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DCG

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 24 AT 4.30 PM IN THE ENGINE ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA MS TEAMS

Present:	Andrew Cochrane (Chair), Richard Blackmore, Sue Bradley, Alan Brady, Andrew Dymond, Alan Brady, Stuart Ellis, Jill Matthews, Martyn Marples, Jane McNeil, Sophie Sanderson, Narinder Sharma, Mandie Stravino, Anju Virdee
In attendance:	Jo Clifford, Aaron Denton, Heather Kelly, Melanie Lanser, Rob Bamford (Minute numbers 38 and 39/24-25) Rose Matthews (Clerk to the Corporation)

PART ONE - GENERAL MINUTES		Action	Date
34/24-25	**WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**		
	The Chair welcomed Jill Matthews to the Corporation and introductions took place.		
	Apologies for absence were received from Bismah Latif.		
35/24-25	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND QUORUM**		
	All members were eligible, the meeting was quorate and there were no new declarations.		
36/24-25	**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2024**		
	RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2024 were formally approved as a true and accurate record.		
37/24-25	**MATTERS ARISING**		
16/24-25	The Prevent Risk Assessment was on the agenda, online safety filtering tests had been completed and were included in the report.		
29/24-25	A recommendation for a new appointment to the Corporation was on the agenda for this meeting. Succession planning for the Corporation was part of the Search and Governance meeting, which had been reconvened. More information will be available at the next meeting.		
	The operating report would be presented with the next strategy update in July.		
38/24-25	**SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT REPORT, INC; PREVENT RISK ASSESSMENT FILTERING AND MONITORING ANNUAL REVIEW AND CHECKLIST**		
	The DSL presented the termly Safeguarding Report, which provided an overview of safeguarding compliance and how the Group continued to meet its statutory requirements.		

Members questioned how frequently the Single Central Record had been completed and it was noted this had been carried out four times in the past year. This was last completed a few weeks ago with no gaps.

AB asked who carried out the audit. The DSL confirmed HR keep the records and he then checks this. He pointed out Ofsted did provide verbal recognition that the SCR was exemplary, although this did not appear in the report. The Lead Governor for Safeguarding also confirmed she attends the SLT Safeguarding meetings where the audits are reported.

The Lead Governor reminded members to enrol on the DFE Prevent Governor training which had been circulated by the Clerk.

Governors acknowledged the report but said they were unsure what to do with the information, should it be benchmarked etc. The statistics were to provide assurance to members that disclosures are being made and actioned. Due to the sensitive nature, and context of each college, benchmarking was not available.

It was clarified the report was to evidence and provide assurance how the College were implementing and responding to safeguarding disclosures. There was a lot that was outside of the College's control.

The Lead Governor said the DSL was aware of the key trends from the local forums he attends. It was also noted some disclosures related to events that haven't happened recently or have taken place outside the College.

AB asked if the LADDO referrals were all completed or if any were ongoing. It was confirmed they were all completed.

RESOLVED: Members accepted the Safeguarding Report and the assurance it provided.

Prevent Risk Assessment

The DSL went on to share the Prevent Risk Assessment and Action Plan which was informed by the counter terrorism local profile. The Risk Assessment identified national risks and what measures should be put in place.

Stuart Ellis referenced the risk assessment and action plan document and asked for confirmation it was the amber residual risks that they needed to focus on. Which was confirmed as correct.

RESOLVED: The Corporation received, discussed and accepted the Prevent Risk Assessment.

Filtering and Monitoring Annual Review and Checklist

The DSL presented the annual review of the College's filtering and monitoring software. The review confirmed the software provided (Fortinet) when tested on staff and student devices was effective at blocking access to illegal child abuse material, unlawful terrorist content and adult content. Students also received information and instruction embedded in the teaching of the curriculum to support on-line safety and digital resilience.

RESOLVED: The DSL confirmed the statutory guidance had been met and the Corporation accepted the report and assurance it provided.

39/24-25 **HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

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

SE discussed accident benchmarking and noted there had been an increase in reported incidents since last reported. This related in the main to Broomfield and the risks due to the nature of the site.

