

**Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on
Thursday 11 July 2024 at 09:30
Burslem Boardroom and via Microsoft Teams**

Present:	Jeremy Cartwright, Chair	In person
	Lisa Capper, Principal/CEO	In person
	David Boughey	In person
	Sally Garratt	Remote
	Tom Nadin	Remote
	David Rogers	In person
	Steve Sawbridge	In person
	David Shufflebottom	In person
	Lisa Thomson	Remote
	Chrissy Pawliszyn, Staff Governor	In person
	Jenny Scrivens, Staff Governor	In person
	Mekdes Mideksa, Student Governor	In person
	Pari Arian, Student Governor	In person

In Attendance:	Cath Brierley, Deputy Principal	In person
	Antoinette Lythgoe, Chief Financial Officer	In person
	Dave Hopley, Assistant Principal Student Experience	In person
	Nova Abela, Chief People Officer	In person
	Kay Kavanagh, Director of Governance	In person
	Claire Williams, Director of Marketing (Item 8 only)	In person

No.

Action

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| <p>1</p> | <p>Welcome, introductions, and apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received from Rob Fisher, Jo Mountney, Bernard Kumeta, and Ben Richards.</p> <p>Members were advised that Kevin Hetherington had resigned from the board due to retirement. It is hoped that a replacement will be fulfilled from the university, and an interview will take place shortly.</p> <p>The Chair advised that this would be the last board meeting for David Rogers, due to David's Term of Office ending. David confirmed that it had been a delight to be part of the board for the last 4 years and acknowledged the positive change in the college during that time. The board and exec team thanked David for his input and contribution to the board over the years.</p> | |
| <p>2</p> | <p>Declaration of Interest in any of the items on the agenda
The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on agenda items to be discussed. No specific declarations, other than for paid positions, were made, and standing declarations were noted.</p> | |
| <p>3</p> | <p>Minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2024
Governors approved the minutes of 16 May 2024 as an accurate record.</p> | |
| <p>4</p> | <p>Action Progress Report
Governors noted the actions from previous meetings, noting that all actions were complete.</p> | |

5 Principal/CEO's Report

The Principal and CEO presented the Principal/CEO report, highlighting:

- The College has received the final published ESFA Annual Strategic Conversation letter, which is extremely positive and references the progress over the last 3 years.
- The College remains in a strong position and has reached 2010 study program students – the highest number for the college. Students have enrolled throughout the year which has aided numbers. This excludes adults. Adults have increased from 5,000 to circa 6,000 bringing the likelihood of an earnings boost.
- The College is forecasting outstanding financial health and has set a budget with a surplus. There is a significantly increased income for next year around study programs, adults, and apprenticeships.
- Staff are engaged in CPD activities, with a recent focus on AI, with external support from MKAI.
- Initial results are expected on 22 August. Final data will be known by mid-October.
- The capital programme has started well with Lifestyle top floor refurbishment completed, and works started in the broadcast and media suite and on the health suite and laboratory on the first floor of Lifestyle.
- College now leads on the Family Taskforce strand of the City Strategy and £80k funding won for the Family Learning Matters campaign (NEETS)
- The profile of the College continues to grow with partnerships and projects boosting the curriculum and learner experience.
- The launch of this year's pop-up gallery and art exhibition showcasing the student work and live project pieces at Potteries Museum and Art Gallery entitled 'Stoke Connected' was extremely popular.
- Further development of the Alumni programme 'Made at Stoke on Trent College' with Throwback Thursday support on Facebook, which is having an impact
- 3 Labour MPs are now in place in Stoke on Trent. All have been invited to the College.

The Principal and CEO gave a presentation on the Labour Party manifesto and the possible impacts on the college.

Five missions

- Kickstart economic growth
- Make Britain a green energy superpower
- Take back our streets
- Break down barriers to opportunities
- Build an NHS fit for the future

The 'Opportunity' mission includes expanding high-quality education, employment, and training routes.

