



**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2024 AT  
4.30 PM IN THE ENGINE ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA MS TEAMS**

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**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2024 AT 4.30 PM IN THE ENGINE ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA MS TEAMS**

Present: Alan Brady (Chair), Sue Bradley, Andrew Cochrane, Andrew Dymond, Stuart Ellis, Bismah Latif, Martyn Marples, Jane McNeil, Sophie Sanderson, Narinder Sharma, Mandie Stravino, Anju Virdee

In attendance: Jo Clifford, Heather Kelly, Melanie Lanser, Rob Bamford (Minute numbers 16/24-25) Tony McIlroy (Minute number 17/24-25) Rose Matthews (Clerk to the Corporation)

**PART ONE - GENERAL MINUTES**

**13/24-25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Richard Blackmore. Stuart Ellis would be arriving later.

Kate Martin and Aaron Denton also sent their apologies.

**14/24-25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND QUORUM**

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

**15/24-25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2024**

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2024 were formally approved as a true and accurate record.**

**16/24-25 VERBAL UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING, PREVENT AND FILTERING AND MONITORING**

The Health and Safety Director and DSL provided a verbal overview of progress towards the Prevent Risk Assessment.

The Police are expected to publish the 2024/25 Counter Terrorism Local Profiles (CTLPs) for each of the East Midlands' counties in December. They will then be holding a briefing session in January to discuss and contextualise. This briefing will then inform the College's current Prevent Risk Assessment and Action Plan with a view to presenting at the next Corporation meeting.

RB 31/3/25

The H&S Director and DSL was currently completing the online safety self-review tool which recommended filtering tests. A number of tests had already been undertaken but filtering tests needed to be carried out for students and staff. Once this had concluded, the Self-Assessment results would be presented at the next Corporation meeting.

RB 31/03/25

**RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the verbal report from the Health and Safety Director and DSL.**

## 17/24-25 STRATEGY ENACTMENT – OPERATING REPORT

The Director of Strategy, Policy and Planning presented the Strategic Operating Plan for the College, which provided an overview of strategy enactment.

The information reported had been drawn from the operational plans from the core strategies which were presented to the relevant governance committees but were not discussed directly at the Corporation.

**JM said the report looked positive but asked if there were any areas that Members needed to focus on.** One area highlighted was positive relationships with employers. While the College made a strong contribution to skills and had positive relationships, there were certain areas where the College had ambitions to improve its employer voice. The improvement was not about engagement, but how the College recorded that engagement.

Melanie Lanser explained how value added was calculated and what it meant. She explained it was a difficult measure, but the College had made progress in this area.

**The Chair pointed out that some elements of the report were incomplete.** The Director of Strategy, Policy and Planning agreed to update and reissue the report.

**JMc suggested the board devote a longer session to this to carrying out a deeper dive at a future meeting.** It was explained deep dives happened at the committees where they are presented and this was a summary pulling everything together for the benefit of the Board. Deeper dives could be arranged for those who were not part of the committees, but who would find it beneficial.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the report and looked forward to receiving the updated version.**

## 18/24-25 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The CFO presented the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to the Corporation.

These were the proposed target KPI's for the year. An overview was presented at the Strategy and Quality Day in July 2024, but the exact targets could not be set until the final ILR had been produced.

The CFO summarised what had changed from the previous year, this included the NSS score from the HE survey – which was no longer available, although the college did have its own internal student voice which provided a measure.

With regards to English and maths, progress and value added seemed to be a more suitable measure than outcomes. Destinations were still being measured and could not yet be added.

**The Chair of FRC pointed out the performance for apprenticeships had gone up but the satisfaction for apprenticeships had gone down he asked why this was.** The Vice Principal explained the response rate needed to improve to provide apprenticeship voice. Those less satisfied

tended to be the ones that completed the survey. She explained she had set a rigorous target of 75% response rate this year.