JM asked what access to first aid at work training did staff and students get. It was confirmed there were 178 first aiders across the campuses and there is always a duty first aider. There were also a number of mental health first aiders, who were all trained.

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

Narinder Sharma joined the meeting.

40/24-25 **CHAIR'S UPDATE – HOT TOPICS**

The Chair raised discussion on a number of key topics affecting the College, which were discussed. These included the Johnson building, pay and recruitment, enhanced security, Ofsted reforms, the Youth guarantee and NEETS.

An overview of the new Routes programme, a Level 1 programme for those with little or no qualifications, which would support progression to Level 2 was shared, this would be implemented from September.

The Chair advised he had attended an FE Commissioner event the prior week which focussed around collaboration. He added he was the only chair at the event that met with other chairs. The discussion went on to focus on the collaboration in the College, such as the IoT, T Levels, LSIF and harder collaboration. However, it was raised that DCG was an early product of collaboration and mergers and resolved some of the issues some cities still have.

JMc had attended an OFS event on effective governance and discussed the OFS proposal for new conditions of registration to better protect students.

RESOLVED: The Corporation discussed, accepted and acknowledged the overviews provided.

41/24-25 **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICTORS**

The CFO presented the latest position on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to the Corporation, which overall were positive.

RESOLVED: The Committee accepted the updated Key Performance Indicators.

42/24-25 **ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT (OPMR)**

The Vice Principal presented an overview of the OPMR report to the Corporation which provided analysis of in-year performance, structured around the Education Inspection Framework and identifying actions required to secure improvement.

Retention rates had increased when compared year to date but had dropped since January. Overall, the College were retaining students.

There was positive engagement with CPD inset day sessions and weekly academy assessment sessions. The Inset day offered 40 different workshops with a focus around AI to improve productivity.

There had been a decline in attendance rates for 16-18 including authorised absence. Entry level attendance at 82%, although deemed to be low acknowledged that many students in STEPs had been home schooled or had behaviour issues, so overall 82% was good compared with schools for this cohort.

The gaps for English and maths were starting to narrow, but the largest gaps were in Creative Hair and Beauty and Automotive.

There were some specific concerns in some academies that were being monitored.

Apprenticeships make up around 600 enrolments this year and are a big group of students that never come into the College. They have an assessor who keeps them warm. Number of apprentices past end date had reduced. There were too many apprentices below target.

Interventions for those academies in RI were shared, Overall progress in these areas was improving.

An update on compliments and complaints was shared.

Retention KPIs were on track, but attendance was below target.

AB said it was positive to hear about Hair and Beauty and asked what was making the difference in that area. There had been a lot of attention devoted to it, with the Advanced Practitioners working on the format, scrutiny on attendance was reviewed line by line and QIP review meetings took place every month. It was sustaining the provision which was still fragile

It was also noted that changes had been made in management of Health and Early years which was starting to show impact in terms of rapid improvement.

AV reflected on her link governor visit and said it was around clarity of question and challenge and targeting the behaviour to the individuals.

The Vice Principal provided an overview of the proposed Ofsted reforms which closes on the 28/04/25.

AB asked if the College had responded formally to Ofsted consultation. The Vice Principal explained she had responded on behalf of the College and personally.

The Chair asked if the cycle would be more frequent. That had not been mentioned.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the OPMR.

43/24-25 FINANCE REPORT

- **Management Accounts (Period 6)**
- **Procurement**
- **Sub-contracting**
- **External Audit Contract Extension**
- **Policy Review: - Financial Regulations and Procurement Policy**

The CFO provided the headlines from the Period 6 Management Accounts. There had not been significant change, EBITDA was in a stronger than budgeted position.

Due to the timing of capital grant releases the full year forecast had been revised and was predicting a 6.5% EBITDA, which puts the College slightly ahead for the sector.

The College had now received growth funding and whilst it did not cover full growth, it did contribute. Funding at Period 6 did not include the growth.

High needs funding had increased and the College were ahead on apprenticeship provision in terms of income and funding, mainly due to earlier starts and a healthy rollover from prior years. The only area of concern was the Adult Skills Fund.

