



**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 20 MAY 2024
AT 4.30 PM IN THE ENGINE ROOM, THE ROUNDHOUSE AND VIA MS TEAMS**

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MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20 MAY 2024 AT 4.30 PM IN THE ENGINE ROOM, THE ROUNDHOUSE AND VIA MS TEAMS

Present: Andrew Cochrane (Chair), Richard Blackmore, Sue Bradley, Alan Brady, Phil Dover, Andrew Dymond, Stuart Ellis, Jack Ellis-Guthrie, Jane McNeil, Sophie Sanderson, Narinder Sharma, Kevin Slack, Mandie Stravino, Anju Virdee

In attendance: Jo Clifford, Robert Bamford (minute no's 51/23-24), Heather Kelly, Melanie Lanser, Kate Martin, Rose Matthews (Clerk to the Corporation)

PART ONE - GENERAL MINUTES

47/23-24 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE,

Apologies for absence were received from Martyn Marples. Stuart Ellis would be joining at 5.00 pm.

The Chair took the opportunity to welcome Anju Virdee and Richard Blackmore and introductions took place.

48/23-24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND QUORUM

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

49/23-24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD 25 MARCH 2024

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2024 were formally approved as a true and accurate record.

50/23-24 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

51/23-24 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The Director of Health, Safety and Environment presented the Health and Safety Report.

The H&S legal register has been reviewed and several national consultations currently open, none of which concern DCG undertakings. There were no proposed changes in health and safety legislation which were likely to affect DCG and mandatory training compliance has been improved from 93% to over 98% for all health and safety modules.

The inspection programme was on track and there were no areas of concern identified which posed an immediate risk of harm or legislative non-compliance.

Employee accident rates were below the industry average with slips and trips remaining the highest accident type. There had been no RIDDOR reportable incidents since the last meeting and no HSE enforcement action taken against DCG during this academic year.

Action Date

RESOLVED: The Corporation discussed the report with the Director of Health and Safety, accepted the Health and Safety update.

52/23-24 STRATEGY ENACTMENT

The Board received a strategic update from the Chair, which included the Skills Conversation with the UoD Skills Lead, the ESFA Strategic Conversation and the Curriculum Business Planning Panels.

The Chair discussed External Review of Governance Report which had been circulated to all Members and would be discussed at a later meeting. There had been a format change to the Corporation agenda to allow more time for strategic oversight. Members indicated the new agenda worked well but it was reiterated that the consent agenda items should still be read.

The Deputy Principal and Chair had met with JY the Skills Link Member at the UoD. It provided an opportunity to outline what DCG did and discuss teacher training which is ran in conjunction with UoD.

Verbal feedback was provided following the annual strategic conversation with the DFE.

Thanks was extended to those involved in the Curriculum Business Planning Panels – which were still ongoing and these were discussed briefly.

A brief update was provided for members on property developments, including the IoT and the Johnson building.

Discussion points also related to the mayoral elections and awareness raising the MPs ahead of the local elections and tolerance levels in relation to English and maths. Exams were ongoing with DCG the 17th ranked resit provider in the country.

The Clerk to the Corporation shared an AoC strategy presentation covering how policy might change, devolution, funding for 2024-25, public sector status and Level 3 reform.

Members discussed the challenges relating recruitment and meeting employers demand, the technical aspects of engineering were quoted as an example, with engineers earning more out in industry than teaching.

The stock of engineers locally was increasing, but the demand was high. **Stuart Ellis said there was real growth and virtual growth. It was noted demand was there but the College could not keep up with it. Another area of potential growth was digital.**

The teaching of GCSE and A Levels in colleges was correcting secondary school teaching. Many of the College's students had missed the target in schools for recruitment, but school pay was significantly higher than college pay.

The Chair asked linking back to the strategic goals if the ability to recruit and grow was the College's biggest target to meet employer demand. The College needed the best teachers (from schools) but they are already being paid more, the best talented engineers from industry, who

The Chair asked linking back to strategic goals would the College say the ability to recruit and grow was its biggest challenge?

DCG needed the best teachers but they were already being paid more in schools and the best talented engineers to train the future of industry, but the College could not pay enough to compete with industry salaries.

The Deputy Principal (DP) presented the **Accountability Statement** which had been reviewed by the Curriculum Planning Committee at its last meeting. The Statement considers how the College is meeting the needs of its key stakeholders and was accompanied by an action plan. The main aims had not changed, but not all the targets had been achieved – which were discussed along with the rationale why. Focus will be around sustainable development and SEND.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Accountability Statement for submission by the required deadline.