**JMc said it was a shame the College had lost the NSS overall score but noted the internal score. She asked if that left the college vulnerable for the TEF and asked if there was another representative TEF theme that could be used perhaps around student voice.** The CFO said the College internally monitored when they came through on NSS, but had not got the KPI here to present. The Vice Principal said the College had tiny volume of students eligible for NSS and there were 39 in total. JMc said it was a useful KPI if the College wanted to achieve gold TEF.

The Acting Chair questioned attendance, he said the College were halfway through the 2024-25 academic year and asked for an update on attendance. Attendance was at 90%.

**RESOLVED: The Committee approved the Key Performance Indicators and would monitor at future meetings.**

## **19/24-25 OFSTED INSPECTION REPORT**

The Acting Chair took the opportunity to congratulate the College on the Ofsted Inspection outcome. He asked for feedback on the process. How the team felt it went and if there were any surprises or any things they felt disappointed about?

The Vice Principal and Ofsted Nominee said she felt it went very smoothly, the College was well prepared. The preparations that had been made were right, which led to confident managers and teachers. They did not have to evidence or fight for too many judgements. She did, however, think the process was too long. With notification eight days before they arrived, many staff were exhausted before, and planning calls took place every day and sometimes twice a day during the visit.

The Vice Principal said the majority of deep dives related to Level 1 and Level 2 programmes and she was disappointed they didn't do many Level 3 deep dives and did query this with the inspection team.

Discussion focused around the Pathway programme – a discreet SEND provision - with half the students studying in Pathways and half in curriculum. Ofsted agreed to gather evidence from the half in curriculum. The College were disadvantaged by not having Pathway programme students in college.

The staff governor, who was also the Head of SEND, felt the inspection team did not take into consideration the impact of COVID when questioning why a young person had not progressed as well as they perhaps could.

The skills contribution went smoothly, although some of the stakeholders found the questioning aggressive. The Vice Principal explained she received updates on recent inspections and there were more inadequate and RI inspections than good, all with familiar language like the inspectors are tied to a framework.

The guarantee deep dive areas should have received feedback but didn't. This was reported back to the inspection team. They then received 30 minutes each for feedback on the Friday.

**The Acting Chair asked the staff governor how the inspection had affected her.** She explained from an inspection perspective, the inspectors were very pleasant. The level of questioning was what she would expect. She felt it was a long time being notified in advance and during the inspection week. The Acting Chair also asked the student governor if students had been impacted. She explained she had been involved in one of the meetings, she was nervous but it had gone really well and she was pleased she was able to share her experience of the College.

**The Acting Chair noted there had been a concern about Landbased when they were in the governors meeting.** The Landbased students did not have enough practical. However, the team were able to argue their points. They knew they were good.

**The Corporation Chair echoed his congratulations and thanks and asked from a governance perspective had the feedback from the inspectors been taken away and actioned?** It was confirmed this had been incorporated into the Quality Improvement Plan.

The Acting Chair asked if there had been any publicity on the outcome. The deputy CEO said this college has celebrated the strong skills which have been picked up by the Derby. Evening Telegraph. The report had been shared with stakeholders and had received positive feedback from employers, particularly those engaged in talks.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation acknowledged and accepted the Ofsted Inspection Report.**

## **20/24-25 GROUP SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Vice Principal shared the Self-Assessment Report which incorporated the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection. It was noted the process had changed this year due to the disruption from the inspection.

The final outcome data in November had been compared to the national achievement rate (NART) figures. They also looked at student satisfaction, any gaps, progression and destinations. Focus related to what was being done to improve.

A wider range of grades had been used this year with more honest judgments. Attendance meetings were taking place every week in those academies requiring improvement and the Head of Improvement and Performance was meeting with the managers to provide support and challenge.

**The Acting Chair queried if this was a new process (it was) and asked if there was anything to report back.** The DCEO explained the basis of the meeting was to identify key areas that needed improvement, identify strategies and provide a lot more support to improve them. This approached had proven successful in the past and the impact could be evidenced.

**The Acting Chair asked if the QIPs and the process had been accepted by the team.** The DCEO said there had been some changes in the areas and those areas had relatively new managers who had the desire and enthusiasm to improve.

