

**Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on  
Thursday 17 October 2024 at 09:30  
Burslem Boardroom and via Microsoft Teams**

Present:	Jeremy Cartwright, Chair	In person
	Lisa Capper, Principal/CEO	In person
	Sally Garratt	Remote
	Rob Fisher	Remote
	Bernard Kumeta	In person
	Tom Nadin	In person
	Ben Richards	In person
	Steve Sawbridge	In person
	David Shufflebottom	In person
	Chrissy Pawliszyn, Staff Governor	In person
	Jenny Scrivens, Staff Governor	In person
	Mekdes Mideksa, Student Governor	In person
In Attendance:	Cath Brierley, Deputy Principal	In person
	Antoinette Lythgoe, Chief Financial Officer	In person
	Nova Abela, Chief People Officer	Remote
	Kay Kavanagh, Director of Governance	In person
	Angela Brookes, Executive Director of MIS (item 15 only)	Remote

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1-5 See Confidential Minutes</b>	
<b>6-7 See Restricted Confidential Minutes</b>	
<b>8 Welcome &amp; Apologies</b> <i>The Principal &amp; CEO, Deputy Principal, Chief Financial Officer, Chief People Officer, and Staff &amp; Student governors joined the meeting.</i>	
Apologies for absence were received from Jo Mountney, Lisa Thomson, and Dave Hopley.	
<b>9 Declaration of Interest in any of the items on the agenda</b> 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.	
<b>10 Approval of new governors</b> Governors <b>approved</b> the appointment of Prof Annabel Kiernan as an external governor, from 17/10/2024 for a first 4-year term of office.	
Interest in the student governor role is being sought, with the process underway and several students have expressed an interest. Details will be confirmed ahead of the next board meeting.	
Governors were reminded to share the recruitment campaign on social media for the remaining vacant positions on the board.	
<b>11 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2024</b> Governors <b>approved</b> the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2024 as an accurate record.	

## 12 Action Progress Report

Governors noted the action process report.

One action is to be carried forward concerning the waterfall chart, which will be available at the next meeting.

## 13 Learner Voice & Enrichment Report

The Principal and CEO presented the paper, providing the following highlights:

- Enrichment 2024/25 was launched during induction week and our Freshers Festival, the programme has been reshaped in consultation with staff and learners and includes new clubs such as Women's Football, Darts, Cricket Net Sessions at the Cricket Cave, and a Choir.
- The Fresher's Festival was supported by a wide range of organisations, including Stoke City FC, Engage Boxing Club, and Sexual Health Team. In addition, a range of internal support services were also in attendance to offer support, advice and guidance including Careers, Counselling, Mentoring and Health and Wellbeing.
- It is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Challenge South Africa. We have 20 learners on-programme for Challenge South Africa 2025, who are currently working on a range of fundraising initiatives to raise the £850 per-person student contribution required.

The enrichment program delivers over and above what is required, and continues to run despite the increased number of students, however, the associated costs with the increased numbers are under review.

The Chair commented that more ex-students are returning to talk about their journeys, speaking at events.

**Action:** Director of Governance to share video clips of MPs with governors

There were no questions.

## 14 Principal & CEO Report

The Principal and CEO provided an update on the 'Skills Ready, Future Ready' one year on, confirming that over half of the objectives are completed, with 2 years remaining on the strategy.

The capital programme has progressed well reaching £19.7m over the last three years. The Lifestyle top floor refurbishment was completed earlier in the year followed by the completion of the broadcast and media suite, and the health suite, reconfigured hair salons and laboratory on the first floor of Lifestyle

The Level 3 Academy has been launched, with a popular open evening. This will have a different offer to attract L3 learners.

Regarding the policy landscape, we have met with Staffordshire County at a lead member level to discuss the sufficiency of places and how this can be taken forward as a group of colleges with the County and DfE. This is looking at the strain on the system regarding places.

A space efficiency review is underway, with the results due to be presented at the December Corporation meeting.

Staffordshire with the City and 8 District Councils have bid for devolved status (non-mayoral and no machinery of government changes meaning adult funds will not be devolved on current plans) with 5 themes including skills and employment. It will be governed by a leaders' board. We await the devolution prospectus from the central government.

Director of  
Governance

The Chair **asked** how much of the collaboration is embedded and doesn't rely on direct input from the Principal & CEO. The Principal & CEO explained that it does require leadership, however, capacity has been built within the college, via Directors, the Executive Team, and Heads of learning. Good communication and partnerships should continue and named account holders are in place.

## **15 Learner Outcomes & Data Dashboard**

*The Executive Director of MIS joined the meeting.*

The report provides an overview of the 'data on a page' Governor Dashboard report and Apprenticeship Accountability Framework for the end of year 23/24. The data presented here is as of 24-09-24. Finalised data will be submitted to ESFA by 17-10-24 (R14 collection).

Highlights from the report include:

- Level 3 results (based on a cohort of 543 students) are positive with a 2% increase in overall pass rate (92%, 22/23 90%).
- The College's very first T Level cohorts (6 in Construction; 4 in Childcare) have just completed their first year, and achieved well overall and with exceptional performance in their employer-set projects (90% A\*-C).
- For 16-18 learners, retention is 87%, below both KPI target (92%) and the 22/23 national average (89.9%).
- For 19+ learners retention is 89%, which is below both KPI (94%) and 22/23 national average (93.0%), and consistent across directorates.
- Overall attendance is 82% with good consistency across directorates, but a decline on 22/23 outturn of 84.7% and below the College target of 88%.
- 23/24 Apprenticeship Achievement is 60.6% which is +3% to 22/23 (57.7%) and above the 22/23 national rate for GFE Providers (57.8%). It also means the 'needs improvement' flag against achievement in the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework will no longer apply (threshold is <62%).