RESOLVED: Members received and accepted the strategic overview.

53/23-24 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND OPMR (INCLUDING KPIS)

The Vice Principal – Quality of Education presented the latest Quality Improvement Plan and Organisational Performance Management Report which provided a summary of in-year performance against KPIs, structured around the EIF, and highlighted actions to secure improvement. Whilst the report relates to March, a verbal overview was provided in terms of performance against 17 April 2024.

There had been 986 learning walks completed with a similar percentage to the report for excellent and good practice. Overall most had improved in terms of development and the impact of coaching and mentoring. An update was provided in terms of serious concerns which were outlined in the report.

The first work scrutiny had been completed with the second one almost complete. Four had improved and four required improvement and members discussed the areas these were in.

Since this report 16-18 retention had reduced to 09 percentage points (pp) below this time last year with Adult 1.2 pp and Apprenticeships 2.9 pp.

In terms of narrowing the gap, significant progress had been made with students on an educational care plan with both retention and attendance and the College were confident the gap had closed for Level 1 students.

The biggest gap was students with mental health issues – this could be seen across the sector.

Progress log information was shared which showed a bigger percentage of students above and on target – the breakdown was included in the report.

Student voice survey information was shared which showed an overall satisfaction rate of 92.2%. Academies with gaps were outlined in the report and analysis taking place.

In year data indicated the College were comfortably within the minimum measures as set out in the Apprenticeships Framework which changes on 22 June and the College had exceeded the maximum numbers.

Key actions to improve the quality of education were shared and driven through the PM&R which were presented by each Academy Manager and the Assistant Principal. Bespoke action were set for academies with a retention or demographic gap and action plans in place for all.

The Vice Chair noted progress for Level 3's indicated 41% were below target and asked how that compared with previous years. The VP explained it was less than last year and A Level students on a L3 would not be expected to be on target as they were on a trajectory. **The Vice Chair said it could look alarming reading the report and suggested presenting a present position and end result trajectory.**

VP

11/07/24

The Chair noted apprentices past end date and asked if that was within or beyond the College's control. It was beyond DCG's control but the College were responsible for every student, including those made redundant, leaving or changing job roles. They had their licence to practice and were not pushed by their employers to complete English and maths as they were needed in employment for the ratios.

Attendance had improved compared with last year, but there are some that have declined with gaps in English and maths, but with improved attendance at tutorials.

Members discussed what was being done in terms of attendance it was noted actions were in place for individual students, who had poor attendance or were below in terms of progress. Gaps where were agency staff were in place or a specialist teacher was absent.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the report, progress to the KPIs and the Improvement Plan.

54/23-24 GOVERNOR OVERSIGHT AND SCRUTINY SESSIONS

Sue Bradley – Safeguarding (22/04/24) – Sue had continued to meet with the DSL. Keeping up to date with particular cases and monitoring the progress of these. She had also attended the last SLT where there had been a particular discussion on the frequency of DBS checks and what best practice was. The risk assessment is presented and a robust plan in place. General updates were provided on Prevent. The DSL was settling into his new role and finding it very interesting. Mental health continues to be a key issue which is monitored closely.

Sue Bradley – Little Explorers (24/04/24) – This had been a very positive visit and Sue commented on the enthusiasm of the staff. They were all outside during her visit and she saw lots of examples of creative and messy play and all the children were happy. Discussions related to staffing challenges and the positive impact of the staffing review. The Nursery Operations Manager was extending her role across the College to share best practice. The Nursery was at full capacity.

Sue Bradley – Landbased (24/04/24) – The meeting had focussed on attendance and there were lots of examples of employer engagement. She had an interesting trip around the site to meet with different teams and see the building work taking place. There had been lots of staffing changes and discussions had taken around how these gaps would be filled.

Jane McNeil – HE Tour of Professional Construction and Engineering (20/05/24) – Jane had attended a tour earlier in the afternoon, meeting with the AP for the area. There was nothing further to report that had not already been covered. She did ask about the apprenticeship completion and it was noted there was more integration to that. They discussed staffing – which remained a risk and the struggles generally to recruit and talent develop. She also visited the IoT which was on track for a timely completion. They discussed the partners that were easy to work with and those that posed more of a challenge to get their students through the qualification.

