

## Corporation Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024  
5.00pm -8.15pm Institute of Technology, Birmingham.

### Present

Barbara Hughes – Chair of Corporation  
Paul Assinder – Joint Vice Chair of Corporation  
Christine Abbott  
Tasleem Chaudary  
Mehak Farooque (FE Student Governor)  
Rebecca Gater – Principal and Chief Executive  
Sarah Horton-Walsh  
Ravi Kumar  
Lucy Lee  
Jo Moorcroft (HE Student Governor)  
Amirun Nehar  
Cheryl Pidler  
Geraldine Swanton  
Sally Tomlinson  
Harrison Thompson

### In Attendance

Heather Hunt – Deputy Principal and CFO, Pete Haynes – Vice Principal HR & Student Services, Lee Jamieson – Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum, Nancy Buckley - Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills & Partnerships, Sam Bromwich – Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance,  
  
Tina Taylor – Senior Governance Officer (minute taker), Olly Scholefield – Head of Sustainability (attended via Teams), Micky Burke – GBSIoT Operations Director, Gita Gorman – Director of Finance, Claire Powell – Head of School Animal Welfare & Nursing, Phil Trilloe – Head of School, Sport & Public Services.

### Apologies

Tony Lucas – Joint Vice Chair of Corporation, Donna Poole – Staff Governor, Mehreen Mirza.

#### 1. Welcome and any announcements.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Tony Lucas, Donna Poole, and Mehreen Mirza.

#### 3. Declarations of Interest

There were no items declared.

#### 4. Minutes of the previous Corporation meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023

The previous minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were received and **APPROVED** as a true record.

#### 4.1 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising to be discussed and all actions were covered within the actions report.

## 4.2 Action Report

The actions were reviewed, and an update was provided. In addition to those completed within the report, items 5 and 7 were confirmed as completed.

## 4.3 Top Risks

The Top Key Risks report was received, and a detailed update was given.

**Following a governor question**, the Vice Principal HR & Student Services reassured governors there are plans in place to deal with any adverse publicity in the event of a cyber-attack. Discussions also took place regarding the cyber-incident testing and how the college dealt with it.

The Deputy Principal and CFO explained the direction of travel under point one of the top risks had increased following feedback received from the recent internal audit. The Principal and CEO assured governors the college was clear on how it needed to manage a cyber-attack.

The framework for the governors briefing pack for Ofsted was in the process of being approved and would be completed by the deadline at the end of February.

The Chair confirmed there were no updates regarding the defunding of L3 qualifications. **A governor commented** on how colleges that are more successful will suffer financially because of the changes; governors discussed ways they could offer their support. Following a comment from the Chair, it was agreed to circulate copy of the “Chair’s letter” from the AoC Chief Executive’s letter for governors’ information which provided key updates for the sector. **ACTION.**

The top risks were **NOTED.**

## 5. Committee Minutes for Information

The following minutes were circulated for information and were **noted.**

- Remuneration Committee 06.12.2023 (Confidential)
- EDI Special Interest Group (SiG) 07.12.2023

The Remuneration committee minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were not shared with the Staff and Student Governors due to confidentiality.

## 6. Chairs Action

The Chairs action was shared, and a unanimous decision of those present was received approving the amendments to the Financial Statements.

## 7. Meeting Local Skills Needs presentations.

Claire Powell – Head of School Animal Welfare & Nursing and Phil Trilloe – Head of School, Sport & Public Services were welcomed to the meeting to present how the college meets local skills needs.

Claire Powell presented an update on the following key points:

### **Presentation 1: Animal Welfare & Vet Nursing**

- Opportunities in the sector
- How are we meeting skills needs
- Key attributes we are working towards.
- Employer Advisory Board and feedback
- Examples of Employer/Sector Engagement
- Employer Feedback
- Student Success Stories

- Next Steps

Governors asked questions regarding the opportunities in the sector, how Covid-19 impacted rescue centres, whether the curriculum could be “tweaked” so that it is in line with the accrediting boards and if the school incorporated entrepreneurship to enable students to start up their own business.