The Executive Director of MIS explained that retention is still a concern and remains a focus, with different ideas to retain learners being explored.

A governor commented that retention remains a concern and would welcome seeing comparison data with other similar colleges. The Executive Director of MIS explained that retention strategies are in place and good practice across providers can be shared.

*The Executive Director of MIS left the meeting.*

## **16 Performance Measures / KPIs 23/24 and 24/25**

The Deputy Principal confirmed that the SAR 2023/24 has been internally validated as Good with the apprenticeship provision also graded as Good after the previous RI grade at the last Ofsted inspection and included a visit from an exHMI.

Retention remains a focus, and the overall attendance outturn was 83% with good consistency across each curriculum area whilst below the College target of 88%

The apprenticeship income met its funding target of £2.2M (100%) and Adult Skills and Community Learning has a factored position of 103% vs KPI 97% of its income.

High-level skills at level 3 are 36% vs KPI of 35.0%. The number of level 3 Study Programme learners enrolled is increasing due to market share and reputation from enhanced marketing and engagement with learners.

The destinations report undertaken by the external agency Purlos shows that 96% of learners progress into positive destinations in the late Autumn of 2024.

Student satisfaction for the question 'Would recommend the College' at the Induction Survey out turned 90% vs KPI 95%. Further surveys such as On-Programme and End of Year Survey will investigate this further.

The employer survey was disappointing in the number of returns received this is now being relaunched with key account holders targeting employers to engage in the process.

The College has good to outstanding financial health and remains within bank and PMO covenants for 2023/24.

The Chair asked regarding apprenticeships if we have a notion of what 'good' looks like. The Deputy Principal explained that obtaining validation from external sources, always looking at best practices, having good networks and collaborating enabled 'good'.

## **17 Management Accounts**

The Chief Financial Officer explained that the Management Accounts had been discussed at the recent TF&R meeting, and provided the following highlights:

- The surplus before ITDA was £4.174m. Post-year-end it is now £4.11m. The Auditors have confirmed that no significant adjustments are expected.
- The College's cash position remains strong with £4.98m in the bank, as of July 2024, of which approx. £1m was funding received in advance.
- It has been agreed that we will not account for a cash sweep by the ESFA. This remains a higher risk, until this is confirmed in writing.

A governor asked if the College need to plan for a cash sweep for next year? The Chief Financial officer explained that the KPIs are agreed on a 2-year basis. For FY2025&2026, the RF deal could be scrapped – this is to be agreed with the ESFA. If we achieve green against all 2024 KPIs, and also meet the curriculum KPIs, we can put a case forward for us to come out of monitoring.

## **18 Capital Update**

The Cauldon FECTF project has moved considerably since the Board meeting in July with the groundworks now underway. The Enterprise Hub work package was completed over the summer. The project is progressing on time and within budget.

Work is expected to begin on-site at the Burslem campus in late October / early November 2024. A 'spades in the ground' event is planned for 17th October 2024.

Leigh Crosby has been recruited as the new Executive Director of Capital & Estates.

The DfE is likely to carry out a conditions survey across all schools and colleges in the spring of 2025. Further details will be provided when known, but the College is preparing as much as possible.

Work has commenced on a space planning exercise across the College to ensure that space is utilised as efficiently and effectively as possible and to determine the space requirements for future growth over the next three years. Initial findings of this exercise are hoped to be available for the Corporation board in December 2024.

There were no questions.

## **19 Risk Report & Register**

The Chief Financial Officer explained that the Risk Register had been discussed at the recent Audit Committee meeting.

The risk of a cash sweep is still high but will be reduced. Mitigations are in place for all risks.

Risk registers for capital projects were also discussed at the Audit Committee meeting.

There were no questions.

## **20 Annual Board self-Assessment 2023-24**

The Director of Governance presented the Annual Board Self-Assessment for 2023/24 confirming that this had been discussed at the Governance Committee meeting and it will be discussed further to plan further improvements for the board.

There were no questions.

## **21 Chair reports and committee minutes**

### **1. TF&R**

Governors **approved:**

- Scheme of Delegation
- Subcontractors 2024/25
  - Learning Curve Group
  - North Staffordshire Engineering Group (NSEG)
  - Port Vale Foundation Hub
  - Stoke City Community Trust

For 2024/25, the total value of the subcontracting contracts of which £772K is income and £796k is contribution is £1.569m

### **2. Audit**

The Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that 'Reasonable' assurance for internal audit is the highest possible.

### **3. CQ&S**

The Chair of the CQ&S committee confirmed that retention was discussed in detail and the timing of the meeting was just before day 42. Updated figures will be available at the next meeting.

### **4. Governance**

There were no questions.

## **22 Review of meeting, and Cycle of Business**

Governors liked having the confidential items first on the agenda and would like this to remain for future agendas.

## **23 Any other items of urgent business**

Governors acknowledged that this was the final corporation meeting for the Principal & CEO. Governors gave their thanks and presented the Principal & CEO with a gift.

## **24 Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is 12 December 2024 at 09:30.

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 12:10