Anju Virdee – SEND (20/05/24) – Anju had met with the Director of Student Experience and Pastoral Support. There were no major surprises as the clarity of reporting was triangulated. Looked after children were at 95% retention which was encouraging. They discussed the challenges of getting data from schools – with fewer girls attending in school, the area were looking at future college cohorts. They were looking at this in the context of the local community with many identified as possible unofficial carers. She was looking forward to visiting Broomfield at the next visit and visiting the specialist provision and the different learning environment and culture. She was briefed on the catch up funding that supported the pastoral coach role. Speech and language were now coming through as a key theme and not just mental health.

Stuart Ellis – Technology (09/05/24) – Stuart’s visit had focused on attracting and retaining staff, alongside balancing affordability. He had reviewed the scorecard which had dramatically improved. Apprenticeships were a challenge and there was more opportunity to work with the university in the future.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the reports and noted the key themes from the Link and Lead Governor visits.

55/23-24 FINANCE REPORT

The CFO presented the Initial Funding Allocations and Budget Assumptions and management accounts for March 2024 – which included the KPIs.

It was explained the Initial Funding Allocations and Budget Assumptions had already been recommended to the Corporation by the Finance and Resources Committee and approval was sought for a minimum level EBITDA to support the long term plan for good financial health.

The report outlined the key changes for income allocation for 16-19 funding and included growth funding received. Additional funding had also been received for English and maths GCSE. It was noted the College would be losing the Tuition Fee catchup funding for next year, but they were growing their T Level additional funding and there was growth in High Needs Funding.

AEB budget allocation had a key change of non-regulated provision, which was ringfenced to and capped for next year.

There was a drop in Adult Skills funding based on historic trends, with an improvement projected in the budget for next year.

Apprenticeships were static with a little growth for next year.

Overall income is projected to grow and offsets the additional cost pressures – which in the main is pay.

Pay costs were factored into the budget –and were outlined in the report. Wider costs in terms of non-pay were presented with a full cost of Johnson Building budgeted for in terms of lease cost – any early exit would be of benefit.

Due to substantial deferred capital grant release during 2024-25 scenarios had been built around this, with a 2% ENITDA recommended, although it was noted this could not be sustained over a longer period of time. This would allow a £2m capital budget and 'good' financial health score. The biggest risk would be to drop below 2%, which would likely breach the operational covenant.

KS said the assumptions seemed sensible to get a good financial health score. He asked if that would likely breach the bank covenants. It was confirmed that it would not, and that has been modelled into the budget. It did all hinge on the cash outflows and capital projects, but these were being managed. KS said it looked sensible and prudent.

He went onto ask if £1m capital expenditure was investment enough. Over £4m bids had been received, but a large amount related to Estates. Some expenditure was mandatory in terms of curriculum with business critical need prioritised.

KS asked when pay negotiations would commence. This was usually after the AoC had made their recommendation which was the catalyst for local meetings. This was discussed further.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the minimum expectation for the College budget for 2024-25 of a 2% EBITDA based on the scenario outlined in the report presented.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the March 2024 Management Accounts and the progress towards the KPIs outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the removal of the SEND Projects from the Capital Reports and accept the proposed revised reforecasts.

The CFO presented the Sub-contracting Report with variations. This covered sub-contractor performance for 2023-24 (which was detailed in the report), revised contract variations and proposed sub-contracting for 202425 academic year.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the contract variations as outlined below for 2023-24:

Subcontractor	Original Contract	Revised Contract	Variation
Tempus Training	£500,000	£550,000	£50,000
The Construction Skills People	£250,000	£350,000	£100,000
			£150,000

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the 2024-25 contracts as outlined below and that due diligence and negotiations be delegated to the Executive/College Leadership team:

Subcontractor	2023-24 Contract	Revised 2023-24 Contract	Proposed 2024-25
Tempus Training	£500,000	£550,000	£500,000
Skills College	£456,624	£456,624	£400,000
The Construction Skills People	£250,000	£350,000	£300,000
Holdback to allocate during year	£93,376	-	£100,000
Total	£1,300,000	£1,356,624	£1,300,000

56/23-24 CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

No consent agenda items had been brought forward for discussion.

All reports requiring approval had been addressed during the main business of the meeting.

All staff left the meeting with the exception of the Clerk.

57/23-24 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2024

RESOLVED: The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record.

The meeting finished at 7.32 pm