



**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2025 AT
2.30 PM IN H8 AND H9 HUDSON BUILDING**

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MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2025 AT 2.30 PM IN H8 AND H9 HUDSON BUILDING

Present: Andrew Cochrane (Chair), Richard Blackmore, Alan Brady, Ranjit Singh Dol, Andrew Dymond, Stuart Ellis, Martyn Marples, Jane McNeil, Mandie Stravino, Anju Virdee

In attendance: Jo Clifford, Aaron Denton, Heather Kelly, Melanie Lanser, Brian Malyan, Rob Bamford (Minute Numbers 69 and 70/24-25) Rose Matthews (Clerk to the Corporation)

PART ONE - GENERAL MINUTES

65/24-25 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Sue Bradley, Bismah Latif, Jill Matthews, Sophie Sanderson and Narinder Sharma

66/24-25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND QUORUM

All members were eligible, the meeting was quorate and there were no new declarations.

67/24-25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22 MAY 2025

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2025 were formally approved as a true and accurate record.

68/24-25 MATTERS ARISING

61/24-25 This related to the review of the strategies and operating plan which had been circulated prior to the Corporation Strategy Day and reviewed with members throughout the event.

69/24-25 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The Director of Health and Safety (DHS) presented the Health and Safety termly report which provided an overview of arrangements in place to fulfil DCG's statutory health and safety obligations.

Accidents were slightly down on last year, with four reportable events under RIDDOR with no recalls.

SE appreciated the statistics may be better than previous years, but said without a target or benchmark it was difficult to tell if it was better enough.

The DHS said the AoC had restarted the Health and Safety Forum and he attended the Landex Health and Safety Group. The AoC had requested all those in attendance share their statistics to provide benchmarking against equivalent colleges. Once the benchmarks had been provided, internal targets could then be set.

Action Date

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the Health and Safety Report with an action for the DHS to provide internal targets and benchmarking in future reports.

RB

Oct 25

70/24-25 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

The (Designated Safeguarding Lead) DSL presented the termly Safeguarding Report, which provided an overview of safeguarding compliance and how the Group continued to meet its statutory requirements.

Following a review of the Single Central Record (SCR) prohibition checks were discussed. **AB asked if staff were joining were eligible to be in the College without prohibition checks.** The DSL explained there was always a delay for those checks to come through, but all other checks were undertaken to mitigate (DBS etc.).

The DSL discussed the trends in student disclosures, including gender and ethnic diversity. They highlighted the need to address gender and cultural barriers to disclosure and prioritise mental health support for high-need students. Often student will have had a history in school. The team were working through files from feeder schools to draw out.

Members discussed the safeguarding statistics by groups and particularly made note to increases in self-harm, mental health and suicidal tendencies in high needs students. They asked for specifics in terms of how many students were in the group the percentages referred to. This was clarified by the DSL and the VP Student Experience explained internal benchmarks had been put in place.

The Chair asked if counterparts at other colleges were seeing similar trends. There were no benchmark comparisons with other colleges but from all the forums attended trends were very similar.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the Safeguarding Report, noted key trends and action being taken to support students.

71/24-25 CHAIR'S UPDATE – HOT TOPICS

The Chair highlighted the College had the support of East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) colleges to put forward their bid for DCG as a Construction Technical Excellence College and were competing against other bids from Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire. The outcome was likely to be known in readiness for September.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the update provided.

72/24-25 REPORT FROM THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 JUNE 2025, INCLUDING;

- **BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLAN (INCLUDING FINANCIAL PLANNING CHECKLIST)**
- **PEROD 9 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**
- **PROCUREMENT**
- **HE TUITION FEES**

The Committee Chair presented the report from the Finance and Resources Committee held on 25 June.

The Committee had reviewed the Period 9 Management Accounts and the position compared to that predicted – **which members challenged on.** The

financial position showed a positive trajectory with increased EBITDA, driven by additional income that could not have been predicted at the budget setting process.

The Committee recommended the Corporation approve £1.39m for a non-consolidated staff payment and the release of the additional Post-16 grant relating to a period from April to August 2025. An offer has been made of £1,500 for anyone paid under £30,000 (FTE) and £1,200 for anyone over £30,000 (FTE) non-consolidated and a 2% increase to all salaries/increments for all employees from 1 April 2025 subject to union negotiations and Corporation approval by 31 July 2025.

