Chair of the Corporation for 2024/25 academic year.</p>
4.	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Corporation – 8 July 2024</p> <p>The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 8 July 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>Approved: The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 8 July 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p>

5.	Matters arising				
	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 to present on their areas as appropriate.	CGO	October 2024	Included on business cycle for 2024/25
	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
	The Chief Governance Officer (CGO) confirmed that the Corporation had appointed Akeel Ahmed to the Board via email approval.				
6.	Chair's Actions				

	<p>The CGO advised that the Chair had authorised the Principal/CEO to correspond with LBBD regarding the lease for Broadway Theatre. The contents of the letter had been agreed with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporation.</p> <p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p> <p><i>The Head of Safeguarding and PC Tom Seaward joined the meeting.</i></p>
7.	<p>Safer Schools/Safeguarding Update</p> <p>PC Tom Seaward (PCTS) informed the Board that he was familiar with the College and highlighted some previous issues he had dealt with last year.:</p> <p>The Chair queried the method of operation and level of concern regarding gang activity. PCTS replied that he travelled to the College via bicycle and was in uniform whilst on site. There had been no reports of gang activity this term and it was noted that previous years issues had focussed around 14-16 provision which the College no longer offered.</p> <p>The Principal/CEO asked PCTS for his views on knife crime as the College would be piloting a knife pole. PCTS responded that he was eager to promote knife arches/poles, however, there was an exemption in the law regarding pocket knives and this needed to be considered. It was noted that weapon sweeps were undertaken around the area.</p> <p>Further discussion took place on engagement with the community and the Chair thanked PCTS for his update.</p> <p>Amy DeCampos, Head of Safeguarding (AD) provided the following update on the first six weeks of the academic year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85 referrals to the safeguarding team – increase from last year • Counselling referrals increased 46% - 4 placement counsellors in place • Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – no major changes, nothing to affect operational inclusion of contextual safeguarding in line with KCSIE 2023 as previously updated • Governor duties in terms of KCSIE 2024 were individually highlighted and discussed • Increased training for teachers • SLD strategy needed to incorporate business support staff as well as teaching staff to ensure safeguarding training could feed in • Full time coordinator appointed to Safeguarding – pressure on safeguarding officers as SLO's are volunteers. • Need to ensure that support staff have sufficient times and resources to deliver personalised individual support/staffing structure. • Safeguarding policy refreshed to make it clearer which parts were appropriate to external people in line with Open University feedback – policy to be issued to the Board. <p>In response to a query from PCTS, the Principal/CEO confirmed that all teachers and staff received training around child exploitation.</p> <p>Action: Updated Safeguarding Policy to be issued to all Governors.</p> <p><i>PC Tom Seaward left the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>The Director of Student Support joined the meeting.</i></p>

8.

Student Services Update

The Director of Student Support, Anthony Braithwaite (AB) highlighted the following:

- Restructure to address pockets of student support to bring them under one umbrella had taken place
- Support and Achievement mentors (SAMs) in place to ensure consistency of learner support, actively monitoring attendance – challenges re staffing
- Safeguarding officers to be remunerated
- Code of conduct for staff
- Student liaison officers (SLO's) increased to six – understanding of the local knowledge, links/work taking place with the community
- Safeguarding moved to Student Services
- Counselling and LAC moved to Safeguarding
- Enrichment team fully staffed to focus on thematic programmes
- Work experience and careers group strengthened to work on Careers Education Initial Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and work placements
- Student Services area constantly being reviewed

CD advised that she had attended the SPDW Group and had been encouraged by the positive update in terms of enrichment. Noting that recruitment of staff takes time, CD queried whether as the SAMs focus was on attendance, there was confidence that other pastoral support areas were not impacted. AB replied that attendance was the trigger to open the door to other issues and behaviour formed part of the conversation.

CD stated that the increased safeguarding referrals needed continued focus and Governors would want assurance that staffing and investment were in place. AB advised that there was now increased focus on the detail and the numbers.

BP stated that the ability to recruit the right people for the roles was a challenge and asked what the timeline was for improvements e.g. attendance. AB replied that the College was currently seven weeks into a new restructure and certain markers eg bursary payments being issued allowed the opportunity to pre-empt challenges. Recruitment was constantly taking place but the calibre was challenging.

FA questioned whether there were mechanisms in place to establish where learners who did not attend/had withdrawn had gone. AB advised that if learners had been withdrawn they had to undertake a 1:1 meeting with the careers progression team and at risk of Not in Employment, Education or training (NEET) work placement opportunities were in place. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality (DPCQ) added that a list of NEET learners was issued to the College from the Council for the College to re-engage.

The Chair stated that there was a need to keep a close eye on whether the right resources for the issues were in place. The Chair thanked AB for the update.

The Director of Student Support and Head of Safeguarding left the meeting.

9.

