

MINUTES OF A CORPORATION
Meeting held on Thursday 9 February 2023
At 5.00 pm at Trowbridge Campus

Present	Martin Clark (Chair), Harry Adam, Carlton Brand, Jenny Davies, Paul Fox, Philippa Gray, Cathryn Giles (to item 13), Iain Hatt, Brian Humphreys, Ajay Nithyananthan (to item 13), Lily Raynor-Blundell (to item 13), Mags Patten (online), Justin Purkis, Kayleigh Robinson (to item 13) Lucy Thompson (online), Katie Walker (online).
In Attendance	<i>Oliver Symons (Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality) to item 13, Steve Campion (Deputy Principal Corporate Resources) to item 13 and Heather Cross (Clerk to the Corporation). Gail Larkin, HR Director, for Item 4 only</i>

	Minute	Action
2022-23 3/1	Apologies for absence and welcome to new members	
	Apologies were received from Daisy Agathine-Louise. Ajay Nithyananthan, Paul Fox, Brian Humphreys and Justin Purkis were welcomed to their first meeting following their appointment as governors recently and introductions were made.	
2022-23 3/2	Declarations of interest	
	None	
2022-23 3/3	Chair's opening remarks	
	The Chair referred to the recent written resolution which had been passed concerning the approval of the capital bid for works related to T-levels (Wave 5). This mechanism had been necessary because of the timing of the bid deadline.	
2022-23 3/4	People Strategy	
	The draft People Strategy had been circulated previously and was proposed for approval. Gail Larkin, HR Director, joined the meeting to answer questions and provide comments as required. Governors discussed the draft document and welcomed its ambition. A number of comments were made in discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In being conscious of the ambition of the document, it was suggested there should be recognition that the college was under-resourced overall and therefore resources to deliver the document needed to be specifically allocated. Governors expressed an intention more actively to monitor performance indicators in the People and Culture section of the Balanced Scorecard and it was requested that these be reviewed to ensure the indicators were extensive enough to reflect the new strategy. It was agreed that the Finance and Resources Committee should review performance roughly on a quarterly basis and that the 	SLT

	<p>Board should receive an annual report on progress and implementation overall. The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee suggested some 'deep dives' for the committee from time to time on key people issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested that other public sector organisations locally might be interested to share or pool resources such as coaches and mentors and in working on shared issues such as actions to address the gender pay gap. The HR Director commented that there were some developing networks with other organisations already, such as a women's network, and other initiatives could be explored. • It was acknowledged that middle management was critical to deliver the strategy. The Stepping into Leadership training programme for middle managers already in place was welcomed. • Considerable activity to demonstrate commitment to staff to enable them to 'love' the college in turn would no doubt be necessary. A coaching culture would need to continue to be modelled by the senior leadership team. It was recognised that staff had already acknowledged the development and coaching provided by the college and that this was important in their retention. • A key activity for governors was to increase engagement with college activities to show support and create an active presence. The Chair encouraged governors to join staff briefing events where possible and for governors to receive copies of all staff briefings. • The intended early activity in introducing the Strategy, focussing on wellbeing initiatives initially was supported, as this would demonstrate the intent that it was much more than simply a 'shiny' policy. <p>The HR Director was thanked for attending the meeting and for her work in developing the Strategy together with senior colleagues. The People Strategy was approved.</p>	Clerk/ Govs
2022-23 3/5	Capital Developments and Bidding Update	
	<p>A report had been circulated previously and a presentation was given by the Deputy Principal Corporate Resources, providing an update on the current position with capital developments and bidding. He thanked governors for their recent written resolution approval for the Wave 5 T-level bid submission, commenting that it would not be his preferred normal method of obtaining a decision but the external timescales did not allow for an alternative. The bids had been circulated with the agenda. Initial indications were that the bid had been well received centrally, but the extent of other bids and therefore likely success was not possible to estimate at this stage. The bid outcome was expected by Summer 2023, but work has to be realised by Summer 2024, so the timescales were tight. In response to a question, it was commented that the college was ready to negotiate on its level of match funding in comparison to its financial health position. In response to a question about the nature of the bid submitted for Lackham, college management stood ready to explain the bid further if required. With land-based work being the most dangerous occupation, the equipment bid for was designed to help real working, but with greater safety.</p> <p>The importance of the health care bid which supported working on the 'Heat' project and links with health care providers, was recognised. It was noted that Salisbury Hospital had commented that the kit requested will exactly replicate hospital usage, which was a strong support to effective learning. Governors welcomed this strong and important link with the hospital and the synergy in</p>	