The Principal & CEO highlighted:

- Skills England are to have more powers to agree priorities for Local Growth Plans (LGPs) and devolution will be deepened and widened.
- Promotion of a 'tertiary system', to integrate further and higher education.
- Technical Excellence Colleges (TECs) – investing in specialisms. This is a good opportunity, with the college already having the 4 skills hubs
- New growth and skills levy –with 50 percent used on non-apprenticeship courses

Other commitments include:

- Young Futures programme
- Ofsted report card system to replace headline grade
- Expert-led review of curriculum and assessment
- Will establish a new Industrial Strategy Council, on a statutory footing

Key asks from the sector include:

- Pause and review
- Review post-16 E&M
- College-led End Point Assessment
- Funding to at least match school teacher pay rise in colleges
- Fund 16-18 growth in-year
- Reimburse VAT

A Governor **asked** if anything was likely to change imminently. The Principal/CEO advised that T Levels may be impacted, but are likely to remain. BTECs may be considered too.

Governors **acknowledged** the opportunities at the College, particularly around L3 and above.

A Governor **asked** if staffing and recruitment were as needed for English and maths for 2024/25. It was confirmed that the College already provides 3 hours for English, but an extra hour is still needed for maths. 3 approaches are being trailed at each level (1, 2, & 3).

Action: The Principal & CEO to share the slides with governors.

Principal &
CEO

6 Student Voice

The Assistant Principal Student Experience provided an update on Learner Voice for the end of the academic year.

Student Union elections have taken place with Mekdes being re-elected as Student Union President and thus, will continue as a student governor for 2024/25.

Enrichment 2024/25 will be launched in September 2024 during induction week. The programme has been reshaped in consultation with staff and learners at our Learner Voice Conference in May 2024 and will include new clubs such as Women's Football, Darts, Cricket Net Sessions at the Cricket Cave, and a Choir.

There were no questions.

The Principal & CEO added that, during the annual conversation with the ESFA, the learner voice programme and enrichment activity at the College were seen as a model of good practice.

7 KPI end-of-year draft outturn

The Deputy Principal explained that the report is a culmination of progress across the academic year with the exception of final student results.

There has been excellent progress in the number of learners and the College expects to have increased its market share.

Areas of continued focus and review are:

- Attendance and retention
- Maths and English resit strategy – Learners are considered individually
- Sustainability target from strategy - weaved into each curriculum area
- Apprenticeship achievement – aiming for 60% achievement
- Employer evidence gathering – employer surveys are now complete and an action plan is in place for improvement on survey completion moving forward

Significant successes include:

- Capital income
- Adult delivery
- Study Programme Growth
- Apprenticeship funding target

- Staff Pulse Survey positive outcomes

The Chair **asked** if it was known why 10% of students wouldn't recommend the college (survey output). The Assistant Principal Student Experience explained that it is likely to be the understanding of the question, and the level of satisfaction rather than being unsatisfied with the college. Mental Health is still a factor.

A Governor **acknowledged** the progress made on apprenticeships.

A Governor **asked** if the overwhelming demand for mental health was an issue. The principal explained that it continues to be a priority and various strategies are in place, including; The Big Tutorial, Learner Voice, proactive safeguarding team, learning mentors, and behaviour support. Online counselling has enabled more volume of reporting and has helped to get learners the right support). The Assistant Principal Student Experience added that services are busy and we continue to invest in mental health.

8 Marketing, Partnerships & Employer Engagement Update

The Director of Marketing joined the meeting (10.40)

A presentation on marketing, partnerships, and employer engagement was provided to increase awareness among Governors.

The current Marketing Strategy runs for 3 years and is coming to the end of the first year. It includes key objectives:

- Technical college for Stoke-on-Trent and surrounding area
- Promote the role of the College and stake our claim
- Grow market share
- Showcase the quality of the College
- Offer to employers and meeting local skills needs
- Purpose and role: largest provider of adult education, third largest provider for Study Programmes locally
- Our role in the community

The College has increased awareness and improved the perception of the college by:

- Sponsorship of high-profile events
- Website visitors - improved bounce rate and visitor stay average 4 mins 28 secs
- Increase in regular positive media coverage, radio interviews, press release distribution
- Targeted specialist publications for FE & other priority sectors
- Enhanced visibility: Volunteering Week, Alumni stories, ESOL, Engineering, Regeneration Brainery
- Exploit specialisms: Greenpower, WorldSkills, Guild of Bricklayers

Social media followers and engagement continue growing, with Facebook having the largest following and LinkedIn having the most engagement.

