



## Full Corporation Meeting

12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Time: 6.00 pm  
Chair: Mr Nick Horsfall

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### Present:

Mark Rigby	Y	Carol Davies	Y	Nick Horsfall	Y
Andy Lythgoe	A	Stuart Merrills	Y	Glenys Hughes	Y
Angus Hughes	Y	Sam Jackson	Y	Carole Swarbrick	A
Susan Wright	A	Rob Coyle	Y	Alison Oakley	A
Bashir Shama	Y	Bilkis Ismail	X	Martyn Cox	Y
Alexandria Stones	Y	Emily Louise Quinton	Y	Stephen Bamber	Y

### In Attendance:

Lesley Hart Deputy Principal	Y	Sandra McManus Deputy Principal – Curriculum	Y	Sarah Ball Assistant Principal	Y
Tracy Tunstall Clerk	Y				

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Alison Oakley, Susan Wright, Carole Swarbrick and Andy Lythgoe.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. Welcome to New Governors

The Chair welcomed both Sam Jackson and Steve Bamber to their first Full Corporation meeting and they both shared their background and experience with everyone present.

### 4. Amendment to Standing Orders

The Chair drew attention to the Standing Orders and informed Governors that currently Student Governors are elected annually. He recommended that paragraph 5.1 regarding terms of office be amended as follows:-

- 5.1 Governors are normally appointed for a period of four years with the exception of the Student Governors who are appointed for the duration of their programme of study or until such time as he/she ceases to be a student at the College.

Governors agreed the amendment to the Standing Orders with immediate effect.

## **5. Appointment of Student Governors**

The Chair informed Governors that the Student Learner Voice had held elections for the two posts of Student Governor and that Alexandria Stones and Emily Louise Quinton were recommended for appointment as Student Governors.

Governors formally approved the appointment of Alexandria Stones (second year student) and Emily Louise Quinton (first year student) as Student Governors in line with the changes to the Standing Orders outlined above.

## **6. Appointment of External Governor**

The Chair informed Governors that Mr Zahid Tapas, a former student, had expressed an interest in becoming a Governor. He has completed an application form and references have been received. The Chair and Clerk had recently met with Mr Tapas and recommend his appointment as Governor.

A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed that Mr Tapas is appointed as Governor for a four year term of office.

## **7. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

## **8. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

### **(a) Minute 5 - Safeguarding Training for Governors**

The Clerk informed Governors that the link to the Safeguarding Training which had previously been circulated had not worked to allow Governors to complete the questionnaire. This has now been rectified and the new link would be circulated to all Governors to complete and return.

### **(b) Minute 5(b)(iv) – 360° Appraisal Process for Chair of Governors**

The Chair's appraisal process was now complete and the outcome discussed at the next Governance and Search Committee in January.

### **(c) Minute 5(e) - Minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee**

Governors **noted** that the CIF Bid to replace the College roof has been re-submitted. The College's contribution towards the work has been increased significantly to £1,060,560. The outcome of the bid will be known in May 2024.

### **(d) Minute 12 - Principal's Report**

Governors **noted** that the joint bid with Wigan and Leigh College as project lead, was successful and that £113k has been received to deliver digital skills.

## **9. Principal's Performance, Review and Development (PRD)**

The Chair informed Governors that the Principal's PRD has now taken place. Sandra Hamilton-Fox, as external adviser, has been involved throughout and the process had been extremely effective. A report and action plan would now be developed. The Principal will now undertake a PRD for the Deputy Principal and the Deputy Principal – Curriculum.

## **10. Whistleblowing Policy**

The Clerk informed Governors that the Whistleblowing Policy has been revised in line with Evershed's recommendations and was presented for approval. The policy would be reviewed on a 3 year cycle.

Governors **agreed** to approve the Whistleblowing Policy.

## **11. Minutes of Sub-Committees**

### **(a) Student Affairs Committee**

The minutes of the Student Affairs Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were **noted**.