	<p>the project. It was agreed, as discussed at the previous Board meeting, that if the bid was not approved centrally, that the college should consider self-funding or diversion of capital transformation funds, given the importance in supporting health care partnerships and their training needs. In deciding this, it was noted that the estimate for the scheme now stood at £485K.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the recent launch of a small capital bidding process within college to go alongside the curriculum planning process.</p> <p>It was noted that the programme to complete the cladding was about to start at Salisbury campus.</p> <p>An initial concept of an Esports arena on the Trowbridge campus, using the Arc Theatre was introduced and discussed, with an associated course concerning esports management. Governors could see the distinctive nature of this and the benefit to the area and campus, provided performing arts students still would have access to performance space - which may be provided digitally. It was agreed that a full proposal, having established proof of concept, be made to the Board in due course for inclusion in the Trowbridge campus masterplan.</p> <p>It was noted that at land adjacent to the Lackham campus, the Wiltshire Council-led future Chippenham development had not been supported by Housing England, although it was expected that a new plan would still come forward, with the possibility of further approaches being made to purchase land from the college. A mini estates strategy for the site was about to be started, building in consideration of the longer term requirements for residential accommodation and to include confirmation of the minimum site requirements for a teaching farm.</p> <p>The development of the Chippenham old college building, was now delayed and with it any possible overage payment. There was now some debate with the DfE concerning whether any payment could be used to pay down the college loan without specific Treasury approval, following the reclassification of the college sector to public sector. The college was being put forward as a test case to challenge the principles being applied here, as the obvious benefit in paying down the loan should surely not be in question.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal was thanked for his updating report.</p>	SLT
2022-23 3/6	Principal's Report (including safeguarding report)	
	<p>The Principal's report had been circulated previously. Key issues concerning curriculum and quality, applications, student services, finance, the Colleges Partnership and estates were all noted.</p> <p>The Principal spoke to his report and flagged in particular the introduction of Accountability Agreements as a significant new approach by the Department for Education. Increased governor involvement would now be needed in signing off the college curriculum plan. The priorities set by the Employer Representative Body, in this area being Business West, would be important to respond to. College staff were currently attending events to look at priorities with employers. Two key areas were digitalisation and responding to net zero climate change. He thanked the Clerk for summarising the information contained in his report about the new requirements to write an accountability statement and submit it to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by</p>	

	<p>the end of May. As the document was intended to be a response to the ERB Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) which was only due to be published by the end of March, this left the college relatively little time to consider its response. The draft document was planned to be presented to the Board at its awayday in May for approval. The College was using consultants to help with developing the document. Content in future would routinely be checked by Ofsted at any inspection and through the Annual Strategic Conversations with the ESFA. In answer to a question, the Principal explained that there was no direct correlation at present concerning the allocation of college budgets to Accountability Statements, but this was anticipated in future.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the college should discuss priorities with New College Swindon as this was the other college in its ERB area of Swindon-Wiltshire and duplication of specialist offer should be avoided. The Principal and the Chair/Vice-Chair would represent the college in these discussions.</p> <p>Governors asked questions concerning the alignment of curriculum budgets and allocations with curriculum priorities.</p> <p>It was noted that staffing remained a major concern for the college, as it did for all colleges nationally.</p> <p>Adult Education and Apprenticeship performance required in-year improvement and an external lead-generating company had been recruited to assist with numbers. Better traction of apprenticeship completion was being achieved, but both areas of work remained challenging.</p> <p>A proposal to amend subcontracting partner contracts, which required governor approval for the variation, was put forward, the details of which were in the Principal's report. Aspire and Learning Curve have capacity to deliver more contract value, with a maximum further of £200K to Aspire Education Academy and £176K to Learning Curve. These contract increases would represent an appropriate hedge against possible underperformance by TCP, the work of which was subject to short term reductions as a result of higher literacy experienced by Gurkha recruits and the reallocation of army apprentices to active service as a result of covering public sector duties potentially affected by industrial action. The MoD has clear targets to reinstate the former position in the level of course participation, but it may not be experienced in this year's budget. The transfer of subcontracting funds and contract values were agreed.</p> <p>The success of the Apprenticeship awards earlier that week was noted and the Vice-Chair requested that a letter be sent to the Marketing team to thank them for organising such a successful event.</p> <p>Reported student successes were noted.</p> <p>The Chair encouraged governors to use the student run restaurants in Trowbridge and Salisbury and also requested that celebrating student success be brought to the forefront of agendas. It was agreed that governors should be invited to attend staff long service lunches.</p> <p>A more detailed report on addressing sustainability issues was to be presented to the next Board meeting.</p> <p>A confidential update report on a student complaint was provided to governors and was discussed. The college had received professional advice concerning</p>	<p>Chair/P/ Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>DPCR</p>
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	<p>the handling and resolution of the complaint. The Quality and Standards Committee had been provided with more details.</p> <p>The safeguarding appendix report was noted. The safeguarding governor reported on his regular meetings with the safeguarding team and his satisfaction with the arrangements and operation.</p> <p>The Principal was thanked for his report.</p>	
2022-23 3/7	Balanced Scorecard	
	<p>The December 2022 balanced scorecard had been circulated previously together with a covering report identifying key points.</p> <p>In discussion it was suggested that for governors in some instances the key information was the consequence or impact of an issue in an area and the overall progress, not necessarily the associated numbers unless these were relevant for other audiences. It was noted that the scorecard was a very useful management tool for senior management. More work in linking the scorecard with the risk register and the post inspection action plan could be useful.</p>	
2022-23 3/8	Ofsted report, Post Inspection Action Plan and Quality Improvement Plan	
	<p>The full published Ofsted inspection report from the inspection carried out in November 2022, the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) had been circulated previously. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality commented that whilst the PIAP had similar content to the QIP, supporting that managers knew the college strengths and weaknesses well, four themes as identified in the inspection were highlighted – improving the curriculum, work placements and support for learners with high needs; young learners improved attendance and greater achievement in English and Maths; coherence and good teaching of personal development and careers guidance; employer involvement in design and implementation of all curricula.</p> <p>Governors noted that all associated strategies were being reviewed to consider their effectiveness. A pilot for English and Maths to be taught together in curriculum area groups was welcomed by governors. A postcard home to flag attendance issues and therefore more likely to be seen by parents, was to be trialled. The possibility of educational maintenance allowances being used to incentivise attendance was being considered.</p> <p>The current update to the Quality Improvement Plan was noted.</p>	
2022-23 3/9	Management Accounts	
	<p>The December (period 5) management accounts had been circulated previously. Good financial health was still forecasted, although margins were getting tighter. The college surplus was reduced. As a result of a significant level of vacancies, pay was below budget. As discussed elsewhere in the meeting, the apprenticeship forecast is a challenge, as was meeting the adult target, although the intention was still to meet the 97% level which would mean the retention of full income.</p>	