Phil Trilloe - Head of School, Sport & Public Services presented an update on the following key points:

### **Presentation 2: Sports and Public Services**

- Skills and Employment in Sport
- National Skills Gap Sport – September 2023
- Skills and Employment in Public Services
- Skills and Employment gaps in Public Services
- Sport & Public Services KSB’s (knowledge, skills and behaviours) & Employer Skills Wishlist
- Transferrable skills
- Success Stories in Sport & Public Services
- Evidence of Teamwork, communication, guest speakers and development gained from trips.

Discussions took place about how the changes to T Levels will impact on Sports and Public Services as a curriculum area in the longer term.

The Chair gave thanks for the comprehensive updates and the presentations were noted for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

*CP and PT left the meeting and there was a break for food.*

## **8. Principal’s Introduction & Update Report**

The Principal and CEO’s report had been shared prior to the meeting and provided governors with a mid-term update on key areas of the College. A detailed explanation was provided.

Following an update regarding the JLR opportunity, governors were informed that once an outcome was received, a Property Special Interest Group (SiG) meeting may be required to ensure the appropriate lines of approval were in place.

The Vice Principal HR & Student Services provided an update regarding the link between overall absence for staff and student absence. He confirmed that there was no evidence of correlation to this.

Following a question from a governor, the Principal and CEO noted to make an improvement to GCSE Math’s achievement rate was to ensure that it was “everyone’s problem” and ways to raise ambitions particularly in Math’s and English. Discussions took place regarding the Prime Minister’s plan to teach Math’s for all.

Governors discussed whether the college was looking at the Digital Strategy from an internal perspective or whether there would be external help. Ravi Kumar and Harrison Thompson offered their support and were happy to review the draft from an external perspective prior to it being submitted to Corporation in March. **ACTION.**

The report was **noted for information, understanding and decision making by governors.**

## 9. Institute of Technology (IoT) Update

Michael Burke (MB) - GBSIoT Operations Director was welcomed to the meeting and provided a verbal update regarding the following key points:

- The GBSIoT Digital SLA is proceeding with Aston University Engineering Academy; this will put into place the supporting infrastructure to address previously raised concerns regarding cyber security. This has Board approval in principle subject to confirmation of costs.
- An update regarding the re-licensing was given noting that version 2 of the draft GBSIoT Strategic Plan was in the process of being distributed. A copy of the Strategic Plan will be emailed to governors separately. The submission date to DfE is 29.02.24 **ACTION**.
- An update regarding the collaboration agreement was provided noting the latest legal steer was still to be received. It was confirmed that going forward, both University College Birmingham (UCB) and Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMET) would be paying membership fees which will have an impact on the collaboration agreement.
- The Department of Education (DfE) has a pending green skills policy to be announced in which GBSIoT will be included as a case study.
- This is the first full year of operation and utilisation rates of the Learning Factory and The Hub have been high with adoption from digital students in particular very high.

**Following a governor question**, MB provided details about the utilisation of the current facility and gave an update regarding the expansion plan.

The Chair thanked MB for his comprehensive update.

*MB left the meeting.*

## 10. Feedback to all governors on SEND (verbal)

A SEND update was provided by the SEND Link Governor and the Vice Principal HR & Student Services:

- The number of students requiring additional support was provided.
- 500 EHCP consultations last year. 140 so far this year compared with 110 at this point last year.
- EHCP breakdown: 300 Blossomfield, c.70 at each of the other campuses. Majority are Birmingham and Solihull, but others from Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Coventry, Gloucester and Oxford
- 17 deaf students are being supported, compared to around 8 per year 5-6 years ago. Good links have been made with Braidwood school for the deaf.
- We have just secured funding for another 13 High Needs students at £6k each - £78,000.

In-depth discussions took place following the update. An explanation was provided regarding the number of students where an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) is in place, and the support in place for students at the college particularly for those students who travel some distance to attend their courses.

The total number of students who recognised themselves as needing additional support were confirmed indicating the required number of support plans. **A governor shared concerns regarding whether the curriculum team were under resourced or understaffed.** The Vice Principal HR & Student Services explained the number of EHCPs in place had an impact on workload however there were sufficient measures in place to deal with it.

The Chair thanked the SEND Link Governor for her support.

## 11. Termly Safeguarding Report.

The Vice-Principal HR & Student Services' termly safeguarding report provided governors with an update on safeguarding and prevent strategies. A detailed explanation was provided regarding the termly safeguarding report which was received prior to the meeting.