Vacancy drift continued to be strong and pensions savings have now been included in the forecast, due to the move to the public sector and Colleges now guaranteed in terms of pensions, this has led to reduced contributions.

Non-pay was on track with savings on energy and the relocation from the Johnson Building. Systems and development fees had yet to be spent.

The balance sheet showed a healthy position and cash was strong with projects still on track.

Members noted the recommendations from the Finance and Resources Committee in terms of procurement which had already been scrutinised by the committee.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the following procurement:

- **The Mechanical and Electrical services contract to be awarded to Dalkia from 1st May 2025 for two years with an option to extend for three years.**
- **Extension of college bus services contract with Notts and Derby for a further 12 months until 31st July 2026.**
- **Extension of college security services with Constant Security for a further 12 months until 30th April 2026.**

The Committee had reviewed the Sub-contracting Report which had highlighted good performance and positive outcomes forecast for the current year. Contract variations were proposed to offset the risk of underperformance from individual partners.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved, in addition to the original holdback of £100,000, an extra £100,000 contract increase. The proposed increase in allocation did not change the educational rationale for sub-contracting.

Reviews had taken place with regards to the Financial Regulations and Procurement and Tendering Regulations with updates made. The Committee recommended to the Corporation for approval.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Financial Regulations and the Procurement and Tendering Regulations.

The Audit Committee recommended the External Auditors, RSM LLP, who were appointed on June 2022 for a three-year term, with the option to extend for a further two years, be extended for a further year to June 2026. The decision considered their performance.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved that External Auditors, RSM LLP be extended to June 2026.

An overview of the Strategic Risk Management Report was shared, highlighting the key risks. This had been reviewed at the Audit Committee which discussed the mitigating actions and changes since the last meeting.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Risk Register.

44/24-25 **SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE REPORT**

The Search and Governance Committee recommended the appointment of Ranjit Singh Dol, a senior member of Derbyshire Police. He will bring context to the challenges the College faces with an understanding of the city issues and will be a strong sounding board for crime and disorder issues.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the appointment of Ranjit Singh Dol.

45/24-25 **STRATEGIC REFLECTION**

Members reflected on how the agenda items provided assurance against the College enacting the strategic objectives and engaged in a wider strategic discussion around the challenges.

Strategic Priority 1: **Deliver Educational Excellence**
Strategic Priority 2: **Champion Social Mobility**
Strategic Priority 3: **Enable Economic Prosperity**

Members noted the College did not always receive the funding it needed to deliver educational excellence, for example the Routes programme, will cost more, but would be doing the right thing for the city does not always align with the financial position.

The College had to engage with EMMCA to lobby for funding for the adult budget.

The demographics were out of kilter with the allocations. The College were only paid for 1/3 of the students it supported. The City's NEET figure has gone from 4.8 – 9% in a year and this falls on colleges, yet college teachers are paid £10K less than in schools. Very few of the colleges have capacity without extensive building work taking place.

There has been an influx in the building trades but the College did not have capacity. They could extend if the capital was available.

The Chair asked about the Green agenda and how the College were meeting that. The Deputy CEO explained the College were ahead of the game. Sustainability is embedded in the curriculum and Green Week had just taken place. The SLT had taken part in the climate cafes and the Environmental Manager was very proactive. There had been lots of positive feedback and recognition, with others wanting to look at what the College do.

The Chair asked if the College could fulfil employer demand for the jobs. There was not a huge demand from companies, but young people need to trained to be aware of digital skills, the green agenda etc. There has been a lot more around green skills, but it doesn't feature in the Ofsted framework.

RB asked if EMCCA had reached out to the College and what their relationship was like with FE and college. There is one representative on their Board that represents HE and FE and they are from the University. The new mayor had not been to the College as yet.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the information presented and discussions linked back to the Strategic priorities.

46/24-25 **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.

All employees (including the staff and student governor) left the meeting, with the exception of those who attend the Audit Committee and the CEO.

The meeting finished at 6.45 pm