	<p>It was reported that the college had recently undergone an ESFA funding audit and had been signed off with only low level actions. The good work of the MIS team in this was acknowledged.</p> <p>Business planning for the forthcoming year was anticipated to be more challenging than previously, albeit funding would be increased following lagged funding for growth. Governors anticipated that next year's budget may call for some brave decisions to be made.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Corporate Resources was thanked for his report.</p>	
2023-22 3/10	Risk Register	
	<p>The latest risk register had been circulated previously. It was acknowledged that many of the key issues had already been discussed at other times during the meeting. Overall, the risk profile of the college had slightly increased.</p> <p>The Audit Committee was to review the arrangements for cybersecurity at its next meeting and other governors wishing to attend for this item for information, would be invited to attend.</p>	
2022-23 3/11	Minutes of the last meeting held 15 December 2022	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2022 which had been circulated previously were considered and agreed as a true record, subject to the addition of Kayleigh Robinson as attending the meeting.</p>	
2022-23 3/12	Appointment of Chair with effect from 1 August 2023	
	<p>Martin Clark, Chair, had reminded governors at the previous meeting that he would be coming to the end of his second term of office as a governor with effect from 31 July 2023 and would therefore be standing down from the Board. All external governors had been invited by the Clerk to express an interest in standing as the new Chair of Governors with effect from 1 August 2023 and one letter of application had been received, from Carlton Brand. It was confirmed that there were no further applications.</p> <p>Governors were invited to ask Carlton any questions. In reply to one concerning his thoughts on estate modernisation that he had mentioned in his letter, he replied that in particular he was concerned to address the issues posed by the Trowbridge campus. His other key priorities were student attainment and maintenance of good finances.</p> <p>Carlton then withdrew from the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair commented that he was delighted that Carlton had put himself forward and he proposed him as Chair with effect from 1 August 2023 until the end of his term of office as a governor, in 2026. Harry Adam having seconded the proposal and having been unanimously supported, Dr Carlton Brand was duly appointed as Chair of the Governing Body with effect from 1 August 2023 to 31 October 2026.</p> <p>Carlton was invited to rejoin the meeting and governors congratulated him on his appointment. It was planned that he would shadow the current Chair's activities until he took up office in August.</p>	

2022-23 3/13	Governance Update	
	<p>A governance update report had been circulated previously. The report contained a proposal for publicising and promoting governor engagement which was agreed.</p> <p>A role description for a link governor had been circulated with the report and was agreed. Current link governor roles were noted. Following some discussion, the Principal was requested to consider, in addition to any which were regulatory requirements, the areas of the college where he considered link governor roles may be most productive and for a proposal to be brought to the next Board meeting.</p> <p>It was flagged that with the future taking up of office of a new Chair, the positions of Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee and that of Vice-Chair would become vacant and new appointments would need to be made.</p> <p>A summary of the themes from the latest Governance self-assessment questionnaires had been circulated with the report and were acknowledged by governors. It was agreed that these be identified to the external governance reviewer who was about to start their review and that the themes be considered for further actions. Governors were encouraged to engage fully and be open and transparent in the forthcoming external review.</p>	P
2022-23 3/14	Any Other Business (Confidential item – external governors only)	
	<p><u>(Non- confidential minute of a confidential item)</u></p> <p>External governors were informed about a recent senior staff resignation shortly to take effect. The Principal was considering as a consequence the shape of the senior team and the job description of any replacement, particularly having in mind how the senior leadership presence on each campus might be strengthened. Governors supported moves to increase the senior team presence across the college, where possible.</p>	
2022-23 3/15	Date of Next Board meeting – 27 April 2023 at Trowbridge	
	The next Board meeting was noted as 27 April 2023 at Trowbridge campus – location to be reviewed. (Subsequently confirmed to be at Trowbridge).	