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MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2025 AT 4.30 PM IN T108, THE BOARD ROOM, THE ROUNDHOUSE

Present: Andrew Cochrane (Chair), Simon Allsop, Alan Brady, Sue Bradley, Nikol Daskalova, Andrew Dymond, Stuart Ellis, Guy Hodgkinson, Martyn Marples, Jane McNeil, Mandie Stravino OBE, Anju Virdee

In attendance: Jo Clifford, Aaron Denton, Heather Kelly, Melanie Lanser, Brian Malyan, Rose Matthews (Clerk to the Corporation)

| PART ONE - GENERAL MINUTES | Action | Date |
|--|--------|------|
| <p>19/25-26 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>The Chair introduced Simon Allsop, who would be taking over as Chair of FRC to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Rick Blackmore, Jill Matthews and Ranjit Singh Dol.</p> <p>Sue Bradley would be slightly late.</p> | | |
| <p>20/25-26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND QUORUM</p> <p>All members were eligible, the meeting was quorate and there were no new declarations.</p> | | |
| <p>21/25-26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2025</p> <p>RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2025 were formally approved as a true and accurate record.</p> | | |
| <p>22/25-26 MATTERS ARISING</p> | | |
| <p>69/24-25 The Director of H&S had provided internal targets and benchmarking on his report.</p> | | |
| <p>05/25-26 The Clerk had shared the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper with members.</p> | | |
| <p>09/25-26 The Clerk had circulated the validation panel dates again to members.</p> | | |
| <p>23/25-26 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE, INCLUDING POLICY REVIEW</p> <p>In the absence of the Health and Safety Director, the Deputy CEO shared an overview of health and safety.</p> <p>There had been a decline in mandatory health and safety training compliance over the year which was being investigated</p> <p>Benchmarking had been included for accident data, with a year-on-year comparison which was discussed and indicated the College was in line with the sector.</p> | | |

An internal review of the Health and Safety Policy had been undertaken with no changes made.

RESOLVED: The Committee accepted the verbal update and the review of the Health and Safety Policy.

24/25-26

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE, INCLUDING SAFEGUARDING POLICY REVIEW AND MARTYN'S LAW BRIEFING

The Deputy CEO provided a verbal update on safeguarding.

She reported strong assurance from a recent internal audit, with minor recommendations, which provided good evidence towards the College's Self-Assessment in terms of safeguarding.

Training compliance was strong for new starters; a follow-up required for existing staff on topics such as domestic abuse and sexual harassment. Emerging concerns related to looked after children, support for mental health, self-harm, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, substance misuse.

The Safeguarding Policy and Little Explorers Safeguarding Policy had been updated in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education*; with retrospective approval sought.

The Deputy CEO went on to discuss the Martyn's Law briefing, which placed a legal duty for certain premises and events to protect the public from terrorist attacks. This had been prepared by the DSL. It was confirmed the College remained in the standard tier regardless of size.

The Corporation held strategic responsibility for Martyn's Law in the organisation and their responsibilities were outlined in terms of policy alignment, resource allocation and monitoring. The DSL was the Responsible person for compliance.

It was explained DCG had recently introduced an Events Management Policy and undertaken a number of measures to ensure compliance with Martyn's Law which were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: The Corporation;

- **accepted the Safeguarding update**
- **provided retrospective approval of the Safeguarding Policy and Little Explorers Safeguarding Policy**
- **received and acknowledged the Martyn's Law overview.**

25/25-26

CONSTRUCTION TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE COLLEGE (CTEC) UPDATE

The Vice Principal for Technical and Vocational Education (VP-T&VE), who was leading on the CTEC provided a strategic overview for members, including progress to date.

Members noted the delivery plan had been sent to the DFE and monthly progress reporting to the DFE had commenced.

The Chair asked if the College were happy with the progress or if there was anything holding them back. The VP-T&VE said it was hard to benchmark against these projects. Having recently attended an event with other CTECs, DCG were on point with its progress compared to others.

The Chair went onto ask if there were any more technical excellence colleges coming out. Future opportunities related to new technical excellence centres in clean energy, advanced manufacturing, digital and defence.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the update provided.

26/25-26

GROUP SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Vice Principal – Quality of Education presented the Group Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Plan for 2024-25, which had been presented and recommended to the Corporation by the Curriculum Performance Committee.

All provision had been graded ‘good’ with the exception of ‘outstanding’ for personal development in education programmes for young people (EPYP). She highlighted the shifting context of the College’s cohort, with 61% of students enrolling without Grade 4 in English, Maths or both and increase in students declaring a mental wellbeing, identifying as ethnically diverse, with SEND needs and young carers. She pointed out the success the College achieved against the challenges it faced.