Adult provision has grown through:

- Adult Prospectus - supermarket distribution
- Exhibitor opportunities: Stoke Jobs Fair, Run Through, Chamber events, Longton Pig Festival, etc
- Promotion of distance learning with partners
- Stoke by Numbers – initiated and sold to City, learners progress to our courses
- Dedicated Adult campaigns – e.g. Sky/ITV X video 86,000 views, paid social advertising FB & Insta, Google Ads

Awareness of the college brand is increasing by:

- Brand guidelines and guardians
- Increased profile of the College brand across the city and county

- Partners and alumni: engaging, endorsing and celebrating
- Made at Stoke on Trent College Alumni network and Memory Lane
- Appointment of a Brand Ambassador

Business engagement continues by:

- Regular Skills Advisory Panels – across each Skills Hub
- Initiated and sponsored Skills for the Future award
- Future Skills Pledge scheme
- Attendance at networking events to seek new opportunities; We Are Staffs, BID, Chambers
- Engagement with relevant Chamber Forums
- Stakeholder newsletter
- Recording of employer interaction
- National Apprenticeships Week daily films and case studies at employer premises
- Dedicated materials for apprentices and employers

The Principal & CEO provided an overview of the range and type of partnerships that the college has, including Civic, Community, Education and Employers, along with Governors, learners, parents and colleagues.

We have high-quality partnerships that help to shape the curriculum. Heads of Learning have formal arrangements with 2 or 3 key employers and there is consistency across all curriculum areas.

The College has also now formed formal partnerships with, for example, Port Vale, Keele University and Metaverse.

We have emerging partnerships with Wedgwood, Genr8 (property developer), MKAI and Overclockers.

Various education partnerships are in place with the Principal & CEO chairing the Headteachers group and the college is a licence holder with the Institute of Technology.

KPIs are in place for partnerships and include:

- Recruitment of learners
- Impact on achievement and progression
- Income or funding for projects added value
- Reputation
- Innovation
- Expertise
- Anchor and City leadership role
- Stakeholder survey

Governors **noted** the progression from previous years and agreed that due to the breadth of the partnerships and the significance to the college, partnerships should remain on the risk register (currently at green).

A Governor **asked** how members of staff below the management level engage with partners. The Director of Marketing explained that all staff are advocates for the College, across all levels.

The Director of Marketing left the meeting (11.10)

9 Management Accounts

The Chief Financial Officer presented the management accounts for the reporting period to 31st May 2024, and questions were invited.

The College's financial health rating is now expected to be 'outstanding' for 2023/24.

There are 4 main reasons for the significant increase in ESFA grant income reflected in the May management accounts:

- Additional funding prioritised for pay (£719k)
- In-year study programme growth funding (£989k)
- Earnings boost income (£200k)
- Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) (£200k)

There were no questions.

10 Budget and 3-Year Financial Forecast

The College has prepared the draft budget for 2024/25 and the following year. The budget has been discussed by members of the Transformation, Finance, and Resources Committee at their meeting in June.

The forecast operating surplus after interest, tax, depreciation, and amortisation costs for 2024/25 is £1.135m.

The College's financial health is forecast to be 'Outstanding' for 2024/25 and 2025/26 based on the current forecast.

Overall income is expected to increase in 2024/25 by £2.45m (10.5%) when compared to the May 2024 forecast position for 2023/24, mainly due to growth in learner numbers.

Pay costs will increase by £2.3m for 2024/25 compared to the May 2024 forecast outturn. The staffing budget assumes that all current vacancies will be filled from 1st August 2024. Staff costs are circa 65% of income, in line with the FE Commissioner benchmark.

Non-pay costs of £7.3m excluding bursary expenditure of £711k are included in the budget. This represents a significant increase of £667k (10%) compared to the expected outturn for 2023/24.