**SB asked how this had been received by the staff in light of the good Ofsted outcome.** The Vice Principal explained some of those graded good had moved up to outstanding (those getting 10-15% above the national average). There will always be nuances with focus on those on the cusp and below requiring improvement.

**MM asked when the plug would be pulled if there was an area with a limited skills contribution that was performing poorly.** This would be carried out as part of the curriculum planning and design process. All outcomes are looked at, sometimes some learners have been recruited to the wrong programme and there might be a position where some programmes of study are removed.

It was noted Engineering went through rapid improvement and was now a successful area, it needed to improve before the College grew the provision.

**The Corporation Chair pointed out this was where link governors visits could direct focus on the Quality Improvement Plan actions and challenge on the correct provision in place through curriculum planning. The Clerk to the Corporation would be contacting the particular links requiring rapid improvement to ensure visits are in place and to request the QIP ahead of their visits.**

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Self-Assessment Report and the Quality improvement Plan and agreed the refocus of link governor visits.**

#### **21/24-25 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chair of the Audit Committee 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.

Conversation related to the Mock Funding Audit which had not been completed, a discussion at Audit Committee, agreed it did not pose a risk. The Committee had also looked at the non-obligation to having an Internal Audit function and had debated this (although for a College of DCG's size it would be considered best practice).

**RESOLVED: The Committee accepted the Audit Committee's Annual Report.**

#### **22/24-25 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND EXTERNAL AUDIT 2023-24**

The CFO presented the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

These had been reviewed by the Audit Committee, with a dedicated agenda item, which all Members were invited to observe the External Auditors present their completion report.

An AGM had taken place earlier in the day to approve the Financial Statements for the two subsidiary companies.

All documents were required to be submitted, along with the Financial Record to the ESFA by the 31 December 2024.

**RESOLVED:** The Corporation approved the Letter of Representation and Members Report and Financial Statements for 2023-24 for DCG recommended by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 26 November 2024.

**APPROVED:** The Corporation received the Letter of Representations Financial Statements DCG Services Limited and MBS Ltd which had been approved at their respective AGMs on 16 December 2024.

**APPROVED:** The ESFA Regularity Self-Assessment was shared and approved for signature.

**23/24-25 RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT AND SUMMARY REPORT AND RISK REGISTER**

The CFO shared the Annual Risk Management Report which provides assurance on activity during the previous academic year. The assurance plan for the academic year was discussed and it was noted the Head of Internal Audit from the College's Internal Audit Service was retiring. The intention was to complete the plan but there may be a requirement to seek some specialist assurance on some items, in particular around higher education.

**RESOLVED:** The Corporation approved the Annual Risk Management Report.

The CFO went on present the regular risk update. This highlighted three red risks, one relating to recruitment and two around financial pressures.

A review of risks had resulted in some changes due to risk reduction (for example ONS reclassification and energy).

The report also summarised current litigation, health and safety issues and any safeguarding incidents.

**Members discussed the pay award and union activity** and it was noted that in recent discussions with the unions they had requested the College review terms and conditions of staff. The College were monitoring the school sector as they faced similar issues.

**RESOLVED:** The Corporation discussed and approved the Strategic Risk Report and Register.

**24/24-25 FINANCE REPORT INCLUDING MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The CFO provided a financial overview, along with the Period 3 Management Accounts, which presented a positive position with the College ahead in terms of EBITDA.

The forecast remains aligned with the original budget, while the risk ratings have been reviewed and updated to identify potential variances at this early stage in the financial year.

The reports formed the basis of a detailed re-forecasting exercise with all budget holders during November, outturns and risks ratings will be updated and reviewed for the P4 Management Accounts.

There was a key positive variance ahead on adult skills income, apprenticeship income and other variances were generally positive in terms of income streams and vacancy drift.

Members heard how the pay budget included an NI uplift in May and there was an indication the LGPS pension scheme could be affected for colleges – resulting in a lower risk, which may affect DCG's contribution.

Non-pay was positive with an overspend due to additional delivery and exams, but savings to date had been made in terms of energy. The College did have a budget specifically set for adult skills innovation.