Principal/CEO Update – KPI Dashboard 2024/25

The Principal/CEO informed the Board as follows:

- Outturn position improved
- Current years financial position - decision to be made re the pay award
- Domain 2 – College had engaged with a quality improvement consultant who was an Ofsted inspector – headline feedback was that, on the whole, the teaching he had seen was good and in line with Ofsted requirements
- 16-18 achievement – vast improvement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults at 83% achievement - similar to last year • Apprenticeships still a risk area – 51.7% <p>The Chair thanked the Principal/CEO for the update and advised that it was key for Governors to become familiar with the format and to email any questions/concerns to the Principal/CEO.</p> <p>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Management Accounts September 2024 including Pay Award and Bad Debt Provision</p> <p>The Deputy Principal – Finance & Resources (DPFR) informed the Committee that the Finance Team had been undertaking audit work on the outturn and closing the balance sheet and the management accounts would be issued this week.</p> <p>The Corporation were advised that the Association of Colleges (AoC) pay award recommendation had been agreed at 2.5% for Colleges. The College had budgeted 1% at the beginning of the year and 1% in January 2025 which was slightly behind the recommendation. The position would now be reviewed to try to achieve 2.5% with the aim of this being given to staff earlier than January. It was noted that the Unions were requesting 10%.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the pay award could initially be discussed by the Policy & Resources Committee but a recommendation would need to be made to the December Board meeting. The DPFR confirmed that a conversation would take place with Unions – the intention would be for the full 2.5% to be paid and not in two stages.</p> <p>AK stated that the Board needed to be really confident that there would be no other unexpected variances before this the pay award was approved. The DPFR replied that the impact on the budget would be c£300K.</p> <p>The DPFR reported that a lot of work had taken place to reconcile the student debt position. Student debt as at last year was showing as £1.5m - a large amount of the £1.5m was not collectable and some was dual accounting of income. Student debt now aligned to the CIS system and had been reduced to c£300K. This had been explained to the Auditors and there was the option of reducing the line items in the Financial Statements or a prior year adjustment.</p> <p>AK questioned the Auditors explanation for not previously picking this up. The DPFR replied that it had taken a long time to agree the position and the Auditors had previously wanted to decrease the position against CIS records. The Chair added that the Board needed to keep a close eye on this.</p> <p>CD stated that this was movement in a good direction and asked whether there were potentially other areas that needed to be scrutinised over historic approaches which could have negative or positive impacts. It was agreed that this would need to be monitored.</p> <p>BP advised that Governors needed to have the bad debt analysis at the Policy & Resources Committee and Audit & Risk Committee to explain the adjustments – this was agreed.</p> <p>Check re the minutes.</p> <p>Action: Management accounts to be issued to the Board before half-term. Pay Award recommendation to be made to December Corporation Meeting. Bad debt analysis to be discussed at the Policy & Resources Committee and Audit & Risk Committee to explain the adjustments.</p>

<p>11.</p>	<p>Draft Outturn 2023/24</p> <p>The DPFR highlighted the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worst case position presented in April 2024 • Improved position – predicting surplus • Over accrual of costs had presented an erroneous position – would be managed better this year • P11 accounts stating 250K insurance claim which had not been incorporated that had now been included • Over delivered on GLA AEB – anticipating further element of funding c£180K • Over delivered NSF • Consideration being given to retaining the money 24/25 especially if pay award to be increased to 2.5% • ESFA adult budget dropped 3K to hit 97% - clawback • Need to better manage prediction of AEB delivery through the year • Broadway – deficit reduced to 104K – number of shows delivered in earlier years sitting on the balance sheet was deferred income • Cash days reduced to 24 due to number of capital project ongoing <p>The Chair thanked the DPFR for the report and advised that this would be followed up by the Policy & Resources Committee to ensure a clear explanation for the improved position was understood.</p> <p>Agreed: That the current position be noted and followed up through the Policy & Resources Committee.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Variation to Barclays Terms of Financial Covenants (Long Term Loan) Update</p> <p>The DPFR reported that, given the improvement to the outturn, the College would not be breaching any financial covenants.</p> <p>In response to a query from the Chair, the DPFR confirmed that there would be no obstacles in terms of the financial statements and the position should be easier this year. CD added that the position provided a level of confidence for the budget and accounts for 2024/25.</p> <p>The Chair recorded his thanks to the DPFR and Finance team for their work.</p> <p>Agreed: that the position be noted.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>HR Update</p> <p>The Director of HR (DHR) updated the Corporation on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current challenges • Unpicking to stabilise the foundations • Stabilising the team – good progress • Quick wins – reviewing the occupational health provider, new HR operations partner to help manage caseload • Key focus on new applicant tracking system • Better integration into HR system • Clean up the data to be able to interrogate etc. • Dedicated resource in the team to manage agencies <p>The Chair stated that the update was encouraging and noted that the Board were aware that it would take time to get the systems up to the right standard. The detail on where some of the vacancies were was appreciated.</p>

