

**Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on  
Thursday 29 February 2024 at 09:00  
Burslem Boardroom and via Microsoft Teams**

Present:	Jeremy Cartwright, Chair	In person
	David Boughey	Remote
	Lisa Capper, Principal/CEO	In person
	Sally Garratt	Remote
	Kevin Hetherington	In person
	Bernard Kumeta	In person
	Hannah Molloy	In person
	Jo Mountney	In person
	Tom Nadin	In person
	Ben Richards	Remote
	David Rogers	In person
	David Shufflebottom	In person
	Steve Sawbridge	In person
	Chrissy Pawliszyn, Staff Governor	In person
	Jenny Scrivens, Staff Governor	In person
Pari Arian, Student Governor	In person	
Mekdes Mideksa, 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
	Rob Lawson, Observer (External Governance Reviewer)	In person
	Kay Kavanagh, Director of Governance	In person

No.		Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome, introductions, and apologies for absence</b> Apologies for absence were received from Rob Fisher and Lisa Thomson.	
<b>2</b>	<b>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>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2023</b> The minutes of the meeting were <b>approved</b> as an accurate record.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Action Progress Report</b> The actions arising from the previous meeting were summarised in the progress report and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Membership:</b> 1. <u>Approval of new members of the Board</u> <i>Ben Richards and David Shufflebottom left the room for this item.</i>  Governors <b>noted</b> the recommendations from the interview panel and the candidate CV's.	

A governor **questioned** the balance of both diversity and employment of the board as a whole, given the potential 3 new governors.

The strength in Healthcare was noted and it was acknowledged that David Rogers may not complete his second term of office fully, thus a more balanced board will be restored (in terms of employment).

The 3 new candidates between them, bring experience in finance, operations, estates, digital, corporate governance, communications, and strategy.

The board was **assured** by CEO that the recruitment campaign, run by FE Associates, had a clear requirement to promote EDI and all protected characteristics beyond whatever else had been done before and all candidates were considered against criteria. The Board now has a wider balance than a few years ago in terms of background, age, gender but still work to do to reflect the student population and local community. There are also good take up and attendance from staff and student governors. There remains 1 vacancy on the board and this will remain the case for the recruitment for this vacancy, and any future vacancies. It was **noted** a different approach will be taken to recruit for the final vacancy.

Governors **approved**:

- the appointment of Benjamin Richards as an External Governor, for a first 4-year Term of Office from 29/02/2024
- the appointment of David Shufflebottom as an External Governor, for a first 4-year Term of Office from 29/02/2024
- the appointment of Lisa Thomson as an External Governor, for a first 4-year Term of Office from 29/02/2024

*Ben Richards and David Shufflebottom re-joined the meeting.*

## 2. Approval of 2<sup>nd</sup> Term of Office for David Rogers

Governors **approved** the extension of the Term of Office of David Rogers from 24/02/2024.

## 6 **External Review of Governance – final report, discussion, and next steps**

Rob Lawson, AoC, introduced the External Review of Governance report, explaining that it included some of the journey and the changes since the last review.

Overall, the conclusion of the review is that:

*there is strong evidence that the Board is highly proficient and consistently impacts positively on college strategy, effectiveness, and outcomes.*

Strengths include:

- Succession planning
- Skills analysis
- Skilled and experienced board and chaired and attended well
- Student voice is exemplary
- Governors have a positive outlook and are curious and ambitious for learners.
- Good link governor scheme
- Tring financial oversight

Areas of development include:

- Diversity on the board (inc gender)
- Raising awareness of the Nolan principles
- Wider remit for Board Self-assessment
- Improved governance platform.
- Shorter length of meetings

Governors **acknowledged** the positive report, **noting** the improvement evidenced from the previous review 3 years ago.

A governor **asked** if there was any best practice that Rob Lawson could advise of, from his experience at other colleges. Rob Lawson advised that LSEC are exceptional with their approach to EDI, and suggested that the College could contact them. The CEO explained the links with LSEC and their CEO and this will be explored.

Governors thanked Rob Lawson and there were no further questions.

## **7 Student Voice**

### Student events and activities

Students joined the meeting to talk about their experiences during Challenge South Africa 2024.

Governors were humbled by the student's accounts and thanked them for sharing their experiences.

A student governor gave an overview of their involvement in the 'Skills for Staffordshire' event that they had attended, confirming that the event was beneficial and raised awareness for local careers.

## **8 Principal/CEO's Report**

Since the last Board meeting in December, our focus has been on the mid-year reviews of progress across quality and curriculum, and on the funding mid-year return.

The College remains in a much-strengthened position with an Ofsted Good rating, good to outstanding financial health for 2022/23 which is being maintained in-year, a top rating for the Governance Review, become a soon to be license holder and partner to the new Institute of Technology and we have launched the new strategic plan and £14.4m capital programme.

The College has received an exceptional in-year growth award of circa £990k in February, due to the exponential growth in funded Study Programme learners and we are now looking at how we can use those funds to support those additional students.

Study Programme continues to grow since the last meeting from 1919 to 1940.

Adult delivery is performing well and we are predicting 100% delivery against the threshold of 97%.