The Budget and Financial Plan were presented to the Corporation. This had rigorously been reviewed at the Committee. Three scenarios had been presented to the Committee, all of which presented 'good' financial health. The increase in government funding had allowed for the budget to aim for a 6% EBITDA, aligning with the FE Commissioner's benchmark for colleges. The budget included a 4% pay award with effect from 1 September 2025 to all employees subject to successful union negotiations.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved:

- **£1.39m for a non-consolidated staff payment and the release of the additional Post-16 grant relating to a period from April to August 2025. An offer of £1,500 for anyone paid under £30,000 (FTE) and £1,200 for anyone over £30,000 (FTE) non-consolidated and a 2% increase to all salaries/increments for all employees from 1 April 2025 subject to union negotiations and Corporation approval by 31 July 2025.**
- **the Budget and Financial Plan option with an EBITDA Target of 6% for 2025–26, which included an above inflation pay offer of 4% with effect from 1 September 2025 to all employees subject to successful union negotiations.**
- **The Financial Planning Checklist.**

RESOLVED: Following a robust procurement exercise, the Committee had considered a number of contracts. The Corporation approved the following:

- **Davlyn Construction are awarded the contract for the Animal Care refurbishment works as per the details of their tender.**
- **Bell Group are awarded the contract for the internal and external decorating services as per the details of their tender**
- **That RS Projects be awarded the contract subject to review and potential cost adjustments to align with the budget.**
- **The recruitment organisations listed below are appointed on to a college agency framework for a period of two years with the option to extend for up to two years in annual increments.**

Title	Suppliers
College Recruitment 7 suppliers	Morgan Hunt UK Limited Reed Specialist Recruitment Exede Ltd Axis Recruitment Dovetail and Slate Ltd Provision Recruitment Ltd (part of Operam) Think FE Ltd ta FE Partners
Cleaning staff	Axis Recruitment

	Blue Arrow Limited
Nursery staff	Axis Recruitment

Since the Committee had met, the CFO was able to provide an update on the college insurance. There was a slight increase, which was largely due to the College's organic growth, including the Motor Vehicle extension and the increased turnover. Members were satisfied the renewal demonstrated value for money

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the appointment of Arriva (the same provider as last year) for a further year.

RESOLVED: The Committee had received an updated report in relation to MFD supply and in light of the competitive offer the Corporation ratified the Chair's action to approve Konica Minolta as the MFD supplier for a five-year term.

Finally, the Committee had reviewed the HE Tuition Fees which were proposed for 2026-27 and were included in the Access and Participation Plan submission to the OFS.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the HE Tuition Fees for 2026-27

73/24-25

REPORT FROM THE STRATEGY AND CURRICULUM PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 JUNE 2025

The Chair updated the Corporation on discussions at the Strategy and Curriculum Planning Committee of 26 June, which focussed on a thorough review and recommendation of the Accountability Statement, which included the confirmation of the legal Duty to Review how well education meets local needs.

Given the timescale, with approval and submission required by 30 June, remote approval was sought from the Corporation based on recommendation by the Committee.

RESOLVED: The Corporation ratified the remote approval of the Accountability Statement.

74/24-25

REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 JUNE

The report from the Audit Committee held o 17 June was presented.

The Committee had received a robust report from Uniac in relation to HE assurance, which had been commissioned in response to the OFS audit and the DFE Bursary Audit.

Good progress was being made in terms of data protection with increased staff awareness

An update was provided in terms of internal audit and governors had been involved in the internal audit tender presentations with three providers. The Committee recommended WBG Services Ltd be appointed for a period of three years, plus the option to extend for two one-year periods. The CFO would approach them to see if they could carry out the Mock Funding Audit for this year.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the appointment of WBG Services Ltd for a period of three years with the option to extend for two one-year periods.

75/25-26

STRATEGIC RISK REPORT

• **CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

The Audit Committee had reviewed the Corporate Risk Register, three risks remained rated as high following preventative control being implemented. These related to failure to attract and retain correct, high calibre personnel, rise in inflationary pressures and failure to achieve financial targets.

The other area governors questioned related to the change in the finance team and the resource implications with the external audit. The CFO had provided assurance this was in hand with an interim Finance Director appointed to oversee the external audit.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the Strategic Risk Report and Corporate Risk Register.

76/25-26

REPORT FROM THE SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 JUNE 2025

The Committee met on 24 June and reviewed board composition, link roles and skills needs.

The Committee ratified the appointment of Peridot Partners as external recruiters for the Chair of FRC due to MM reaching his maximum tenure. The challenges with recruiting a qualified accountant were acknowledged. Peridot had also been tasked with sourcing an additional member for the Audit Committee.

On viewing skills needs, it was proposed Rosslyn Green, Co-opted Audit Committee member be asked to continue for a further two years based on her knowledge and expertise and value she brings to the Committee.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved Rosslyn Green be asked to continue for a further two years.