Attendance had improved in EPYP and adult Achievement rates had improved across 16-18 provision, apprenticeships and GCSE English and maths and members noted positive value added and progress scores and high-grade attainment. There was an increase in securing positive destinations, which continues to be progressed through the Academy Quality Improvement Plans.

Areas for development outlined in the Quality Improvement Plan related to narrowing gaps for disadvantaged and SEND students, curriculum design for digital, green and essential skills and a continued focus on behaviour, leadership CPD and employer engagement.

Members heard of preparations for the new Education Inspection Framework with delivery sessions planned for all teams in January.

MM asked how the College promoted the positive picture to the students to inspire them. It was explained the College had students as role models and it promoted where the A Level students had progressed as a result of achievement.

Members went on to discuss inspection and if there had been any feedback on the new framework. Colleges were being inspected now and feedback from those will inform next steps. The first inspection will not be published until the 16th January.

SA noted the achievements of students and the increasing numbers of those. He asked if there anything more around resources or estates required to support these students. The Vice Principal – Student Experience and Pastoral Support explained the College provided pastoral support and carried out transitions work with schools etc. The College provided this voluntarily and not receive any financial support in this area. The recent press coverage indicating the government were looking at autism support was mentioned and the College trend mirrored that across the country.

The Chair asked for a copy of the presentation and the Clerk agreed to upload onto Team Engine.

Clerk 16/12/25

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Self-Assessment Report 2024-25 and the Quality Improvement Plan for 2025-26.

27/25-26

REPORT FROM THE CURRICULUM PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 DECEMBER 2025

The Committee Chair presented the report from the Curriculum Performance Committee held on 3 December 2025.

Prior to the meeting Members had a tour of the Routes provision at the Johnson Building, they saw how students were nurtured and encouraged when they arrived, visited the different resource areas and met with students and staff – some of whom had moved internally into the Routes and were training to teach as part of the College’s internal development programme.

The Committee reviewed, discussed and recommended the College Self-Assessment Report, which had been presented in the previous agenda item.

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report and Statement were presented and discussed and the objectives for 2025-26 shared. The Committee recommended the Corporation approve the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report and the Statement for publication – which was a statutory requirement.

The Organisational Performance Management Report (OPMR), was shared, which provided an analysis of in-year performance. Strong teaching had been identified and the Committee had noted 94% of students felt safe. Withdrawals, attendance and emerging gaps information was shared. The Committee had discussed the areas in rapid improvement. **Members asked if the safeguarding survey results related to the way in which the question was phrased, SB pointed out there had been a lengthy discussion around safety which was followed up by the team.**

SE explained during his link visit earlier in the day he had met with students and challenged safety. They confirmed the issues were outside of college, but when on site they felt safe across a range of disciplines.

The Committee also recommended the Higher Education Annual Review for approval and discussed the Little Explorers Self-evaluation and the Curriculum Risk Register.

JM explained when the HE Annual review was signed off, it is the B conditions governors are looking at. The College continued to refer to progression and further study, it should refer to SOC codes B3 and progression to graduate outcomes. She explained there may be a small risk around the meeting of that threshold, which is 45%. She clarified it wasn’t just employment it was graduate outcomes.

The VP-QE explained the College had a new destinations capturing system that had recently gone live, which will enable precise capture of graduate outcomes JM’s point was recognised and the College work was ongoing to resolve.

The Committee also reviewed and recommended the Higher Education Academic Misconduct Policy for approval.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the Curriculum Performance report and approved:

- **The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report and the Statement for publication.**
- **The Higher Education Annual Review**
- **The Higher Education Academic Misconduct Policy.**

28/25-26

REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2025, INCLUDING;

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND EXTERNAL AUDIT 2024-25 –

- **AUDIT COMPLETION REPORT/ MANAGEMENT LETTER**
- **DCG REPRESENTATIONS LETTER**
- **DCG GROUP ACCOUNTS**
- **MBS REPRESENTATION LETTER**
- **MBS ACCOUNTS**
- **DCG SERVICES REPRESENTATION LETTER**
- **DCG SERVICES ACCOUNTS**
- **REGULARITY LETTER OF REPRESENTATION**
- **REGULARITY SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

The Chair of Audit Committee summarised the meeting held on 25 November and presented the Audit Committee Annual Report which confirmed the Audit Committee's opinion that the framework of governance, risk management, and control and processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the safeguarding of its assets are sufficiently robust to provide a reasonable opinion.

The change of internal auditors was noted and the seamless transition to new auditors had been highlighted. It was noted that whilst there had been a small period without internal audit, a broader approach had been taken which allowed the Committee to make those attestations.

The Committee noted the Counter-Fraud and Irregularity Policy, Data Protection Policy and Freedom of Information Policy had all undergone internal reviews with minor changes and accepted these revisions.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the Report from the Audit Committee and accepted the Audit Committee's Annual Report.