The Chair of the Committee reported that the students had delivered an excellent SWAY presentation and drew Governors' attention to events which students have been involved in and highlighted, in particular, the Open Mic Poetry night which is now an annual event with many staff and students participating. The use of QR Codes and Forms in College is proving successful in getting students involved in events.

### **(b) Finance and Personnel Committee**

The minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> November were **noted**.

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that there are now 1859 funded students on roll.

### **(c) Curriculum and Quality Committee**

The minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 were **noted**.

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that the Committee had received a good update on the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and highlighted that 10% of students progressed to Russell Group Universities in September 2023, however he would like to see more progression going forward. An excellent presentation on the Professional Growth Programme had also taken place.

The Chair of the Committee highlighted the subject areas where interventions are taking place and drew attention to the Science intervention plans. He reported that an External Consultant would be working with the department in the new year. He asked what the total cost of the intervention strategies are likely to be and **noted** that these are likely to be around £100k.

The Chair of the Committee reported on the ALPs scores and highlighted that the College can achieve 4, however he felt that an ALPs 3 is achievable if measures are put in place.

#### **(d) Risk and Audit Committee**

The minutes of the Risk and Audit Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were **noted**.

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that Alexander Hogg from Wylie and Bisset had attended the meeting via zoom and reported that there were no recommendations raised in relation to the audit. He confirmed that the Corporation can take substantial assurance that the annual report and accounts have been prepared in line with all necessary legislation and accounting standards.

## **12. Approval of the Annual Report and Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023**

The Deputy Principal outlined the following documents which required approval.

#### **(a) Letter of Representation**

The draft letter to confirm that the Corporation has fulfilled its responsibilities and that the accounts give a true and fair view of the college's financial position had been considered and was recommended for approval by the Risk and Audit Committee. Governors **agreed** to approve the Letter of Representation and authorised the Chair and Principal to sign the letter on behalf of the Corporation.

#### **(b) Regularity Letter of Representation**

The draft Regularity Letter of Representation to confirm that the Corporation has proper internal processes in place and is used to test the effectiveness of internal controls was recommended by the Risk and Audit Committee for approval by the Corporation. Governors **agreed** to approve the Regularity Letter of Representation and authorised the Chair and Principal to sign the letter on behalf of the Corporation.

#### **(c) Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 July 2023**

The Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 July 2023 were **approved**.

The Deputy Principal drew attention to the Performance Indicators on Page 6 and reported that these should be referred to the Finance and Personnel Committee in order to consider what the targets should be going forward to build cash reserves.

**(d) 2022/23 Annual Report from the Chair of Risk and Audit Committee**

The annual report to the Corporation from the Chair of the Audit Committee was considered and recommended to the Corporation for approval. Governors **agreed** to approve the report.

**(e) Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire**

The Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire is a standard format which is completed by the Deputy Principal and confirms that the Corporation has proper internal processes in place and is used to test the effectiveness of those internal controls. The questionnaire was considered and **agreed** that this should be formally approved.

**13. Management Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

The Deputy Principal gave a detailed report on the Management Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and reported that it was still early in the financial year to identify any areas of change. She drew attention to the staff costs and reported that the original budget was produced on the basis that the proposed new structure would be in place and some posts re-designated. At present the new structure has not been finalised, the additional cost is £30k for the current year. The Deputy Principal reported that the budget assumed a pay award of 5% however the actual pay award has been agreed at 6.5%.

Bank interest is received in accordance with the daily cash balance held within the college's bank. Surplus funds equating to the outstanding bank loan have been placed on a 12-month fixed treasury deposit account. Surplus held outside the deposit account are held in a high interest deposit account at 0.75% below base rate.

The Deputy Principal reported that the increased funding rate per student will be discussed at the next Finance and Personnel Committee to consider strategies on how to use the additional funding.

The Deputy Principal informed Governors that the Agency costs budget had been set at £100k based on current agency contracts, however she highlighted that the additional agency costs which are currently required due to maternity leave, vacant posts in Science and sickness absences will be £243,536, although the actual additional expenditure in real terms at present are £161k.