	<p>SN questioned the correlation between staff sickness, vacancies and turnover and asked how the College considered the skills set of staff instead of always looking outside of the College to recruit. The DHR replied that the correlation between staff sickness and vacancies etc was complex and there would be a lot of reasons not just one specific thing. It was intended to get to the point where HR Business Partners could be proactive and work directly with departments in terms of recruitment.</p> <p>FA noted that a lot of processes had been implemented since the Ofsted inspection to improve communication and asked how long the College was tied to the Zellis contract. The DHR replied that there was two years remaining. There would be a cost involved in training for the new system but work was taking place with the provider to agree a sensible solution.</p> <p>The Chair stated that there was now more joined up working between other areas and HR which was beneficial. It was noted that the Staff Survey would be live from Wednesday 23rd October and the Board would receive the results at the next meeting.</p> <p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Curriculum Update: The DPCQ advised the Board of the following:</p> <p>Learner Recruitment Update 2024-25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal targets • Recruitment currently sat at 97% (2557) – some applications still to go through and 55 learners on the waiting list • 16-18 on target– January and March starts to take place • On target for adults • HE – cause for concern – lot of intervention some programmes that have done really well but a challenge re CIOB programmes, T-levels <p>QAR 2023/24 - Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarding organisation for Adult ESOL – 2% achieved which will adjust pass rate • QAR achievement 79% but expected to improve by around 2% against a benchmark of 82% • Identified issues in apprenticeships • Lots of work taken place over the last 18 months – best results since 2018 – still a lot of work to do to get where we need to be <p>The Chair stated that this was a good picture overall and the report showed tangible improvement in 16-18, however, there was a lack of clarity on what the actions were that pushed the improvements for 2023/24. It was agreed that the DPCQ would provide this data.</p> <p>CD stated that the data showed that 55% of Curriculum Performance Reviews (CPR's) had been rated as medium or high risk. The Principal/CEO replied that CPR's were separate to learning walks and focused on quality, administration and documentation etc. These were Chair dependant on teacher evaluation of student progress and teachers had different approaches.</p> <p>Action: Data to clarify actions that have pushed improvements for 2023/24 to be provided.</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>C&Q Update - Ofsted Readiness The Chair of the Curriculum & Quality Committee highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key strengths and weaknesses and strategic risks – Governors advised to review • Prior to inspection the briefing would be updated and re-issued • Governors were encouraged to attend, learning walks, MAP meetings and visit English and Maths which remained a concern

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed plan in place for inspection being rehearsed weekly <p>CD stated that she had found the Ofsted Q&A session very helpful and advised that a set of strategic questions would be useful for the Board to refer back to from time to time. This was agreed.</p> <p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p>
16.	<p>Broadway Theatre Update</p> <p>The Principal/CEO advised that a meeting would be scheduled with LBBD in November to discuss the terms of the lease.</p> <p>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</p>
17.	<p>Corporation Terms of Reference and Corporation/Committee Schedule of Business 2024/25</p> <p>The CGO presented the Corporation Terms of Reference for 2024/25 and Corporation/Committee Schedule of Business. The Board were advised that all statutory business had been included but agendas would be updated in agreement with the Chair and respective Committee Chair for each meeting to include relevant and timely information.</p> <p>Approved: The Corporation Terms of Reference and Corporation/Committee Schedule of Business 2024/25 were approved.</p>
18.	<p>Review of Confidential Minutes 2023/24</p> <p>The CGO reported that the Corporation had not recorded any confidential Minutes for the period 2023/24.</p> <p>Agreed: That the current position be noted.</p>
19.	<p>External Board Review – Action Plan</p> <p>The Corporation noted the actions that had already taken place against the recommendations from the external board review and approved the action plan going forward. The CGO advised that the action plan would be a standing agenda item for each Corporation meeting. The Corporation further approved the external board review summary to be uploaded to the College website.</p> <p>Approved: The External Board Review Action Plan and Summary were approved.</p>
20.	<p>Audit & Risk Committee Update including Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 and Financial Planning Memorandum</p> <p>The Vice-Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee updated the Corporation on discussions from the meeting highlighting the work undertaken on the internal audits and the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 and Financial Planning Memorandum.</p> <p>Approved: The Board ratified the Audit & Risk Committee’s approval of the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 and Financial Planning Memorandum.</p>
21.	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>The DPFR presented the risk register in the revised format which was well received by the Board. Discussion took place on the format of the risks.</p> <p>Agreed: That the risk register be received.</p>
22.	<p>AoB</p>

	The DPFR reported that there had been delays to the T-Level EV project and the College may need to provide additional capital monies. The Chair noted that this was a risk and that options would need to be provided before a decision could be made. It was further noted that the Decarbonisation scheme was on hold.
23.	Self-assessment – to be issued after the meeting.
24.	Date and time of next meeting – Corporation Strategy Day – Monday 25 November 2024, 10am

The meeting closed at 7.00pm.

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	
c/f	Staff recruitment data targeting HE and number of HE applicants to be provided.	EDHRS	ASAP	
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	
10.	Pay award recommendation to be brought to December Corporation Meeting.	DPFR	16 December 2024	
10.	Bad debt analysis to be discussed at the Policy & Resources Committee and Audit & Risk Committee to explain the adjustments.	CGO	December 2024	
14.	Data to clarify actions that have pushed improvements for 2023/24 to be provided.	DPCQ	ASAP	

Signed.....
Andy Forbes (Chair)

Date.....