An update was provided to Members in terms of the Johnson Building.

Risks were shared, in particular, a high risk around the HTQ grant funding due to uncertainty around some of the HTQ courses. There was a medium risk around the transformation grant.

The Chair of FRC summarised that the financial position was positive, but the normal risks still remained relating to covenant, student numbers, capital spending etc.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the Finance Report, including the Management Accounts for Period 3.**

#### **25/24-25 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT**

The Freedom of Information Annual Report was presented by the CFO and summarised activity which had taken place during the course of the last academic year. The report included the number of request received with the main themes relating the journalistic or research and requests on college spend.

**RESOLVED: The Committee approved the Freedom of Information Annual Report.**

#### **26/24-25 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.

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

#### **27/24-25 GOVERNOR RECRUITMENT**

The Corporation Chair provided an overview of current and future vacancies on the Corporation.

Following a successful recruitment exercise through Peridot Partners it was recommended the Corporation approve Jill Matthews, of Burton and Derby Hospitals Charity to join the Corporation.

A number of governors' terms of office would be concluding over the course of the next few years, in particular Martyn Marples whose term concludes in

October next year and will mean the loss of an accountancy position. In light of such the Recruitment Working Party has resumed and will take place in early January.

The Search and Governance Committee made the following recommendations:

Andrew Cochrane continues for a further two years taking his term to 10 February 2027.

Alan Brady continues for a further two years taking his term to 10 November 2027.

Sue Bradley has agreed to continue for another year taking her term to 31 April 2026.

Stuart Ellis continues for a further two years taking his term to 30 November 2027.

Rosslyn Green, the Audit Committee Co-opted Governor be invited to continue for a further two years.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the update, agreed that the Recruitment Working Party commence and approved the term of office recommendations as outlined above.**

#### 28/24-25 STRATEGIC REFLECTION

This provided an opportunity for governors to reflect on agenda items against the strategic objectives and how the College was working to achieve these.

Strategic Priority 1 - Deliver Educational Excellence: Members had discussed the Ofsted Report and debated the QIP and the SAR. They discussed how Engineering had been turned around, which had taken time and how that tried and tested approach was being used to support other areas in need.

Strategic Priority 2 – Championing Social Mobility: The Corporation had discussed attendance through the SAR and QIP and discussed curriculum planning, particularly around the Pathway programme and how robust areas were. They had discussed high needs across the provisions and how each academy was looking at the disadvantaged.

Strategic Priority 3 – Enable Economic Prosperity: The Group had a good balance sheet and the key was making sure the Corporation were focussing enough ahead.

Members also heard how the College were working on the three core strategies, curriculum planning had commenced and KPIs had been presented in a way that reflected the overall strategic aims.

Members asked if succession planning for the Board could be feedback at a future meeting and JMc said she would like to have further discussion around the strategic operating report. The Corporation also heard about a White Paper 'Get Britain Working', which could be worth revisiting at a future meeting.

Chair/  
Clerk Ongoing

**29/24-25 CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no consent agenda items brought forward for discussion. However, the following were approved based on recommendations by the relevant committees:

Audit Committee – 26 November 2024

Gender Pay Report

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Gender Pay Report for publication.**

**RESOLVED: Policy review:**

**The Corporation approved the Counter Fraud and Irregularity Policy**

Finance and Resources Committee – 4 December 2024

Employee Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

Policy Review:

- Flexible Working Policy
- Grievance Policy

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the policies above.**

Strategy and Curriculum Planning Committee – 4 November 2024

Terms of Reference Review

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the updated Terms of Reference.**

Search and Governance Committee – 16 December 2024

Terms of Reference Review

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the updated Terms of Reference – which had been circulated in advance.**

Attendance

**RESOLVED: The Corporation agreed to retain the 80% attendance target.**

The Acting Corporation Chair expressed thanks to Kate Martin, the Deputy Principal, was stepping back to take up the role of Director of External Engagement for the College.

*All employees left the meeting with the exception of the Clerk.*

*The meeting finished at 6.50 pm*