The internal communications survey has produced strong results of 87% on engagement with the values, 78% on vision and mission, and 84% agreeing that all relevant methods of internal communications are in place and effective.

The 'Well-being Week' was held recently, with a theme of resilience and an emphasis on personal well-being strategies. It was well attended. The 'One Team' ethos continues across the college.

Stakeholder partnerships continue to grow and improve, with various events having taken place, or due to take place. A bus has been commissioned to advertise the Multiply project, and several motorbikes have been donated to the college by the Police.

The government has just announced the requirement for colleges to deliver 4 hours of maths and 3 hours of English from this September, in person, in classroom sessions, each week, with a reduced leeway of non-attendance/compliance to 2.5%.

A governor asked if the increased requirement for English and maths would be deliverable. The Principal explained that various models of delivery are being considered, and these will be presented to the next CQ&S committee. She explained

this was quite a controversial policy and there may well be changes yet. Challenges include staffing, tuition fund being removed, the need to teach the fourth hour face to face in the classroom, and no changes to this for all cohorts regardless of the level of course and starting points. The AoC have picked up the lobby to try and influence.

## **9 Strategic Plan KPI Update (As presented at TF&R)**

The paper details the progress to date on the list of KPIs (against the 5 strategic objectives).

Retention is good; however, attendance has dropped below KPI although work is in hand to boost this back up and we can see progress.

Apprenticeship achievement is strong at 44.9%, indications are that we will meet KPI.

Out of Funding (OOF) Apprentices are at 2% and 6%, well under the ESFA target of 15%.

Adult Skills and Community Learning is in a good position and responding to local employers/markets. It is currently at 103.69% of allocation, which is above the KPI of 97%.

There were no questions.

## **10 Curriculum Update – Data dashboard performance to date (As presented at CQ&S)**

The Deputy Principal highlighted the following from the report:

- Retention rates for 16-18 and Adults are above KPI
- Attendance rates are below KPI, work continues to improve attendance
- Focus continues on Care Leavers, as they are currently below KPI
- The Apprenticeship Accountability Framework has 4 KPIs at green, 2 at amber, and 1 at red. Most should be green at the next iteration.

There were no questions.

## **11 Management Accounts – January 2024**

The Chief Financial Officer provided an overview of the January Management Accounts, confirming that the financial health rating is 'good' and could move to 'outstanding'. Loans and Bank covenants are secure.

Although the College has an extremely healthy financial position, it brings different risks, as we need to ensure that we don't have a cash sweep for excess cash (50% of any excess is taken back). Pensions/Pay are being considered. The additional in-year funding is not yet showing on the accounts.

There continue to be some vacancies in College and it is possible/probably, that we will have a pay underspend, which isn't our intention.

The Chair **asked** that is the growing position and in-year funding likely to continue over the next couple of years. The Chief Financial Officer explained that we want the college to continue to grow (targeted growth). From a financial point of view, the growth is timely as we can re-negotiate the deal with the DfE every 2 years. The principal added that due to the demographic, the growth is likely to reduce in 2027. The general election may have an impact on growth too.

## **12 Risk Management**

The rating of 3 risks have been updated since the last meeting. 2 concerning Teaching & Learning and 1 for Capital. These changes have been discussed at the recent CQ&S committee.

Due to the Capital Projects needing appropriate levels of funding and the possible operational disruption, we have increased that risk on the register. This will be discussed further in the confidential item of this meeting.

The Risk Appetite statement, following the recent Strategy Day, is being developed and will be discussed during the next Strategy Day.

### 13 Chairs Reports

Overview of the following meetings were provided in the meeting papers:

- Capital Projects Committee
- Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee
- Governance Committee
- Skills and Apprenticeships Task and Finish Group
- Transformation, Finance, and Resources Committee

There were no questions.

### 14 Review of Meeting

Overall governors felt that the meeting was positive with good oversight.

Information was clear and expectations of decisions were concise. The need for good scrutiny and challenge as we have at the committee level was noted.

Governors would like future meetings to allow for deeper discussions in relevant areas (deep dives), and improved use of a governor portal to provide information in between meetings (such as changes to risks, or chair updates). The CEO also pointed to the new newsletter we have introduced.

### 15 Any other items of urgent business

**Action:** The Director of Governance to issue an updated calendar invite for the Strategy Day as the morning of day 2 for this set is no longer needed.

Director of Governance

The Deputy Principal advised of two items of expenditure that require Corporation approval. These being:

- expenditure of £134,712 (inc VAT) from LSIF (Local Skills Improvement Fund) Capital Funding for an Instrumentation Lab for Advanced Industrial Manufacturing from LJ Create
- expenditure of £157,452 (inc VAT) from LSIF Capital Funding for an engineering 5-axis CNC Machine from HAAS

**Action:** Director of Governance to circulate the details of the expenditure to governors, for comment to the Chair.

Director of Governance

**Action:** The CFO to review the financial regs to take into account rising costs and higher thresholds.

Chief Financial Officer

Governors **approve** a 'Chairs Action' for final approval of the expenditure for the Instrumentation Lab and the 5-axis CNC Machine.

### 16 Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 09:30

*Staff and Student Governors left the meeting.*

### 17- Confidential Items

18 See confidential minutes

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 11:15.