The Safeguarding Link Governor briefly provided feedback since her visit, reassuring governors significant improvements regarding safeguarding have been carried out since the last Special Interest Group (SiG). Detailed notes would be shared outside of the meeting. **ACTION.**

Governors queried the increase in safeguarding cases in creative performance, governors were assured that it would not be uncommon with foundation learners which sees more referrals due to special educational needs. Queries were also raised regarding whether safeguarding records should have been considered for mental health issues and whether there was a requirement for further staff training explaining how to record these. An explanation was provided regarding the triage process in order to assure governors the records were accurate.

**Following a governor question,** it was confirmed supervision sessions have taken place, positive feedback received confirms there is the necessary support network in place, and safeguarding concerns were easily identified.

The Termly Safeguarding report was **noted for information, understanding and decision making by governors.**

## 12. Sub-contracting Termly Update.

The sub-contracting termly update report had been shared prior to the meeting, the Vice Principal for Business Growth, Skills, and Partnerships provided an update on subcontracting provision.

Governors **approved** the selection of RMF to deliver the subcontract for ESFA/AEB provision of 100 learners approx. £160k contract value (£200k funding value).

## 13. Finance Matters

### 13.1. Finance Report Re-Forecast 23/24 including November PMR and presentation.

The Budget Reforecast for January 2024 was shared prior to the meeting. This confirmed the reforecast budget for 2023/24 and updated indicative budget for 2024/25 onwards.

The Performance Monitoring Report (PMR) for November 2023 was received and an explanation provided.

The budget update presentation confirmed the key points:

- Changes since October 2023
- Risks & Mitigation
- Income & Expenditure
- Underlying Operating Position
- Financial KPI
- Cashflow
- Sensitivity impact on income and expenditure
- Mitigation

Following governor questions, the Deputy Principal and CFO confirmed the frequency of reforecasting, gave an update regarding the estate re-evaluation, and explained that some of the proposed increases on the contributions were up by 10% noting the reasons why.

With there being no further comments or questions, governors **approved** the reforecast budget for 2023/24 and **noted for information, understanding and decision making by governors.**

The updated indicative budgets for 2024/2025.

### 13.2 Property Report

It provided governors with an update on property issues and requested the approval of the new Heat Pump facility at the Stratford campus.

Governors noted the contents of the report and **approved** the request of the new Heat Pump facility at Stratford.

Discussions took place regarding an external payment owed by a supplier and the legal penalties which would follow should the payment not be received. An update regarding student residences was also provided.

### 13.3 Treasury Management Annual Report

The report was **noted for information, understanding and decision making by governors.**

### 13.4 Contribution Analysis 2023/24 Reforecast (confidential)

The report was not shared with the Staff and Student Governors due to confidentiality. It provided governors with an update on the reforecast contribution by faculty and school for 2023/24 and included an update on Reforecast Contributions 2023/24 – November PMR.

Both reports were **noted for information, understanding and decision making by governors.**

## **14. Sustainability Update presentation**

The item was not discussed due to the length of the meeting however the report had been received by governors in the board papers. The Chair confirmed sustainability remained part of Strategic Ambition 5 within the Strategic Plan for 2022/25.

## **15. Governance Items**

The Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance gave an update regarding the vacancy on the Search & Governance Committee and asked governors to volunteer for the vacancy. A review of the skills audit linked to succession planning will take place to fill additional vacancies and a revised skills audit questionnaire will be submitted for governors to complete.

The draft agenda for Governor Development Day on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024 was discussed and items were agreed.

The Cheshire College Partnership Terms of Reference and meeting dates were shared for information. Governors were asked to express how and who they want to link to in Cheshire. **ACTION**

## **16. Confidential**

Discussed under items 5.1, 13.2 and 13.4.

## **17. Policies**

There were no policies to be approved.

## **18. Items for Information**

The Bids and Projects/Tender update was shared for information.

## **19. Any Other Business**

## **20. Future Dates**

- Wednesday 20/03/2024 5pm – Blossomfield Campus
- Thursday 23/05/2024 5pm – Stratford Campus

- June 26/06/2023 4pm (4 hours) - Corporation and Dinner - Blossomfield Campus

*The Chair thanked everyone for their time and the meeting ended at 8.20pm*

*Barbara Hughes*

**Signed:**

**Dated:**

**20/03/2024**