Capital expenditure (excluding major capital projects) funded from the College's resources in 2024/25 will be increased to £800k, of which £400k will be normal capex, and 400k will be for matched funding for various projects.

The cash balance at the end of July 2025 is forecast to be £3.9m assuming all capital projects proceed as currently planned.

Borrowings as a percentage of income is 9.18% for 2024/25.

Action: The Chief Financial Officer to provide a 'waterfall' chart for the budget/outturn.

Chief
Financial
Officer

Governors **approved** the Budget (2024/25) and 3-Year Financial Forecast.

11 Risk Management and Risk Register

The Chief Financial Officer presented the report and asked governors if the risk concerning 'The inability to attract new partnerships' is at the right level and if it is felt that it is still a risk. Governors **agreed** that it is a useful risk to keep, given the upcoming change in Principal.

Governors noted the Risk Management internal audit, carried out by ICAA, giving substantial assurance in control and monitoring arrangements for risk.

12 Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25

The Chief Financial Officer presented the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25, confirming that it had been discussed and recommended by the Audit Committee.

Areas for review in 2024/25 are:

- Employer Engagement - Apprenticeship Strategy and Delivery Model
- Careers Guidance
- GDPR
- 16-19 Study Programme - Curriculum Efficiency
- HR and Payroll

The Chair of the Audit Committee stated that the plan was dynamic and relevant, and will be completed throughout the academic year.

Governors **approved** the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25.

13 External Audit Plan for the year ending 31 July 2024

The Chief Financial Officer presented the External Audit Plan for the year ending 31 July 2024, confirming that it had been discussed and recommended by the Audit Committee.

Governors **approved** the External Audit Plan for the year ending 31 July 2024.

14 Chair reports and committee minutes

1. Transformation, Finance and Resources Committee
2. Governance Committee
3. Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee
4. Audit Committee The Chair of the EBS Board was absent to provide an update.

All committee minutes and updates were assumed to be read.

There were no questions.

15 Governor Link Feedback

Governor link feedback was assumed to be read.

There were no questions.

16 Governance items

1. Corporation Membership (including committees & link roles)

Governors **approved** the Corporation Membership, including committees and link governor roles for 2024/25.

2. Annual Calendar of Meetings

Governors **approved** the Annual Calendar of Meetings for 2024/25.

3. Committee Terms of References

The Director of Governance explained that all committee terms of reference had been reviewed by their respective committee and further updates had been made following feedback.

Governors **approved** the Committee Terms of References for 2024/25.

4. Standing Orders

Governors **approved** the Standing Orders

5. Scheme of Delegation

Governors **approved** the Scheme of Delegation, **noting** the updates in line with the Financial Regulations.

Governors **noted** the following for completion ahead of 2024/25:

- Governors' Register of Interests
- Governors' Code of Conduct
- Governors' Eligibility

- Governors' Skills Audit
- FE Workforce Governor Data Collection

17 Policies for approval:

1. Financial Regulations

The Financial Regulations had been recommended by the TF&R committee for approval.

Governors noted the updates and **approved** the Financial Regulations.

2. Risk Management Policy

The Risk Management Policy had been recommended by the Audit Committee for approval.

Governors noted the minor changes and **approved** the Risk Management Policy.

3. Sub-contracting Fees and Charges Policy

The Sub-contracting Fees and Charges Policy had been discussed at the TF&R committee and subsequent updates had been made.

Governors **approved** the Sub-contracting Fees and Charges Policy.

4. Equality and Diversity Policy

Governors **approved** the Equality & Diversity Policy, noting that the policy will also be reviewed as part of the accreditation.

5. Data Protection Policy

The Data Protection Policy had been recommended by the TF&R committee for approval.

Governors noted the updates and **approved** the Data Protection Policy.

18 Review of meeting, and Cycle of Business

Governors agreed that the meeting provided a wealth of information and assurance.

19 Any other items of urgent business

The Director of Governance reminded governors to submit any governor expenses that they may have.

20 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is 17/10/2024 at 09:30

Staff and Student Governors left the meeting (11:41)

21- Confidential Items

26 *See confidential minutes*

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 12:50