It also accepted the internal review of the Counter-Fraud and Irregularity Policy, Data Protection Policy and Freedom of Information Policy.

The Committee Chair went on to discuss RSM's final External Audit Completions report, which had been presented to Corporation members at the end of the Audit Committee meeting. RSM had indicated they were behind on some areas of the audit findings and had highlighted a few control points and a dilapidations adjustment. Overall, they provided a clean audit.

During the latter part of the Audit, the College were informed of a DFE funding audit. They were in the latter sample and work had started late. It was indicated timescale for the completion of the work was optimistic and if any adverse findings were raised, the College would have little time to respond up to the point of signing of the accounts.

The CFO explained there was an additional note in the Letter of Representation and the accounts to reflect the funding audit and enquiries had been made as to the status of the audit at this point and there were no

observations or findings to report that might impact the signing of the accounts.

The funding audit was yet to cover adult loans, 16-18 and apprentices and would then move onto a review of the PD stats. They have said there is nothing to report at this age but cannot say any more than that at this stage. There was a £1.19 materiality level and any changes required would be reflected in the 2025-26 financial statements, although it was unlikely to be in the region of that figure, but if found the DFE would claw back.

The Corporation Chair questioned when the funding audit would be complete, which was 31 March 2026 – the year end for the DFE. The funding auditors were hoping to complete their testing by the end of December and allow five working days for feedback.

The DCG Financial Statements had been reviewed by the Audit Committee, and the AGM's for the two subsidiary companies had approved in principle. The Regularity Self-Assessment had been presented and reviewed at October's Committee and was recommended for signature.

All documents were required to be submitted to the DFE by 31 December 2025.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved following document for signature by the Accounting Officer and Corporation Chair:

- **DCG Representations Letter**
- **DCG Group Accounts**
- **MBS Representation Letter**
- **MBS Accounts**
- **DCG Services Representation Letter**
- **DCG Services Accounts**
- **Regularity Letter of Representation**
- **Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire**

29/25-26 RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT AND SUMMARY REPORT

The Chair of Audit discussed the Annual Risk Management Report which provides assurance on activity during the previous academic year.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Annual Risk Management Report.

The CFO went on present the regular risk update. Key movement was outlined and three main risks remained high following preventative controls.

There had been effective control evidenced through the report and an observation had been made by SE where a few risks had not been achievable. A debate had taken place at Audit Committee whether, despite mitigations, due to the environment the College operates in some risks would always remain significant.

The report also summarised current litigation, health and safety issues, safeguarding incidents and there had been no reported instances of significant fraud.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the Risk Report and approved the Risk Register.

**REPORT FROM FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON
4 DECEMBER 2025**

The Chair of FRC presented the report from the meeting held on 4 December 2025.

The Committee briefly reviewed the prior year and noted the College had achieved its KPIs, with a positive outturn. The Period 3 Management Accounts were presented. EBITDA was ahead of target and reforecasting had commenced with budget holders. Members discussed variances and the impact on teaching provision. Capital was still strong and there was a small risk relating to spending by the end of March. The cash position was discussed and it was noted this was largely committed. A discussion had taken place in relation to a cash v debt strategy report to be presented at a future Corporation meeting.

The Committee recommended the non-consolidated pay award for all employees (including for the CEO, SPHs, and Clerk) be processed in December, decoupling it from the statutory accounts sign-off, as financial health remained strong.

Capital budget increase of up to £275,000 was recommended for essential projects and IT security upgrades.

The DFE Financial Health Dashboard had been received, along with an update on the Transformation Grant Capital Projects progress.

The security services procurement was considered with the contract due to expire at the end of April 2026. The Committee recommended a direct award of the outsourced security services contract to Constant for four years (with an option of a one-year extension), citing value for money and satisfaction with current service.

The Free Speech and Expression Code of Practice had been reviewed and was recommended for approval.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the report from the Finance and Resources Committee and approved:

- **The non-consolidated pay award for all employees (including for the CEO, SPHs and the Clerk) to be processed in December's payroll, decoupling it from the statutory accounts sign off.**
- **An increase up to the value of £275,000 to the capital budget, for essential projects and IT security upgrades.**
- **The direct award of the outsourced security services contract to Constant for four years with an option to extend for a further one year.**
- **The Free Speech and Expression Code of Practice.**

MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

The Clerk to the Corporation presented the annual Modern Slavery Statement which requires obligated organisations to publish a statement each financial year.

The statement outlined the action being taken by the College to tackle modern slavery. To show the College's commitment to the duty, it voluntarily publishes its statement on the Modern Slavery Register. A training refresher was also

being planned to raise awareness with the Leadership team, as it had been some time since the initial training had been undertaken.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Modern Slavery Statement for the Group.