The Committee had reviewed the Senior Post Holder (SPH) Appraisal and Chair's Performance guidance and made a number of recommendations.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved:

- **The Remuneration Committee hold an additional meeting in September to provide detailed consideration of the SPHs and the Clerk's objectives for the new academic year and present to the Corporation for approval.**
- **The Remuneration Committee be renamed to Performance and Remuneration Committee.**
- **The Vice Chair to lead on the Chair's performance review.**
- **The SPH Remuneration and Performance Policy recommended to the Corporation.**

The Committee had discussed the DFE Governance Matters letter which outlined voting rights for student governors and recommended a change in the Instruments and Articles of Government.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the updated Instrument and Articles of Government.

An annual review had taken place of the Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation and these were recommended by the Committee for approval.

The Chair also shared discussions relating to the Annual Board Effectiveness review, Governance training and annual governor reviews and all members noted the updated Corporation Improvement Plan.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the updated Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation.

77/24-25 **REPORT FROM THE CURRICULUM PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 JUNE 2025**

The Committee Chair summarised key business discussed at the Curriculum Performance Committee on 23 June 2025.

The Committee had received a detailed Organisational Performance Management Report (OPMR) report, which had highlighted improved retention rates and quality of teaching and student satisfaction.

The Vice Principal Quality of Education explained it had been planning where a range of CPD had been undertaken. The First two days had seen an average of 75 people attend each session.

Attendance continued to be a concern, but was particularly challenging at entry level. The Committee had heard how support was being targeted and picked up with individuals where needed.

The Committee Chair said there had been really high satisfaction levels in student voice and apprenticeships were an improving picture.

The Early years academy had showed notable improvements and those areas still under intervention were discussed.

The Committee Chair pointed out it was the Student Governors last meeting and had asked her feedback on the role and her experience. She provided positive feedback and was very insightful and mature and all governors wished her well on the next stage of her career.

An update on Little Explorers Nursery was shared.

The Committee had reviewed the Self-Assessment Policy and Curriculum Improvement Policy.

The Head of HE had shared the Access and Participation Plan and following a robust discussion at the Committee it was recommended for approval to the Corporation.

RESOLVED: The Corporation:

- **Approved the Higher Education Access and Participation Plan.**
- **Approved the Self-Assessment and Curriculum Improvement Policy**
- **Accepted the Committee's report.**

78/24-25 LINK GOVERNOR VISITS AND CURRICULUM BUSINESS PLANNING PANELS

Link Governor visits were discussed, which provided assurance on achievement of strategic priorities.

AV had recently picked up the Mental Health link role and had received an induction from the VP – Student Experience. She had also carried out the Inclusion Link visit and met up with Compass who had an in-house team supporting the College in terms of mental and wellbeing to reduce the CAMHS waiting list. She said there was a healthy layer of mental health as part of the core teaching offer and supported self-regulation. Different interventions were being rolled out, toxic talk culture was one theme, race and gender were variable in terms of common themes and there was diversity amongst the pastoral coaching staff.

Members fed back following attendance at the Curriculum Business Planning Panels. Members reflected the panels were rigorous with no holding back in terms of challenging the service leads. **MM said one point related to failure to recruit following recent retirements and he asked if this could have been prevented had the team acted earlier.**

Another point made was that given the breadth of provision in the college not all governors attending the panels were expert in those fields. It was explained that was the reason link governors are approached in the first instance to be involved in the panels, these are then offered wider if they were not available. These give assurance around the Duty to Review and governors see the challenge around poor quality and financial return.

Discussions also related to employers differing requirements and the restrictions the College faced around which provision is funded.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the update.

79/24-25 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

The CFO provided an update on progress towards the 2024-25 KPIs which were reflected in the OMPR and the Management Accounts. She also outlined the process for 2025-26 target setting. It was noted curriculum measures were not calculated until the final outturn in October, so they will be prepared for December and then refreshed or reviewed.

She explained there would be a wider set of KPIs which would be produced over the coming weeks following the new strategies. This will provide measurable tracking on achievement of strategic objectives.

She shared a letter received from the FE Commissioner on benchmarking, which proposed some changes which were highlighted to members. A discussion was had around the staff pay benchmark, the difficulties the College had in achieving this and the difficulties in standardising across the sector.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the KPI update and approach for 2025-26.

80/24-25 ANNUAL APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR FOR 2025-26

RESOLVED: The Corporation voted Andrew Cochrane be appointed Chair of DCG Corporation for 2025-26.

81/24-25 ANNUAL APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE CHAIR FOR 2025-26

RESOLVED: The Corporation voted Alan Brady be appointed Vice Chair of DCG Corporation for 2025-26.

82/24-25 CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

There were no consent agenda items brought forward for discussion. The agenda items for approval had already been discussed as part of the main agenda.

The meeting finished at 4.10 pm