Governors **noted** the projected outturn of £784,984.

**14. Ofsted Report**

The Principal informed Governors that the Ofsted Report had previously been circulated to all Governors and reported that inspections are now based on a new much tougher framework. As a result of this, many colleges have been down graded and whilst he had hoped for an outstanding grading he was pleased to have maintained 'Good'.

The Deputy Principal – Curriculum highlighted that the report reads well and that only two areas have been identified as to what needs to be done to improve. She drew attention to Safeguarding arrangements and reported that safeguarding will only be reported as effective or not and was pleased to highlight that our safeguarding systems are effective.

Governors **noted** the report and thanked the staff for their hard work.

## 15. College Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

The Principal informed Governors that the college self-assessment report had been updated to reflect the overall Ofsted grades.

A Governor asked who the assessment report is for and **noted** that it is used to enable Governors to know what is being focussed on, individual staff to carry out their own reflection and for Heads of Department and Course Leaders. The overarching College key priorities are set out for all staff.

A Governor asked what is the purpose of the report and **noted** that this is used as part of our quality assurance. The document follows the inspection format in assessing ourselves against Ofsted criteria and whilst it is not mandatory it is a useful tool in assessment.

A Governor asked where the key points from the Ofsted report are shown and the Deputy Principal – Curriculum reported that these have been added to the Quality Improvement Plan. A full review of this will take place in February.

There was a general discussion. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum informed Governors that work continues as normal following the Ofsted Inspection and that ‘deep dives’ are currently taking place as planned.

Governors **agreed** that, whilst this document is useful, it should clearly identify areas where we want to improve and the key strengths should outline the best strength at the top of the list. It was recognised that this is a working document, however Governors felt that the self-assessment report should be more succinct.

## 16. Principal’s Report

The Principal spoke to his report. He informed Governors of the proposed key elements of the The Strikes (Minimum Service Level) Act 2023 but highlighted that arrangements currently lack information on the detailed obligations on colleges and the consequences of non-compliance from colleges or unions.

The Principal drew attention to the National Living Wage which is now confirmed from 1 April 2024 at £11.44 and reported that revisions will need to be made through the NJC to the NJC Support Staff pay spine to take this into account as the lowest point on the pay spine is currently equivalent to £11.34 per hour.

Governors **noted** that funded students who have enrolled is now confirmed at 1859. Retention rates remains strong.

The Principal reported that footfall at open events this year already exceeds last year’s total by 436 with the January event yet to take place, and applications to start in September 2024 are significantly up than at the same point last year. A Governor asked if this will mean the College will become more selective and the Principal reported that the Admissions Policy takes this into account when necessary.

A Governor asked the Student Governors how they found the admissions process and **noted** that this had been positive.

Governors **noted** the Principal’s report.

## **17. Any Other Business**

There was none.

## **18. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 6.00 pm.

Governors were reminded that Stone King who have undertaken the External Governance Review, would be presenting their report at an additional meeting of the Full Corporation on Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 at 5.00 pm.

Staff Governors and Student Governors left the meeting.

## **19. Proposed Staffing Structure and Costings**

The Principal outlined the proposed structure and the rationale behind this. He informed Governors that the College has grown in size and there was a need to strengthen the Senior Management Team. As the Deputy Principal – Curriculum has now tendered her resignation it gives an opportunity to implement some of the proposed changes as Phase 1. The new post of Vice Principal will be advertised externally using a recruitment consultant. Two Assistant Principal posts for Teaching and Learning, and for Student Experience will be advertised internally and ring-fenced to the four current curriculum senior leaders. The relevant senior leaders have been informed of the new posts and the process for recruitment. A Governor asked what plans were in place in the event that there was no internal interest and **noted** that the structure would need to be re-visited. The Assistant Principal posts will take effect from February. £30k has been included in the budget for the additional costs until the end of the financial year. The total cost of the restructure for a full year will be £150k.

After a general discussion it was **unanimously agreed** to approve the proposed staffing structure.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.05 pm