32/25-26

REPORT FROM THE SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2025

The Chair of Search and Governance summarised the meeting held on 18 November.

The Committee had reviewed members attendance, the Register of Interests, Governance KPIs, the Governance Development Plan and an annual review of the Committee terms of reference had taken place with no changes proposed.

Members discussed the Corporation Self-Evaluation and an ambassadorial role for members at external forums etc. It was agreed to deliver the Derby College presentation to members and the Clerk would build into the cycle.

The Committee had reviewed Anju Virdee and Andy Dymond's terms of office, took into consideration their engagement and proposed to the Corporation they both be extended for a further two years.

SA noted the OMPR had referred to young white males and asked if anything more could be done for the Board to link with at risk groups. It was explained RSD of Derbyshire Police was on the Board and a key link in this area.

The Committee reviewed the Board Recruitment, Appointment and Induction Procedure which had been strengthened.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved:

- **Anju Virdee and Andy Dymond's terms of office for a further two years.**
- **The Board Recruitment, Appointment and Induction Procedure.**

33/25-26

STRATEGIC REFLECTION, INCLUDING LINK GOVERNORS

Governors reported on their recent link visits, which provided assurance on achievement of the College's strategic priorities.

20/10/25 – Academic Link Visit

AB updated members on his visit to the JWC, where he met with the Head of A Levels and English and maths. As part of the visit he reviewed their SAR, visited some classes and had a thorough review of the exam results over the summer and were about to embark on the resits. There were lots of positives and there was a good atmosphere.

03/11/25 – Landbased Link Visit

SB had met with the Vice Principal of Landbased and discussed progress, achievements and areas for development. She had also met with the safeguarding auditors at short notice to discuss her role as the Lead Governor for Safeguarding.

05/11/25 – Routes Visit

The Chair had visited the Routes provision and attended a staff meeting to review progress 6-8 weeks into its introduction. The team were incredibly

motivated and he had the impression students were engaging better in that environment. The key takeaway was the environment and the DCEO explained those students did not thrive on the main campus. The environment was discussed and future options, particularly around capacity with the Government agenda.

27/11/25 and 11/12/25 – Technical and Vocational Link Visit

SE discussed his attendance at the Hair and Beauty SAR Validation led by the Curriculum Manager, improvements were being made in the area and she was well prepared and discussed a number of elements to hair and beauty that he was not aware of, such as diversity relating to skincare, make-up and hair. It was pointed out that governors were there to observe the SAR process and the challenge from managers for their own assurance, but on occasion a governor may question if something had had not been asked.

The second visit related to meeting with the VP's line reports, the team discussed the issues across the areas and the differences and similarities between their challenges. SE welcomed the opportunity to hear these and was reassured they were taking action to address. He could also cross reference with discussions held through the committee, corporation and link meetings which provided comfort.

SE had asked for feedback on any issues they had, which related to the response around financial approvals. The CFO said she would take that on board.

Prior to the Corporation meeting SE had met with students across the vocational areas of business, hair and beauty, electrical and engineering. They enjoyed the quality of teaching much more than school as it was specific to their chosen vocation. There was a mix of students, ranging from some who elected for their course and some who arrived not knowing what area to chose. They felt comfortable raising issues and understood the need for good attendance. They felt safe on site. When asked about improvements, they suggested more support around personal finance, reduction in the food queues and one student wanted more sports facilities on site at the Roundhouse. It was all very positive.

17/11/25 & 8/12/25 SEND Link Visit and 22/10/25 – AOC SEND Network Update – Anju Virdee

AV met with the Head of Student Development who oversees the progression and resilience coaches, they had discussed the inclusion agenda with AD and how it was mapped into the provision. AD had created 4 pillars and now added a 5th. Outside of teaching and learning there was a lot of support for the provision. She was able to see that young people attend the College and want to learn.

She also visited on the 8 December to meet with the inclusion team and join their inset day, there was a lot of focus on teaching and learning and why students are achieving.

She went on to discuss the AoC SEND network and shared the feedback from the green paper and the acknowledgement that colleges were more inclusive than schools, but that more clarity was needed from the DFE. She said the college mirrored best practice with a Link Governor role. Discussions also related to diagnosing ADHD, autism etc and the graduated intervention programme. Discussions also related to championing the work of the College more in terms of this field and the support the college provides.

Members went on to discuss the challenges of SEND in the workforce and how it was supporting employers and providing supported internships for employers taking on high needs students.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the oversight of governors from the link visits and how this supported the College in achieving its strategic goals.

34/25-26 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 staff and student governor left the meeting.

The meeting finished at 6.20 pm